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LANGUAGE AND ATTACHMENT:
Conversations between 28-month-old children and their mothers

By
Virginia Picchi

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Psychology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

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4.23.96
Date

Arietta Slade
Chair of Examining Committee

4-23-96
Date

Kay Deaux
Executive Officer

Arietta Slade, Ph.D.

Irving H. Paul, Ph.D.

John Dore, Ph.D.
Supervisory Committee

The City University of New York

ABSTRACT

Language and Attachment
Conversations between 28-month-old children and their mothers

By Virginia Picchi

Advisor: Professor Arietta Slade

This study examines the manner in which conversations between mothers and their children are related to their attachment status'. It attempts to show, on a linguistic level, what has already been amply investigated with preverbal infants and their mothers: That styles and mode of interaction can reflect the security or insecurity of a dyad.

Six different mothers and their 28-month-old children were used as subjects—three dyads were classified insecure, three secure. Twenty minutes of conversation for each dyad was transcribed and coded on the computer, using the Child Language Data Exchange System (CHILDES) and Wolf/Kruger's Narrative Co-construction coding system. Two different play conditions were examined; 1) the child playing alone while the mother is occupied but present and, 2) child and mother playing together on the floor. The mother's AAI narrative and child's behavior in the Strange Situation were related to the shape and content of their dialogues together. It was projected that comparing the play performances to the participants' previous measures of attachment would give some idea of how the dynamic internal workings mother are passed on to child.

The final data was examined using two distinctly different methods of analysis: First a descriptive analysis was conducted, in which the discourse

measures for both groups were compared. In this analysis, patterns and consistencies within and between the secure and insecure dyads were explored using data from CHILDES and the narrative co-construction coding system. Three dyads were then chosen for case studies . Here, data were considered at a micro-analytic level to facilitate more careful examination of the shape and structure of portions of the exchanges.

This study found that the most marked differences between secure and insecure dyads appeared when the children played alone in their mothers' presence. Here, the secure mothers intervened more frequently to verbally structure the children's play. The case studies suggested that the verbal exchanges of the insecure dyads are more explicitly disrupted and conflictual than those of insecure dyads. These suggestions are in keeping with the findings of previous research regarding discourse and attachment.

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INTRODUCTION

> The creation of the world did not take place once and for all time, but takes place every day.
>
> Samuel Beckett
> *Proust*

The emergence of the ability to speak is a revolution in a child's life. It is the means by which the world becomes articulated, relationships defined, objects delineated. Although there is currently much debate about just how fuzzy a pre-verbal infant's world really is, it is clear that gaining access to a shared cultural system of meaning offers the child a new way of functioning in the world, of being with others, of knowing the contours of the self.

Current literature has pushed the emergence of language up on the timetable to the earliest stages of the infant's life. Researchers in both psychology and language studies make the case that language is gradually spun out of the interactions that take place from the first months. Exchange with caregivers is fundamental to language learning and is the base upon which the infant's sense of self and the world is built. The dynamics underlying preverbal and verbal forms of communication exist along a continuum—language grows out of the preverbal "dialogues" that have preceded its formal emergence. Language acquisition is thus a slow process, rooted in the earliest interactions between mother and child, by means of which the world of things and relationships gradually becomes delineated and known.

This suggests what has been called a *dialogical* model for understanding what happens when a child learns to speak. According to this view, early

language acquisition is always at least a two-person (hence, relational) phenomenon, with conversation or "dialogue" at its root. What is most important about what takes place between partners is not the exchange of information, but the process by which different speakers interact: The focus is on the interpenetration of words and speakers, how they collaborate, clash, and compete in communicating. Because of the focus on interaction, it is the dynamics of the "social semiotic" sphere (Hodge and Kress, 1988), the social arena in which meaning is jointly built, that tells us most about how and what a child is meaning or learning to mean. In the words of the Australian linguist, M.A.K. Halliday: "Learning to mean is a process of creation, whereby a child constructs, in interaction with those around, a semiotic potential that gives access to the edifice of meanings that constitute social reality." (1976, p.90)

In the next pages, I will promote a dialogical approach to examining the mother/child relationship, and the language that develops between them. I begin with Winnicott's theories about the development of the mother/infant relationship. This section represents an attempt to locate what I consider to be one of the original "theories of the between" in psychoanalytic literature. Winnicott attempts to describe what happens internally for a mother and child as they move from an empathy-based relationship to a semiotic one. He concentrates on the psychological interface between mother and child as they adjust and adapt, meeting or failing the exigencies of a developing relationship that will eventually be based on symbols. What Winnicott offers is a way to understand "the infant's journey from the purely subjective to objectivity"(1971, p. 6) cast in terms of his relationship with mother and traced in the gradual development of the capacity for representation.

Bakhtin's theory of dialogism and the interactional properties of live language represent the soul of the language piece of this study. What is essential here is his notion of the inherently relational properties of live language. He concentrates on the space that lies between people and promotes language to be the thing which brings this space to life. To Bakhtin, language is the central means for understanding interactions of all kinds as they take place on the individual and cultural level. It is located somewhere between inner and outer reality, self and other, the realities of the present, experiences of the past and expectations for the future. Any investigation of language, in Bakhtin's terms, requires that the focus be precisely on the dynamic intermediary space in which words are learned and used.

Attachment theory offers a way to link these ideas to a methodology that is both relational and psychoanalytically informed. I examine the internal working model as the theoretical centerpiece for the exploration of language acquisition—the element that links internal states to representational processes. While some recent studies have shown a correlation between language and attachment status, there has been less work relating the structure of conversation to attachment. I draw from Mary Main's work on coherence to examine the semantic and structural properties of dialogues between mother and child as related to their attachment status.

The aim of this dissertation is to examine the relationship between attachment status and patterns of linguistic interaction. I attempt to show, on a linguistic level, what has already been amply investigated with preverbal infants and their mothers; that styles and modes of interaction can reflect the security or insecurity of a dyad.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Winnicott and Object Relations

> "Religious narrative, Christ's biography, is founded upon and originates in the mystery of a Virgin Birth that can never be wholly verified, but that beseeches recognition and unqualified acceptance. Whereas secular narrative, which concerns us here, is staked upon and originates in the common and indisputable fact of human birth; or, to be more severe about it, in the natal banishment of man from immortality, and his initiation into an afflicted family which is not Apostolic but a problematic combination of repression and love."
>
> Edward Said
> *Narrative: Quest for Origins and Discovery of the Mausoleum.*

Where does language come from? How is conversation constructed? Winnicott claims that it is only within the context of development that the rise of symbolism can be understood: "It seems that symbolism can be properly studied only in the process of the growth of an individual and that it has at the very best a variable meaning" (1951, p.6). He proposes a theory of development in which mother and child are first symbiotically connected and communication is gradually sculpted out of the original empathic bond that exists between them. He traces the internal dynamics of the path that mother and infant follow in moving from preverbal, empathy-based communication to one rooted in the use of tools outside of the self

Winnicott is one of the earliest and most articulate spokesmen regarding the empathic bond that ties mother to infant even before the child is born. He claims that there is a deep connection that enables the mother to facilitate the infant's first experience of the world as a completely subjective phenomenon. The "good enough mother", with her constant internally-

derived adaptation to her infant, is herself working out of a particular state of subjectivity that facilitates his "illusion" of omnipotence in the face of overwhelming dependence.

Winnicott suggests that the first stage of an infant's life is one in which he is unable to distinguish between self and other, inside and outside. He does not feel himself to be an individual entity with a limiting membrane: Physically and psychologically, he is utterly dependent on the mother, whom he perceives as part of himself. Although this notion of an initially symbiotic union between mother and child has more recently come under fire (see Stern, 1985, for a comprehensive review of this literature), Winnicott's investigation of each partner's experience and contribution to the state of fusion is useful for understanding the dynamics underlying the earliest bond between mother and infant and how it develops into formal communication.

The mother initially serves as an "auxiliary ego" for the child (Spitz, 1965), without whom he could neither survive in real terms, nor exist psychologically. His "inherited potential" for growth and development can only be achieved through her ministrations. (Winnicott, 1960, p. 43) In spite of the infant's real dependency and lack of control, the seamlessness of the mother's responses allows him to maintain the sense that his experiences in the world are completely of his own making: "The mother's adaptation to the infant's needs, when good enough, gives the infant the *illusion* that there is an external reality that corresponds to the infant's own capacity to create." (1971, p. 12) The infant senses the world only through the filter of his own projections (1960, p. 38) and so experiences the material environment as congruent with his internal state. This is the source of a sense of subjective omnipotence for him: As all aspects of the external and internal world are gathered into his subjective realm of experience, he is allowed a feeling of

complete power and centrality with respect to his surround. The sense of omnipotence shields him from being overwhelmed by anxieties of annihilation stemming from his real vulnerability.

Mother, as a "symbiotic organizer" (Mahler, 1986), literally completes the infant. Through her, he develops a sense of his own subjective being and the world around him. The mother's accommodations facilitate the infant's period of illusion in important ways. She provides a "holding environment" in which the intrusion of alien, other-than-me forces is minimized. This prevents him from being victimized by his inadequacies, helps him to discover and believe in his own capacities, and gives him the earliest experience of the world as a safe place. In being held, the infant enjoys the freedom of acting as if he is central and all-powerful, and so can test and expand the limits of his subjective universe. The dynamics of self-formation are rooted in these earliest experiences of creativity born of illusion that give the infant a natural sense of aliveness and real existence that Winnicott calls the True Self.

The initial illusion of oneness cuts two ways: As the infant experiences the mother to be inextricably linked to him, so does the mother sense her infant as a part of herself. Winnicott suggests that mother first understands her infant through projective identification, thus seeing and responding to him as a subjectified object. Because she so closely identifies with him, she has an internal sense of what he feels and responds to him out of this sense:

> ... the mother through identification of herself with her infant knows what the infant feels like and so is able to provide almost exactly what the infant needs in the way of holding and in the provision of an environment generally. Without such an identification I consider that she is not able to provide what the infant needs at the beginning, which is *a live adaptation to the infant's needs.* (1960, p. 54)

The mother supplements the infant's ego only insofar as she is able to behave as if he were a natural extension of herself. She grants him cohesion

and agency by casting *his* needs and feelings in *her* terms—an act of translation in which she construes particular meanings and intentions from his more ambiguous movements and states. The image of the baby does not stem from the inherent meaningfulness of his own gestures or indications (the child has not yet reached the level of using set "content expression pairs" (Dore, 1985, p. 27) such as Halliday's (1975) "proto-language", and Dore's (1983) "indexicals"), but rather is the effect of a joint exchange hinging on a profound degree of understanding and adjustment on the part of the mother. Mother's understanding allows her to anticipate and provide for the infant's needs without explicit signals from him, minimizing external impingement and allowing him the opportunity for spontaneous, self-generated action. (1960; 1960)

While the infant has the illusion of creating the mother ("A subjective phenomenon develops in the baby, which we call the mother's breast." (1951, p. 11)), the mother is in part creating the infant out of the proclivities of her own unconscious. As Mahler (1975) claims:

> The birth of the child as an individual comes about when, in response to the mother's selective response to his cueing, the child gradually alters his behavior. It is the specific unconscious need of the mother that activates out of the infant's infinite potentialities, those in particular that create for each mother 'the child' who reflects her own *unique* and individual needs. This process takes place, of course, within the range of the child's innate endowments. (p. 60)

Yet, in describing what the mother experiences as "identification", Winnicott suggests that, though finding it within herself, the mother is working out of a sense of the infant which originates from inside of *him*. This is the intersubjective basis of the earliest mother/baby communication: The mother's internal reality is tied to that of her infant such that it constitutes her experience (and, consequently, the overt, culturally coherent, codification) of the internal life of her baby. Meaning gets made from the

inside as mother empathically meets and interprets the baby in his completely subjective world, and translates what she sees into a definition of what he *means* and who he *is*.

What we have, then, is an interplay between the infant's completely self-enclosed projective world spun from his own needs and states, and mother's internally-derived sense of the nature of these needs and states and how they should be addressed. The "illusion" of the early stage is both the infant's first experience of the world as essentially his own creation, and the mother's sense of the infant as existing within the matrix of her reciprocating gestures. The dynamic subjective interplay between mother and infant is the site of pre-verbal creativity for both partners. Each of them performs a gesture, born of subjectivity, that brings an element of the external world under their control and provokes a change in the environment.

At the heart of this two-way creative process lies *empathy*, the fundamental source of the earliest understanding and communication that ties mother to infant. Empathy prefigures language as the element that makes the infant understandable to the mother, and her care seamless enough to be subjectified by the infant:

> Actually the word infant implies 'not talking' (*infans*), it is not un-useful to think of infancy as the phase prior to word presentation and the use of word symbols. The corollary is that it refers to a phase in which the infant depends on maternal care that is based on maternal empathy rather than on understanding of what is or could be verbally expressed. (1960, p. 40)

For Winnicott, maternal empathy lies at the core of the identificatory processes that constitute the earliest interactions between mother and infant. It enables mother to understand her child and gives the infant his first experience of how meaning gets made. Mother is a kind of "mirror" who filters the infant's internal reality through her interpretive system and, via some communicative gesture, sends him back a coherent picture of himself (1971).

Having his rudimentary states—affects, vocalizations, postures—realized and given shape *retrospectively* by mother's empathic responses and adjustments (Dore, 1983) shows the infant that gestures can be meaningfully linked to intentions and can effect environmental change. Empathy makes possible a coherent exchange between mother and infant that prepares for and anticipates later symbolic and linguistic developments.

The centrality of empathy in these earliest exchanges has been a source of interest in much of the current infancy research. Stern's "affect attunements" (1985), Kaye's preverbal dialogue (1977), and Trevarthen and Hubley's "interactional synchronies" (1979) are all attempts to operationalize the way that dyads effectively communicate about internal states before the development of formal language. They concentrate on how caregivers automatically adjust and respond to the cues of infants and thus forge a comprehensible exchange.

With the development of cognitive and symbolic capacities in the infant, mother's use of empathy is gradually supplanted by the child's *indication of need,* and mother and baby "become differentiated into discrete language-using ego entities." (Dore, 1983, p. 188) Winnicott sees this as a process by which mother and infant become separate such that a new mode of communication is necessary:

> An infant is merged with the mother, and while this remains true the nearer the mother can come to an exact understanding of the infant's needs the better. A change, however, comes with the end of merging, and this end is not necessarily gradual. As soon as mother and infant are separate, from the infant's point of view, then it will be noted that the mother tends to change in her attitude. It is as if she now realizes that the infant no longer expects the condition in which there is an almost magical understanding of need. The mother seems to know that the infant has a new capacity, that of giving a signal so that she can be guided towards meeting the infant's needs. (1960, p. 50)

Although empathy is thus dethroned by overt signals as the element that explicitly joins mother to infant, there are hints that it still remains at the core of the exchange. Mother now acts on the basis of the infant's overt expressions rather than out of her own internal sense of his needs and wants, but her capacity to do so requires that she have an empathic sense of her child's expectations: She now "seems to know" that the infant is capable of expressing himself and indicating what he needs or wants. Mother's internal life thus remains very much in play. Her empathic sense of her child regulates her ability to anticipate and allow for his growing autonomy and capacity for symbolization.

Although still requiring a deep connection of mother to infant, the rise of symbolic capacity corresponds with the gradual diminution of the empathy-driven preverbal dialogue and occurs against the backdrop of the separation-individuation stage of the child's development (Mahler et al, 1975; Slade, 1986). Motility, burgeoning language skills and increased cognitive capacities allow the child to function more independently and with greater agency. His focus is increasingly on the "autonomous apparatuses of the self and the functions of the ego—locomotion, perception, learning." (Mahler, 1972/86).

Werner and Kaplan (1963) consider the implications of the way in which the growing capacity for abstract representation coincides with the tasks of separation and differentiation:

> ...the greater the interpersonal distance between individuals involved in a communication situation, the more autonomous must be the symbolic vehicles in order to be understood, that is, the more communal and the less egocentric, idiosyncratic, and contextualized must the vehicles become. (p. 49)

The growing interpersonal distance of the separation-individuation stage of development poses a challenge to both mother and child. The mother's mediation of her child's differentiation is crucial to his development. She must

relinquish the real power and closeness of the original state of oneness and weather the vicissitudes of the ambivalently autonomous toddler and rookie language user. If she is too impinging (insists on her own interpretations), the infant will not be able to explore and expand; if she is too accommodating, (completely understanding all of the half-formed ideas and language), it will be difficult for him to give up the illusion of being all-controlling.

The process of differentiation also poses a crisis for the child. While he begins to gain mastery and competence, moving outside mother's realm to explore and name the things around him, he also faces the loss of a more immediate, seamless connection with her and, consequently, his internal sense of control and exclusivity. His awareness of separateness and increasing ability for autonomous functioning thus emerges in conjunction with the recognition of his true place within an objectively perceived reality—a fragile and dependent place indeed. Winnicott conceptualizes the crisis of this period in terms of the infant's sudden realization that his mother (and the world around her) is real and beyond his control, and that he is truly dependent on her for crucial care and support. These discoveries breed conflict, anxiety and frustration, and usher in a period of "disillusionment."

In forging a symbolic world, the child must come to terms with his fragility, the chance of being misunderstood and the loss of the previous more symbiotic modes of communication. (Stern, 1985; Bowlby, 1982; Mahler, 1986) He must acknowledge that he lives in an environment where he's not automatically understood, and where he is vulnerable and helpless in proportion to his lack of symbolic mastery. This is a source of anxiety, but also lends impetus to his quest for language acquisition (Dore, 1983). He now must work toward a level of intentional expression— that of symbolic

representation—and become educated in the conventions of a broader, shared culture.

In his discussion of "secular narrative" as an after-the-fall phenomenon, Edward Said (1970) implies that the impulse to organize the world with words is born out of an effort to stave off an implicitly (or explicitly) chaotic reality. According to Said; "Narrative lives in the temporal quotidian element, which commemorates the absence of timeless mystery." Loosely applied, disillusionment is the backdrop against which all language is developed and used. It is the emerging recognition of vulnerability in an uncontrollable world that lends force to the child's attempt to master reality with words.

At the core of the new language-using child's experience is *conflict* —conflict over relinquishing a more symbiotic relationship with the other, giving up the grandiose notions of omnipotence and control, being a novice in a brutally exacting sociosemiotic system. The "eternal struggle against both fusion and isolation" (Mahler, 1972/86, p. 231) that characterizes the rapprochement subphase of the separation-individuation stage of development (and endures, to some degree, throughout life) can be traced both in the development of language use and in the developing language itself. Language use is *de facto* an acknowledgment/exploitation of separateness and simultaneously a mode of reconnecting (Wolf, 1993; Stern, 1985). And, in learning a language, one abandons the primacy of the more idiosyncratic, personal modes of empathy-based communication for a shared public system that makes possible a new degree of specificity and range of expression but also requires competence and conformity.

Many theorists talk about the way in which the burgeoning use of symbols always occurs in the context of the loss of other more immediate ways

of experiencing and communicating. Stern (1985) sees language as a compromise that introduces a "discontinuity in experience" for the infant as it subverts the "amodal flux" in which events of the world are first experienced. Disillusionment, in Stern's terms, could be construed as the artifact of how language can "fracture amodal experience" for the infant. (p. 176) Yet, in making this claim, he casts language as a referential tool that is more a prototype than a process: While behavior manifests experience, words can only represent it. As abstractions out of and away from concrete reality, words usher in an estrangement of official or socialized world knowledge from personal experience:

> ...the advent of language is a very mixed blessing to the child. What begins to be lost (or made latent) is enormous; what begins to be gained is also enormous. The infant gains entrance into a wider cultural membership, but at the risk of losing the force and wholeness of original experience. (1985, p. 177)

Seen in more process terms, the child's induction into a standard system of meaning is a gain: It allows for a more fully realized experience of what is in here vs. out there, provides a means for distinguishing self from other, and offers the child a firmer positioning in space and time. Symbol formation, as it develops in the space between the increasingly differentiated self and other, serves as a substitute means of connecting with and making sense of the outside world. Symbols are "interactionally situated" (Dore, 1983, p. 179), replacing symbiotic empathy as the new link between self and object. They help ease the shock of separation by permitting the forging of new connections. The shared communication of language and play allows the child to put his budding intellectual capacities to work in reconnecting with the object—or connecting with the real object for the first time. Gradually, the child learns not only how to use symbols, but also how to imbue them with his own significance and so make them his own. This allows for "the origin of a

reciprocity of perspective (Garfinkle) whereby the world known in common can be objectively expressed" (Dore, 1983, p. 180).

What had before been for the child a kind of seamlessness inside himself, contained as he is within his own omnipotent shell and the protective holding of mother, now becomes expressed through representation. Empathy is turned inside out: Continuity must now be maintained through signs and symbols—interactionally and on the outside. Trevarthan promotes the importance of representational capacity in the development of "secondary intersubjectivity" which emerges near the end of the first year of life when mother and baby combine communication about action on objects with direct dyadic interaction. (Trevarthen and Hubley, 1978/1987, p. 335) Intersubjectivity, normally studied with younger infants (Trevarthan, 1987; Kaye, 1977; Stern, 1985; Wilson and Weinstein, 1993), has been defined by Trevarthan as "the linking of subjects who are active in transmitting their understanding to each other" (p. 347). Through the learning and use of a shared language, mother and baby join once again in such a state as "words reconstitute the dyad's intersubjectivity." (Dore, 1983, p. 172)

Winnicott claims that the shift to an objective sense of the world made possible by symbol use is never total. In "Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomenon" (1971), he tells us; "It is assumed that the task of reality-acceptance is never completed, that no human being is free from the strain of relating inner and outer reality, and that relief from this strain is provided by an intermediate area of experience." He offers the notion of transitional phenomenon as inhabiting this intermediary position between subjectivity and objectivity that both facilitates the child's initial transition and continues to operate throughout life. The first use of the transitional object provides a means for the infant to relinquish omnipotence without complying. He takes

something that exists out there and imbues it with personal meaning which goes beyond its physical properties. This object has apparent autonomy, yet its significance is highly idiosyncratic. In this way, the infant is allowed an experience in which inner and outer reality are interrelated, yet starting to be separate. This is the first step in a process of fluctuation between subjectivity and objectivity, illusion and disillusionment, that will continue throughout life.

Winnicott and object relations theory provides us with one way of understanding the internal dynamics of each member of the dyad as they negotiate the move from an empathy-based preverbal form of communication to exchanges within a formal representational system. These are the dynamics of the separation-individuation stage of development cast in terms of language acquisition: Mother and child must navigate the tension between fusion and separation, relinquishing preverbal modes of communication, forging a common language together, and weathering the crisis of disillusionment. Language develops in the space between mother and infant, and how this space is negotiated—filled as it is with these conflicts—tells much about the dyad.

Language Studies

> In truth, in talk it seems routine that, while firmly standing on two feet, we jump up and down on another.
>
> Gail Goodwin
> *He-Said-She-Said*

Investigations of live conversation are a relatively recent development in language studies. Much of the work of the past 20 years has been descriptive, an attempt to methodologize what were previously considered to be unbridled, loose, unregulated phenomenon of the natural world that escaped typology. (Grice, 1977) More sophisticated technology made access to the study of

naturally occurring conversation more possible (MacWhinney and Snow, 1985, p. 271), thus fostering the emerging interest in microanalytic examinations of language *in vivo*. J.R. Firth, a British linguist, was the first to explicitly propose that conversation be studied in 1935, claiming that it was the place where "we shall find the key to a better understanding of what language is and how it works." (Coulthard, 1977, p. 1) Austin (1962), Searle (1969), and Grice's (1967) work on speech acts and conversation came later to lay the theoretical groundwork for a proliferation of interest in the study of live language.

As actual talk or text is privileged over the abstract linguistic system of cognition, a semiotic approach replaces a formal or structural one. The word is examined not as an isolated, idealized unit of language within an abstract system (as per de Saussure and Chomsky), but as a live act entrenched in the surrounding culture and society. Language is lent meaning and value by virtue of the context in which it is used and the use to which it is put: More simply, language must be embodied to do its work, and it is this embodiment that counts. In this spirit, ethnomethodologist Gail Goodwin says that "what is being investigated is not language per se but rather the systematic organization of human interaction..."(1990, p. 5) The emphasis on the experience of using language thus leads to examination of the social sphere of live discourse. The focus becomes the phenomenology of everyday life as manifested, through language, in different social activities and forms of interaction.

A fundamental unit of real speech, the applied word as it occurs in written or spoken dialogue, is the centerpiece of this approach. The units are variously defined: The utterance (Bakhtin), C-act (Dore), speech act (Austin), proposition (Ochs-Schiefflin), and clause (Slobin) all represent units of live

speech that can be operationalized and examined. These units are the property of speaking (or writing) subjects orienting to the listener. There is always a reciprocal relationship between the unit of live speech and its context—one creates the other. Where and how something is said determines *what* it says: Words are examined as they function in a particular situation, used for a distinct purpose by a specific speaker and listener.

The move to analyze actual talk spans disciplines. In sociology, Garfinkel established ethnomethodology, the examination of the methods people use while engaged in real social interaction. Ethnomethodology turned to live, naturally occurring conversation for its data, focusing on how people experience, interpret, and report on their interactions. Out of Ethnomethodology came conversation analysis (CA), developed by Harvey Sacks in the early 1970's. CA has attempted to methodologize the principles of communication and exchange underlying different types of discourse—to establish a grammar of conversation. Sacks (1984, p. 21) described ethnomethodology and CA as the "domain (that) seeks to describe methods persons use in doing social life."

In the work of ethnmethodologists, such as Sacks, Garfinkel, Jefferson and Schegloff, what is said is significant by virtue of how it performs within a chain of interaction. It is the *sequence* of speech and behavior that is important, not isolated or distilled units of talk. As the sociologist Erving Goffman puts it, "What nature divides, talk frivolously embeds, insets and intermingles." (1981, p. 155) He and his followers examine forms of discourse as strategic modes of social interaction. Goffman proposes a dramaturgical model of discourse built on the assumption that the social order severely circumscribes the possibilities for individual behavior such that one must

always look at talk in the context of the social expectation and convention that surrounds it.

Many of those working in the study of live language make claims as to the behavioral nature of what they are examining—almost incidentally positing a motivational structure within which language is used and developed. Theirs is not a grand theory of internal processes: They are more interested in what happens *between* speakers and listeners than within them. But embedded within their stated emphasis on "the technology of conversation" (Sacks, 1984) lies an interest in language as a means of behaving and making other people behave. They thus almost inadvertently place psychology at the base of linguistic investigation: Language is the dynamic meeting place where psychologically significant encounters transpire.

There are examples throughout the language literature of the concern with speech as a form of behavior and a means of social regulation. Goffman, for example, is almost Machiavellian in his views of the exigencies of socially based sources of self-identification and self placement within the "freewheeling, self-referential character of speech" (1981, p. 145, 147) His dramaturgical theory, in which "a participant's alignment, or set, or stance, or posture, or projected self is somehow at issue", looks at language as a strip of behavior extending in scope far beyond the words themselves to include a whole realm of covert motivations and expectations. Halliday's contention that "through dialogue, one person 'acts on' the other." (1976, p. 88) Garfinkel's (1967) rules of "accountability" for talk, Grice's (1975/1989) maxims for conversational coherency, and Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson's (1974) rules for turn-taking, are all examples of this tendency to cast language use in interactive terms with specific implications regarding the behaviors and

motivations of the participants. In these systems, all transgressions from the rules become particularly important as instances of variously motivated deviation from social convention.

Theories of live speech are rooted in an open-ended system that displaces an interest in static structures with a concern for fluid, situation-bound reciprocity: Meaning emerges within the continual fluctuation between the language system, language use and the environmental factors determining the joining of the two. The interlocutors, with their varied agendas and personal proclivities, are the human centerpiece around and through whom this play occurs.

Bakhtin

The focus on language as a form of interaction and interpenetration is taken to its most radical extreme by Bakhtin and his theory of dialogism. Bakhtin uses language as the base from which to launch a far-reaching epistemological investigation. Language is not just a vestige of thought, nor merely a vehicle for its expression and articulation, but rather the material embodiment of the dynamic constituents of mind and experience. Our consciousness is shaped by our experiences with the outside world and the different ways we assimilate and/or accommodate to others—their reality, their world, their words. For Bakhtin, structural elements of speech are correlated with consciousness such that language *is* psychology, and experience and speech become almost interchangeable phenomena. In the words of a contemporary Bakhtinian, Michael Holquist, "Discourse does not reflect a situation, it is a situation." (1990, p. 33)

Because of the strategic positioning of the spoken word as both a source and container of experience, there is a constant flow between life and

language that lends each their dynamic quality. Bakhtin focuses on the word-in-use as the central manifestation of that flow: "...language enters life through concrete utterances (which manifest language) and life enters language through concrete utterances as well. The utterance is an exceptionally important node of problems." (1986, p. 65) A node which, according to Bakhtin, offers us the most explicit means to examine the formation of consciousness—what he calls the "ideological" birth of an individual.

Bakhtin looks at the mechanisms of exchange—assimilation, adaptation, co-production—as the crucial constituents of all kinds of interactive relationships. He uses language to theorize the intermediate area between traditionally polarized concepts throughout the social system—subject/object, self/other, individual/society, private/public. Binary opposition is replaced with an interest in the dynamic intermingling and cross-pollination between elements. Yet, his emphasis is not merely on how two things interact, how they complement or conflict, but also on how they meet and interpenetrate in "an intense field of interorientation" (1984, p. 239) and thus come into "inner contact." (1984, p. 189)

Language is never the boundaried, self-contained product of a person working alone, addressing, head-on, a single well-defined object, orienting to a neutral and non-influential listener. Although overtly the property of a single individual—the speaking subject—nested within each utterance are phrases, concepts, styles belonging to others past and present. According to this approach, the ongoing activity by which language occupies the intermediary space between individuals is its primary defining characteristic:

> As a living, socio-ideological concrete thing, as heteroglot opinion, language, for the individual consciousness, lies on the borderline between oneself and the other. The word in language is half someone else's. It becomes "one's own" only when the

> speaker populates it with his own intention, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention... Language is not a neutral medium that passes freely and easily into the private property of the speaker's intentions; it is populated—overpopulated—with the intentions of others. (1981, p. 293)

The emphasis on the highly interactive nature of live language is grounded in a commitment to the interpersonal aspects of thought and behavior. Contemporary sociolinguists have been systematically dismantling the concepts of "speaker" and "hearer"—Goffman going so far as to refer to them as "global folk categories" (1981, p. 129). Bakhtin takes it further: He extends his interest in the "field of interorientation" to apply to the formation of self. He displaces the notion of a core self and distinct other with an emphasis on the dynamic and fluid system of mutual, ongoing interpenetration in which self and other are constantly being constituted, disassembled, and reconstituted.

We learn from dialogical discourse that there is no such thing as a completely individuated self, independently operating and self-contained. The self is a situated, contextual phenomenon that changes with respect to the surround. People live in relation to each other, and identity shifts, existing somewhere within the exchange between self and other. The varying positions from which we perceive ourselves, and from which others perceive us, constitute the essence of how the self is defined. In the words of Halliday, a more recent proponent of this view; "the self ... lies, in Meadian fashion, at the intersection of various dimensions of social process—including, critically, processes of a symbolic or *Sociosemiotic* kind."(1976, p. 95)

Bakhtin posits an early state in which the individual is an undifferentiated entity, completely immersed in the surrounding culture from which he gradually becomes separated. His contention that consciousness develops out of an initially entangled mass in which there is no

differentiation between one's own thoughts and words and those of others is reminiscent of Mahler and Winnicott's theory of infantile symbiosis. What object relations theorists construe as the child reacting to the world through the filter of "mother", Bakhtin poses as a consciousness undifferentiated from "culture:"

> ...consciousness awakens to independent ideological life precisely in a world of alien discourses surrounding it, and from which it cannot initially separate itself; the process of distinguishing between one's own and another's discourse, between one's own and another's thought, is activated rather late in development. (1981, p. 345)

It is only with time that, gradually, some highly permeable boundaries are achieved. The emergence of self structures, which the object relations school investigates on the inter- and intra-psychic plane, is here tracked *linguistically*. Dialogue is privileged as the vehicle of self-definition and differentiation. Early encounters with the language of others serve as the foundation upon which subsequent ideological and behavioral constructs are built: "One's own discourse is gradually and slowly wrought out of others' words that have been acknowledged and assimilated, and the boundaries between the two are at first scarcely perceptible." (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 345) Consciousness actively unfolds, through language, from this interpersonal matrix of self and other. Development, then, consists of gradual differentiation as the individual, through language, becomes increasingly able to know, assimilate and assume ownership of parts of the culture with which s/he is initially merged.

Once again, the dynamic structures that Bakhtin postulates here are grounded in a theory about the structure of language itself. The birth of consciousness develops out of the play between "internally persuasive discourse" and "authoritative discourse." While the former is an internally validated, creative application and alteration of others' words—a language that

has been "affirmed through assimilation"—the latter represents inert, semantically finite institutional language. Authoritative discourse is the standard, static, prior institutional language that demands complete "allegiance" and permits no play or permutation. (1981, p. 345)

Language is always refracted through others, and one's own words forever retain their social roots, yet the degree to which these roots are made manifest varies with the particular type of discourse. Authoritative discourse, the word of the "father" (or, for my purposes, "caregiver") can only be reiterated or imitated and so is always readily identifiable as "not mine." Internally persuasive discourse, on the other hand, is developed via an assimilative process in which the individual's creative, productive capacities are brought to bear on the use and transmutation of others' words. Here, we find the linguistic traces of a dynamic interplay between self and other resulting in a distinctive, personalized utterance: the internally persuasive word is always "half-ours and half-someone else's." (1981, p. 345)

For Bakhtin, consciousness is a joint construction that is never fully self-contained or complete, but rather always extends outside of itself to the public arena from which it was derived and to which it refers. It is formed and shaped on the border between internal and external, where the individual continues to live. (1981)

When a consciousness is fully developed, dialogue goes within and enters "the very atoms of thought and experience." The "intra-atomic" constitution of the individual consists of voices originating from encounters with the external world, and the resulting "microdialogue" is an internally experienced version of the original social phenomenon. If one were to disassemble a single consciousness, one would find it full of clashing and conflicting utterances—an internal situation which mirrors that in the outside

world. This parallels Vygotksy's (1978) idea that the events that take place between two people interpsychically later get internalized to become intrapsychic reality. We are dialogically determined beings in the sense that our essence lies somewhere at the intersection of a multitude of internal and external voices. This results in what Bakhtin refers to as the "profound dialogic and polemical nature of self-awareness and self-affirmation." (1984)

The dialogism of the self thus cuts two ways: We exist as individuals both by virtue of how we take in the world and how the world reflects ourselves back to us. As a speaker's words are oriented to those of other speakers, past and present, so a person's self-representation is always formulated in relation/reaction to the views of others. How we see ourselves is a function both of some internal notion of who we are and what we want, and of what we think other people think and want of us. This constitutes the collision/coalescence of interior voices that makes up an individual's consciousness.

Following Bakhtin's line of inquiry, the "disillusionment" of Winnicott's theory can be cast in purely linguistic terms. The dilemma presented by the child's growing language competence is that it forces him to relinquish the grandiosity of incomprehensibility—of living completely within a solipsistic universe that lies outside of any culturally coherent system of meaning. At the earliest stages, the innate disparity between self and culture, public and private speech, is not yet experienced or recognized. The tension that inheres in learning a language stems, in part, from having to reconcile this disparity. The difficulty of this process is evident even in Bakhtin's choice of language to describe the phenomenon: "Expropriating (language), forcing it to submit to one's own intentions and accents is a difficult and complicated process."(1981, p. 293)

As in psychoanalytic theory, the differentiation that occurs via language according to this model is riddled with conflict. While the child develops the capacity to communicate in a more individual *and* culturally coherent way, he must come to terms with the conflicts that inhere in language use and exchange itself: the conflict between what's said and what's heard; between what's intended and what's accomplished; between internally persuasive discourse and the conventional speech of authoritative discourse; between his own linguistic incompetence and the competence of an adult. In terms of the culture, the child is helpless and subject to these conflicts in direct proportion to his linguistic incapacity and incomprehensibility. Differentiation understood through a dialogical model of discourse, then, is the process whereby the child gradually sculpts a personally resonant and comprehensible language from an initially monolithic social and historical property.

Bakhtin's theory offers up language as a central means for investigating the dynamic construction of concepts of self and other. In his view, an individual's utterances will always manifest the active, multilayered interplay between self and other, public and private. They are simultaneously artifacts and living enactments of the interpersonal and cultural processes that constitute an individual's being.

There are practical implications to this theory: A child's language is a map of his relationships with others, both historically and in the present. Cast in terms of the dyad, learning a language, and having an incipient, less developed language with which a child communicates with his mother, leads to assimilations and accommodations that can be tracked and are significant markers of their experiences together. (See Dore, 1989 for one example of the application of Bakhtinian theory to language acquisition.) The specific

medium in which this can be traced is the exchange itself, where this process is actively unfolding.

Attachment Theory

> "A character is like an acrostic or Alexandrian stanza;—read it forward backward, or across, it still spells the same thing."
> Ralph Waldo Emerson
> *Self Reliance*

Attachment theory offers us a way to operationalize the "intense field of interorientation" (Bakhtin, 1984) within the narrower scope of attachment behaviors. This is a theory founded on the premise that exchanges between caregiver and child are crucial constituents in the development of personality structure. Although narrower in its scope, many have noted that attachment theory is nonetheless an object relations theory. (Greenberg & Mitchell 1983; Cicchetti, Cummings, Greenberg, and Marvin 1990; Slade and Aber, 1992) It emphasizes the social and emotional development of the infant and the way in which early experiences become internalized and effect both infant and adult behavior. Attachment theory focuses exclusively on attachment interactions, however, which are only one dimension of the relationship between caregiver and child. (Bretherton 1985; Cicchetti, Cummings, Greenberg, and Marvin 1990)

Attachment theory concerns the examination of biologically-based attachment behaviors as originally defined by Bowlby; seeking *proximity* in order to gain *protection* and so obtain a sense of *security*. Mary Ainsworth went on to operationalize Bowlby's theory to study the attachment behaviors of young children. Using the Strange Situation, she found that there are classifiable and stable patterns in the way in which children respond to reunion with their mothers after a brief separation. (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978) Those who react to the stress of the situation by seeking

closeness, showing few or no signs of resistance or avoidance, are classified as Secure. Those who avoid mother, seeking little or no closeness and resisting efforts to make contact, are classified as Anxious Avoidant. Anxious Resistant (also known as Anxious Ambivalent) infants display angry and resistant behaviors upon reunion with their mothers while still seeking proximity. (Ainsworth et al, 1978) These categories have since been shown to be robust across cultures. (Slade and Aber, 1992)

In 1985, Main, Kaplan and Cassidy proposed that there are also classifiable patterns of attachment in adults, and that these patterns are representationally encoded. Mary Main went on to operationalize this idea using the Adult Attachment Interview (AAI). The AAI is a semi-structured clinical interview that assesses the representational quality of the adult's view of his or her own parents and childhood experiences. Verbatim transcriptions of the interview are evaluated with attention to structural and semantic dimensions of the discourse. The coding system of AAI concentrates on the individual's "apparent state of mind with respect to attachment" as manifested in discourse characteristics of his or her speech. Ultimate classification is judged according to the goodness of fit between semantic evaluations and episodic memories—the capacity of individuals to back up abstract, semantic descriptions of their experiences of being parented with more finely rendered memories of actual events. (Fonagy et al, 1991) In this system, discrepancies, contradictions and the overall coherence of thought take on particular significance. (Main, Kaplan and Cassidy, 1985; Cassidy, 1991) What is important is the degree to which parents are "coherent, consistent and plausible" (Main, 1995) in describing their experiences: The subject's narrative is considered relevant only insofar as it meets or violates these criteria.

Based on their performance on the AAI, caregivers are classified as either Autonomous, Dismissing or Preoccupied. Transcripts are classified *Secure* when the narrative is coherent and internally consistent, and responses are clear, relevant and succinct. Narratives of *Dismissing* and *Preoccupied* individuals are both highly incoherent, though in different ways. The transcripts of Dismissive individuals are superficially collaborative, but have internal contradictions, unnoticed by the individuals themselves, which make the narrative appear untruthful. They can also be excessively succinct because the individuals often claim not to remember childhood events. The discourse of Preoccupied individuals is normally unfocused and rambling, filled with nebulous phrases, childlike speech, jargon and nonsense words. (Main, 1995) The adult classifications of Secure, Dismissing and Preoccupied have been found to correlate highly with Secure, Avoidant and Ambivalent categories of infants, respectively. (Main, Kaplan and Cassidy, 1985; Main and Goldwyn, 1988; Fonagy, Steele and Steele, 1991)

The internal working model is the theoretical postulate that justifies the correlation of representation with attachment. Attachment theorists propose the internal working model to be the basic representational structure upon which the individual's internal world is constructed. Encoded and manifested in language, the working model links the shape and form of verbalizations to attachment patterns in the same way that sensorimotor behaviors (exploration vs. proximity seeking) are associated with attachment in pre-verbal infants. Theories regarding the manner in which internal working models develop and are made manifest provide the explanation for the centrality of linguistic analysis in the study of attachment in older children and adults.

Working models have been defined as a set of conscious and/or unconscious rules that organize and govern an individual's access to

attachment-related experiences, feelings and ideations. (Main et al., 1985). They have both affective and cognitive components, and are the derivatives of concrete events experienced in the real world. The growing child constructs increasingly complex internal working models through continual transactions with the people and objects in his environment (Bretherton, 1985). These models are the products of a dynamic series of action and action-outcomes formed out of generalized event representations (GERS) (Nelson and Gruendel, 1981), rather than static environmental abstractions of like and different.

The history of the parent-infant relationship is the reality base upon which the infant's internal working models are constructed—his actions, his interactions with parents or caregivers, and the results of his attempts to make these caregivers available, even if they are absent. Yet internal working models not only refer back to past experiences, but also have bearing on the present and future. They provide the individual with insight and foresight to evaluate current situations and project into the future. In this way, they guide and direct the expectations and intentions of individuals throughout their lives. (Bretherton, 1985; Main et al, 1985)

Internal working models become routine with time because they are in constant use, and they operate largely out of conscious awareness. Some claim that the child may begin to form internal working models of attachment figures in the first months of life. All agree that they are in place by the end of the first year, when the child has developed the cognitive capacity to formulate GERs. Working models are built up over the course of years as the individual gains experience. They are most likely to undergo alteration in childhood, as a response to environmental changes, or when the child gains the capacity to more objectively evaluate relationships with the acquisition of

formal operations in adolescence. Yet, despite allowance for environmental impact and developmental capacity, internal working models are relatively stable and enduring structures. (Main, Kaplan and Cassidy, 1985; Bretherton, 1985)

Because working models of attachment are constructed out of dyadic experiences, concepts of self and other are developed interdependently (Bretherton, 1985). The child's initial formation of an internal working model of attachment stems directly from the type of caretaking he has received. The mother's own internal working models, structured according to her early attachment experiences, have immediate bearing on her caretaking responses and in this way contribute to the dynamic formation of the child's internal working model. For instance, a rejecting or dismissive mother might be internally represented by the child as one who is undependable and best avoided. This, in turn, will engender in him a self-representation of being undesirable or undeserving of mother's attention. The ongoing real relationship between child and caregiver is the source for continual updating of this interdependent representation of self and other. Bretherton (1985) suggests that, in terms of development, internal working models of the relationship precede attachment-related notions of self and other.

There are some important differences in the way in which internal working models are formed and object relations' theory of the processes leading to internalized objects. Both object relations and attachment theory postulate the organization of internal structures in the earliest years that have an enduring effect on the life of the individual. And they share the notion of a representational sense of self emerging from interactive experiences. Attachment theorists claim that internal working models are present within the first year of life, are built on real life experiences, and are

continually updated by ongoing relationships, however. They are the imprints of real exchanges and, as such, represent a range of experiences with the other. This distinguishes them from the internal structures of object relations theory which are not so much the literal imprint of real exchange as they are the fantasy-informed representations of the other inside of the self that are only partly derived from these exchanges. The internal objects of object relations are relational in the sense that they both constitute and determine fundamental, behaviorally manifested notions of self and other. But they are not exclusively co-constructed imprints of the dyad resulting from real experiences, as are internal working models.

Implicit in the shift in theoretical emphasis from attachment seeking behaviors to "individual differences in the mental representation of the self in relation to attachment" (Main et al, 1985, p. 67) is the assumption that the flow of influence between the mental representation of a relationship and one's real experiences in that (and other) relationships is bi-directional. There is a fluid, reciprocal interaction between experience, perception and representation such that each is influenced by the others. According to Main, Kaplan and Cassidy, internal working models determine the "direction and organization of attention and memory" which are made evident in the organization of thought and language. (1985, p. 77) Working models exist as the structural meeting place of thought and experience, and representational processes are the means by which they are made evident. There is therefore a consistency and continuity between how one behaves linguistically and how one feels inside: The manner in which emotional reactions in attachment-relevant situations are recalled and communicated is an indication of how these experiences have been integrated.

Like Bakhtin's utterance, internal working models occupy an intermediate position somewhere between self and other, past and future, conscious and unconscious processes. Though distinctly the property of a single individual, they are representations of a dyadic relationship and, as such, refer outside of the self. They are positioned between time in the sense that they are the present traces of past interactions, the determinants of how current experiences are processed and what is expected of the future. They are constricting and regulating in that they set down rules and determine proclivities—both conscious and unconscious—which shape the way reality is experienced. Internal working models could be called *dialogical* in the sense that they are the codification of exchange: They represent the way in which the child's self-concept is interwoven with the caregiver's conception of him in a pattern of mutual interpenetration and influence.

This, then, becomes the theoretical justification for using a dialogical model of language to gauge the organization of attachment-related thoughts and experiences in older children and adults. The link between observable rules of thought and language and the structure of internal working models of attachment suggests linguistic investigation to be the opening into the individual's internal life. The relational underpinnings of the internal working model provide a further justification for concentrating more particularly on theories of dialogue. The individual holds the relationship inside her/himself in the form of a working model reflected in the organization of language. As in the work of Bakhtin, Dore and Halliday, language is here considered as a constituent of a relationship and a manifestation of it—it both determines and tracks what is happening between two people. In this way, one can assume that the shape and content of the

dialogue bears direct relation to the history and topography of the speakers' attachment

Attachment and Coherency

Bretherton, Ridgeway and Cassidy (1990) pose one caveat to using language to understand internal working models: Verbal expression is not always consonant with nonverbal experience. One can use language defensively or covertly to subvert and dissemble. As they tell us;

> "...language may serve to communicate or miscommunicate, to create concordances or discordances within internal working models. The adaptive function of language with respect to attachment, namely, to better align intentions and goals in an attachment partnership...can become subverted." (p. 280)

This is a strong argument against a purely semantic approach to studying internal working models through language. Current work concerning the coherency of language in children and adults represents a methodological attempt to exploit the conflict between overt expression and inner intent. Behind the measure lies the assumption that, in evaluating internal working models, it is not the content of the utterance that matters so much as the relationship between what is said and the mode and manner in which it is expressed. Coherency in the AAI has been found to be one of the strongest predictors of attachment status. (Main, Kaplan and Cassidy, 1985; Main and Goldwyn, 1988; Fonagy, Steele and Steele, 1991) Evaluating this in terms of the structural properties of AAI coding, Fonagy, Steele and Steele conclude that "Predictive power resides, it seems, not in the quality of past experience but in the overall organization of mental structures underlying relationships and attachment-related issues." The coherency measure has more recently been used to evaluate conversations between children and parents (Main et al, 1985; Bretherton et al., 1990), as well as caregivers'

descriptions of themselves as parents and their children. (Zeanah et al, 1991; Slade and Aber, 1986)

Main's operational definition of coherence is derived directly from the philosopher Paul Grice's (1975/1989) work on conversation. Grice's maxims of coherence outline the principles that govern the orderly conduct of conversation. He promotes the "cooperative principle" to be the supraordinate rule: "Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged." Subsumed within this overriding principle are four other rules: the rule of *quantity* —give as much information as necessary, but not too much: the rule of *quality* —"try to make your contribution one that is true": the rule of *relation*—be relevant: the rule of *manner*—be perspicuous; avoid obscurity, ambiguity and prolixity, and be orderly. Any of the four subordinate maxims can be violated if the supraordinate rule is maintained.

Main uses this system to evaluate the way in which the AAI narrative conforms to conversational expectations and conventions and in this way relays a comprehensive and fluent picture of the subject matter. A narrative is considered understandable and coherent if Grice's rules of conversation are followed and the reader does not have to "make her own, differing interpretation" of what is being said. Conversely, violations of any of Grice's principles represent incoherence which in turn indicates discontinuities in the original attachment relationship. Disturbances in the relationship will result in narratives that confuse or otherwise impede the reader. The conflict that inheres in language itself thus becomes the focus: "Discrepancies and contradictions", "distancing and dysfluencies", and incomprehensibility are indications of relational difficulties, just as consistency and more "free-flowing" or fluent discourse indicate security. (Main and Goldwyn, 1985, p. 30)

The interpretive strategy for detecting coherency in the AAI owes much to discourse analytic work and is distinctly dialogic. The linguistic construction, in its direct link to the working model, is inherently relational. The experiences of being parented are contained within one's use of language—how these experiences are remembered and described reflects the configuration of thoughts and memories surrounding dyadic events, and says something about how they were first experienced and perceived. There is also an implied interface between the reader (or listener) and the speaker. In the process of evaluating the transcript, the reader compares his/her own expectations with the representations of the speaking subject. A transcript is coherent in proportion to the reader's ability to reconstruct a fluent and consistent picture from what has been said. The onus thus lies on the interpretive strategies deployed by both speaker and receiver as they come together to form a coherent (or incoherent) picture of the relationship.

The way in which slips, unlicensed violations and breaks displace content-oriented analysis to become the focus of investigation in this system is reminiscent of psychoanalytic theory's approach to narrative: A front-line indication of psychic conflict in an analysis are those moments of slippage in the analysand's productions, symbolic revelations of unintegrated material pushing its way through "rational" discourse. Compare Main's interpretive treatment of the AAI interview, for example, to Schafer's (1983) discussion of the psychoanalytic narrative:

> It is characteristic of analytic technique that the analyst scrutinizes the analysand's narrative performances for signs of unintelligibility or less than desirable intelligibility. The analyst pays close attention to contradictions, gaps, evasions, overreactions and underreactions, oversimplifications, non sequiturs, and bewilderment; also to absent beginnings, transitions, and endings and to absent events, times, and characters, and so on." (p. 186)

Representation is an action by which attachment-related "attentional/representational states" are upheld and sustained. Discourse violations constitute "*resistance*—both to memory, and to interaction" that is evoked by an interview aimed at "surprising the unconscious" (George et al. 1985) such that internal conflicts and defensive processes will be evidenced. The deployment of defenses to maintain psychic equilibrium in the face of stress is thus manifested verbally in the AAI, just as it is shown in the behavior of infants in the Strange Situation.

In using Grice's model to study attachment, Main injects a piece of interiority into the normally more behavioral approach of discourse analysis. Like many of his contemporaries in language studies, Grice steers clear of conjecture about any internal motivation in his speakers and listeners. Indeed, he claims that one of his "avowed aims is to see talking as a special case or variety of purposive, indeed rational, behavior..." (1989, p. 28) In contrast, Main's emphasis on coherence is a means for her to tap some of the unconscious aspects of discourse: The burden of proof in the AAI narrative lies in the relationship of conscious productions (what is said) to unconscious framing (the manner in which it is expressed). Unlicensed violations of conversational conventions represent meaningful slippage in the relationship of deliberate behavior to unconscious defensive processes. Juncture or disjuncture between representational content and form is an indication of the degree of psychic integration and understanding of attachment-related material.

Attachment theory's conceptualization of working models, and the successful adaptation of Grice's maxims of coherency to tap into these models, provide a guide for tracking the processes of co-production and interpenetration present in the verbal exchanges of mother and child, as

discussed by both Winnicott and Bakhtin. Current research shows a link between attachment status and modes of nonverbal communication between infants and their mothers: There are recognizable patterns in the way in which mothers treat their infants' bids for closeness, and a mother's behavioral responses to her infant's cues can be correlated with the attachment status of her child. (Ainsworth, 1978; Sroufe, 1985) The quality of a mother's interactions with her infant can also be correlated with her own attachment status as derived from the Adult Attachment Interview. (Slade and Haft, 1989)

These findings suggest that; "The match between the parent's description of his or her attachment history and the infant's Strange Situation response is mediated by patterns of caregiving." (Main, 1993). Present in language are "conscious or unconscious rules for the organization of information relevant to attachment and for obtaining or limiting access to that information." (Main, 1993). Attachment related beliefs and experiences of parents are thus evidenced in their language and behavior and are passed along to their children. There is a generational flow in attachment status, and this flow is established through patterns of communication.

The strong correlation between attachment status and coherency indicates that the shape and style of verbal communication is a window into attachment. There is now a push within the literature to study attachment in toddlers and school-age children. (Cicchetti, Cummings, Greenberg, and Marvin 1990) Because of the rising prominence of language in this group, the focus shifts from physical proximity to exchanges made possible by verbalization. Language and gestures not only provide a new kind of closeness and exploration, they also allow for a different brand of mutuality and intentionality. This facilitates a more explicit active "partnership" between

child and caregiver as they can now communicate about internal states and share mutually regulated goals. (Cicchetti, Cummings, Greenberg, and Marvin 1990) The study of conversation is one way in which this partnership can be followed and understood.

It could therefore be predicted that language analysis of mother-infant dialogues would show patterns of communication similar to those displayed by preverbal infants and their mothers. As with the AAI narratives, verbal exchanges show distinct patterns of fluency, coherency and comprehensibility that can be correlated to the attachment-related beliefs and experiences of mother and child.

Empirical Literature

In 1979, Bretherton reviewed the attachment literature and concluded that no observable connection between security of attachment and language acquisition/performance could be established. Several studies have since successfully shown a relationship between modes of representation—symbolization and discourse—and attachment status in children and adults. Much of this work takes a structural/semantic approach to the analysis of narratives and dialogues.

In 1985, Main, Kaplan and Cassidy followed-up 40 six-year-olds who had been classified for attachment in infancy and assessed the relationship between discourse and attachment status in the children's narratives and dialogues. Their methods for evaluating discourse are of particular importance to the current study. Three-minute dialogues between parent and child, taking place during a reunion after the dyads had been separated, were transcribed verbatim. All pauses and speaker overlaps were indicated, but transcripts were devoid of prosody markings or information about nonverbal behavior in order

to preclude any cues as to emotional tone or status. The dialogues were then rated along the discourse dimensions that the experimenters deemed to characterize good dialogue; *fluidity*, *dyadic balance* and *focus*.

According to this system of analysis, discourse is *fluid* when partners answer one another directly and with few pauses. Individual speech is considered fluid if the person speaks straight-forwardly, with little apparent difficulty in accessing or expressing information. *Dyadic balance* is achieved when neither partner exclusively leads or follows the other and both partners address the other in a way that invites further conversation. There are three types of *focus*: focus on objects, focus on activities with objects, and focus on relationships. Conversations with the widest range of foci are considered the most successful.

The experimenters found that the infants' early security of attachment was highly related to "fluency and openness" of mother-child discourse assessed according to these criteria (r=.63, p<.001). In secure dyads, the topics of conversation were *free ranging* and *balanced* and there was an *ease of access* between members. In insecure-avoidant dyads, dialogues were more *restricted* and less balanced. They were marked by frequent pauses between adult and child conversational turns, topics that were restricted to impersonal perspective and/or inanimate objects with limited elaboration, and frequent rhetorical questions or empty conversational turns by the parent. Insecure-disorganized/disoriented dyads had more *dysfluent* discourse: Conversation was disorganized, characterized by stumbling and false starts by parent and child, dyadic focus on relationship-related topics, and parents often passively letting the child lead the conversation.

The two other portions of narrative evaluation in this study involved a more content-based approach. Children were shown a series of six cards

featuring children undergoing separations from their parents. The experimenters looked at the child's *emotional openness*—judged according to the balance between self-exposure and self-containment in responding to the pictures. Responses were determined to be open if the children attributed emotions to the characters being separated ("she felt mad" "he was sad") and gave reasons for these feelings. Behaviorally speaking, the task was judged to be emotionally open if the child completed it with minimal resistance, withdrawal or stress. The narratives of those receiving low scores in this section of the study had narratives that were characterized by silence, overt depression, or irrational or disorganized responses. The emotional openness of the narrative was found to correlate highly with the infant security of attachment to the mother ($r = .59$, $p<.001$).

In the most strictly content-oriented measure of the study, children were shown a pictured child and asked what the child might feel and do if separated from a parent for two weeks. The child's capacity to "deal constructively" with parent-child separation was then assessed according to what the child said or did. Highest scores were given to narratives in which the pictured child tried to convince the parents not to leave, achieved the same end through other means, or directly expressed disappointment, anger or distress. Low scores were given to "I don't know" or complete silence. The lowest score was for scenarios in which the attachment figure became inaccessible ("kill self", "kill parent", "lock oneself away"). A strong correlation was established between the level of answer given and security of attachment to mother in infancy (r=.59, p=.001)

Using this mix of language measures and behavioral observation, Main, Kaplan and Cassidy found that children and mothers with different early attachment organizations had predictably differing language organization,

manifested in varying discourse structures. (Main et al; 1985, p.93) They conclude from this that what is first expressed behaviorally in the dyad is later shown dyadically and individually in the organization of language, a finding that they claim merits further investigation: "The strong overlap between attachment classifications as assessed by nonverbal methods in infancy and discourse classifications discovered 5 years later suggests new anchors for the study of individual and dyadic differences in speech patterns." (1985, p. 92)

In a more recent study of discourse and attachment, Bretherton, Ridgeway and Cassidy (1990) looked at the fluency, coherence, and emotional openness of the narratives of 37-month-old children. Although concentrating on the structure and content of the children's' verbalizations and behavior, they did not utilize formal discourse measures. Instead, they looked at the way in which behavior and language convey an "appropriate", well-adapted approach to the emotionally laden topic of separation. Subjects were first told the beginning of a story about a child being separated from a parent, narrated and acted-out with figurines by the experimenter. They were then asked to "show me and tell me what happens next." Two separate records of the children's responses were made; a verbatim transcript and a description of the movement of the figures and the child's emotional responses to the story enactment. "Coherence" and "fluency" in this system are determined by the child's actions while narrating and the types of resolutions they proposed. Presentations are considered *fluent* if stories are adequately elaborated and the child responds with a minimum of prompting. *Coherence* consists of "appropriate and comprehensible" responses with particular importance given to benign story resolutions. Avoidance of the story issue and incoherent or odd responses are considered signs of insecurity. The experimenters found that children classified as secure were more "coherent" and "emotionally

open" in responding to attachment related stories than were insecure children.

A more general study of the discourse style of dyads is that of Rocissano, Slade and Lynch (1987), who used sequential analysis to examine "synchrony" and "asynchrony" in dyadic exchanges between toddlers and their mothers. They looked at *turns*, defined as utterances demarcated by "a pronounced pause in which the partner might or might not take the floor." (Kaye and Charney, 1980) Dyads can either maintain or break the *mutual focus* of attention, and this determines whether the turns are synchronous or asynchronous. *Child compliance* with maternal instructions within two turns also indicates synchrony. The experimenters found that mothers were generally more facilitative of conversation than were children. Although mothers and children were similar in the extent to which they maintained each other's topics, mothers produced more synchronous turns, were more likely to repair breaks in joint attention, and were most successful in maintaining a shared focus of attention. These efforts seemed to pay off: The more synchronous the mother, the more likely the child was to comply with her instructions.

The level of symbolization in children's play has also been shown to relate to attachment status. This is particularly evident in the differential between the level of play when a child is alone vs. that when with mother. Belsky, Garduque and Hrncir (1982) and Belsky and Hrncir (1984) suggest that there is a competence-performance gap in symbolic play that is a psychological construct, and that this gap can be associated with attachment status. They examine the "executive capacity" of children at play, which is measured by calculating the difference between the child's most sophisticated level of functioning as displayed in free play alone versus that exhibited in elicited play with mother. A child's *performance* is defined as his most

advanced level of functioning in self-initiated play. His *competence* is his highest level of play when encouragement or modeling is provided by another. They found that the children's level of competence is consistently higher than their level of performance—adult participation raises the level of the children's play. But this discrepancy between competence and performance is greater for insecure children than for secure children. The experimenters conclude from this that secure children are more free to explore and make use of their capacity for symbolization, alone or with another, than their insecure counterparts. Although they also found that secure children exhibit a consistently higher level of play than those classified avoidant or resistant, these findings did not achieve conventional levels of significance.

Slade (1987) also found that the duration and level of children's play increases with adult involvement. In another study (1987), she was able to establish a statistically significant difference in the duration and level of symbolic play episodes in secure and insecure children at 20 and 28 months of age. She found that "secure children were more persistent than anxious children in their efforts to create a make-believe scene and were more likely—at older ages—to engage in play organized around a theme or plan." (p. 83) From this she concludes that there is a higher incidence of planful and abstract pretending in the repertoires of secure children. In general, she found no difference between insecure and secure children in the overall level and mean length of play episodes when playing alone, but she did find that secure children have a higher level of play in the presence of mother and engage in longer play bouts. Slade's data shows that the mothers of secure children remain in contact with their children even when they are engaged in other activities and their children are playing alone. This is in contrast to

mothers of anxious children, who have significantly less contact with their children while otherwise occupied and tend to favor passive involvement in the children's play. She concludes from these findings that secure children are more persistent in their explorations of the environment and are better able to use mother when she is available. Additionally, mothers of secure children are generally more available to their children and more apt to facilitate talk and play even when occupied with other tasks.

Wolf and Kruger (1993; 1994) compared conversational styles in dyads with children identified as temperamentally inhibited versus those of uninhibited children. Concentrating on structural and semantic aspects of conversations, they make a case for the relational or systemic aspects of temperament. They look at conversational parameters in the course of play; turn-taking, number of utterances, and the use of challenges, vocatives and questions. Following Goffman's concept of "footing" (1981), they examine "flickering alignments" of mother and child with respect to the pretend play—how they negotiate the move between fantasy and reality and balance the exigencies of the play with pragmatic requirements. They found that mothers of inhibited children frequently talk about their children in the presence of the children (often using third person), more frequently assume that their own thoughts are somehow contiguous with those of the child, and sometimes presume that they know what the child is thinking. They also found that, when the children were tested at 14 months of age, mothers of inhibited children talked more frequently and their speech was more repetitive and "vigilant." Mothers of uninhibited children had more "sporadic, relaxed and elaborative" speech.

Summary

There is significant research to show that language acquisition is a social event that can be fruitfully examined in process. Learning a language is an *internal* as well as external event, and psychoanalytic thought offers a way of conceptualizing the structure and mechanics of the internal events occurring in the course of language development. In the traditional psychoanalytic terms of the mother/infant dyad, verbal dialogue grows out of empathy-based exchanges that begin in the earliest days of a child's life. It presents a new forum for interaction and interpenetration that has been called a state of secondary intersubjectivity. Both partners undergo significant, sometimes painful changes as the infant is progressively inducted into the conventions of the real world. This entails a period of what Winnicott terms "disillusionment" as the child gradually relinquishes fantasies of fusion and omnipotence. Language acquisition is founded upon and occurs against the backdrop of the separation-individuation stage of development. It is not only a means of expressing the necessary conflicts of this period of a child's life, but also provides a way to experience and negotiate these conflicts.

Bakhtin's model of dialogism helps us to situate the play between self and other that occurs during language acquisition more clearly in the field of the language itself. He postulates the emergence of identity from the undifferentiated web of "culture." Construed dialogically, learning a language is always at least a two-person event whose dynamics are located within the interface between self and other. Bakhtin's emphasis on the active process of the "interpenetration" of speaking subjects provides a theoretical means for focusing on conversation as the site for understanding the gradual process of differentiation and the emergence of identity.

Attachment theory has developed a classification system for dyads based on a stable set of characteristics related to attachment-seeking behaviors. One way in which these characteristics are made evident in older children and adults is through representational processes. The theory of working models says something about the way that relationships are folded into language and remain encoded in its structure and content. Measures of coherency can be seen as one of the first attempts to crack the code. It is suggested that this attempt can be extended to include measures of conversation through which to study interactions of verbal dyads. This is considered an extension of work that has been done showing a correlation between styles of communication and attachment in preverbal infants and their mothers.

METHOD

> I at least have so much to do in unraveling certain human lots, and seeing how they were woven and interwoven, that all the light I can command must be concentrated on this particular web, and not dispersed over that tempting range of relevancies called the universe.
>
> Goerge Elliot
> *Middlemarch,*

Subjects

All subjects are participants in the Pregnancy Project at the City University of New York. This is a longitudinal study of the emotional experience of pregnancy and child-rearing for primiparous mothers and their infants. Mothers are a self-selected group, recruited through private obstetricians, childbirth education classes and public notices. All are between the ages of 25 - 40 years old from middle or upper-middle class homes, college educated, and living with the father of their child in NYC and its environs. The children are the eldest in their families, and all are of average or above-average intelligence and have normal motor capacity. As remuneration for their participation, they were paid 20 dollars per visit and given small gifts for their children and copies of the video-taped play sessions. Given the minimal nature of these reimbursements, and the duration of the commitment required of them, all participants in the study are considered to be highly motivated participants. A subgroup of six mother-child pairs were selected from this larger subject pool for the present study: three dyads in which both mother and child have been classified as securely attached, three in which both have insecure classifications. Those with insecure classifications are not stable across subgroups of insecurity: In other words, an Insecure-Dismissing

mother may have an Insecure-Ambivalent child. All children have tested within the normal range on the Picture Vocabulary test of receptive and expressive language skills.

Mothers are seen in three prenatal visits to assess their responses to pregnancy. They then come back with the child at ages 4, 10, 14 and 28 months. Each of these visits consists of two parts: 1) a video-taped play session where the mother is instructed to play and interact with her child in a specific way depending on the age of the child, and 2) an audiotaped interview of the mother alone. In a prenatal visit, the mother is given the Adult Attachment Interview to tap early memories of her own childhood experiences. At the 10 and 28 month visits, she is administered the Parent Development Interview about her experiences being a parent. In an effort to control for experimenter bias, no mother is ever interviewed twice by the same research assistant.

Procedure

Data points

The Prenatal, 14 month and the 28 month visits are used as data points for this study.

PRENATAL: Mothers are given the Adult Attachment Interview.

14 MONTH VISIT: Mother-child dyads are administered the Strange Situation at the City College laboratory.

28 MONTH VISIT: The portion of this visit to be used in this study consists of two videotaped sequences: a) the child playing alone with mother occupied (the "playing-alone condition"), and b) the child and mother playing together (the "playing-together condition"). In situation a), the mother is in a chair in the room, filling out paper and pencil measures while the child plays alone for ten minutes on the floor with a variety of toys. The mother has been instructed to

remove herself from the play and redirect her child's attention to playing if he interrupts her. After ten minutes have passed, the mother is signaled via a knock on the wall to join the child on the floor (situation b). She is told to play with her child as she usually does at home. This segment lasts 10 minutes.

Transcriptions

For each dyad, two ten minute segments are transcribed: The first full ten minutes of the child playing alone, and the first full ten minutes of child and mother playing together. Data has been transcribed, coded and analyzed using CHILDES, the Child Language Data Exchange System. CHILDES is an internationally utilized computer program which has a data base of archived data and a program for transcribing and coding new data. In this study, the systems for transcription, coding (CED) and data analysis (CLAN) are used. The content of what is said is transcribed on the first tier of the computer file. On this tier, the speakers are identified, everything they say is recorded, utterance terminators and utterance linkers are indicated, and various forms of speech dysfluencies are recorded. Relevant actions, and proxemic and nonverbal situational information are recorded on the second tier. See Appendix A, Transcription Symbols, for a detailed list of what is recorded on these first two tiers of the files. The language codes from the Wolf coding system are entered on the third tier of the computer file. This coding system will be discussed under Measures.

Measures

Adult Attachment Interview

The AAI was administered to every mother in a prenatal visit. This semi-structured interview is designed to assess the mother's "state of mind in

relation to attachment" (Goerge, Kaplan, and Main, 1985). It consists of 18 questions which explore the parent's memories of attachment-related experiences during childhood. Subjects are asked to describe each parent using five adjectives, and then probed for specific memories which elaborate on these more general descriptions. The nature of early relationships is then further explored. Parents are asked to reflect on how they were parented, and what effect this had on them as adults and as parents themselves. The mode and manner of these descriptions are evaluated taking discrepancies, contradictions, and the individual's overall coherence of thought into account. Interviews are then classified into three attachment patterns which parallel the three infancy patterns: Secure/autonomous, dismissing and preoccupied. Details of the scoring procedures are described in Main and Goldwyn, 1985.

All AAI's have been coded by research assistants trained to reliability who are blind to the purposes of the study.

Strange Situation

At the 14 month visit, each mother-child dyad participated in the Strange Situation (Ainsworth et al, 1978). This procedure is designed to assess the quality of the child's attachment to his mother. It lasts approximately half an hour, and consists of eight episodes involving the mother, the child and a stranger. The child is alternately left by the stranger and the mother in a standard order. The order of leave-taking is designed to subject the child to increasing levels of stress. There are two parent-child separations and two parent-child reunions. The child's behavior upon reunion with mother is rated and each infant is assigned to one of three categories: secure ("B"), anxious-avoidant ("A") and anxious-resistant ("C"). Ratings and classifications are based on Ainsworth, Bell & Strayton. The reliability and validity of this

scale has been well established (Ainsworth et al., 1978; Bretherton, 1985; Waters, 1983).

Videotapes of the Strange Situations were coded by Dr. Jude Cassidy's research staff at Pennsylvania State University, who were blind to the purposes of the present study. The staff had been trained to reliability by Dr. Cassidy, and she was called in as a second coder when questions arose regarding final attachment classification.

Narrative co-construction coding system

This coding system is an adapted version of one developed by Lou Marie Kruger and the Harvard Narrative Working Group, directed by Dennie Palmer Wolf. It aims to capture the quality of the dialogue between mother and child as they are playing, focusing on the structure and function of both partners' speech. It has previously been used to code the "narratives" of children from ages three to seven and their mothers as they are engaged in various kinds of story-telling tasks. The emphasis is on the manner and form in which the pretend world is co-constructed by mother and child via dialogue. Reliability has been established on all four levels of coding.

The original version of the coding system has been adapted to account for the younger age of the child subjects and the fact that they are engaged in play, rather than telling stories. The first level classifications of Story, Meta-story and Nonstory have been altered to Play, Meta-play and Nonplay. Additionally, the classification Unclear has been added to every level to allow for the incomprehensibility of some the children's productions at this age. The second and third levels have been altered by the addition of Directives—Direct and Indirect, and Response—Compliance. These categories, which code physical behavior, were added because of the relatively greater importance of action

for the children and mothers engaged in play, and the predominance of behavioral instruction and response at this age. A measure of Topic Changes has also been added, to be applied to every clause. There are four different sub-categories of topic changes: Abrupt-, Fluent-, Outside- and No topic change. Topic changes were included as an extra measure of fluency and directiveness.

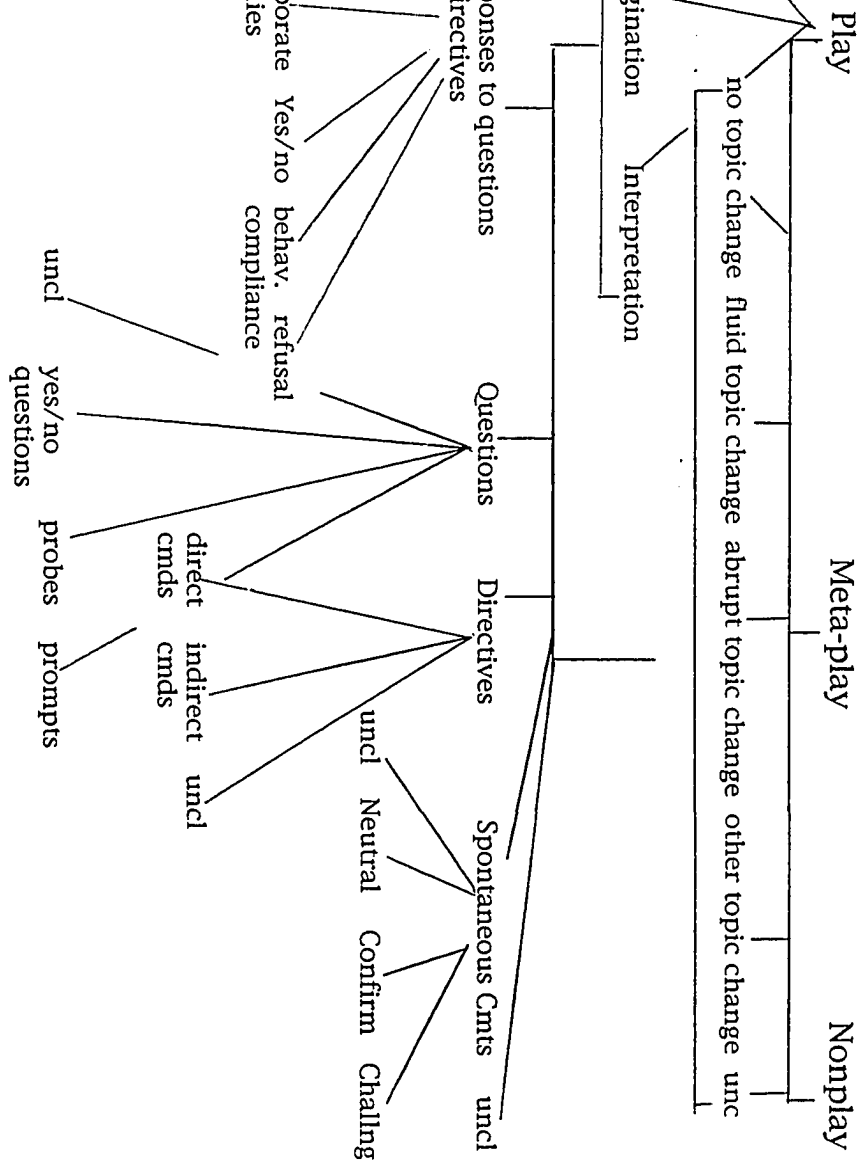
Every verbalization is accounted for in the narrative co-construction coding system. The fundamental unit of analysis is the clause, defined as "any unit that contains a unified predicate" which "expresses a single situation (activity, event, state)." (Wolf/Kruger, coding manual) Each clause is examined in its context to determine how it functions with respect to the task at hand.

The coding system operates on five levels (see Chart I). On Level One, every clause is classified as either Play, Metaplay, Nonplay or Unclear. Play clauses are all those which are part of the actual play. This can include naming items, recounting actions or talking about what's being done. Metaplay clauses deal with the mechanics of the play—the way in which it should be done, its configuration and boundaries. Nonplay clauses are those which cannot be linked to the actual play in any way. Unclear clauses are those which are unintelligible to the transcriber, but which may or may not have been intelligible to the listener. Unclear and Nonplay clauses are coded only on the first two levels. Metaplay clauses are coded on the first four levels. Play clauses are coded on all five levels.

On Level Two, all clauses are classified according to whether they represent a maintenance or shift in topic. This follows Conti-Ramsden and Friel-Patti's (1987) definition of conversation as; "Two or more turns linked together by a focus on a particular topic." Topic changes occur when new activities are initiated or new topics of conversation introduced. The five categories on this level are: 1) No topic change: The topic remains the same

CHART I

CO-CONSTRUCTION CODING SYSTEM



across clauses in which the same object or same activity is being discussed or played with. Most clauses fall into this category; 2) Fluid topic change: A new object or activity is being discussed after at least 5 seconds (##) have elapsed since the previous clause. This can follow a clause by the same speaker or by a new speaker; 3) Abrupt topic change: A new object or activity is introduced after less than 5 seconds (# or no pause) have elapsed since the previous clause. This can follow a clause by the same speaker or by a new speaker; 4) Outside topic change: the conversation is interrupted prematurely by the occurrence of an outside event which changes the partners' focus of attention; 5) Unclear topic change: the clause is only partly intelligible such that it is impossible to know whether it maintains or breaks the current topic.

Level Three of the coding system further classifies the Metaplay and Play clauses into Questions, Directives, Spontaneous Comments, Responses and Unclear. Questions include all clauses which pass the speaking turn to the hearer (Sacks, Schegloff, Jefferson, 1974), anticipate a response, and are not directives. Directives are all clauses that elicit or constrain the physical behavior of the hearer (Searle, 1975). Spontaneous Comments are those clauses which are not questions or directives and are not explicitly elicited. Responses are clauses or actions that can be construed as reactions to specific questions or directives. They must follow a question or directive by no more than two clauses. Unclear clauses are those which are intelligible to the transcriber only according to the clauses which precede and follow them, but which cannot be understood unto themselves. Although it is clear that they are Play, Metaplay or Nonplay, it is not clear what specific form they take.

On Level Four, each of the four Level Three categories (Directives, Questions, Responses and Spontaneous Comments) is further divided into subcategories. Following McDonald and Pien (1981), Directives can either be

Direct or Indirect. Directives classified as Direct clearly specify the desired behavior and agent and allow no alternatives. Indirect directives are softened and less explicit. Questions are divided into four categories, following Fivush et al (1987): 1) Prompts, which are general, open-ended questions; 2) Probes, which include all specific questions; 3) Yes/No questions; and 4) Unclear. Responses can be: Concise, i.e. not longer than two clauses; Elaborate, which are longer than two clauses; Yes/no; Refusal, which can be verbal or behavioral; Compliance, which is an action performed which complies with the directive immediately preceding it; and Unclear. Spontaneous Comments are classified as: Confirming, supporting what the previous speaker has said or done; Challenging; Unclear; or Neutral—a default category for all comments that aren't Challenges or Confirmations.

Level Five of the coding system is loosely based on Labov's (1971) work on the narratives of south-central Harlem preadolescents, adolescents and adults. It classifies all Play clauses according to what stance or "footing" (Goffman, 1981) the speaker is taking with respect to the play. He or she can be speaking as a narrator, as a character in the story, or as him/herself. Commentary clauses are those in which the speaker reports on what is actually happening in the play world. Commentary can include clauses of orientation (recounting the who, what, when and where of the play) or of complicating action (telling what is happening next in the play world). When the speaker is talking as a character in the story, the speech is classified as Imagining. This category includes playing the self in a pretend situation, assuming a character in a pretend situation, or playing a character in a real situation. Clauses of Interpretation involve an evaluation or judgment of what is going on in the play. The speaker is speaking as her/himself in the real world and clearly wishes to convey his or her interpretation of what is

happening in the play. This level accounts for inference—those times when the speaker is putting something into the play that can't be seen.

Reliability was established by this coder on both the original and adapted versions of the coding system. 93% reliability was established on the original coding system using data of three-year-olds' frog stories from the Harvard Narrative Working Group. Reliability was then established with a second coder—already reliable on the original version of the coding system—on the adapted version using transcribed material from the same study as the final data. After 89% reliability was established, the second coder cross-coded one-third of the final transcripts for this study.

The transcription and coding system used here is similar in spirit to Main's measures of coherency. It concerns both structural and semantic aspects of the dialogue between mother and child. It accounts for every utterance, provides a way to examine what is said, and is a means of tracking the conversational flow. The focus is on the structure and function of each person's speech and the shape of the conversation taken as a whole.

The play situation

Before looking at the data, it is important to take into account the context within which it was gathered. In general, the mother and child are performing for experimenters who are assumed to be experts—or at least highly interested observers—of child development and mother/child behavior. Although the participants are familiar with the lab from previous visits and are instructed to play "as if at home", the situation is nonetheless highly staged. There is a prescribed set of toys, a one-way mirror, pre-determined phases of play, and a minimal set of rules to be complied with: Mother and child must remain within a designated area of the play space in order to be

videotaped; the mother must remove herself from the play, redirect the child and remain occupied while the child is playing alone; each play condition is of a specified duration. Together, mother and child are negotiating these requirements as well as trying to accomplish the stated task of playing in the most natural way possible.

Given these experimental conditions, each partner is faced with an array of problems and challenges: In the first play sequence, mother and child are at cross-purposes—mother is instructed to fill out paperwork and the child must play. The child is challenged to withstand mother's lack of involvement in spite of her proximity. The mother must both keep the child focused on the play and deflect him from herself as she completes her assigned task. In general, it must be assumed that most mothers are motivated to perform in as successful a way possible for the observers. And the child is motivated to explore and make use of the variety of toys while at the same time remaining in contact with mother. Together, they must strike a balance of duties and wills.

It is against this backdrop of constrictions and motivations that the play dialogue occurs. The overarching concerns of the coding system, within this context, are: 1) How does the dialogue function with respect to the assigned task—how does the play get built or disassembled using language? 2) How are the conflicts, anxieties, and demands of the experimental situation handled by mother and child separately and together? 3) What is the difference in the quality of dyad's interaction in the two different conditions?

Data analysis

In keeping with previous work on coherency coding in the AAI and the relationship of styles and structures of language to attachment status,

emphasis has been placed on the contours of the discourse as the child plays alone and with the mother. Previous studies have shown securely attached individuals and dyads to have more "coherent" linguistic patterns. Discourse is considered fluent and coherent to the extent that it is "unified, yet free-flowing", follows a course of steady development, has relatively fewer disruptions, is more equally distributed between mother and child, and shows greater thematic and symbolic elaboration. Incoherence and dysfluency are evidenced in more frequent interuptions of the flow of speech between mother and child, restriction in the quality and range of themes, and disrupted speech patterns.

This study combines quantitative and interpretive/qualitative analysis to examine these patterns in the exchanges of secure and insecure dyads. There are two types of data analysis used here: I) a descriptive analysis of aspects of the play dialogues captured in the transcription and coding system, and II) case studies of three selected dyads, consisting of the micro-analysis of small portions of the mothers' AAI transcripts and the dyads' play dialogues in both play conditions.

I. Descriptive analysis

Because the sample size of this study was too small for parametric analysis, a descriptive analysis was conducted to quantifiably examine the discourse findings. In this analysis, data from the Wolf coding system, and discourse markings from the CHILDES transcription system—such as interruptions and overlapping speaking turns—, were grouped together into categories of speech to look at potential differences in the structure and function of secure and insecure talk. The frequency of different types of speech was examined on a dyad-by-dyad basis. Categories of talk, listed below under Descriptive

Hypotheses, were compared for secure and insecure dyads, and bar graphs were used to illustrate the data.

II. Case studies

The case studies offer a more open-ended interpretive approach to the AAI narratives and the play dialogues themselves. These micro-analyses of the discourse of three selected dyads were performed after the descriptive analyses, and take the quantitative findings for the discourse measures into account. But the qualitative approach of this section deviates significantly from these other analyses. The emphasis was not on categories of talk, but the flow of the talk for the mother alone in the AAI, and between mother and child in the play dialogues. Here, the focus was on the dynamic unfolding of the discourse itself, examined in the context of each dyad's attachment history.

Descriptive Hypotheses

Directiveness:

HYPOTHESIS I: Utterances that are aimed to somehow contain or direct the behavior (verbal and otherwise) of the other are considered attempts to control: questions, directives and topic changes constitute controlling forms of speech. Grandstanding, or greater mean length turns, is considered another means of control. There will be a greater use of constraining categories of talk in insecure than in secure mothers, and insecure mothers will have longer runs of speech, in proportion to their children, than secure mothers:

mother clause type/mother + child clause type

1: There will be a higher proportion of DIRECTIVES used by the insecure mothers than the secure mothers:

mother directives/mother + child directives

2: There will be a higher proportion of QUESTIONS used by the insecure mothers than the secure mothers:

mother questions/mother + child questions

3: There will be a higher proportion of TOPIC CHANGES by insecure mothers than secure mothers:

mother topic changes/mother + child topic changes

4: There will be more grandstanding by insecure mothers than secure mothers:

MLT = utterances / turns

mother MLT / mother + child MLT

Responsiveness

HYPOTHESIS II: A lower proportion of questions and directives will be responded to for insecure dyads than secure dyads, across conditions:

partner A responses/partner B questions and directives

1. A lower proportion of Mother's questions and directives will be responded to by the Child in insecure dyads:

child responses / mother que + mother dirs

2. A lower proportion of Child's questions and directives will be responded to by the Mother in insecure dyads:

mother responses / child que + child dirs

Range of Play

HYPOTHESIS IV: There will be a smaller number of play clauses, and proportionally less of the play clauses will be IMAGINATION or INTERPRETATION clauses for insecure dyads as opposed to secure dyads:

1: type of clause/total clauses

A: subtype of clause/type of clause

1. A smaller proportion of all clauses will be PLAY for insecure dyads:

Play clauses / total clauses

1A.: There will be proportionally less IMAGINATIVE and INTERPRETIVE play clauses for insecure dyads:

IMA +INT clauses / play clauses

Fluency

HYPOTHESIS V: The speech of insecure dyads will be less fluent and their patterns of speech will be more disrupted:

type of disruption/total clauses

1. There will be proportionately more retracings [/] and [//], and incompletions [+...]; 2. interrupted speech [+/.] and overlapped speech [>]; 3. interrupting speech [<] and quick uptakes [+^] in insecure than in secure dyads:

[/] + [//] + [+...] + [+/.] +.[>] + [<] + [+^]/total clauses

2. There will be proportionately more unintelligible speech [xxx or xx] , ambiguous speech [?] and unclear clauses [unc] in insecure than in secure dyads:

xxx + xx + unc + [?]/total clauses

RESULTS

> Conversation is like playing tennis with a ball made of Krazy Putty that keeps coming back over the net in a different shape.
>
> David Lodge
> *Small World*

This section begins with a presentation of the descriptive analysis of the transcription and discourse measures for the six dyads. It ends with a portrait of three select dyads—604, 605 and 613—which offer a closer view of the actual play dialogues, examined in the light of each partner's attachment status and the mothers' Adult Attachment Interviews.

Descriptive Results

Analysis of the discourse measures:

The overarching categories of talk that were examined in the descriptive analysis are defined as follows:

Directiveness is a measure of the mothers' proportion of directives, questions, topic changes and mean length turn for each dyad. These categories of speech are here called *constraining speech* because of the way in which they represent an effort to effect the response of the interlocutor or hold the floor. It was hypothesized that there would be a higher proportion of constraining speech in insecure dyads. Responsiveness is the proportion of each partner's directives and questions that are answered by the other partner. It was hypothesized that more of both mother and child's questions and directives would go unanswered in insecure dyads than in secure dyads: In other words, insecure partners would receive proportionately fewer responses

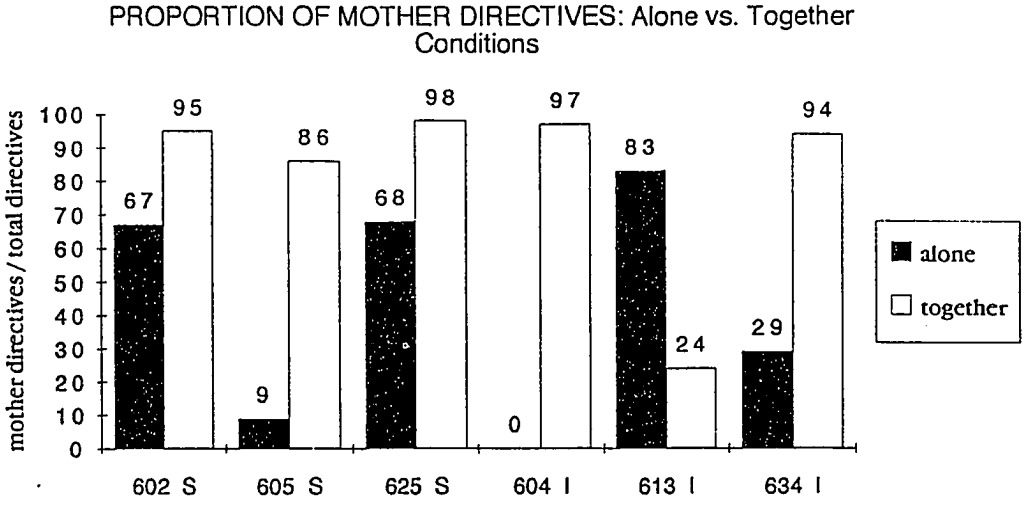
to their respective questions and directives than secure partners. Range of Play concentrates specifically on the amount and type of Play clauses. In this category, the proportion of Play clauses to total clauses is measured. The percentage of these play clauses that are in the higher-level categories of imagination and interpretation is also considered. It was hypothesized that secure dyads would have a higher proportion of play clauses, and these would generally be of a higher level than those of insecure dyads. The last overarching category is Fluency, a measure of each dyad's speech disruptions. Interruptions, incompletions, overlaps, retracings and quick uptakes are grouped together for each speaker, and their proportion of total clauses calculated. It was hypothesized that insecure dyads have a proportionately greater number of these speech disruptions than secure dyads.

Descriptive findings

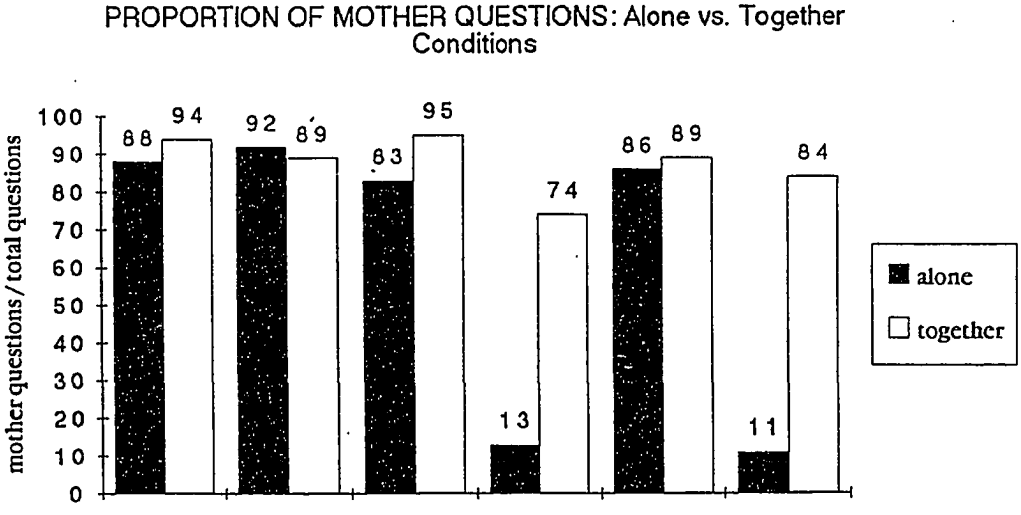
There were no perceptible differences between the secure and insecure dyads in the categories of Fluency and Responsiveness. But some compelling patterns, which seem to distinguish the two groups, were evidenced for selected variables in the overarching categories of Directiveness and Range of Play. Below is a breakdown, by dyad or attachment status, of some of these findings :

Directiveness:

Graphs A through C represent the findings for three of the variables considered in the analysis of Directiveness; directives, questions, and topic changes. These graphs examine each of the dyads individually, contrasting their performance in both play conditions. Graph A and B represent mother's proportion of all *directives* and *questions* delivered in the playing-alone and playing-together conditions. Two of the three secure mothers (602 and 625) delivered a proportionately greater number of directives, and all three asked

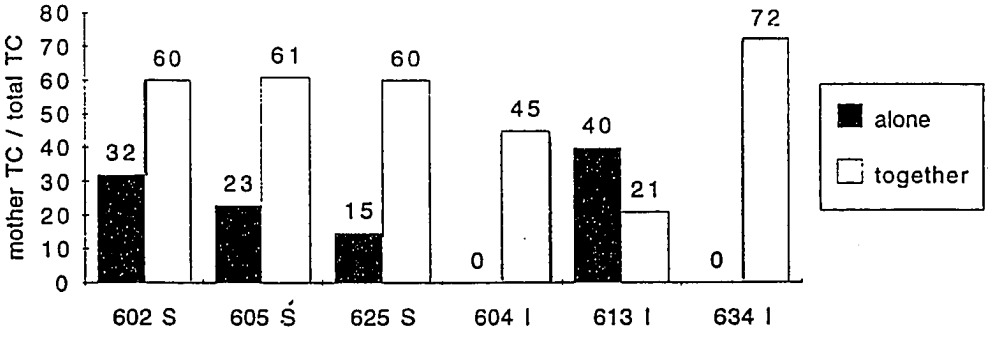


GRAPH A



GRAPH B

PROPORTION OF MOTHER TOPIC CHANGES: Alone vs.Together Conditions



GRAPH C

proportionately more questions than their children, even when the child was playing alone. This was not true of the insecure dyads, where two of the three mothers (604 and 634) delivered a markedly smaller proportion of questions and directives when their children were playing alone.

Graph C is a break-down of *topic changes* by dyad and condition. It shows that, while all mothers were responsible for proportionately less of the topic changes in the playing-alone condition, only secure mothers delivered a higher proportion of the topic changes, as a group, in the playing-together condition. Additionally, secure mothers had a higher overall average proportion of topic changes, across conditions, than insecure mothers: Secure mothers were responsible for an average of 41.8% of all topic changes, insecure mothers an average of 29.6%.

There also appeared to be differences between secure and insecure dyads in the mean length turns of mothers and children. MLT is defined as the number of utterances per turn. Utterances are units of speech delineated by a terminator, such as a period or question mark. Turns are runs of utterances by one speaker without interruption or interjection from the interlocutor. Mean length turn, then, is the average number of consecutive utterances delivered by a single speaker. In general, both secure and insecure children had longer runs of uninterrupted talk (greater MLTs) than their mothers when they played alone, and shorter runs (smaller MLTs) when they played together. But insecure mothers had shorter runs of talk than secure mothers in the Alone condition, and appeared less likely to intervene in the discourse of their children. Here, the insecure mothers' average mean length turn was only 1.36, compared to 5.25 for their children. In contrast, the mean length turn for secure mothers was 1.52, compared to 2.5 for their children.

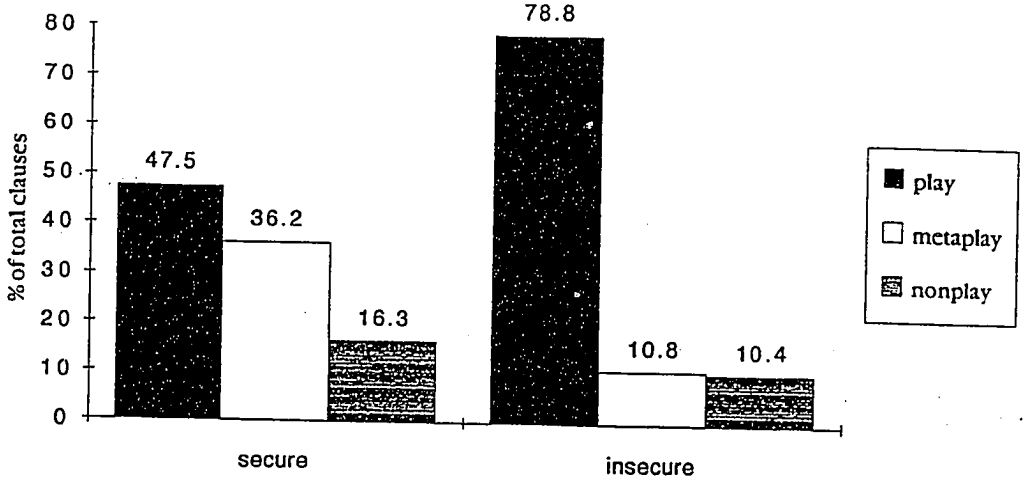
Taken together, these numbers suggest that, contrary to expectations, secure mothers were responsible for a greater proportion of constraining speech than insecure mothers, and were more likely to verbally intervene, particularly when their children played alone. Relative to their children, they generally talked more, asked more questions, delivered more directives and changed the topic more often than insecure mothers.

One note: As evidenced in these graphs, some of the discourse patterns of Dyad 613 deviate consistently from those of the other two insecure dyads, and in fact bear a much closer relationship to those of the secure dyads—particularly when the child plays alone. This finding will be discussed in detail in the close analysis of this dyad at the end of the results section.

Range of Play

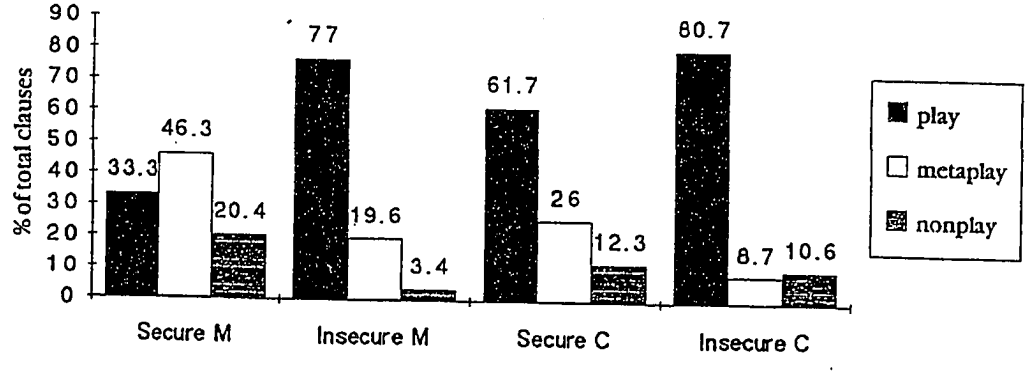
There are also interesting patterns evidenced in measures for the Range of Play of secure and insecure dyads. While all dyads have similar distributions of play, metaplay and nonplay clauses while playing together, there is a marked difference in the distribution of clause types while the child plays alone. Graph D depicts this difference. Contrary to expectations, when the children played alone, the discourse of secure dyads was much less focused on the play than that of the insecure dyads: Less than half of the clauses of secure dyads were devoted to play, while they had more than double the number of metaplay clauses of insecure dyads. Secure mothers were particularly slight on play clauses, as evidenced in the mother/child breakdown in Graph E: When secure children were playing alone, only an average of 1/3 of their mothers' clauses were in the play itself, as opposed to the 2/3 average of insecure mothers. In contrast, a much greater proportion of secure mothers' talk concerned the structure or mechanics of the play: almost 1/2 of their clauses were metaplay, as opposed to 1/5 of those of insecure mothers. And

Distribution of Play, Metaplay and Nonplay clauses: Alone condition



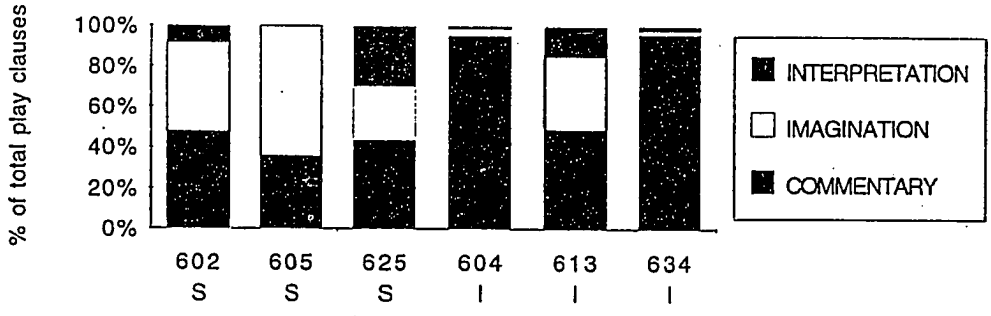
GRAPH D

Distribution of Play, Metaplay and Nonplay clauses for mother and child: Alone condition



GRAPH E

DISTRIBUTION OF PLAY CLAUSES FOR MOTHER AND CHILD:
Alone Condition



GRAPH F

they were generally more likely to focus on issues or events bearing no relation to the play: An average of 20% of secure mothers' clauses were nonplay, as opposed to the 3% average of those of insecure mothers. In both groups, the children's proportions of play clauses were generally higher than those of their mothers, but secure children had, on average, fewer play clauses and more than twice as many metaplay clauses as insecure children.

These results suggest that, although secure mothers generally intervene more when their children play alone, their talk was more often organized around the mechanics of the play. This is made evident in both the greater prevalence of constraining or structuring speech forms (directives, questions and topic changes) and the smaller proportion of play clauses in their discourse. Even more germane is the fact that secure mothers were more likely to deliver questions and directives from outside of the play itself in the playing-alone condition: 92% of secure mothers' directives were in the metaplay condition, while only 44% of insecure directives were metaplay. And 51% of all secure mothers' questions were metaplay, as compared to 19% metaplay questions for insecure mothers. Thus, in general, the discourse of secure dyads—especially that of secure mothers—was less *in* the play and more *about* or *outside* it when the child played alone.

When secure mothers and children talked from within the play in the alone condition, they were generally more likely to engage at an imaginative or interpretive level than insecure dyads, however. This is exhibited in Graph F. The average percentage of imaginative play clauses for secure dyads (45%) was much greater than that of insecure dyads (14%). And secure dyads had twice as many interpretive clauses (12%) as insecure dyads (5.6%). So, although less of secure dyads' discourse was centered on play while the child plays alone, the play talk was of a generally higher level. Once again, the

proportions for Dyad 613 look more similar to those of the secure dyads than the two other insecures. This, too, will be discussed in more detail below.

Descriptive results summary

Because the sample size precluded parametric analysis, no firm conclusions regarding differences between secure and insecure groups can be derived from this study. Instead, this descriptive analysis highlights interesting patterns, evidenced in the discourse measures, which suggest qualitative differences in the exchanges of the two groups.

In general, the differences between secure and insecure dyads were most evident when the children played alone. The descriptive analysis shows that, while secure mothers, on average, delivered a higher proportion of directives and questions than their children in both play conditions, two of the three insecure mothers delivered less than 1/3 of the total questions and directives in the alone condition. Insecure mothers also talked less than their children, relative to secure mothers, in this condition. When the children played alone, secure mothers tended to intercede more frequently and speak from outside the play, acting as organizers and helpers. Insecure mothers intervened less frequently and more often addressed their children from within the play. In general, insecure mothers exhibited firmer boundaries between engagement and disengagement in this condition: either they were all the way in or they were completely out.

The discourse patterns for insecure dyads were more unstable than those for secure dyads. Whereas secure dyads were relatively consistent in the type and quantity of their discourse, the insecure dyads exhibited more intergroup variability. This may be partly due to the fact that several different subtypes of insecurity were represented in this sample, and two of the three dyads have insecure classifications for mother and child which are

incompatible. This finding of greater inter-group variability will be discussed more fully later.

Case Studies

The case studies offer a means to look more closely at the quality of the exchanges behind the numbers. Discourse patterns are related to the attachment histories of both mother and child. Semantic and syntactic markers of coherency and incoherency, fluency and dysfluency are examined to show that some distinct patterns of exchange can distinguish insecure from secure dyads.

The three dyads to be presented in detail are 605, a very secure dyad; 604, a stable insecure dyad; and 613, an insecure dyad with mixed classification. The study of each dyad begins with a description of their classifications, followed by a closer examination of some aspects of the mothers' prenatal Adult Attachment Interviews and the mother/child dialogues at 28 months.

One note about the attachment classification system: Regardless of the primary classification for each child, every Strange Situation is given an Ainsworth classification and subclassification in the order of best-fitting priorities. Additionally, the classifications of U or D are always accompanied by a subclassification. Several mothers and children in this sample have a primary classification, with tendencies toward another, and the two insecure children to be focused on below have both primary classifications and best-fitting Ainsworth classifications.

Insecure Dyad 604

Attachment Classifications

This insecure dyad was chosen because mother and child showed disturbed patterns of interaction in earlier experimental situations, and deviated in marked ways from secure dyads in their discourse patterns at 28 months.

CHILD: This child is classified as *disorganized* and *extremely avoidant* (D/A1). The D classification is given to those children who show strong disorganization or disorientation in the presence of the parent at relatively high levels of intensity. In the Strange Situation, disorganized infants often exhibit a lack of a readily observable goal or purpose, and inexplicable, off or conflicted behavior patterns. According to Main and Soloman (1990) this behavior can include one or more of the following features:

-disordering of expected temporal sequences

-simultaneous display of contradictory behavior patterns, such as approaching the parent with the head averted or screaming at the door upon separation, then moving quietly away from the parent upon reunion

-incomplete or undirected movements and expressions, including stereotypies

-direct displays of confusion and apprehension

-behavioral stilling (p. 122)

Disorganization in the Strange Situation has been associated with infant trauma; 80% of maltreated infants receive the D classification. But it is also more currently being affiliated with parental trauma. (Main and Hesse, 1990; Main and Soloman, 1990) High scores for unresolved trauma on the parent's AAI have been found predictive of infant D attachment status. Main and Hesse suggest that, because of her own unresolved trauma, the mother of a D infant

may be frightening or frightened and is relaying this state to her infant. This would imply that fear is responsible for the inhibition or contradiction of the disorganized child's behavior:

> ... it seems apparent that frightening behavior on the part of the still-traumatized parent should lead to disorganized/disoriented infant behavior, since the infant is presented with an irresolvable paradox wherein the haven of safety is at once the source of alarm. (p. 180)

Because of their own unresolved loss or trauma, parents of disorganized infants give conflicting signals. Their behaviors can include unpredictable invasions of the infant's personal space, pursuit movements or postures, "looming" over the infant, timid handling, or responsivity to infant indications of rejection. The content of parents' speech can also be disturbing: They may imply that the infant's actions could have harmful consequences, or directly indicate their fear of him. Sometimes, these parents suddenly initiate games with a frightening narrative content. It is suggested that the disorganized infant is alarmed by these unpredictable or frightening parent behaviors such that the activation of attachment behavior can't be systematically controlled. (Main and Hesse, op. cit.)

The best-fitting alternative classification for this infant is *extremely avoidant* (A1). The avoidant classification is associated with a history of limited rejection of attachment behavior by the caregiver. Faced with a relatively rejecting parent, the infant minimizes the display of attachment behavior and thus looks relatively unresponsive to, or avoidant of, separations and reunions. This is exhibitted in contradictory or inhibitted behaviors. Throughout the Strange Situation, the avoidant child shows no distress specific to parent's absence and often spends his time exploring the room and toys. Avoidance is considered strong when the infant avoids and ignores the parent during both reunion episodes of the Strange Situation. He turns away and

moves away from the parent upon reunion, indicates a desire to be put down when picked up, and ignores the parent's effort toward communication. In general, these infants often display a marked absence of fear, distress or anger.

MOTHER: This is a stable insecure dyad in the sense that the disorganized child attachment status can be associated with unresolved loss on the part of the parent. The mother is classified as *unresolved* and *angry/preoccupied* (U, E2). Parents are considered unresolved if they exhibit high levels of confused thinking regarding some trauma or loss.

Emphasis in determing the U classification falls on disorganization and disorientation in mental (cognitive and affective) process as evidenced in the AAI speech transcriptions. This can include 1) lapses in metacognitive monitoring of reasoning processes—such as disbelief that the person is dead, feelings of having caused the death, or intellectual efforts to ignore the facts or implications of death; 2) lapses in the metacognitive monitoring of discourse processes such that there are marked alterations in the individual's discourse during the discussion of a death (i.e. unusual attention to detail or rhetorical/eulogistic speech); 3) reports of extremely disorganized or disoriented behavior after a death. (Main and Goldwyn, 1985 - 1993)

This mother's best-fitting alternative classification is *preoccupied* (E2). Individuals classified as E appear in the AAI as confused, unobjective, preoccupied with past relationships or experiences, and angry. They may seem cold, detached and defended. Their speech is entangled and convoluted, with frequent run-on sentences. They become lost or confused in citing parental failures, and have active, partly recognized mental entanglements with them.

These mothers tend to confound self and other, past and present, and often have difficulty seeing other people's point of view. (Main and Goldwyn, op cit)

Mother 604: The Adult Attachment Interview

This mother was classified as *unresolved* with respect to a trauma based on an account of her dog being hit by a car when she was an adolescent. This narrative is a fine example of an incoherency and dysfluent narrative . First I'll relate part of the mother's description of her dog's death, then examine some its discourse properties. Here is the mother's answer to the question: "Did you experience the loss of people who were close to you when you were growing up?":

S: You mean the death?

I: um hum.

S: No. (Pause) My dog? Was pretty potent.

She then goes on to recount the incident as follows:

I: What was his name?

S: Jacques. He was a French poodle (laughs). Jacquie. He was a real wimp, too. He was probably gay. Although he got the little poodle across the street pregnant. Um, we had his mother and I always thought she would be the one to go first and I it was very unfair that he was killed before her. Oh, I was I was destroyed, I mean,I wrote a letter to the editor of the paper about because the newspaper in my town because the driver didn't stop, he kept going and there is it squealed it's brakes. I knew, I was inside, I heard it. I knew that a dog --- I thought that it was the mother dog. I knew that one of the dogs had been hit. And um, and right in front of our driveway! I mean like right there. And I couldn't believe that the driver left, I mean, didn't even stop. And also, there was no pet cemetary, which destroyed me. [end of tape]

The looseness and disorganization of this mother's speech is particularly evident when her narrative is subjected to the requirements of Grice's maxims of conversation. Within this bit of talk, she violates Grice's supraordinate "Cooperative Principle" for conversation, and his four subordinate rules of *Quantity* , *Quality* , *Relation,* and *Manner.* Although she

explicitly complies with the requirements of the interview, formulating an elaborate and detailed response, her story about a dog is a subtle subversion of the original question, which refers specifically to people who've died. In this sense, the narrative itself can be considered a violation of Grice's Cooperative Principle: "Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged."

More flagrant violations of Grice's other rules are evident throughout the account. Within the first few sentences is a description of the "wimpy dog" who was probably gay, though he impregnated the neighboring poodle. This is a contradictory formulation which violates the maxim of Quality: "be truthful, and have evidence for what you say." There are run-on sentences with confusing shifts of tense and voice which violate the maxims of Quantity, Relation and Manner. Consider the mother's description of her response to the accident: "Oh, I was I was destroyed, I mean I wrote a letter to the editor of the paper about because the newspaper in my town because the driver didn't stop, he kept going and there is it squealed its brakes." Within this one sentence, she summarizes her emotional state ("I was I was destroyed"), her behavioral response (writing a letter), and the actual incident, in reverse order of their occurance. There are dysfluencies throughout, in the form of repetitions ("I was I was"; "about because the newspaper"), gramatically confusing phrasings ("and there is it squealed"), and confounded descriptions ("it squealed it's brakes"). In general, the sentence is "entangled and confusing" such that it violates both the maxim of Quantity—"be succinct, and yet complete"—and the maxim of Manner—"be perspicuous (clear); avoid obscurity, ambiguity and prolixity, and be orderly."

The subject's continuation of the story after the tape is changed is equally dysfluent and incoherent. Here is how she interrupts her description of the strange behavior of the poodle's mother the night of his death to explain her letter to the editor: "And she (Jacque's mother) stayed in the ... anyway, so I wrote in the letter that, you know, I think thought that my—it sounded strange, but my dog knew he was going to die and, you know, I forgive the driver but, you know, you most, you know, next time stop." Here is another run-on sentence (violation of Quantity) in which she leaves two fragments unfinished, lapses into different voices without cueing the listener (violations of Manner), struggles over verb tenses, and repeats "you know" four times (dysfluency). By the end of her answer, the mother loses track of the question entirely. Her concluding statement is "Why am I telling all this about? Why—what was the question?". According to Main (1993, p.35), losing the train of thought in such a manner represents a violation of the maxim of Relation—"be relevant"—in that it indicates that the discourse no longer adheres strictly to what was required/requested.

There are some signs of vigilance in the narrative in spite of the many slips and dysfluencies, however. This is evident in those instances when the mother plays critic to her own discourse: "I know it's bizarre, but I swear, I feel like he knew he was going to die, and so did she (the dog's mother). I I know that doesn't make any sense and I know it's a child's interpretation ..." The mother is here anticipating the listener's incredulity and requesting license to recount a story that she knows violates expectations of truthfulness and perspicuity. Her self-criticism is, ironically, precisely the mechanism which grants her license to commit these violations.

Dyad 604: General discourse trends

The looseness of mother's narrative on the AAI stands in stark contrast to the evident carefulness and guardedness in her dialogue with her child 29 months later. As her discourse is full of slips, dysfluencies and linguistic violations when she speaks on the AAI, so is it tight and over-vigilant (to a restrictive degree) when she speaks to her child. This is evident in both the structure and content of these dialogues.

There is a remarkable difference in the way this dyad interacts in the two different play conditions. When the child plays alone on the floor, the mother briefly tells him to play quietly while she fills out papers, then says virtually nothing through most of the session. The child fluctuates between making brief bids for her attention and playing alone on the floor. His play is attenuated, he moves from object to object, activity to activity without ever really settling in. In contrast, when they play together, mother is very verbally active. Although she asks few questions relative to other mothers, she is extremely directive: She delivers a total of 76 directives, as opposed to the average of 32.5 for all other mothers. Yet her directiveness does not result in high compliance, as her child replies to only a quarter of all questions and directives. And Mother herself is relatively unresponsive: She answers none of the nine questions the child asks her while playing alone, and responds to only 20% of all questions and directives while they play together. This is in contrast to the other mothers, who respond to an average of 45.6% questions and directives while playing with their children.

The play dialogues

In the playing-alone condition, the child's talk seems an extended, mostly failed, effort to get mother's attention. Mother generally responds with

silence, intervening only twice; and these interventions are terse and didactic. The exchange below takes place in the first minute of play. The child has been talking constantly, naming what he sees with the generic "this is" and occasionally calling for mother's attention: "mommy dis is." He then makes one more extended attempt to elicit a response from her. Situating himself directly in front of her with the mop in hand, he explicitly calls for her attention and participation. But mother remains silent:

*CHI: look all toys mommy.
%act: crawls away from mother, toward the mop on the floor
*CHI: look at all toys.
%act: crawls over to mop, picks it up
*CHI: this is a brush.
%act: stands up, begins mopping the floor
*CHI: clean the floor.
*CHI: this is a this is a xx xx.
%gpx: briefly looks at M., touching end of mop to show her, walks toward her
*CHI: clean the floor.
%act: drops mop, turns back to M., drops on knees in front of the toolbox. Back is to M.
*CHI: look at these toys.

One sees paralells of the disorganized/avoidant patterns in this monologue: Although, up to this point, the child has been consistently calling mother's attention to the toys, this is the first time he directly approaches her. Yet he does so in a contradictory manner: He seeks to get her attention with a repeated directive for her to share his focus of attention and reinforces this effort by calling her name ("look all toys mommy. look at all toys."), yet he does so while crawling away. He is thus entreating her to share his interest at precisely the moment he is moving away from her. When he does approach her with the mop raised, he looks at her only briefly, then abandones the activity altogether.

There are several ways in which this monologue bears traces of mother's influence in spite of her lack of participation. It has a didactic, explanatory quality: The child names what he holds, both recounts and

displays its function, then more explicitly approaches mother to display the object itself and again narrate its uses. In doing this, he is not only reenacting something he has most likely seen her do (cleaning and mopping), but doing so in a manner which, as is evident below, is similar to mother's own didactic style of interaction.

Mother's silence in the face of the child's solicitation is notable, and typifies her stance through most of this portion of the play session. She makes no verbal response, in spite of his progressively closer approach. The incident goes full-circle—it begins and ends with virtually the same global entreaty for mother's attention ("look all these toys")—without any connection having been made.

After this attempted exchange, the child falls almost completely silent for three minutes. At the end of the fourth minute, he returns to the mop, this time successfully gaining mother's attention. He again positions himself directly in front of her and begins to try to name the mop. Mother responds with a lesson:

*CHI: ## this is a this is.
*CHI: # this is.
%act: mops floor, facing M. waves mop at M. again
*CHI: ## this is a this is.
*MOT: what do you think it is?
*CHI: yeh.
*CHI: hair brush.
%act: drops mop, turns his back to mother and goes to other toys on the foor.
*MOT: it's a broom.
*MOT: it's a mop.
*CHI: mop.
*MOT: +^ a mop.
*MOT: I'm sorry.
%act: C. turns away from M., begins playing with fire truck

This dialogue mirrors the earlier monologue in several ways: The child attempts to elicit his mother's participation by calling attention to the mop, trying to name it, putting it to use, and raising it to show her. The approach is

again one of simultaneous avoidance, for he is concurrently persistent and hesitant. Although he repeats "this is" five times, there are substantial pauses between the utterances, and he loses interest and moves to other activities almost as soon as mother becomes involved: He drops the mop and, with his back to her, explores different toys. Although he remains verbally linked to mother, iterating her correction "mop", his participation is now at odds with his behavior.

When mother responds, she herself shows a pattern of engagement/disengagement. Perhaps it is the child's lack of specificity this time ("this is a this is.") which impels her participation. She intercedes as the arbitrator of meaning and reality, deploying first a probe ("what do you think it is?") which belies either her having not heard his earlier name for the object, or a wish to this time correct him. She then provides him with two corrected definitions to help him name the object. The phonetic liaison between her first contribution and his original utterance ("brush" - "broom") links her discourse to his. But, although phonetically resonant, this name is semantically faulty, and mother rights herself with a correction; "mop". A new liaison is established, and her authority reinforced, when the child repeats "mop" after her. But the child's repetition is mitigated both by his contradictory behavior and mother's follow-up. She repeats "mop", yet she does so almost simultaneously to him (+^) and with a subsequent apology, suggesting she is more involved with correcting her original mistake than reinforcing his contribution. Her distraction with teaching and her linguistic vigilance give her discouse a sollipsistic quality: Her carefullness turns in on itself and becomes a kind of distancing preoccupation.

These patterns are increasingly evident when this dyad plays together. Although there is not as much flitting amongst the toys—the first four minutes

are spent with the trucks, the last four with the tape measure—mother and child are often at odds in their approach to the play and the discourse has a generally dysfluent quality. Toys are picked up and abandoned with no transition, play themes aborted, and entreaties unanswered or refused. In general, the discourse has a brittle quality. It seems difficult for mother and child to meet on common ground.

The sequence below begins in the third minute of play as the child is using the truck. Mother suggests he fill up the truck bed, then looks around the toys on the floor. She sees the dress-up shoes and points them out to him:

*MOT: # look at this.
%par: laughs
*MOT: did you see these?
%act: shows purple shoes
*CHI: yeah.
*CHI: my take [/] take the sneakers off (a)n(d) want to wear this?
*MOT: you want to wear those shoes?
*CHI: yeah.
*MOT: # mmm +...
%act: M. instead hands him small mirror
*CHI: ## uh hamburger.
*CHI: wanna hamburger \?
*MOT: you think that's a spatula , don't you?
*MOT: look at it.
*MOT: it's a mirror.
*CHI: <making a> [?] hamburger.
*MOT: you want to make it a hamburger maker?
*MOT: ok.
%act: M holds out plate, onto which C places pretend hamburger
*MOT: ## thank you.
*MOT: # are you gonna join me?
*CHI: no.
*MOT: no?
*CHI: I cut this.
*CHI: <knife> [>] +/.
*MOT: <would you> [<] +/.
*CHI: and a fork.
*MOT: ok would you cut it up for me please?
*CHI: 0. [%exc]
%act: C. applies knife and fork to the task
*CHI: a knife.
*CHI: all done.

The struggle for Dyad 604 to negotiate a space for play and representation is evident throughout this exchange. The dialogue begins with an aborted attempt for mother and child to settle on a common play theme. She has initiated the sequence by calling her child's attention to the dress-up shoes. In an unusually long utterance, he specifically states his desire to try them on: "my take [/] take the sneakers off (a)n(d) want to wear this?" Mother responds by recasting the request as a gramatically correct question: "you want to wear those shoes?" One sees the way in which her words are sculpted directly from his. Yet her linguistic acknowledgement of his request, and the syntactic and semantic link thus established between them, is not translated into action. Instead of complying with his request, she searches the floor and hands him the mirror.

But this child is persistent. He immediately responds to the new object with another play idea, uttering "uh hamburger" as he holds out the mirror like a spatula. With this utterance, he automatically assimilates the mirror into his own idiosyncratic system of signification and meaning, transforming a real object (the mirror) into a play object (a spatula with which to serve a "hamburger") at a relatively sophisticated level of abstraction. (Belsky, ??) But mother stalls at the conceptual underpinnings of his imaginary transformation, thereby temporarily blocking its elaboration. She makes clear the conceptual link between the mirror and his "hamburger", conjecturing "spatula" to be the underlying idea: "you think that's a spatula, don't you?". And she then demands that he pay allegiance to perceptual fidelity and truth before pursuing the imaginary: "look at it. it's a mirror."

The child complies minimally with mother's directive, holding the mirror to his face and peering into it. But he again makes his intentions clear, this time specifying: "making a hamburger." Mother reframes this idea in

adult terms with her response: "you want to make it a hamburger maker." While the child is already in the play world, insisting on his pretend activity in spite of his mother's insistance on the real properties of the mirror, she is using almost his exact words, recast at a metaplay level, to explain the mechanics of the transformation from real to imaginary. It is worth bearing in mind that the end result of mother's vigilance is another faulty formulation. Athough she restates his utterance in question form, there is a significant semantic difference between his "making a hamburger" and her "hamburger maker." In fact, his behavior confirms her first interpretation—that he is using the mirror as a spatula—which suggests that "hamburger maker" is linked only syntactically to the child's preceding utterance.

The mother thus forces her child to relinquish the idiosyncracies and egocentricities of the play world by insisting it be cast and played in her terms. He is able to transform objects into play things—assimilate what he sees to a personal system of meaning via play—only with great difficulty. Mother either rejects his attempt (ignoring his request to put on the play shoes), or accepts the transformation only after remarking on its deviance and insisting he do so as well ("look at it. it's a mirror."). It is as if only by colonizing the child's personally resonant speech, binding it to the conventions of adult reality and perception, can the mother relinquish some of her authority and let him play. She is like Winnicott's "impinging mother" (1961), who overtly ignores or misinterpretes her child's signals and circumvents his ability to explore and expand by insisting on her own interpretations, her own drama.

The palpable stress between mother and child in this sequence evokes Bakhtin's contention that"Expropriating (language), forcing it to submit to one's own intentions and accents is a difficult and complicated process." (1981, p. 293) In the face of the child's play, mother establishes herself as the "voice

of authority", the reality base from which truth and fiction can be distinguished. The child is permitted to play, pretend and linguistically transform only after the boundaries between real and imaginary, and the mechanism by which one is transformed into the other, have been made explicit. And these boundaries are the property of the mother, the keeper of internal and external reality, who can both extrapolate her child's innermost thoughts and establish them as true or false.

Once the perameters of real and pretend are clearly established, mother and child finally get down to playing. And now the roles are reversed. Mother elicits her child's participation; "are you gonna join me?" and he overtly refuses. Again, his actions are at odds with his words, however, for he replies "no" at the same moment that he is gathering a knife and fork for her. As she was the overseer of the real world, so is he now the master of the play world: He supervises her pretend activity, playing the role of parent who facilitates her play—he cuts the meat while she eats. Once mother leaves the borders of the play to enter within, the child retreats to a position of mediator and observer, participating only minimally.

Dyad 604: Conclusion

It is as if these dialogues are turned inside out, their seams are evident throughout. Missed signals, incompleted gestures, and failed initiations unveil a fundamental disjuncture between mother and child, and lay bare the borders of their discourse. Each member of the dyad has a different agenda.: Mother is preoccupied with maintaining the boundaries of real and imaginary, self and other such that she often miscasts or overtly ignores her child's initiationss and becomes lost in her own discourse; And the child grants her access only with ambivalence, pushing for her participation until the moment it is granted, at which point he withdraws. There develops a kind of estrangement

within the dyad such that it is difficult for them to share the same play world. Physical distance, aborted attempts at play, and generally low levels of responsiveness become his methods of separation, as didacticism, pedantry, directiveness, and equally low levels of responsiveness are hers.

These are brittle and tenuous methods of separation. Indeed, while it seems difficult for this dyad to occupy the same space at the same time, it is also hard for them to extricate themselves from one another. Ironically, it is exactly mother's vigilance over boundaries and child's constant breaches which keep them entangled. Mother is preoccupied with articulating the internal workings of her child's discourse such that she subverts its content and forces it into her own realm of undertanding. Her words and ideas become subtly entangled with his so that the line of meaning gets lost and the continuity of the dialogue disrupted. The child's ambivalence keeps him caught within a cycle of seeking mother out and subtly disregarding her so that his ability to venture completely away and explore on his own is compromised.

What is the relation of this dialogue to mother and child's attachment status? In the child, we see repeated example of simultaneous displays of contradictory behavior patterns, incomplete or undirected movements and expressions, a level of unresponsiveness and, at times, subtle avoidance of mother. In the mother, some confusion and preoccupation are evident, as are difficulties with boundaries between real and imaginary, self and other. Together, mother and child have great difficulty settling on a common agenda and more often than not appear at odds with one another. There is no "steady course" in their verbal exchanges: The dialogues are disjointed and full of interruptions, with limited symbolic and thematic elaboration.

Secure Dyad 605

Attachment Classifications

This dyad was chosen as the most stabley secure of the sample. As the "exemplars" of security, they are the representatives of protoypically coherent and fluent discourse.

CHILD: The child is classified as *very secure* with some tendencies toward avoidance (B3, B2). Although the secure infant normally exhibits little or no resistance or avoidance on either reunion, the secondary B2 classification indicates a slight avoidance of mother on first reunion. But the B2 infant's avoidance breaks down and he ultimately strongly seeks out mother on the second reunion. In general, the secure infant is quickly soothed upon mother's return and proceeds easily to play.

MOTHER: The mother is classified as the model of security—*secure/autonomous* (F3). Parents falling into this category display strong coherency throughout the AAI. Their talk is characterized by ease and/or thoughtfulness. They neither idealize nor minimize, and back-up generals with particulars. In their narrative, they are able to create an integrated and believable image of their childhood, generally expressing good memory for both the positive and negative aspects of their past and present. They give a unified, yet free-flowing picture of the their experiences, feelings and viewpoints such that the reader/listener is not required to make a differing interpretation. Although they may be currently dissatisfied or unhappy, they display autonomy with respect to the inner representation of attachment (Main and Goldwyn, 1985 - 1993). As discussed earlier, secure transcripts are internally consistent and coherent, with clear, relevant and succinct responses.

Mother 605: The Adult Attachment Interview

This subject's mother died when she was three years old. Her father never told her much about the illness or death ("the whole thing was kind of very much swept under the rug") and remarried a "very sweet" woman a year later. Here is this mother's response to the questions regarding her own mother's death:

> I: You mentioned that you lost your Mom at a very very early age and can you tell me a little bit about the circumstances?
>
> S: She had chronic colitis and she would have bouts of it occasionally, would have to go into the hospital for maybe a week at a time. From what I have been told, that only happened a couple of times in my life, but then finally she got to a point where it was bad enough that they told her to have a colostomy. And then she went into the hospital to have this operation and then ended up getting a staph infection and it just got worse and worse and they had to keep reoperating and it just never went away. And she was in the hospital for five months and then she just died. She kept getting weaker and worse. And she was only thirty.
>
> I: And you also mentioned before that you don't really remember that time.
>
> S: I don't remember it at all.

This account clearly meets the requirements of Grice's Cooperative Principle—it is an appropriate and timely answer to the question, fulfilling the basic requirements of the interview. The subject recounts her mother's illness and death in chronological order with enough details to give a firm sense of how the events unfolded and culminated. Her "clear and orderly" account fulfills Grice's maxim of Manner. The subject also solidly locates the listener/reader by identifying the details of the death as hearsay; "...from what I've been told", thus meeting the maxim of Quality's requirements for truth and evidence. Her narrative is focused, it is comprehensive yet succinct, and never becomes confused or confusing.

Indeed, this description is almost too clear and direct. It is hard to imagine that it is a mother's death being discussed. Only the last two sentences

break the tight narrative frame: "She kept getting weaker and worse. And she was only thirty." Here the temporal sequence is disrupted as the speaker backtracks from her mother's death to her condition before death. She ends with a somewhat incongruous reference to her mother's young age at death, a kind of veiled lament. This last sentence lends some affective weight to the whole response and lays bare the relatively dispassionate tone of what precedes it. One wonders if the simplicity and relative sparseness of the rest of the description is what makes it coherent, and if this is achieved precisely because it is based on second-hand information and is thus a received, rather than personally sculpted, narrative.

When the subject is asked more directly about the evolution of her "feelings" regarding the death, the narrative becomes looser and slightly more difficult to follow:

> I: Have your feelings regarding this death changed over time?
>
> .[begins with a description of the last time she saw her mother] ...(her death) was never treated with this kind of emotion or seriousness, hm and I think I never, until I got older, fairly recently, I just never thought about it like in a serious way. It was just all sort of taken for granted. But recently, especially when I got married, I started thinking about her as a woman who right now I am about the age she was, when she got married and she had a baby and I have pictures of her like shortly before her wedding and her wedding, where she lived with my father before she had me and pictures of her when she was pregnant and pictures of her when I was a baby, you know, and like suddenly she is this person that is like my age and just can empathize with the situation, which I never did before. She was always this mythical figure and now suddenly she is this real woman that died when she was thirty after she had a little three-and-a-half-year-old baby. You know, I feel like I went through a period sort of of mourning like twenty five years later, sort of like mourning for her as a person pretty recently.

In this account, the subject considers her mother's death in the light of her own development. She is recounting an *internal* evolution, which is certainly more complex and challenging to narrate. The stress of relating this subject matter is reflected in the relatively more circuitous and meandering

nature of the response. There is a degree of entanglement evident in the melding of "she" and "I" and the oscillations between past and present, facts and feelings. Consider the following: "... and I have pictures of her when she was pregnant and pictures of her when I was a baby, you know, and like suddenly she is this person that is like my age and just can empathize with the situation, which I never did before." Here, the identity of the speaking subject is folded into that of object of discussion—the subject's mother—such that it becomes difficult to distinguish who exactly is being talked about. The subject's intense identification with her dead mother is reflected in the formal entanglement of the language itself. Yet, ultimately, one does not sense confusion on the part of the speaker or become confused oneself. The next sentence offers a clarifying summary which relocates the reader/listener: "She was always this mythical figure and now suddenly she is this real woman that died when she was thirty after she had a little three-and-a-half-year-old baby."

Though less fluent and more difficult to follow, this response still qualifies as coherent discourse. For there is an overriding clarity and completeness to the narrative when seen as a whole. The subject gives a detailed and ornate, but generally comprehensible, account of events and feelings. She responds directly to the question and recounts in temporal order—though this time it is the chronology of an internal reality. The narrative flows from past to present, is honest and thoughtful and consistent with previous answers—all criterion of Main's (1985-1990) requirements for coherent discourse. Affectively charged and formally more complex, it nonetheless succeeds in relaying a clear sense of what the subject feels, and the manner in which these feelings developed.

Dyad 605: General discourse trends

A similar coherency and fluency is evident in the discourse of mother and child in the play dialogues. The mother intercedes more frequently than Mother 604 when her child plays alone, and she generally does so in a more fluid fashion. But, like the other secure mothers, her discourse in this condition has an organizing, rather than participating, quality. In spite of their more frequent contact, the dyad's exchanges when the child plays alone are normally brief. And, in keeping with other secure mothers, almost half of mother's total clauses (12 out of 26) are questions. In contrast, the child asks only one question. Mother also typifies the secure pattern of having a relatively lower level of play clauses than insecure mothers while her child plays alone. Slightly less than one-half of her clauses were coded as play (46%) and the rest are metaplay. Yet, like other secures, when this mother talks from within the play, the level of her clauses is relatively high: 83% of all her play clauses while the child plays alone are Imagination, 17% are Commentary.

There are also some ways in which this dyad deviates from the secure pattern of interaction, however. The mother delivers fewer directives than other secure mothers in the playing-alone condition: She uses one directive, compared to 12 and 13 for the two others. Her child, on the other hand, is more directive than his secure counterparts: he is responsible for 10 directives while playing alone, compared with five and six for them. The mother's low number of directives, and the child's relatively high number, is somewhat balanced out by mother's high use and the child's low use of questions in this condition, however.

The play dialogues:

While playing alone, the child sticks to just a few activities. He spends the first seven minutes with the trucks and tools, the last three minutes "cooking dinner" with the kitchen utensils. In the first few minutes, he talks mostly to himself, naming what he sees in a generic fashion similar to Child 604; "this thing." "a this." In the third minute of play, he directly addresses his mother for the first time. He is manipulating the firetruck ladder, close to mother's feet but facing away from her:

*CHI: # help me.
*CHI: it stuck.
%sit: ladder is stuck in down position on fire truck. C's back to Mom, though calling for help
*CHI: help me.
*CHI: <help me>. [>]
%act: brings truck closer to M, turns around and faces her, fools with ladder
*MOT: <what's the matter> [<] sweetie?
*CHI: there it goes.
%act: as he turns toward M, ladder opens
*MOT: # having trouble with the ladder?
*CHI: mm mm.
*MOT: you fixed it?
*CHI: yeah.
*MOT: good.
*CHI: 0.
%act: selects toy, puts it on fire truck. plays with fire truck, making grunts of exertion. playing at M's feet.

In this exchange, there is a clear progression of events: It begins with a solicitation for mother's help and ends with a resolution. The child's call for aid begins almost inadvertently. Indeed, his first clauses, "help me. it stuck" seem more an indication of his encountering, alone, something problematic than a direct appeal to mother—his back to mother, he defines his difficulty and expresses his need without directly looking at her. Mother's participation is strictly verbal and primarily retrogressive. She is initially unresponsive, but when she does intervene, she addresses his appeal in a rather global way: "<what's the matter> [<] sweetie?" Her intervention overlaps with his third cry

for help and coincides with his physically repositioning himself closer to and facing her. Although she more directly addresses the problem only after it is already regulated, she continues on, with her child's participation, to articulate the problem, it's resolution, and her opinion about the whole affair. She thus articulates the cause and effect of his action and offers him verbal support after the fact. She is putting words to his mastery, linguistically linking problem to action and resolution without actively intervening. This post hoc account and evaluation appears to reinforce his mastery and ability to function autonomously. After her final judgment of his performance, "good", the child continues playing with the fire truck.

Mother's restriction to verbal participation, and her child's tendency to stick to a few select toys, continues when they play together. The first five minutes of play is devoted to the pop beads, the second five to the tape measure. Through most of the ten minutes, mother sits with her hands in her lap observing, commenting and offering suggestions. She rarely touches the toys—physically intervening only to regulate some problem—and is quick to verbally reinforce the child when he accomplishes something alone. Her language is quite didactic: she asks the child to name things, draws comparisons between toys in the room and other toys he knows, explains how various toys work.

The exchange below takes place in the third minute of play. The child has transformed the pop beads from chain to necklace to snake, and is now sliding it along the floor, hissing. Mother hisses after him. Then the child makes an abrupt transition, at first difficult to follow, which unfolds in the following dialogue:

*CHI: how about the # forehead?
%act: making circle out of pop beads, crawling toward M with his back to her
*MOT: what?

*CHI: <about> [?] forehead
%act: crawls past M, turns back towards beads, they are in a semi circle
*MOT: who has a forehead?
*CHI: mommy, xx mommy.
%act: pulling two sides of beads together, back to M
*MOT: where's my forehead?
*CHI: here.
%act: connecting two sides of bead circle, M leans into him
*CHI: here's ya # feet!
%act: turns away from M, grabs plate, sets it along pop-bead circle
*CHI: here's feet!
*CHI: here's feet.
*MOT: <feet> [>].
*CHI: <here's> [<] +...
%act: grabs other plate, sets it beside the first
*CHI: here's feet.
*CHI: feet.
*MOT: whose feet?
*CHI: here's arms.
%act: grabs fork, sets it along the circle
*MOT: the arms.
%par: laugh
*MOT: is that mommy?
*CHI: yeah.
%act: grabs other utensil, sets it along the circle
*CHI: that's mom.

This dialogue represents a language of negotiation which typifies the play interaction of this dyad. Out of the child's initial contextually incomprehensible comment, "how (a)bout the # forehead", grows a representational structure whose significance derives in large part from how it's named and discussed. Mother and child work together: While he physically constructs the object which will be called "mommy", she helps him to name and conceptually place its elements.

Mother at first responds with blank confusion and a plea for clarification ("what?") to the child's contextually incomprehensible comment, but then turns her confusion into an orienting probe: "who has a forehead?" Looking to place and embody a befuddling utterance, she gives shape to a problematic conceptual shift in the discourse and lends the child's preceding clauses legitimacy, pushing the discourse forward by repeating a part of his

formulation ("forehead"). The child responds promptly, but his answer further confuses: "mommy, xx mommy." Here the dyad is posed between the real world and the pretend world. The child utters this clause while connecting the two sides of the bead line into a circle, his back to mother. It is unclear whether "forehead" is meant to signify an imaginary forehead on an imaginary head, the real forehead of self or mother, or something else entirely.

Still confused, mother becomes even more specific while at the same time incorporating information the child has given her—she asks him to locate her forehead: "where's my forehead?". The door is now opened to a new level of abstraction. Mother is again pushing the child to be more precise, but this time includes the possibility of a strictly representational reality: Her forehead can perhaps be elsewhere than on her head. Again, he responds immediately and appropriately, pointing to the middle of the circle and saying "here." From this point forward, the child is completely immersed in the representational world, calling plates feet and forks arms as he places them along the circle. With the exception of one unanswered question, "whose feet?", mother sticks to simple repetition of the names he is giving to objects. Body parts are verbally passed back and forth, and their naming becomes the syntactic element which links each of mother's clauses to those of her child. What began as a completely idiosyncratic utterance has become an entire representational structure via the dyad's negotiation of meanings.

In contrast to mother 604, this mother works with, rather than resists, the child's imaginative elaboration, scaffolding his formulations with probes and repetition. As she reinforces, with words, his representational capacity, the discourse shifts from comments about the play to abstraction and interpretation from within it. Though it is he who constructs the symbol of

Mother, it is she who ultimately names it, but in question form ("is that mommy?"), leaving it to him to confirm or refute his own creation. The child's confirmation is syntactically folded into mother's question: "yeah. that's mom." Together they have created the symbol of mother in mother's presence.

In the course of this exchange, an originally idiosyncratic theme becomes communal property dialogically, with mother and child working together, assigning meaning and developing the properties of a purely representational object. Between the child's construction and mother's elucidation arises a symbolic mother in the real mother's presence. Together, the dyad has successfully moved from simply naming, to creating in the imaginary realm and, finally, interpreting within this realm. The "sculpture" that the child builds—the second "mommy"—brings to life the intermediate space between them, the space between real and imaginary, self and other.

The notion of language as simultaneously an acknowledgment of separateness and a way of connecting is particularly relevant in this sequence. It is proportionate to the degree of interpersonal distance within this dyad that they are able to gradually build a "more autonomous" and "communal" "symbolic vehicle" from an originally idiosyncratic production. (Werner and Kaplan, 1963; p. 49) Yet the empathic and linguistic connection between mother and child must be strong in order for them to arrive at a consensual meaning. In the throes of the separation-individuation stage of development, this child responds to "the strain of relating inner and outer reality" (Winnicott, 1961) by creating his *own* mother—outside and away from the real one—a mother that he can make and control. But this is both a homage to his autonomy and a recognition of his dependence, for it is achieved in mother's presence and with her help.

Dyad 605: Conclusion

Throughout this dyad's exchanges, the intense negotiation of conversation is evidenced. But the inherent tension of this process never leads to war—there is neither victor nor vanquished. Indeed, it is often difficult to say who, exactly, is the agent. Both mother and child take what is sent, transform it, and send it back. Mother shapes and makes comprehensible her child's actions and productions by running them through an adult system of meaning and sending them back in altered form, always pushing him forward. And he assimilates what she gives him without capitulating, incorporating it into his own particular way of seeing and creating. Mother's language *helps* the child insofar as it links words to actions, and gives shape and meaning to his behavior. But her participation neither overwhelms nor stifles him

This mother is "empathic" in her ability to anticipate and support her child's representational initiations while at the same time contributing to their elucidation and elaboration. Mother's participation is integral to the blossoming of object into symbol. She helps the child to leave the "egocentric, idiosyncratic, and contextualized" (Werner and Kaplan, 1963; p. 49) world of the preverbal child and enter the adult world of symbols and signification. Yet they are still operating somewhere in between the two, in a transitional space in which the child builds the symbol and mother helps him place and name it. Mother's utterances structure and orient the child, in this way strengthening the legitimacy of his representations and reinforcing his imaginative process. The child retains his personal voice, but gradually moves in the direction of greater articulation and comprehensibility.

Coherency and fluency are evidenced in these dialogues. Mother and child give a concentrated and directed performance both when he plays alone and when they play together. Their exchanges are fluid and progressive, their

interactions "cohere" in the sense that there is a clear movement from one utterance to the next. In their play and language, the dyad moves from problem to elaboration to resolution. Mother's fluidity and openness is evident in her ability to successfully negotiate the play world with the child without either overwhelming or abandoning him. And the child displays an capacity to work in the space between them which suggests both a confidence in his own vision and an ability to successfully utilize his relationship with mother.

Mixed Insecure Dyad 613

Attachment Classifications

This insecure dyad has been included because of the way in which mother and child deviate from expectations. In a previous play session at ten months, they exhibited very disturbed and stilted patterns of engagement. Their intense interaction at 28 months, and the child's prolific imagination and strong propensity for play stand in stark contrast to these earlier interactions. This dyad has noncompatible insecure classifications, and their patterns of discourse are remarkably different from those of insecure Dyad 604. In some respects, they exhibit verbal tendencies similar to those of secure dyads. Yet they are different from both secure and insecure dyads in important ways. Most notable is their high level of play and a level of role-reversing child dominance, particularly evident in the playing-together condition.

CHILD: This child is classified as U-C1/D-C1. The primary classification is *unclassifiable.* U indicates that the coders had a sufficiently confused picture of the child in the Strange Situation that they were unable to assign her to any one category. She was found to have *ambivalent and angry* tendencies (C1), however. Angry-ambivalent children are generally very focused on mother

in the Strange Situation. They have strong distress on separation and trouble settling down in the reunion. While originally seeking contact with mother, they then vacillate between seeking her out and rejecting her. Obvious anger is the affective backdrop for this behavior. Typically, strong direct expressions of anger are combined with proximity seeking.

The child's Ainsworth best-fitting classification is *disorganized* and *angry/ambivalent.* As indicated in the discussion of Child 604, the *disorganized* classification implies that the child has difficulty ignoring or avoiding stress, and approaching mother does nothing to ameliorate this problem. There is thus "conflict" behavior in the presence of mother, as the child displays his difficulty but has no acceptable means of coping with it—either in himself or in relationship to her.

MOTHER: The mother is classified as *dismissing* and *cut-off* (D1,4). A mother with this classification generally attempts to ignore, avoid or devalue attachment relationships. This indicates an organization of thought which allows the attachment system to remain out of operation. The dismissing mother often has a history of rejection and lack of love by her own parents. Her background can also include parental involvement/role-reversal. (Main and Goldwyn, 1985 - 1993) She has some significant fear about the future with respect to her own attachment relationships (D4)-- usually exhibited with her child—but this fear is not consciously connected to real experience. Main postulates that, while the psychoanalytic explanation of the parent's fear would be that it indicates unrecognized rage, attachment theorists are more likely to attribute it to a parental background of major loss. (1993; p. 94) On the AAI, these mothers are typically idealizing and insistent upon their lack of memory for childhood experiences. They have difficulty backing up

generalizations with specifics, often display an emphasis on "fun" or activities, and have many unexamined experiences. (Main and Goldwyn, op cit)

Mother 613 The Adult Attachment Interview

This subject's AAI is half as long as those of 604 and 605. This is due to her lack of memory for early experiences and tendency to down-play the importance of the topics being discussed. It is clearly not an indication of a less difficult or tumultuous childhood, however. The subject's parents divorced when she was three and she never heard from her father again. Her mother was remarried a year later to a man the subject considers her "real father." She has no memory of her biological father and does not know why her parents divorced. But she is sure "it must have been something horrible" because her mother has never discussed the details. Here is how this subject talks about the loss of her father in the AAI:

> I: Okay, um, did you experience the loss of a parent or (unclear) or other close loved one when you were younger?
>
> S: Let me see, I told you I really don't remember my first father, so that was a loss, but it didn't affect me at all. Not that I know of. (I: Right)...
>
> ...I: Now talk to me a little bit about your father, I know that you said you don't remember the feelings at the time, but um, would you say that the affect of the loss has changed over the years?
>
> M: Only in that sometimes I'm more curious than other times as to what he looks like, what he's doing, you know. I know he did remarry, and well, somehow I found out he remarried and has children, you know, just curiosity. I don't feel like I'm missing anything. (I: right) But, sometimes I just get more curious. (I: And do you feel like the loss, that relationship, has affected your adult personality?) No, cause I don't really even think of it as a loss. Like maybe had my mother not remarried it would be a loss, or my fa, my step-father, wasn't as good a father to me as he has been. It would be a loss. Like I said, I don't even think about it. Like when I say my father, I mean my step-father, but I've done that since age four. So...(I: So do you think it will affect the way you approach a child?) No, no.

The discourse trends of the dismissive adult are evident throughout this response. The mother is constantly minimizing the importance of events ("it

didn't really affect me at all", "I don't really even think of it as a loss" etc...), and repeatedly denies all feeling. There are also traces of the kind of idealization which punctuates the rest of the interview: For example, the subject contends that her stepfather was so "good" that any feelings about the loss of her real father were completely circumvented.

This subject's general style of minimization and denial leads to some revealing inconsistencies in the narrative. There are several subtly contradictory statements: She qualifies her contention that the loss of her father had no effect on her with the follow-up "Not that I know of"; and her admission of curiosity about him is peppered with disclaimers of harboring any interest whatsoever ("I don't even think about it.").

Carefulness is a hallmark of this mother's style, and, as such, her discourse is relatively "clean" by Grice's standards. There is one revealing instance of dysfluency in this otherwise orderly narrative when she inadvertently confounds her father and stepfather ("or my fa, my step-father...") Yet her recovery is careful and deliberate: She logically explains this slip to be a natural result of linguistic habit: "like when I say my father, I mean my step-father..." Other than this one slip, the mother's answers are generally clear, concise and well-ordered, with no run-on sentences or confounding linguistic constructions. Yet the narrative's sparseness clashes with the relatively loaded topic. In this way, it is *too* succinct and could thereby qualify as a violation of Grice's maxim of quantity: "be succinct, and yet complete". Consider, for example, mother's answer to the question of whether her experiences with her father will have any effect on her relationship with her child: "No, no." This order of conciseness completely undermines the emotive intentions of the interview.

Dyad 613: General discourse trends

The discourse patterns of Dyad 613 are consistently deviant from those of the two other insecure dyads. When the child plays alone, they look very like the secure dyads. Mother has a relatively high number of clauses and delivers a proportionately greater number of questions, directives and topic changes than her child. She is responsible for 83% of the directives, and 86% of the total questions, proportions which are in keeping with those of the secure mothers. Her rate of topic changes in this condition outstrips that of all other mothers. She is responsible for 40% of the total topic changes, compared to 0% for the other two insecure mother and an average of 18.6% for the three secure mothers.

But these numbers, when compared to the dyad's taped performance, are deceptive for several reasons. The dyad's interaction in the alone condition unfolds as follows: Mother spends the entire first minute talking to her child, sitting on the floor and helping to set things up. She then goes to her chair to fill out papers, and falls completely silent. The child is alone on the floor for the following seven minutes, sitting at a right angle to mother's chair and, though remaining in close proximity, never directly addressing mother in any way. She talks and sings quietly to herself throughout this time. There is no further dialogue between mother and child until the end of eighth minute, when the child stands in front of mother and directly addresses her. Mother is responsive to her child's initiations and the dyad then spends the last two minutes in constant conversation.

The dyad's real activity shows that, in fact, the mother is less active and the child more active than the numbers suggest. Although mother talks more than other insecure mothers when her child plays alone, her participation can be divided into two distinct episodes—the opening set-up sequence and the

closing play dialogue. While she is more receptive to her child's initiations than the others, and shows greater willingness to direct and contribute, she exhibits the same pattern of engagement/disengagement which typifies insecure mothers and children.

The child, on the other hand, is much more talkative than is apparent in the transcription. Unlike any other insecure child in the study, she talks almost constantly throughout those seven minutes of playing alone, but in a way meant only for herself. Most of her speech is so quiet and private as to be incomprehensible to anyone else (i.e. mother, observer and transcriber). This speech is thus not included in the discourse measures. If the child's monologue had been recorded, her number of clauses in this condition would have been much higher, and mother's proportion of directives, topic changes and questions would undoubtedly be lower.

When mother and child play together, the dyad's distinct patterns of engagement are more evident in the numbers. Unlike any other mother in the study, this mother's level of topic changes and directives drops dramatically. Here, she delivers a total of 10 directives—in contrast to the 45.6 average for all other mothers. And only 21% of the total topic changes are initiated by her—as opposed to an average of 59.6% for the others. The child, on the other hand, is unusually dominant when she plays with mother. She talks virtually as much as her mother, and significantly more than any other child: She has 182 clauses, her mother 184 and all other children an average of 91.6. She is also unusually directive in this condition --uttering 31 directives, as compared to the average of 2.5 directives for all other children. In the face of her child's directiveness, the mother is remarkably responsive. She answers 3/4 (74%) of the questions and directives delivered, compared to the 1/3 (34.8%) average for the rest of the mothers when playing with their children.

The dyad's performance in both conditions is an aberration in the sample. Mother is more directive, and mother and child more verbally active than the other insecures when the child plays alone. But their talk is portioned out into discrete periods of exchange and monologue. When they play together, the child is very talkative and directive and mother is deferent and compliant. The pattern of overt child dominance/mother acquiescence in this condition distinguishes this dyad from all others.

The play dialogues

At the start of the play session, the mother orients her daughter to the situation, telling her where to sit, pointing out the different toys, and suggesting possible games. The child then spends most of the next seven minutes playing on the floor with the dishware and utensils, alternatively setting and clearing the table. Eight minutes into the play, when the following exchange takes place, the child has begun to circle about the room in the play shoes, using mother as the point of reference and enlisting her physical participation. Aside from the long initial set-up, there has been only one other short conversation immediately preceding this one:

%act: The child walks over to wall across room with a plate in hand. looks down at object (microphone?) implanted in wall. looks over to M
*CHI: ## what's that thing sticking out?
%act: walking toward M., looking over to microphone (?) in wall
*MOT: don't see anything.
*MOT: are you having tea?
*CHI: what's # this sticking out.
%act: walking over to it. leaning down and pointing to it
*MOT: I don't know.
*MOT: that's just something in the wall.
*MOT: # what are <you> [>] +/.
*CHI: &<may> [<] maybe it's # a sandal.
%act: standing between wall and mother. looking from one to the other
*MOT: a sandal?
*CHI: yeah.
*MOT: well <there's a> [//] there are sandals right there.
*MOT: or shoes are like sandals.

%gpx: pointing to play shoes on floor
*CHI: I wanna try.
%act: leaning down to shoes

The child begins by remarking on an aspect of the play room which has nothing to do with the play. This nonplay first utterance is a deviation from the stated task of the session—to play. Mother's initial reaction is to deny the observation and try to redirect the child's attention to the toys. She is guarding her role as facilitating nonparticipant and protector of the rules. But the child is characteristically persistent, insisting on the percept and more explicitly calling mother's attention to it as evidence: "what's # this sticking out?" Mother now responds directly, acknowledging the object but denying its significance: "I don't know. that's just something in the wall." Her attempt to once again redirect the child's attention—"# what are <you> [>] +/."—is interrupted by the child, who has put her imagination to work in transforming the object from microphone to sandal. Mother allows for the interruption and then acknowledges the percept by recasting the formulation in question form: "a sandal?" This settled, she then leads the child back to the toys, linguistically, linking the imaginary "sandal" in the wall to the play sandals on the floor. That redirecting the child's attention is taking precedence over perceptual fidelity and linguistic consistency is evident in mother's slight confusion at this point: "well <there's a> [//] there are sandals right there. or shoes are like sandals." The mother's slips and corrections make obvious the willful transition from a single imaginary sandal in the wall to the real pair of play shoes, evoked for the purpose of reorienting and redirecting the child back to the play.

Throughout this sequence, mother straddles the line between participation and proscription, striking a balance as she goes. She both acknowledges her child's questions and preoccupations, and reorients her

from a strictly imaginary world rooted in verbal engagement to active manipulation of the real toys. Like Mother 604, she is interrupting the child's imaginative elaborations and setting a new agenda, but she does so with more success. Whereas Mother 604 butts the imaginary up against the real, this mother moves from one realm of imagination to another, redirecting the child from strictly verbal elaboration, which requires her participation, to the solitary active manipulation of the real toys. That her re-orientation does not have the same inhibitory effect as that of her insecure counterpart is most likely due to both her flexibility and the child's unusual willfulness and tenacity.

But, in spite of her initial compliance with mother's proscription/redirection, this is a child with an intrepid imagination who is not easily dissuaded. This becomes clear when she returns to the "sandal" at the end of the playing-alone session. As she is walking around the room, she passes by the microphone and pauses once again, calling for her mother's attention:

*CHI: something sticking # out right there.
%act: walking back over to thing sticking out of wall
*CHI: <here> [>].
*MOT: <I don't> [<] know what that is.
*MOT: don't worry about that.
*CHI: # it's a sandal maybe.
%gpx: looking over at M
*MOT: maybe ok.
*CHI: maybe it's [/] it's a sandal and maybe it's a lady.
%act: walking over to M
*MOT: a lady?
%gpx: looking at C
*CHI: &may maybe caught in the wall.
*MOT: maybe.
%act: turns back to look at papers
*CHI: maybe # caught in the wall maybe.
*MOT: um hm.
*CHI: maybe I don't see her.
*MOT: no.
*CHI: where is her?
%gpx: looking at M., gesturing over toward wall
*MOT: who?

*CHI: that lady.
*MOT: I don't know.
*CHI: <may> [>] +/.
*MOT: <you> [<] play with the toys.

Here, the child invokes her earlier source of fascination and demands mother's participation, only this time substituting a declaration ("something sticking # out right there.") for the earlier question ("what's that thing sticking out?"). Mother meets this direct statement with a more overt attempt to discourage her child's particular interest in the microphone, interrupting to claim her ignorance and suggest the child not "worry about that."

Yet, in spite of mother's initial dissuasion, she is now less active in her intervention and more a half-distracted facilitating nonparticipant. She takes a mediating, but not inhibitory, stance to the child's continued imaginings. In a relatively passive way, she keeps the fantasy going by repeating key phrases. When the child suggests that the microphone could be a lady stuck in the wall, the mother seems genuinely surprised and interested, repeating "a lady?" in question form and looking up at the child. In the end, however, mother seems to lose interest; she redirects her attention to the papers and loses track of the child's narrative.

What is achieved by the child here is an idiosyncratic melding of real and imaginary. She once again begins in nonplay, but, building each statement from the next, she gradually constructs a complex fantasy out of this real object: She conjectures the microphone to be the shoe of an absent lady caught in the wall. From one isolated element she has built a whole imaginary structure, most of which is hidden from view. Unlike the sculpture-mother of Child 605, this is a completely cognitive/verbal transformation achieved by the child playing alone. All of the action occurs in the child's mind, the self-conscious product of imagination, posed as speculation. The child's constant use of "maybe" makes explicit the hypothetical base of these imaginings.

Although mother dampens the child's elaboration by emphasizing its conditional quality, repeating "maybe" two times, she does not block it. But she is also not an active participant in the child's construction. The restraints of the condition keep her in her chair, torn between her conflicting obligations to fill out papers and keep the child playing. Her participation is minimal, almost perfunctory. The child thus develops her distinctly personal vision virtually alone, in spite of its conditionality and mother's prohibitions and distraction.

In the end, it is unclear in what realm—real or imaginary—the child is operating. She stands, pointing to the wall, demanding the location of "that lady" ("where is her?"). It appears that she has confounded the experimenter, who disappeared at the beginning of the session and is now behind that wall, with her imaginary lady, thus blending play and nonplay. This is confusing for mother ("who?"), who is already only half-listening, and could account for her finally interrupting the child's further elaborations to return to the initial proscription: "<you> [<] play with the toys."

In this exchange, the child is once again remarkably persistent. She forges ahead in spite of mother's original and repeated discouragement, passing from real to imaginary and back with a kind of personal logic and a distinctly idiosyncratic result. She is clearly operating in an intermediary space of her own, asking for, but not necessarily requiring, mother's participation and support. Although she hedges her bets by posing her ideas in the conditional, she does not require complete confirmation from her interlocutor. Mother reacts minimally, but displays a certain degree of flexibility and interest nonetheless. She does not so much follow her child into the other world as allow her to go there relatively unimpeded. This distinguishes her once again from Mother 604, who directly blocks her child's

movements into the imaginary world. In spite of her child's insistence, the mother remains somewhat disengaged, however. When the theme becomes too confusing and the child too insistent, she pulls her back to the job of playing alone with real toys in the real room.

There is a certain defiance implicit in the child's move from nonplay to interpretation in this sequence. She achieves this level of imaginative elaboration with an already-prohibited item which has nothing to do with the play toys, and in a play condition which necessarily excludes mother's direct involvement. Mother is thus placed in the conflictual position of simultaneously encouraging play while discouraging this particular *kind* of play. In spite of mother's apparent directiveness (relative to other insecure mothers), the child displays her own brand of willful resistance and self-assertion which seems to take precedence.

When mother and child play together, the child's persistence and insistence on her own agenda, reflected in her high number of clauses and directives in the discourse measures, is also evident in the quality of her exchange with mother. In general, the play in this condition is quite sustained and at an advanced level. The child is creative and busy, and mother is an active participant, following the child's lead and generally adhering to her instructions. Most of the play is enactment: The child *is* a fireman, or a girl going to a party, or herself coming through a pretend door, and she casts mother in similar roles. Throughout, the child systematically overtly rejects toys or play themes offered by mother and is strident and exigent about mother's participation in *her* play.

The child here continues a theme she began while playing alone—that of taking leave and returning—only now mother is actively included in the game. At one point, she announces an impending departure, then becomes

distracted by the pliers mother is holding in her hands. Almost inadvertently, she takes mother's lead without giving her credit for it. The following exchange ensues:

*CHI: I'm going to play.
*CHI: what's this?
%gpx: pointing to pliers in M's hands
*MOT: do you remember what this is for?
*CHI: a scissor.
*MOT: well it looks like a scissor.
*MOT: pliers [//] # plier.
*CHI: I have to plier.
*MOT: you have to plier?
*CHI: no I have # to do a plier.
*MOT: ok.
*CHI: this is a scissor
%act: playing with pliers. moving over to chair
*MOT: it looks like a scissor but it doesn't cut.
*CHI: 0 [%exc]
%act: stands opening and closing pliers. then goes to chair and pliers chair
*MOT: ## very good.
*CHI: # here and now your turn.
%act: laying pliers down at M's feet
*MOT: +^ my turn?
*MOT: what should I plier?
*CHI: um # this.
%gpx: stroking arm of chair
*MOT: ok you like this corner don't you?
*CHI: <xxx no don't> [>] +...
%act: taking pliers from M
*MOT: <no> [<]?
*CHI: watch me.
%act: taking pliers from M and pliering chair

Mother begins here in a didactic vein familiar from the interactions of the other dyads. She responds to the child's question "what's this?" with a educating probe: "do you remember what this is for ?" What follows is a negotiation of definitions. The child initially calls the pliers "a scissor". mother gives credence to her perception ("well it looks like a scissor.") while at the same time righting the mistake. Yet she here makes a self-correction which pays subtle homage the child's previous utterance; she changes "pliers" to "plier", a singular version of the original which evokes the child's own "scissor." The child then changes the noun to a verb and announces her

intentions to use this thing they've been discussing: "I have to plier." Play calls, and it is compulsory.

After mother supports the child's declaration by repeating it in question form, the child exacts a kind of linguistic retaliation on her. As mother corrected her definition of the tool, so does the child now correct mother "no I have # to *do* a plier." This is a purely formal alteration, and, in fact, appears as somewhat arbitrary considering the mother's fidelity to the child's original statement. In adding "do" to the phrase, the child emphasizes her own intended action—underlining the use of plier as a verb—and takes the word back for herself. Mother allows for the child's correction and retracts immediately. But the child remains insistent about her own perceptual and linguistic reality, again exhibiting a surprising tenacity in the face of challenge. Walking across the room to use the pliers, she looks back down at them, opening and closing them, and reiterates loudly to mother "this is a scissor!" Mother gives credence to the child's perceptual error while not reinforcing it, now bringing in evidence to support her own definition: "it looks like a scissor but it doesn't cut."

With this, there is a shift to imaginative enactment in the play. The child now pretends to "plier" the chair in the corner and then calls for mother to do the same. Here we see a physical recapitulation of the earlier verbal transaction. Although, to some extent, mother remains the outside commentator, watching the child and remarking with authority on her performance ("very good."), or her proclivities ("you like this corner don't you?"), once the child enlists her participation the roles are reversed—the child plays the master to mother's (somewhat reluctant) apprentice. Mother asks for instructions, "what should I plier?", simultaneously conceding physical authority to the child as the one to tell her what to do, and

reinforcing her own linguistic authority in referring to the tool as a "plier" and not a "scissor." The child stands by, correcting mother's performance with words and actions. She is now presiding over the play, insisting on her idiosyncratic way of *doing*, in the same way she earlier insisted on her own way of *saying*.

In this dyad, the mother-colonized discourse evident in Dyad 604 has been reversed: It is the child who insists on her interpretations, defines and protects her perceptive and linguistic territory. It seems that this child achieves mastery by *being* the master. She will take what mother feeds her, but must always assimilate it to her own ways, incorporating it to suit her needs. This, in itself, is neither unusual nor surprising. What is surprising is the degree to which she prevails, and the confidence she appears to have in her own vision of things. Mother has one of two choices under these circumstances: She can either comment from without, playing the passive observer, the authoritative—if capitulating—commentator; or she can be a direct participant, subject to the commands and directions of her child. In both cases, the child freely refutes and corrects her. While Mother is neither disinterested nor uninvolved, her responses sometimes have an absent, perfunctory and subtly combative quality. This is perhaps her own way of holding ground in the face of her child's assertiveness.

613: Conclusion

In this dyad, mother and child seem to have achieved a balance which allows room for play. But it is a very particular equilibrium, one in which the child is foregrounded, the mother in relief. This dynamic is covert when the child plays alone, overt when mother and child play together. The child's bent for self-determination and control is matched by mother's relatively accommodating, conciliatory style. As a result, the child's (developmentally

appropriate) loose relationship to linguistic and behavioral conventions takes precedence over mother's more fixed boundaries. In this sense, it is the child's more *intermediate* reality which prevails here. This is perhaps what makes it so easy for this dyad to play.

Is this a successful insecure dyad? Earlier recorded interactions between mother and child were stilted and difficult. In an interview conducted when her child was 10 months old, for instance, mother was overtly distressed by her child's neediness and the demands it placed on her, repeatedly expressing her wish to "get away." A taped play session from the same visit shows mother completely out of step with her child; she assumes total control, feeding her child toys and attaching a didactic purpose to each activity. The child's own wishes or proclivities are difficult to decipher because of both the mother's dominance and dissonance, and her own generally lackadaisical and restrained behavior.

The child's high level of directiveness at 28 months, coupled with her consistent diminishment or overt rejection of mother's contributions, suggests a marked reversal of this trend. It is she who has now taken control. But this is not necessarily negative. It seems that now, between the child's high directiveness, and mother's high responsiveness, this dyad has found a way to be together. Mother is more engaged and flexible than one would expect. Indeed, she is generally more responsive and accommodating than either of the other two insecure mothers, and certainly more so than she was 18 months earlier. This may in part be due to the fact that it is now the child who does most of the work—driving, organizing, enacting.

Yet there are still traces of some of the elements which earned each partner her attachment status. The child's simultaneous enlistment of mother's support and participation and insistence on her own dominance evokes the

conflictual behavior of proximity-seeking and rejection typical in angry-ambivalent children. This is further reflected in the all-or-nothing quality of the dyad's interactions, the discrete periods of engagement and disengagement when the child plays alone. As for the mother, there is some evidence that the defensive reticence she exhibited on the AAI has translated into a subtly passive resistance in her relations with her child 29 months later. She appears to be most comfortable asserting herself in the alone condition, when there's a little distance between her and her child. But when they play together, her ambivalence about connection is more obvious. Distractedness and deference replace reticence as a means for mother to maintain distance and dilute the attachment relationship, and provide her a means to subtly subvert her child's capacity to completely prevail.

Case studies summary

The three dyads examined in the case studies, with three different attachment status', each have distinct discourse patterns. Stabley insecure Dyad 604 has many disruptions and disjunctures in their verbal exchanges which are in keeping with previous findings of incoherence and dysfluency in insecure discourse. The dialogue of secure Dyad 605 also shows some patterns which meet expectations for secure discourse. Their verbal exchanges are generally fluent and coherent, with clear thematic progression and representational development. Unstabley insecure Dyad 613 presents a more enigmatic picture. While this mother and child show a capacity for verbal and symbollic elaboration, there are nonetheless subtle imbalances and interuptions in their discourse. Yet these disruptions are not clearly presented by the discourse measures.

DISCUSSION

> A language is never closed upon itself, except as a function of omnipotence.
>
> Deleuze and Guattari
> *A Thousand Plateaus*

Conversation is a seemingly open-ended process with significant formal requirements: One has a number of ways to move in any given dialogue at any given time, but this move is always made within the context of various socio-cultural and linguistic constraints. A premise of this dissertation has been that the choice of what to say in dialogue is a *psychologically significant* event insofar as it is inextricably linked to the internal workings of the speaker/listener. Yet this psychological event unfolds within the essentially interpersonal frame of two or more speakers producing within the bounds cultural and conventional strictures. Conversation, then, is an interactive enterprise which lies at the juncture of the personal and the social, the intrapsychic and the relational, the idiosyncratic and the cultural. Its significance is de-centered, lying somewhere between these elements—it is here that one must go to try to understand the psychology of the participants

In the broadest terms possible, this study set out to examine whether the manner in which people converse can be correlated with their internal, psychological state. The essential question, more specifically, was: Can one track the interpersonal transmission of intrapsychic states in the dialogues of mothers with their children? Trevarthen and Hubley's notion of "secondary intersubjectivity" (1978/1987) suggests that internal states are intergenerationally transmitted through the active verbal exchange between

child and mother. Attachment status was used here as a measure of the internal states of mothers and children, play dialogues were, presumably, their linguistic means of relaying these states.

Six different mothers and their 28-month-old children were used as subjects—three dyads were classified insecure, three secure. Twenty minutes of conversation for each dyad was transcribed and coded using CHILDES and discourse measures of Wolf/Kruger's narrative co-construction coding system. Two different play conditions were examined; 1) the child plays alone while the mother is occupied but present and, 2) child and mother play together on the floor. It was assumed that each of these conditions pose different psychological challenges which would appear in the discourse. The mother's AAI narrative and child's behavior in the Strange Situation were related to the shape and content of their contributions in their dialogue together. It was projected that comparing the play performances to the participants' previous measures of attachment would give some idea of how the dynamic internal workings of mother are passed on to child.

The final data was evaluated using two distinctly different methods of analysis: First a descriptive analysis was conducted, in which the discourse measures for both groups were compared. The data was examined on a case by case level in order to look at patterns and consistencies within and between the secure and insecure dyads. Bar graphs were used to depict interesting and relevant patterns in the data. Then, three dyads were chosen for case studies to investigate the dynamics of exchange more particularly, taking into account the mothers' AAIs, the children's Strange Situations, the dyads' particular discourse patterns, and qualitative aspects of the dialogues themselves. Like the descriptive analysis, these case studies illuminated differences between secure and insecure dyads.

Findings

Descriptive analysis

The absence of statistical analysis in this study, as well as the marked deviation of insecure Dyad 613 and the greater general variation within the insecure group, makes it difficult to fix their discourse inclinations, and automatically qualifies any attempt to conjecture about discourse attributes that may distinguish them from the three secures. The distribution of topic changes, directives and questions varies conspicuously across dyads in the insecure group, for example. Nonetheless, the secures evidenced some stable and consistent patterns which, when compared to those of insecure dyads 604 and 634, reveal some interesting patterns. Though these patterns were not statistically established, and Dyad 613 rests an exception, the numbers here suggest possible ways in which insecure dyads might be distinguished from secure dyads with a larger sample. It must be kept in mind, however, that all of the patterns remarked upon below are conjectured from differences between the three secure dyads, as a group, and only two of the three insecure dyads.

In general, it appears that the three secure mothers use greater proportions of "constraining" classes of speech—questions, directives, and topic changes—in both play conditions. They also appear to talk more often than the two insecure mothers when their children play alone, and their verbal interventions are most frequently from *outside* the play. All three of the insecure mothers in this study appear to have more discrete periods of engagement in the Alone condition, but address their children much more frequently from *within* the play. The three secure and two insecure children (Child 613 excluded here, as well) also show possible differences: When they play alone, the secure children have a smaller proportion of play clauses and

proportionately more metaplay clauses than the insecure children. Relative to their mothers, they are also responsible for proportionately fewer directives, questions and topic changes.

That these three secure mothers appear to use greater proportions of constraining forms of speech, and talk more frequently about the mechanics of the play when their children play alone, can be understood in terms of the approach they take to their role in this play condition. It was hypothesized that insecure dyads would be more distractible and less able to play, and this would be reflected in a smaller proportion of play clauses and greater mother directiveness. In fact, the descriptive analysis suggests that the opposite may actually be the case. While these three secure mothers maintain proximity with consistent verbal contributions, their interventions seem to be more in the service of structuring, rather than participating. With over 90% of their directives and 1/2 of their questions in metaplay when their children play alone, it appears that they help to shape the play while leaving the behavioral execution to the children.

One way of understanding the higher use of constraining forms of speech and smaller proportion of play clauses for the three secure mothers, then, is that they are using words to structure and support the child's ongoing activity. The secure children's higher level of metaplay clauses relative to the two insecure children, coupled with their lower proportion of directives and questions, suggests that they, as a group, are responsive to their mothers' structuring but maintain a degree of independence, as well. While they, too, are using language more functionally to talk *about* what they are doing when they play alone, their low rates of constraining speech suggests that they do not actively elicit mother's response and participation.

In general, the descriptive analysis suggests that there may be a bigger differences in the discourse of secure and insecure dyads when the children play alone. The particular distance between mother and child in this play situation—each in different locations with different agendas—gives language a special importance. Words are a primary means by which the challenges of independence and proximity can be met and the gap between mother and child legitimately bridged. Insecure mothers 604 and 634 seem to struggle more with this function, talking less and intervening more directly into the play. The three secure mothers, on the other hand, appear better able to maintain a constant linguistic connection with their children without breaking role. They uphold the separation while staying present to their children in a mediating or bolstering way.

Another way of interpreting these differences, in the context of this study, is in terms of the respective approaches of the three secure and two insecure mothers to rules and boundaries: The insecure mothers simultaneously display both a more strict adherence to rules and limits, and a greater propensity to transgress them. While they appear to be more fixed and intransigent than the three secure mothers about when and how to interact, for example, they are ultimately less structuring and restrained when they do participate. Their fewer and briefer interventions when their children play alone suggest a particular rigidity with respect to the rules of nonintervention. But their tendency to speak from within the play in this condition suggests they are more likely than secure mothers to depart from the role of uninvolved facilitator. The all-or-nothing approach of these insecure mothers could disrupt the balance of exploration and proximity seeking for their children: They are either left completely alone in their play, or it is taken over by mother.

Case studies

The case studies take a completely different look at the play dialogues in relation to the dyads' attachment status'. They provide a means to more thoroughly investigate some of the suggestions of the descriptive analysis, and help to generate new hypotheses. Here, the weave of the verbal interactions between mothers and children is closely examined through the structural and semantic micro-analysis of selected portions of the play dialogues. The analysis of each dyad's discourse is performed within the context of the mother's AAI and the child's Strange Situation. Unlike the more categorical approach of the Wolf coding system, the relatively flexible and open-ended interpretive stance of this section is better adapted for tracking the development and mutation of the exchanges as they unfold, and the potential relationship between different forms of discourse. In this way, the case studies are more clearly focused on the *dialogic* properties of live language. Each of the three dyads chosen for the case studies showed markedly different discourse tendencies from the others. Nonetheless, some broad patterns can be conjectured from these more detailed analyses which both lend anecdotal support to the suggestions of the descriptive analysis and suggest further research.

Dyad 604 is the one stable insecure dyad chosen for the case study. The mother is classified *unresolved,* her child *disorganized.* The mother's attachment classification is the direct result of her unresolved mourning over her dog's death. In the play dialogues, this dyad displays obvious difficulties. The mother is didactic and reality-bound when she talks to her child—explaining the use and function of a mop, insisting the child acknowledge that a mirror is not, in fact, a hamburger maker. While the child continually calls

for mother's attention and help, he several times turns away from her or stubbornly refuses it when given.

Insecure Dyad 613 has an overtly quite different dynamic from Dyad 604. The mother, classified *dismissing* and *cut off*, is curt and minimizing on the AAI, completely denying the significance of her father's abandonment of the family when she was three years old. In the dialogues, her interventions are intermittent but directive when her child plays alone and overtly conciliatory, though subtly resistant, when they play together. The child, classified *unclassifiable* with *ambivalent and angry* tendencies, is assertive and insistent in both play conditions: When playing alone, she ignores mother's gentle discouragement by returning several times to the microphone, which she perceives to be a lady caught in the wall. When they play together, the child insists on playing *her* games in *her* way.

Mother 605, of the secure dyad chosen for the case studies, appears mostly clear and coherent when discussing her mother's young death. In the play dialogues, her discourse bears some of the same features as the other two secure dyads; her brief interventions are primarily focused on the mechanics of the play when her child plays alone, she is more interactive and in the play when they are together on the floor. The child is concentrated on his own activities but responsive to his mother's input in both conditions. He uses her suggestions to build a sculpture of mother with kitchen utensils when they play together.

Put in the broadest terms possible, the differences between the two insecure dyads and Dyad 605 emerge in the manner in which mothers and children negotiate the requirements and restrictions of the experimental situation; how, alone and together, they deal with the rules and roles of the conditions in which they are placed. In the case studies, there is an overall

sense of conflict with respect to these issues for insecure Dyads 604 and 613. They have trouble settling on a common agenda and frequently seem at cross purposes in their approaches to the tasks at hand.

One sees particular kinds of relational contradictions in the dialogues of these two insecure dyads. The positions of the mothers and children seem to become skewed or inverted in the course of their interactions. This is apparent in the "false predominance" of Mother 613, for example. This mother appears quite directive in the discourse measures for the Alone condition, but the child's own fierce willfulness actually subverts the mother's dominance. Consider, for example, the way in which this child returns to the microphone and develops a complex scenario about a lady being caught in the wall in spite of mother's proscriptions. When the dyad plays together, this dynamic is more obvious. The child here responds to her mother's contributions by either completely assimilating them or turning them back on her. The underlying dynamics of the dyad thus belie their intense interactiveness and mother's overt dominance when the child plays alone: While the child maintains a somewhat solitary predominance, holding onto her own percepts and ideas with or without mother's support, the mother resorts to distracted cooperation.

Relational contradictions are also evident in Dyad 604. Although this child constantly calls for mother's help and participation, he does not really accept it when given. When mother finally responds to his multiple attempts to get her to look at the mop, for example, he quickly turns to a new activity, seemingly ignoring her contribution. Though she is eager to intercede when they play together, mother's participation, itself, is in fact never quite in sync with the child's requests: He is playing with a "hamburger maker", she is insisting it be seen for the mirror it is. In this dyad, mother's manifest

authority as teacher and reality-referee is completely offset by her child's stubborn noncompliance.

These interpersonal conflicts and contradictions upset the equilibrium of the two insecure dyads and can lead to exchanges that are simultaneously estranged and entangled. Consider the manner in which Mother 604's preoccupation with teaching keeps her rooted in her own discourse and far apart from her child. She can become so distracted with correctly naming the mop, for example, that she loses track altogether of the child's attempt to share his play with her. This child's own ambivalence toward his mother also undermines the possibility of any real cooperation between them and so keeps them apart: He can not really integrate her contributions if, as soon as they are offered, he crawls away from her. Yet, though mother and child thus appear alienated from one another, there is nevertheless a mixed-up, confounded quality to Dyad 604's exchanges. The child's "hair brush" turns into the mother's "broom" before she settles it to be a "mop"; "making a hamburger" becomes "make it a hamburger maker." This dyad's dialogue becomes confused and muddled and their exchanges get derailed as words are misconstrued or perverted in the course of being passed back and forth .

Mother 613's subtly resentful compliance with her child has a different kind of estranging effect. Beneath her overt cooperation lies a slightly subversive resistance to the child's self-assertiveness, made evident in her distraction or covert assertions of her own authority. While mother appears to comply with the child's order that she use the "scissor" to work on a chair when they play together, for example, she simultaneously holds onto her own authority by calling her tool a "plier"—a name that has already been rejected several times by the child. The mother's apparent deference allows the child to establish a kind of exigent autonomy that hinges on her initiative and

dominance of mother. And mother's real resistance protects her from truly being dominated and allows her some autonomy in the face of the child's demands. Both partners are pursuing their own agendas—child overtly and mother covertly—which are somewhat at odds with each other. This has a subtly estranging effect on the dyad. Yet their interactions, too, sometimes get confused and mixed-up—though less dramatically than Dyad 604. In their talk about the lady-in-the-wall, for example, mother's half-participation clashes with the child's strong-headed insistence such that the child continues on in spite of mothers proscription and withdrawal, and mother eventually loses track altogether of the original play theme.

In general, the two insecure dyads focused on in the case studies exhibit some marked conflicts over what to do and how to do it, and these conflicts are manifested dialogically in their discourse. They have clashing styles of exchange, in which the obverse is always present; interaction juxtaposed against distraction or avoidance, directiveness against passivity, dominance against submission. While these two dyads sometimes have an un-coupled quality, their interactions can also become confounded, their voices intertwined and confused. The mothers are sometimes absent and inaccessible, sometimes involved and entangled. The children have difficulty using their mothers to negotiate the natural difficulties of the play situations, and appear caught in a conflict between connection and independence.

In contrast to these patterns of interaction in the two insecure dyads, the secure mother of the case analyses, Mother 605, seems to have a more comfortable and fluid relationship to her role. She is both more strict and less rigid in her position as facilitator and/or participant—as indicated in her brief but structuring interventions when her child plays alone. She rarely touches the toys, whether she is removed from the play or participating in it. Her

retroactive verbalizations of the child's actions frames and places them, without stifling or subverting. She uses words to bridge the distance between herself and her child without either overwhelming him or withdrawing.

The suggestion, in the descriptive analysis, of secure children's relative flexibility and capacity for autonomous functioning is evidenced in the close analysis of Dyad 605. This child requests mother's help and incorporates her instructions in both play conditions, but nonetheless repeatedly elaborates and develops his own ideas in his own way. His language and play is sustained and concentrated—shaped and articulated, but not taken over, by his mother's contributions. He thus maintains a certain degree of autonomy while remaining connected to mother and using the structuring she offers. The complex sculpture the child builds with mother's verbal participation is a good example of the way in which this dyad manages to collaborate without clashing.

In the case studies, one sees various forms of conflict between the two insecure mothers and their children. They seem to have brittle relationships to roles and boundaries, and exhibit some difficulty maintaining autonomy in the face of connection. This is made evident in abrupt transitions or discontinuities in their discourse, their difficulties navigating the balance of reality and representation, and disruptions in the balance of control and power between them. In contrast, the ability of secure Dyad 605 to progressively build and shape a play world together, and the lack of overt conflict or contradiction in their interactions, suggest this mother and child to have a particular facility with respect to verbal collaboration and elaboration. There is therefore the suggestion in these case studies of greater fluidity and flexibility in secure dyad 605, as compared to insecure dyads 604 and 613.

Link of findings to research and theory

The suggestion in the descriptive analysis and case studies that the discourse of secure dyads is more fluent than that of insecure dyads is in keeping with the findings of several recent studies. Main et al's (1985) research showed that there was greater fluidity in the exchanges of secure mothers and their six-year-old children. Her finding that secure dyads had greater "ease of access", with topics of conversation that were "free ranging" and "balanced" when compared to those of insecure dyads, supports the suggestion here that the interventions of secure mothers, when their children play alone, are more frequent and helpful, and that the secure dyads' discourse is more proportionate. This research also lends support to the implication, in the case studies, of greater fluidity and clearer development in the discourse of Dyad 605.

Bretherton et al's (1990) research showing that 37-month-old secure children are more "coherent" in their responses to attachment-related stories provides another source for framing the suggestions of this dissertation. Bretherton's finding that secure children were better able to deliver appropriate and comprehensible responses to emotionally charged stories about separation implies a connection between discourse and attachment-related defenses. She proposes that these children have more coherent discourse because they are better able to integrate material regarding attachment and separation. A greater ability to withstand attachment-related stress is perhaps what makes it easier for the secure dyads of this study to interact while the child plays alone. And this might also be part of what makes Dyad 605's discourse appear more fluid and consistently progressive than that of the two insecure dyads in both play conditions, as displayed in the case studies.

In general, both the descriptive and case analyses of this study suggest that the way in which mothers and children manage the requirements of separation and proximity in the playing-alone condition may be the most powerful window into their differences. Previous research supports this implication. Belsky et al (1982; 1984) showed that there were larger differences for insecure children in their level of symbolic play alone and their level when playing with mother. He attributes at least part of this difference to secure children's greater ability to explore and symbolize alone. Slade's (1987) study of attachment and early symbolic play of 20 and 28 month old infants poses this distinction in terms of the mother. She found that the secure mothers were more apt than insecure mothers to maintain verbal contact and remain available to their children while otherwise occupied. The findings of this dissertation suggest that one of the ways in which secure mothers are more present to their children while they play alone is by talking more frequently and in a more structuring way to help direct and organize them.

Because of the lack of formal statistical analysis in this study, it is impossible to draw conclusions about quantifiable differences in the structure and function of secure and insecure dialogues, however. Instead, the descriptive analysis and case studies provide one way of conceptualizing possible distinguishing features of the exchanges of different dyads. The theories of Bruner, Vygotsky, Winnicott and Dore provide a way of understanding the requirements of the dynamic interface of mother and child which are particularly challenged by these play situations.

Bruner (1987) promotes the notion of *scaffolding* to explain one of the ways that adults facilitate the development of their children. Bruner claims that the adult scaffolds the child by playing both a challenging and a pacing

role with respect to his productions. To support this claim, he evokes Vygotsky's *zone of proximal development*, the space between a child's cognitive capacity, alone, at any given moment and that which he can do with the help of adults. Bruner suggests that the continuous challenges of the adult within the zone of proximal development are a crucial means by which the child is pushed forward developmentally. When a parent conceptualizes a task or verbalizes strategies needed to accomplish it properly, that parent is scaffolding the child and thereby helping him to perform at a higher level.

In these experimental sequences, words become a primary means of scaffolding for the mothers, particularly when their children play alone. Delivered from *outside* the physical manipulation of things, language offers a way for the mother to frame the child's activity, conceptualizing problems and solutions or setting the pace of the play without physical intervention. In using language to structure and organize, the mothers breach the gap between their children's competence alone and capacity with help, bolstering their performances and increasing their confidence without taking over. They work in Vygotsky's zone of proximal development to help the child link words to things and better master the tasks at hand. In this way, they both augment the level of their children's play, and give them the experience of mastery and autonomy.

Viewed in terms of Winnicott (1965), scaffolding is one way in which the mother provides a "facilitating environment" for her developing child. (Slade, 1987) She gives shape and continuity to her child's experiences and gradually inducts him into the requirements of the "objective" world by providing a frame at the outside edge of his ability that challenges without discouraging. In this way, the mother lends her child some of her own power and control, so both buttressing his capacity and helping to allay the crisis

posed by his real helplessness. In providing a facilitating environment, mother cushions the disillusionment provoked by the child's realization of his own relative incompetence and vulnerability.

Winnicott remarks that, in separating and individuating, the child must relinquish omnipotence without being obliged to comply. This can be accomplished within a facilitating environment with a scaffolding mother. But it is a delicate project that requires a mixture of empathy and signal-based understanding. The interplay of the facilitating mother and learning child is highly calibrated: While mother is required to be responsive to the child's current capacities, she must also be capable of anticipating his developmental potential. She has to both show the child what he doesn't know—in this way challenging him, and support him for what he does know—so encouraging him.

Dore (1983) discusses this give-and-take between a developing child and scaffolding mother in the context of language learning. He conceptualizes the empathic verbal exchanges between mother and child in terms of Stern's (1982) concept of attunement. Dore emphasizes the conflict between mother's competence and the child's lack of mastery, claiming the tension created by this inequality to be inherent to all early verbal exchanges and an important source of motivation for the language learner. But he, too, acknowledges that this is a delicate process which requires a high degree of "attunement" in order not to result in disillusionment:

> ...the disequilibrium between [mother's] communicative matches and [the child's] affective state and cognitive awareness becomes a motivational (even moral) crisis for him if his personal identity with her as partners in communion (now communication) is threatened by too many mismatches or failure on her part to "uptake" his affect or intent to express. (1983, p. 179)

Bruner's scaffolding, Winnicott's facilitating environment, and Dore's linguistic attunement are all ways of understanding the dialogical dynamics of

the mother/child matrix. The calibration of voices; the use of language to empower or control; the negotiation of vastly different levels of linguistic competence; the maintenance of closeness without fusion, separation without isolation; the navigation of various play worlds—here is where these relational dynamics are manifested in the play dialogues. In the case studies, one sees how the insecure mothers' ability to collaborate and communicate with their children is compromised by moments of impingement and/or abandonment which tip the balance in one or the other of these areas. The descriptive analysis suggests these mothers to be less consistently present—in a structuring way—to their children. This seems to impair the children's performances in their struggle maintain a connection while meeting the challenge of independent symbolization and play. Secure dyads, on the other hand, appear better able to reconcile these forces and maintain representational continuity without mother either taking over or completely receding.

To understand the different representational outcomes of these struggles, compare Child 605's sculpture mother to Child 613's image of a lady stuck in wall. While one is a fully articulated, independent symbol, built in conjunction with mother, simultaneously connected to real object (mother) and apart from her, the other is a fixed half-presence, the idiosyncratic product of a lone imagination working to elaborate but stopping just short with a half-realized, embedded, and socially incomprehensible figure. One is the product of dialogic negotiation and collaboration, the other an act of more solitary defiant self-assertion. The respective symbols themselves show the influence of these dynamics on the end result.

Theoretical justification of approach

This study promotes a dialogical approach to language—the play conversations are examined as interpersonal events which are related to a history and future of internal and external relations. Bakhtin's (1981) idea of an internal discourse originating from voices encountered in the external world; Vygotsky's (1978) notion that original interpersonal events are internalized to become intrapsychic reality; attachment theory's contention that language represents internal working models, that are the derivatives of early attachment related experiences (Bretherton, 1985: Main et al, 1985);—all of these theories point up the interdependence of intrapsychic and interpersonal realms of experience.

A basic assumption of this study is Bakhtin's premise that live language occurs somewhere *between* normally discriminated elements—self and other; past, present and future; the individual and the socio-cultural—and, as such, is the link between the objective world and subjective phenomenon. The essential dialogic quality of language means that every word is "shot through" with the words of others: Using language is always an interpersonal enterprise insofar as each living word is a response to either the external presence of another, the internal presence of another, or both. The word is like a prism with many reflecting and refracting surfaces. And interpreting language is an endless matter of simultaneously unraveling and reconstituting the vast tangle of influences inherent in every utterance.

The two established measures of attachment used here—the AAI and the Strange Situation—share these dialogic properties; they straddle internal and external interpretive and experiential arenas, and refer backward and forward in time. Yet they are both quite differently configured, originating at opposite ends of the spectrum.

The AAI is an essentially intrapersonal event being interpreted on an interpersonal level. The discourse can be considered conversation insofar as the speaker is reacting to a second person. But, in fact, it is in proportion to the internal, organic properties of the subject's narrative—how it hangs together or falls apart—that it is judged "coherent" and "fluent" or, alternatively, "incoherent" and "dysfluent." And it is more the exigencies of the interview, not those of the interviewer, that provoke the defensive processes which lead to these revealing narrative disruptions. The analysis of the AAI thus hinges on an *internal* notion of dialogism and coherence in which the primary drama is not *between* subject and interviewer, but *within* the subject's narrative itself.

With the Strange Situation, the interpretive lens is reversed: What Bakhtin called the "collision/coalescence of interior voices" is turned inside-out. The focus moves from the mother's internalized relationship with her own parents, to her real relationship with her developing infant. The drama is placed between, rather than within, participants and the emphasis falls on the mother/child matrix, itself. In terms of this study, the Strange Situation is the original interpersonal event. Here, interactive behavior takes the place of words as a means of relaying something about the internal state of the participants. Mary Main asserts that the responses elicited by the anxiety-provoking format of this experimental method, like that of the Adult Attachment Interview, provide a window into the incipient psychic organization of the participating infants. The Strange Situation is thus an interpersonal enactment of an internal situation

Following the theory of Bakhtin, these measures, with their different vantage points, are both cuts of the same pie: Remember that language exists between space and time, continually criss-crossing de-limited domains. The

implied inter-generational transmission of attachment behaviors extends the scope of the AAI and the Strange Situation outward; from tracings of personal histories to anticipation of a future with another. The AAI narrative is an internalized dialogue in the present that encompasses the inter-personal domain in the past and future; it refers back to the mother's original attachment relationships and looks ahead to her relationship with her own child. The Strange Situation is similarly cross-located: It is considered a behavioral manifestation of an incipient internal situation which reflects a history and future of care and relationships.

The approach to the play dialogues in this study is similarly cross-located: They are examined as external manifestations of internal conditions which are related to the psychic life of each participant and tell something about the dyad's past, current and future interrelations. While the AAI narrative is dialogical discourse turned outside-in, the play dialogues, like the Strange Situation, are explicitly relational. They are mutating, active exchanges in which mothers and children use a mixture of words and actions to get things done together; whether to protect the boundaries of the play situation (this is particularly true when the child plays alone) or to work jointly toward a common goal. Yet, with the mix of language, representation and play, these dialogues lie more explicitly at the *juncture* of the intra- and interpersonal than either the AAI or the Strange Situation.

The idea, then, is that these dialogues are intermediate artifacts which are both retrojective and prophetic. This is, admittedly, an expansive claim for such relatively modest productions, and one which necessarily foregrounds the interpretive act, itself. Coherence is the pivotal interpretive concept for this project; it provides a way for framing the discourse in terms of internal and external, and past, present and future. Incoherence in the surface of the

dialogue is assumed to tell something about the deep organization of the participants: The way the different dyads conflict or coalesce in language is related to the configuration of their attachment-related defenses. Following this line of reasoning, the relatively greater conflicts and contradictions in the comportment of the two insecure dyads examined in the case studies, and the discontinuity in the fabric of their discourse and play, is significant insofar as it indicates their weaker defense structures—and, hence, the less integrated organization of their internal working models— with respect to attachment-related issues.

Limitations of the study and future research

The natural pitfalls of attempting to fix, operationalize, and dissect dialogical discourse are multiple. While one is required to take a weaving, more open-ended approach to the data in such a project, this can easily end in a hermeneutic tangle. But more rigorous attempts to control and quantify tend to divide and categorize, processes that are fundamentally at odds with the phenomenon being looked at, itself.

Such quantitative/qualitative tensions were evident in the failure of the coding system to capture the more subtle dynamics of the mother/child interface. From this study, it seems clear that one of the most successful ways of understanding the dynamics of give-and-take is micro-analytically tracking the movement within dyads. In fact, it appears that a project such as this requires both quantitative and qualitative analysis. Yet, repeating the study with a larger sample size—one way to make the discourse measures more effective and possibly attain statistical results—would compromise the ability to track the flux and flow of the discourse between mother and child. The choice is thus between a quantitative study with a larger sample to look for distinctive

discourse patterns for different attachment groups, or a qualitative study with a smaller sample to more closely examine the dynamics of the mother/child interface.

The small sample size of this study limited the possibility for quantitative analysis of the data. Because there were so few subjects, possible trends or tendencies could not be statistically verified. Additionally, many of the applied measures were too broad or too infrequently manifested to give results with so small a sample. Discourse markings, such as interruptions, retracings and incompletions, for example, were rendered inutile because they simply did not occur often enough within the 20 minutes of transcribed talk for each dyad. This could account for the lack of findings for Fluency. A similar problem occurred on the fourth level of coding system, where questions, directives, spontaneous comments and responses were divided into various sub-categories. Valuable with larger data samples (Kruger, personal communication), the numbers at this level of interpretation were not large enough to uncover any similarities or differences.

Another drawback of this study is the incompatibility of attachment status' within and between insecure dyads. There is only one insecure dyad with compatible primary classifications for mother and child—Dyad 604, where the mother is *unresolved* and the child *disorganized.* The subclassifications of this dyad—mother *preoccupied/angry* and child extremely *avoidant*—are not compatible, however. The different intra-dyad classifications of each mother/child couple implies that the children's characteristic patterns of interaction are not the complements of those of their mothers. Important differences in type of insecurity are also present across dyads, where each mother and child has a distinct primary classification. While mother 604 is *unresolved,* 634 is *preoccupied* and 613 is *dismissing.* Their children are

disorganized/avoidant, avoidant, and *unclassifiable with avoidant, resistant* features, respectively.

It is perhaps because individuals with fundamentally different interpersonal behavior patterns and defensive styles were grouped together as "insecures" that there was such variability in the discourse findings for this group. Secure mothers and children exhibit essentially coherent and fluent behavior and language, though they may show some elements of avoidance or anger. In contrast, although insecure groups have incoherency in common, this can take completely different linguistic and behavioral forms, according to type. While the transcripts of *dismissing* mothers are superficially collaborative and can be excessively succinct, for example, the AAIs of *preoccupied* individuals are normally unfocused and rambling, filled with entangled and convoluted speech. (Main, 1995) Insecure *avoidant* children actively evade their mothers on reunion, *ambivalent* children are more conflicted and likely to simultaneously approach and avoid. In general, the category "insecure" represents a much more diverse set of behaviors than "secure." This could account for the fact that, in the discourse measures used here, the three secure dyads showed much greater consistency than the three insecures: While individuals classified as secure are generally flexible, fluent and open, insecures represent a whole variety of dysfunctions with a discontinuous range of defensive styles.

In addition, because of the very small size of this sample, insecure Dyad 613's deviant discourse patterns had a strong effect on the final results. The confusing picture this dyad presents in the discourse measures brings up issues regarding the instability of insecure attachment classifications in this study. As mentioned earlier, 613 appeared very like the secure dyads when the child played alone, and their discourse patterns while playing together were a

complete aberration in the sample. The dyad's primary attachment classifications—mother *dismissing* and child *unclassifiable* with *angry/ambivalent* tendencies—presents, in itself, a somewhat enigmatic picture. This is the only dyad in the case studies with noncompatible insecure attachment classifications for mother and child, where closer evaluation suggested a subtle discongruency in their exchanges which was not reflected in the numbers of the discourse measures—particularly when the child played alone. Given the different behavioral and expressive styles implied by these different subtypes of insecure attachment, it is possible that the more mixed picture this dyad gives, and the disjuncture between the findings on the standardized measures and the implications of the case analysis, has in part to do with their incompatible attachment types.

Another methodological drawback of this dissertation is that close qualitative analysis of the dialogues came after the attachment status's of each dyad were known. The decisions of what secure and insecure dyads to highlight and which excerpts of the AAIs and play dialogues to examine micro-analytically were therefore retroactive. This raises obvious problems regarding an interpretive bias, which inevitably shows itself in the selection of what to analyze, the manner in which the analysis was achieved, and the conclusions that were reached.

Further research would necessarily require more careful discrimination of insecure attachment types, with stable within-dyad insecure classifications. Quantitative studies might be conducted with a larger sample to look at the different proportions of directives, questions topic changes, and mean length turns for secure and insecure dyads suggested in this study. Although it is unclear whether the discourse markings used in these transcriptions (interruptions, overlaps etc...) might provide a means to

discriminate structural properties of dialogue with more subjects, this is a capacity of the CHILDES transcription system which is worth pursuing. Additionally, the finding of this study that secure dyads negotiate separation-with-proximity differently than insecure dyads can be further investigated, both quantitatively and qualitatively. If a more qualitatively focused study is pursued, close interpretation of dialogues should occur with the experimenter blind to attachment status.

Conclusion

This study set out to examine if the structure and function of conversations between mothers and their 28-month-old children could be correlated with their attachment status'. Following previous work on coherency and attachment, it was theorized that defensive processes detected through language measures in the mothers' AAI narratives, and behavioral measures in the children's' Strange Situations, would appear as fluencies or dysfluencies in the play dialogues. Qualitative analysis of the data suggests that the verbal exchanges of the insecure dyads are more explicitly disrupted and conflictual than those of insecure dyads. This suggestion, if true, would be in keeping with the findings of previous research regarding discourse and attachment.

Appendix A

TRANSCRIPTION SYMBOLS

*CHI:	child's utterance
*MOT:	mother's utterance
[c]	clause
#	pause of less than 5 seconds
##	pause of 5 seconds or more
()	noncompletion of a word
	*MOT: I been sit(ting) all day.
+...	incompletion of utterance w/out interruption
	*CHI: smells good enough for +...
	*CHI: what is that?
+/.	uninvited interruption
	*MOT: what did you +/.
	*CHI: mommy.
+^	quick uptake (no short pause btw utterances)
	The utterance of one speaker follows quickly on the heels of that of a previous speaker.
	*MOT: why did you go?
	*CHI: +^ I really didn't.
+,	self-completion after interruption
	The same speaker finishes an utterance which was previously incomplete or interrupted.
	*CHI: so after the tower +...
	*MOT: yeah.
	*CHI: +, I go straight ahead.
(&)	false starts
	CHI:&c &c can you go?
[/]	retracing without correction
	*CHI: <and then> [/] and then they all go.
[//]	retracing with correction
	*CHI: <we should all> [//] they should all go.
<bef>	occurance before
<aft>	occurance after

[?]	**best guess at a word**
	for previous word or group of words
xxx	**unintelligible run of speech**
	*CHI: mommy, xxx.
xx	**unintelligible word**
	*CHI: i want xx.
0 (zero)	**actions without speech**
	*CHI: 0 [=! cries]
[= text]	**explanation**
	*MOT: don't look in there [= closet]
[: text]	**replacement**
	*MOT: when you gonna [: going to] stop.
[>]	**overlap follows:**
	Two speakers talking at the same time.
	*MOT: you have to <stop doing that> [>]
	*CHI: <Mommy I don't like this> [<]
[<]	**overlap precedes**
%add	**who talks to whom**
	*MOT: be quiet
	%add: CHI
%cod:	**coding**
%act:	**actions of speaker**
%com:	**comments of any sort**
%gpx:	**gestural and proxemic material**
	i.e. nodding, reaching, etc...
%int:	**intonations**

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