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To act in a way that is both sexist and racist, to maintain one's class privilege, it is only necessary to act in the customary, ordinary, usual, even polite manner.

—Joanna Russ, *How to Suppress Women's Writing*

In the 1960s, we said to ourselves that we would be nonracist and nonsexist. Now 30 years later, we find that simply *saying* so was easier than *being* so. We have, to our chagrin, discovered the truth of Russ' statement and the difficulty of implementing a society where concern and responsibility for the group coexists with respect for individual integrity, where both community and personal autonomy mutually support and reinforce each other.

One of the factors that makes it so difficult for us to perceive sexism, let alone to free ourselves of it, is that sexism is deeply embedded in our grammar in such a way that we are mostly unaware of its daily impact. (For linguists, the term *grammar* includes the formation of words, sentences, texts, and discourse.) This same structure leads us to think of autonomy and community as opposites.

The structure of English persuades us, both gently and not so gently, to think in sexist ways. Because our grammar leads us to see human relationships in sexist terms, we use that model to structure our relationships with other human beings, much as the laws governing slaves were based on the laws then governing women. Language and culture are on a feedback loop; changing one changes the other in complex interactional ways.

One can better understand the effects of our own language by looking at another; one is aware of the air only when one sees what it is not. Therefore, as a contrast, the structure of the Jaqi (pronounced "hah-kay") languages of South America can give us a glimpse into what a grammatical structure based on other principles might be like. The Jaqi are three groups of people in the Andes: 3.5 million Aymara ("eye-mah-dah") speakers in Bolivia, southern Peru, and northern Chile; a few thousand Jaqaru ("hah-kah-doh") speakers in Tupe and scattered in cities in Peru, mostly in the department of

Lima; and a handful of Kawki ("cow-key") speakers, the modern remnants of what was, 1,500 years ago, a vast mercantile empire extending from northern Peru to Argentina. Kawki is now a dying language.

The material presented here follows from a conceptual framework I first developed working with the Jaqi people—a language and culture without sexism in the basic structure. In order to account in a holistic way for the linguistic structures I discovered while writing the grammars for these languages, I developed the concept of the *linguistic postulate*, which is a theme or motif that can be found in almost all the sentences of a language, a feature that is used repeatedly by the language to organize the universe. For example, you might try to think of a sentence in English with no number—that is, with no singular or plural. It is possible only if the sentence consists of expletives ("Ouch!") or exclusively of an imperative ("Help!") or other second-person verb ("You sing"), no other verb forms or nouns allowed. Clearly, grammatical number (singular/plural) is a linguistic postulate in English, and just as clearly, English speakers regularly view this number classification as "natural," a part of nature rather than a learned part of an arbitrary system.

By contrast, the Jaqi languages do *not* mark singular versus plural—number is marked only if important or relevant to the context. Just as we can say *those* without indicating how many we mean, so Jaqi speakers can say *uqa* ("that, those") with a similar lack of specificity—but for them this may also include *one*.

Since I discovered the linguistic postulates of the Jaqi languages of South America to be quite different from those of English, I have found it worthwhile to compare the major Jaqi and English postulates—ones that require realization in virtually every sentence of each. This is a particularly useful exercise because human relations in the Jaqi languages are grammatically constructed on the basis of sexual and human

The Sexist Circuits of English

by
M. J. Hardman

By the time we are six years old, the grammatical structure of our native language appears to us to be the nature of the universe. Such is the nature of the human experience.

equality. The major linguistic postulates in Jaqi are humanness (human/nonhuman) and data source (how do I know what I am saying—my own experience, from someone telling me, or otherwise?). These postulates are realized at all levels of the grammar: verb endings, noun endings, sentence formation, and storytelling. These linguistic postulates lead to a particular construction of the world and to thinking patterns that contrast with those to which our own language structure leads us.

To account for a particular constellation of linguistic postulates in English, I have developed the concept of *derivational thinking*. Three linguistic postulates in English interact in mutual reinforcement. These three are: number (singular/plural), sex-based gender with masculine as the root, and our ranking comparative/absolute (wise, wiser, wisest). These are further reinforced by a number of other sentence-forming and narrative patterns. This derivational thinking forms the grammatical base for our general model of human relationships.

The totality of a culture and a language are present at all times, with some portion being foregrounded. While grammatical items can be analyzed singly, they do not occur singly, which is why they also act as mutual reinforcers—they are all part of a pattern, one that is learned as a necessary requirement for participation in the human community. From the work of the Japanese neurosurgeon Tsunoda, we also now know that the very physiology of our brain structure is determined by our native language. By the time we are six years old, the grammatical structure of our native language appears to be the nature of the universe. Such is the nature of the human experience.

Grammatical and Narrative Patterns

In the following, we will examine the life pattern of a girl child in acquiring English and in acquiring Jaqi as we course through the sexist circuits of English.

Naming Patterns. In English, as soon as a baby is born, we label it as being the child of a man. Our naming patterns make the mother disappear precisely as she gives birth: the baby usually carries the father's name. Furthermore, when the formal announcement comes, the mother is reduced to a mere prefix: "Mr. and Mrs. John Jones announce. . . ." Furthermore, the name a girl child is given at birth isn't even a permanent one: it will change over her lifetime as the man responsible for her changes. Even the part of the name she feels is her own—the "given" name—will, for the most part, be a derivative of some man's name, formed by adding something. For example: Stephanie from Steven or Paula from Paul or diminutives like Betty or Patty. She is denied the identity that can be the foundation of autonomy from the very start. The social con-

cealment of the birth process is a part of this denial, as illustrated in the following incident, described by Tara Schreier, one of my students:

I recently attended with my friend John a gallery opening featuring two nature photographers who had both never shown their work to the general public before. Each artist was billed separately and equally and the only difference on the invitations was that one artist was a female and the other was a male. The photographs were arranged in one room in an alternating fashion so there was no division between the artists' works. The general theme of the entire show was "survival." The female artist concentrated on reproduction and birth. Most of the pictures showed all types of animals in the midst of the birthing process. I remember thinking how graphic but beautiful they were. The male artist chose to show the predatory nature of animals. Most of the scenes were violent hunt-and-kill shots. He too caught the beauty of it, I thought. As we came to the final photographs, John said, "This guy has such a unique and raw perspective, he *really* made this show." I asked him what he thought of the other artist and tried to point out that she really showed promise and her interpretation of survival showed pain and joy, which takes talent. "Give me a break!" John said. "That is exactly the point: look at the subject matter. It's a bunch of animals having babies! They belong in a nursery, not a famous gallery. Yeah, she took her chances with some wild animals; too bad it was not for something that meant *something*." The work was wasted effort because the subject was something he obviously could not comprehend.

Among the Jaqi the legal naming patterns follow Spanish custom, where the girl child takes the names of both mother and father. The given name is taken from some prestigious source, such as the Saints' calendar (for Macedonia, Sofronia, Eustolia, and so forth), from newspapers (Golda), or from a prestige language such as English (for Mery, Beti, and so on). The names may be derived from men's names in the original languages, but they are not so perceived by the Jaqi and would not be so within the Jaqi languages. Furthermore, the name given is a permanent one, Spanish custom notwithstanding. By Spanish law, grandchildren do lose grandmothers' names, but that is not of immediate perception nor identity/autonomy significance to the child. Furthermore, since most people can recite a family tree through five generations, and do so regularly when making introductions, the name may be legally lost but is not forgotten. These practices tie the newborn girl to her community while simultaneously giving her the first tool for developing identity and autonomy.

The grammatical marking of data-source gives ideas both historical and human ties, encourages observation, and builds community through the recognized dependence on others.

Ranking comparative/absolute. In English, before she leaves the hospital, the child will be ranked using comparatives and absolutes as well as a lot of other narrative structures we have developed. By family and visitors, the child will be declared to be the most beautiful baby ever born: the best, the biggest, the smartest, the mostest you ever saw. The hospital personnel will weigh and measure and rank the baby with all the other children born that day—at that hospital, in that city, in that state or country. Parents go home talking about their “eightieth percentile” newborn. She has been placed in a hierarchy where there are no equals and where there is community only in competition.

The girl child in the Andes has come into a world where humans cannot be compared. If, in European style, she should try it, she will be told that comparing people is rude. To speak well of someone, one says *suma jaqiwa* (“That one is a beautiful human”). Within this structure, there is autonomy in uniqueness.

Number. In English, the first sentences the child hears will be full of numbers; as we have already seen, virtually every sentence will be loaded with singulars and plurals. As soon as she starts to speak, she will be corrected on any number of errors made, such as “one feet/two foots”—errors that will be met with great hilarity. She will also be picking up, gradually and continually, the value of the singular, especially as tied in with ranking, as she hears that only one person can be best, one needs to be on top, the buck stops here, there always has to be a boss, and so on and on. The child learns that singular is “best,” that singular is the “norm,” that singular is “most desirable.” This applies finally to only one way of life, accompanied in many cases by an insistence that others adopt this one way, too; and herein lies one of the reasons that diversity is so very difficult for us to understand or appreciate. Even our national motto, *E pluribus unum*, says “Out of many, one,” exalting the singular and implying that we need to eliminate our diversity.

The Andean girl child is surrounded with sentences marking data source; all day she must say, as part of each sentence, whether she heard what is known from someone else or whether it was gained from her own experience. What the child experiences directly is different from what people relay or what the storytellers weave. “Did you see?” or “What did they say?” they may ask. All of these categories—personal knowledge, knowledge through language, or nonpersonal knowledge—are marked grammatically, as constantly and as insistently as our number. Jaqi speakers view such marking as utterly natural and essential to any language. The child learns to pay attention to “how do I know?” This grammatical marking of data-source gives ideas both historical and human ties, encourages observation, and builds community through the recognized dependence

on others for information.

Sex-based gender for people and animal classification.

The child also learns that the major classification for people and all animals is sex-based and hierarchical. As with number, the male as the “best,” the “norm,” and the “most desirable” is learned early and well. Almost all animals and people are male in the story books, except those with young. It doesn’t take very long for children to learn that all other judgments are subordinated to this classification, with the result that boys like to be called by male names from animals, such as studs or bulls (feeling more in common with a male animal than with a girl), and girls learn quickly to be “feminine”—that is, to display, in a polite and courteous manner, a tractable, passive, and docile lower status. This allows the boys to show “masculinity,” even “chivalry,” which is the polite and courteous manner to display dominance and the threat of violence.

Part of the narrative pattern of this classification is that “everyone” is male. The following show this principle in action:

My freshman year, I took a creative writing class. I wrote a story about a woman coming to terms with her grief at her grandfather’s death. Although my story was the only one that got a unanimous “I like it” from the rest of my class, my teacher said that I hadn’t written something “important” enough, and if I ever wanted to write a good story, I would have to learn how to recognize these “unimportant” topics. I asked what an important story would be, and she said it should be something more relevant to all people. When I asked what could be more relevant to everyone than grief, she said that men couldn’t relate to my main character, and my story would alienate half the people who would read my story. (Apparently it was okay if women felt they were being left out.) However, after the class period in which we had workshopped my story, two of the men in the class came up to me and told me that, after they had read the story, they called up their own grandparents just to tell them that they loved them.

[Karen Mya Riemer]

[According to the National Institutes of Health] virtually all medical research has been on males only, including white mice. Now . . . medical researchers must include some women and nonwhite males—[but only] to be measured against white male response! However, some researchers have objected, saying that the rules will reinforce racial and ethnic stereotypes. To quote one of them: “Basically these rules say that every racial and ethnic group is fundamentally different biologically. And this is just not true. In the U.S. we don’t single out different

The structure of ranked classification by sex denies autonomy to half of us and gives rank-dependent autonomy to the other half.

ethnic groups. We assume that basically everyone is similar—that is, all are white male. If this latter assumption were real, then women and minorities would have been included on a regular basis from the beginning in establishing basic doses.

[*Chronicle of Higher Education*, April 6, 1994]

This structure of ranked classification by sex denies autonomy to half of us and gives rank-dependent autonomy to the other half.

One notation in the preface of the first edition of *Oh! Pascal!* by Doug Cooper and Michael Clancy (W. W. Norton and Co.) stands out for its unusualness as a corrective: "Incidentally, all personal pronouns in *Oh! Pascal!* are feminine. After hundreds of years of 'he' and 'his,' a few decades of 'she' and 'her' shouldn't bother anyone."

On the other hand, the Andean child learns that the major classification is between people and animals. A girl learns that her links are with other humans, not with the female of animals; she is not called by those names, nor are the boys around her. This structure also builds a sense of community, this time with all humans.

Pronoun sets. In English, the pronouns echo the structure of the noun sets. The child learns that the "generic" is *he* and thus begins a life of translations. A girl child must learn how to "translate" each and every *he* to know whether or not she might be included: "Will everyone please come in with his ticket?" Can she go in? This is not an easy matter and grammatically leaves girls and women always on the edges, always uncertain as to belonging. Her position is always uncertain, always subject to exclusion, even when legal barriers to inclusion have been removed. Because the male is the "norm," the "best," and the "most desirable," she is always being measured against him. This means that there is nothing she can do that is not *marked*. Deborah Tannen in a recent article has pointed this out in regard to women's apparel. Anything we wear is marked and open to judgment; there is no way for a woman to dress neutrally. The child is also learning that the *first person*, in all senses, is *I*—but, of course, that said person should be male.

The Andean girl must also learn pronouns, but her sets are people as contrasted with all else. The child is also learning to mark the presence or absence of *you* as a focus in the conversation: interaction with other people must always, grammatically, take into account how the person she is speaking with figures into what is being said. This grammatical structure causes a focus on community.

Things organized by sex. In English, the child learns that *things* are organized according to the sex principle as well: ships

are "shes"; women have "appliances" while men have "machines"; there are "girl" toys and "boy" toys; and so on. These are examples of *covert gender* in English.

The Andean girl learns that in her world things are organized by shape and that these shapes in motion are expressed in verbs. So if she carries pencils, it's *aya*; if grains, it's *ach'i*; if potatoes, it's *ira*; and if she is carrying water in a bucket (which a child will do from the age of two on), it's *asa*.

Word order in phrases. In English, as a girl acquires the rudiments of sentence formation, she learns all about ordering: boys, men, or males are always first and, together with the ranking comparative/absolute, this ordering is a very powerful statement. If she complains, she is reminded of "ladies and gentlemen" and "bride and groom" and is expected to be satisfied. No one remarks on what the bride and groom become by the end of the ceremony—namely, "husband and wife." Presumably the ordering is optional, but those who have tried to switch the order on a regular basis find it surprisingly difficult. This structure is a syntactic statement of the actual precedence in life: that it is difficult to change both reflects and reinforces the societal order. Every time we say "men and women" instead of "women and men," we reaffirm men's position as first precisely because *order* is important in English. This overwhelming assumption is illustrated in the following from Brooke Kelly:

While doing my research for this paper, I was surprised to find that not one subject (female or male) made a phrase with the female in the first position. I asked each subject to circle their [*sic*] gender at the top of the page, and I listed female before male. In fact, the male as primary seems to be so accepted that males circled female as their gender. I guess they were so accustomed to being first they neglected to even read the options.

After reading this to one audience, a young man came up to show me an application where the order of sex had also been switched. He told me that he had nearly marked the wrong sex!

Phrase order for the Jaqi child is far more flexible and also occurs much less as a syntactic device because people are included in the verb. Furthermore, when phrases do occur, the linker is more like our *with*—that is, more inclusive, not so itemizing. In addition, inclusion can be done with sentence suffixes. There is no pattern comparable to ours to make a girl child or a woman feel "always second."

Subject male/object female. Within English, the subject of the sentence is ranked above the object. Within linguistics, we even speak of "raising the object to subject position." The subjects in the child's world—the agents—are overwhelmingly

The ranking of subject above object ties in closely with the ranking of both number and sex-based gender: thus we find the singular male subject the most “comfortable.”

men. The girl child is supposed to be the object. Think, for example, of the movie title for a film that was presumably about friendship between women and men: *When Harry Met Sally*. There is one textbook on syntax in which the subject of every example sentence is male, except for one—“Mary wrote a book about John”! The rule of male as subject is true of jobs, of honors, of recognitions, and of accomplishments and is a direct reflection of grammar. Theoretically, women could easily be included as subjects, but the difficulties encountered in doing so are amazing, and the ways in which people go about either denying the agent/subject position to women and/or denigrating her when she gets there anyway are the subject of an entire book by Joanna Russ. The importance of this one grammatical structure is hard to overemphasize. The following reflect what are daily personal experiences of all women. The first is what I call a “defining example”: the people involved had no agenda but were merely being friendly in a basically neutral area. The grammatical patterns came to the fore in a clear example of ordinary perceptual patterns:

I was sitting in the waiting room, playing with my baby daughter Jamie. One of her favorite games is to grab my fingers for stability, and muscle her way up into a stand. A woman saw us playing this game and came over and said: “What a strong little boy you are, able to stand up on your own like that!” I answered: “She is very strong, isn’t she?” The woman looked surprised and commented: “She’s so big for a little girl. And you’re so cute letting daddy pull you up like that.”

[Art Bautista-Hardman]

My sister was taking an English class in high school that I had taken the year before. The class requires a fifteen-page term paper. My sister is an excellent writer and had always done well in English but had never written a formal term paper before. My parents suggested that I help her out with the logistics and I was happy to do so. I told her how I felt was the best way to do research, organize note cards, and so on, but left the actual work to her. As I expected, Susan did very well on the paper and when she showed the “A” paper to my parents, my father remarked, “Good work, Mike. You should help your sister out with her schoolwork more often!” At the time I was very used to comments like these and didn’t think anything of it. Now, however, I recognize it as a denial of agency.

[Mike Wasson]

The ranking of subject above object ties in closely with the ranking of both number and sex-based gender: thus we find the singular male subject the most “comfortable” and where

we should place our “trust.” The ranking of object/subject is anti-community and is part of what makes cooperative endeavors so difficult. The person in the object slot is likely to be uncomfortable; certainly an equality is not easily felt.

The subject/object grammatical structure is one of the areas in which the Jaqi languages and English most diverge. It could be said that the Jaqi languages grammatically express the Heisenberg principle: object and subject are conjoined into single-person suffixes such that object and subject are not separable. With these suffixes, the verbs are conjugated in ten interactive persons: for example, *yanhshutma* (“help me”), where the person suffix is *-utma* (“you to me imperative”). Also, there is no tendency toward foregrounding any particular person except *you*. The grammar, rather, keeps a strong running commentary as to the mutual involvement of all concerned with the matter at hand. This type of structure keeps community mentally present without distracting from autonomy.

Good for women equals bad for men. English vocabulary is heavy in deprecatives for women (see the next section). This is also true of sentences. Even compliments to women are insults when applied to men. This structure makes for a lot of trouble, as demonstrated in the following from Laura A. Boyce:

My roommate Amy’s group of male friends have been “proving their manhood” by jumping off a cliff—at least 80 feet I’ve been told—at the quarries. I’d been hearing about a lot of groups of guys going to the quarries and hearing the stories. The stories about who wouldn’t jump were the big thing. They were the butt of jokes and ridiculed by their “friends.” So my roommate Amy, who is fearless beyond all measure, went with her male friends to the quarries. She jumped. The stories and jokes changed about the guys that didn’t jump—a girl [sic] jumped and they didn’t. They were less than a girl [sic], beneath a girl [sic]. Soon after, the trend among that group of guys of bringing new guys to the quarries to jump to prove their manhood ended. A girl [sic] had jumped, showing up the guys; she had tainted the ritual. It meant nothing now. The ritual died.

In other words, “Woman is 80-foot cliff jumper” makes the sentence “Man is 80-foot cliff jumper” no longer respectable or admirable; the first makes the second an insult. This structure is also directly behind the problem of women in combat and gays in the military: men frequently go into a volunteer military in order to prove themselves “men”—that is, agents/subjects. Given the structure here illustrated, if women should prove as good at killing as men, then why should men do it? What value would that be? Or if “unreal” men could do it, then how could it prove masculinity? The argument, however

The words in Jaqi that cluster around women are those having to do with creativity or productivity or usefulness in work, in art, in people.

couched in overlying philosophical structures, is right back here at the grammatical level: if a woman does it, it is an insult to men, and "we" must keep women (and their analogs) out of the agent position. Or, if they insist on being in that position, we will coopt them; they couldn't be "real" women. As Ruth Trocolli tells it:

My housemate, a single female, is in the process of trying to refinance her mortgage. She has done lots of maintenance and improvements prior to the visit of the appraiser, including using a chainsaw to remove some overgrown bushes/trees in front of the house. A neighbor (retired male professor) complimented her on the improvements, telling her, "You're a good man."

Among the Jaqi, good character is an aesthetic goal that is the same for both women and men, focused on productivity, hard work, and community responsibility while not trying to tell anyone else how to live. What is good for women is also good for men. The aesthetic falls under heavy attack in the cities, of course. I have seen the status of women there deteriorate over my lifetime, as they got more "education," which includes teaching them how little they are worth. The boys get the same teaching, of course, which means that some men among the Jaqi try to act "white," which means beating women and ordering people around. This trend is exemplified by Florence Babb in "Women and Men in Vicos, Peru: A Case of Unequal Development":

In the fifties and sixties, the anthropology department of Cornell University took on a plantation in Peru as a demonstration site for a development program. Before Cornell, all serfs had the right to cultivate specific portions of the land. Under Cornell, land titles were granted to the men serfs but denied to the women serfs. At one town meeting where such matters were being discussed, one woman showed up to defend her right to her land. She was vehement in her demands. The anthropologist conducting the meeting said that land was the concern of her husband only and told her to leave. She did not. He asked her husband to eject her, but her husband did not move; Andean husbands do not have such authority. Thereupon the two anthropologists present removed her bodily from the room, in an example of how modern husbands should treat their wives.

Deprecative words. A great many studies have been done of English vocabulary, pointing out the great number of deprecative terms used for women and the dearth thereof for men, except for being compared to women. A young woman is seen as a vegetable or a piece of meat; as she grows older,

she may be "feisty" but never strong or forthright. The vocabulary of words that deprecate women is furthermore always increasing as words get introduced for a given purpose, pass into general use, then become deprecative. The word *tart* was once a nice pastry. Think of what has happened to the word *feminist*. The mirror image of this is that deprecative words for men that are not based on women (*sissy*, *bastard*) do not remain unambiguously deprecative; think of what has happened to the word *macho*.

For the Jaqi, women are productive and there are no deprecative terms specific to them. There is one very bad insult, however: *q'ara*, which means "naked" and is used of men—especially white men—who are unmarried, have no land, and like to tell people how to live. Priests and boys coming home from school are prime examples of *q'ara*. One priest believes this to be the generic term for "white people." It is, in general and because of their behavior, the generic term for white *men*; but interestingly, it cannot be used for women. That women could be so unproductive is just not conceivable. I have not found a single anti-woman joke in any Jaqi language, nor any general anti-woman sayings; if they wish to denigrate women, the Jaqi switch to Spanish. There are a few jokes about men, not much used, generally relating to laziness. The words that cluster around women are those having to do with creativity or productivity or usefulness in work, in art, in people.

Referencing women as derivations. To underscore the derivational status of women in English—as though all of the preceding were not enough—we have a long list of derivational suffixes whereby one can derive a woman from a man—such as *smurfette*, *heroine*, and many others. These derived forms can never be as good as the "real thing": think of how leatherette holds up against leather. A goddess is never quite as powerful as a god; after all, she needs him to define her. This structure even keeps us from seeing structures from elsewhere that might inspire us to think otherwise, as the following by Lisa R. Perry illustrates:

The Cherokee have a person of power in the tribe who fits the white definition of a medicine man, but this person is a woman. White men had trouble dealing with this, so they decided that she was really the assistant of the real medicine man and called her a "corn woman."

And Elizabeth Ream reports:

In one science class where the majority of the people were males, the instructor would often end a statement with "for you guys," pause [and add] "and guyettes!" He never forgot to add "guyettes," but he always paused

In the Jaqi languages, words referencing women or men specifically are all different roots. There is no linguistic way to link women and men derivationally.

before saying it, and said it in the plural, even when I was the only female in the class.

This structure also denies autonomy to half the population.

In the Jaqi languages, words referencing women or men specifically are all different roots. There is no linguistic way to link women and men derivationally.

Conversational styles: community or hierarchy. A great deal of work has been done by many linguistic scholars on conversational styles in English. They have discovered that conversational styles for women most frequently have as their goal the building of community. Men, on the other hand, almost always use conversation for the purpose of building or maintaining hierarchies. The most common complaint in marriage is: "He won't talk to me." Taking into account the structures we have seen so far, and adding that of conversational style, this response to marriage is an understandable one. If he has you completely outranked, even to the point where you have given up your name for his, and the purpose of conversation is to build or maintain hierarchy, then, of course, there is nothing to talk about, unless you threaten to leave, and then the hierarchy must be maintained, so there is conversation for a while. These are learned patterns, and there are many individuals, of course, who know both styles and can switch. But many women face daily in the workplace men who are using language as a weapon, not as a tool for building a cooperative workplace, while their own styles carry other presumptions.

A student of mine, Christopher Thomas, recently did a term paper looking at the responses to requests for directions. He and a woman friend each asked 25 women and 25 men for campus directions to (a) a fake hall, (b) an obscure hall, and (c) a well-known hall. In total, they asked 300 people for directions.

The women generally replied the same whether the asker was a woman or a man. For example, 19 of the 25 women asked about the fake building sent both the woman and the man askers to an information booth. This is a community-building response, showing concern for the asker and including the asker in the community of the askee. It was the same pattern for the obscure building; those who could not give directions sent the asker to an information booth. In both cases, where directions were given to the obscure building, almost all were correct. Every woman gave both the woman and the man correct directions to the well-known building.

For the men, the pattern was very different, heavily dependent on whether the asker was the woman or the man. For the man as asker, they mostly refused to give directions or gave very vague directions. For the fake building, they mostly brushed him off. For the obscure building, only one-third of those who gave directions were correct, and even for the well-

known building only 15 men gave him directions. Not once did a man direct the asker to an information booth.

For the woman asker, on the other hand, she was given directions every single time, including directions to the fake building from the 25 men she asked. Not once, in all three questions, when the woman asked a man, did any of the men just say they didn't know. All of the men replied with some directions to the building. For the obscure building, only 10 out of the 25 were correct!

At no time did any man say "I don't know" to the woman. No man ever sent anyone to an information booth. Clearly, in this example, the men were using the conversational encounter as an opportunity to build hierarchy, making sure they were one-up on the woman—no matter the inconvenience to her should she believe them—and that they were not one-down to the man.

The woman uses conversation to establish a link, a friendship, while the man uses conversation as a tool with which to dominate.

In the Jaqi languages, conversation—language—is what one gives in recognition of proper human behavior; withdrawal of language is a specific sanction for those who behave like animals. Thus, both women and men talk a lot, although popular European belief has them as quite taciturn, which is a powerful statement as to their perception of European behavior.

Mismatched metaphors. One of the misfires in attempting to communicate across the sex barrier in English is the use of differing metaphors and also the use of metaphors that place men in the driver's seat, that emphasize the sea of privilege in which they live. Another is the commonness of the metaphors of violence and war: these do violence to the narrative style of women and leave us uncertain, again, of our place, emphasizing the sea of violence in which we live. We also have that whole terrible set of seminal metaphors which in academia equate intellectual ability and male sexual performance: for example, hard ideas that have great thrust and can stand up by themselves and be penetrating and not peter out and disseminate all over, entering and conquering all that virgin territory. The sexual metaphors underlying science are part of the chilly climate for women within science.

Work on the metaphors of the Jaqi languages is far from complete. A major domain is that of the metaphorical link between woman and seed. Also, the metaphor for love is *arishi*, "to speak mutually."

Conclusion

Derivational thinking is the name I have given to the type of

thinking and of perception in English that results from the union of all the structures listed previously, and that has as its foundation the three linguistic postulates of number, sex-based gender, and ranking comparative/absolute. These are the thinking patterns that rank human beings such that man is the norm and all else must be measured accordingly and seen as derivative therefrom.

Derivational thinking is the structure our language gives us for human relations. It is not surprising that we apply this structure to all other human relations, with the result that nonwhites, colonials, and others we wish to denigrate are equated negatively to the "sublevel" of woman. In the center court of our first national reserve, now a national park in Hot Springs, Arkansas, there is a statue, lovely in its execution and considered emblematic, of a mostly unclothed native woman kneeling facing the fully clothed white male conqueror, offering up to him a bowl over which flows the water of the springs—America giving her gifts to Europe. This statue is simultaneously deeply racist and sexist, and the artistic embodiment of derivational thinking. Unfortunately, this depiction is "customary, ordinary, usual, even polite."

The most common "womanly" characteristic assigned to colonials, nonwhites, and others is lack of reason, which fully justifies denying agency, which keeps the grammatical structure of not only male but white male in the subject slot. This makes for difficult and uncertain autonomy even for men—any moment someone might outrank you and reduce you to some "woman" status (the only insults for men that remain insults). It makes us think that autonomy is antithetical to community. It makes us rank community below individual dominance, and it makes it difficult for us to appreciate diversity. So strong is the pattern that, when someone in a category that is not white male does something admirable, we find the way to make them, at least temporarily, honorary white men rather than recognizing the accomplishments as coming from a "derivative" source. Elizabeth Williams offers this case in point: "A close friend of mine in high school was black. When speaking of him to newcomers or just in casual conversation, people would often say, 'Jaie is not really black—he is a white guy trapped in a black man's body.'"

And the following anecdote is almost a definer. It occurred during a social for new graduate students and was given to me by Lisa R. Perry, a minority woman. Notice that *academics* is a pseudogeneric term; from the rest of the conversation, the subject was clearly limiting it to white males:

In a conversation with a professor here, he made the comment that it made more sense for "academics" to write books concerning minority and "Third World" problems because they would reach a broader audience (and more importantly the "right" audience) than if those same books were written by minorities and residents of Third World countries. When I asked him why he thought that, he said that the latter books would only appeal to such specialized groups as black studies, women's studies, etc. He did say, however, that minorities and women make

good assistants.

The grammatical structures we have seen for Jaqi come together for the Jaqi world view—a view now under heavy assault from European world views, all detrimental to the status of Jaqi women. Rather than learn and share, our actions are to dominate and destroy.

Life among the Jaqi, however, is not a utopia. The Jaqi are subject—as are all human beings—to the vagaries of human existence: children that come too soon, too late, or not at all; people who fall in love with the wrong person; rains that come too much, too soon, too little, too late; this year, the corn blights; next year, the potatoes. And all this without counting the troubles the dominant group brings in or the worries about educating the children so they won't suffer so. And there are the worries about the children who go to the city to get educated and turn out bad. Life is like that.

Suggestions

The English derivational thinking structure leaves all of us with a diminished capacity for autonomy, at best with a precarious sense of autonomy, with serious identity problems, and with rudimentary community-building ability. Most of us have, to one degree or another, at some point in our lives, challenged the assumptions underlying derivational thinking and, equally often, have felt frustrated at the difficulty of implementing what we perceived to be a more humanistic way of organizing human relations. We cannot simply adopt another set of linguistic postulates, nor can we wholesale and instantaneously change the linguistic patterns of our native language.

What I am suggesting is that it is possible to learn from other people, that it is possible to envision other ways of organizing human relationships. I am also suggesting that we can become more aware of the daily, sentence-by-sentence patterns that form our current relationships. Because language is essentially open, we can change some of the sentence-forming and narrative patterns for other patterns. We can opt for sentences without ranking. We can opt to place women before the *and*. We can opt for women in the subject position—without denigration. And we can seek new metaphors such that *one* will no longer be synonymous with *best*. We can be consciously aware of those we cannot (at least at this point) change—like grammatical number. This very awareness reduces its power. And as we change our language, thus also do we change our thinking and, sentence by sentence, the social environment in which we live.

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