The Self and Others

POSITIONING INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS
IN PERSONAL, POLITICAL, AND CULTURAL CONTEXTS

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CHAPTER 4

"There You Are Man": Men’s Use of Emotion Discourses and Their Negotiation of Emotional Subject Positions

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POSITIONING THEORY

Davies and Harré clearly outlined the relationship between discursive practices and subject positions:

We shall argue that the constitutive force of each discursive practice lies in its provision of subject positions. A subject position incorporates both a conceptual repertoire and a location for persons within the structure of rights and duties for those who use that repertoire. (1990, 46)

Various modes of positioning were later categorized by Van Langenhove and Harré (1999). Of particular importance to this analysis are the concepts of first and second order, tacit, and intentional positioning. First order positioning was defined as “the way persons locate themselves and others within an essentially moral space by using several categories and storylines,” while second order positioning is said to occur when “the first order positioning is questioned and has to be negotiated” (1999, p. 20). Van Langenhove and Harré contend that most first order positioning is of a tacit kind: “the people involved will not position themselves or others in an intentional or even conscious way” (1999, p. 22), while second order positioning is always necessarily intentional. Within the category of intentional positioning, van Langenhove and Harré identify four distinct forms, one of which—“deliberate self-positioning”—is of particular relevance to our analysis. Van Langenhove and Harré state that “deliberate self-positioning occurs in every conversation where one wants to express his/her personal identity” and that one of the ways in which this can be accomplished is “by referring to events in one’s biogra-
EMOTIONS

From the outset, it should be clearly stated that this chapter and the analysis within it take a strongly social constructionist approach to the concept of emotions. Therefore, this introduction, while drawing upon existing literature on emotions, is also necessarily critical of the ways in which emotions have typically been conceptualized. As Harré put it, “Psychologists have always had to struggle against a persistent illusion that in such studies as those of the emotions there is something there, the emotion, of which the emotion word is a mere representation” (1986, p. 4; emphasis in original). The “persistent illusion” of an ontologically existent emotion is important because it frames both the analytic inquiries of psychologists and the functions served by emotion discourses in social interactions.

The theoretical framework for a social constructionist, discursive approach to emotions has been exhaustively elaborated by Edwards (1997). Our approach draws upon this work and the social constructionist approaches of Averill (1980) and Harré (1986). Averill (1980) conceptualized emotions as “behavioral syndromes” and as “transitory social roles” (1980, p. 307). Emotions as syndromes were “defined as a set of responses that covary in a systematic fashion” (1980, p. 307; emphasis in original). The conceptualization of emotion as discourses draws upon the definition of a discourse as “a systematic, coherent set of images, metaphors and so on that construct an object in a particular way” (Burr, 1995, p. 184). Hence, the two approaches are roughly analogous except for the fact that the emphasis in the discursive approach is placed squarely upon the construction of the emotions through language. Within this approach, discourses that construct emotions—emotion discourses—can be identified in talk and their social functions can be discerned.

The “persistent illusion” that Harré spoke of—of something ontological underlying emotion words—is of importance to an analysis of the functions served by emotion discourses. The prevalence of the assumption that there is something there, led Edwards to conclude:

It is because people’s emotion displays (thus categorized) can be treated either as involuntary reactions, or as under agentic control or rational accountability, as internal states or public displays, reactions or dispositions, that emotion discourse can perform flexible, accountability-oriented, indexically sensitive, rhetorical work. (1999: 288)

The work performed by emotion discourses is not only rhetorical. Through the subject po-capable of per-traced back to plays of anger, social context, (Rhetoric, 1378) Averill (1992) : social-function: literature, Kelti functions of em dyadic, the gros closely resembling thre know others’ et reciprocal emot: individuals’ sociations can be co-tact and intenti the four levels : course linked th courses in any j levels. Consequ (1990), the use reflection and j Keltner & Haid Perhaps the n emotion discourlevel of use, havferences and hieremotion is also, Within our analy-society—emotion c om—the mascul

MASCULINITI

In essentialist themselvess to be-Brody & Hall, 1992; Shields, 1992: comparative mascul “restrictive emoti of men’s reported as a central feature
the subject positions that they make available, emotion discourses are also capable of performing social functions—an idea that can be persuasively traced back to Aristotle. In the *Rhetoric*, he provided an analysis of male displays of anger, which highlights the determinant relationship between the social context, the emotional display, and the social functions performed (*Rhetoric*, 1378–1379). More recent work by the likes of Armon-Jones (1986), Averill (1992) and Keltner and Haidt (1999) has led to the development of social-functional approaches to the study of emotions. In their review of the literature, Keltner and Haidt (1999) identify four levels at which the social functions of emotions have been examined; briefly they are the individual, the dyadic, the group, and the cultural. At the dyadic level—the level that most closely resembles our data—Keltner and Haidt describe previous research as identifying three primary social functions of emotions: they help “individuals know others’ emotions, beliefs and intentions,” evoke “complementary and reciprocal emotions in others,” and serve “as incentives or deterrents for other individuals’ social behavior” (1999, p. 511). In positioning terms, these functions can be constructed as sequences of first and potentially second order tacit and intentional positioning. From a social constructionist perspective, the four levels of analysis—individual, dyadic, group, and cultural—are of course linked through language (Gergen, 1985). That is to say, emotion discourses in any particular language are potentially operative across all four levels. Consequently, drawing on the work of Hochschild (1990) and Lutz (1990), the use of emotions discourses has been argued to function in the reification and perpetuation of “cultural ideologies and power structures” (Keltner & Haidt, 1999, p. 514).

Perhaps the most salient cultural ideology and power structure of which emotion discourses are a part is that of gender. Emotion discourses, at any level of use, have been argued to function in the maintenance of gender differences and hierarchies. As Catherine Lutz clearly stated, “any discourse on emotion is also, at least implicitly, a discourse on gender” (1990, p. 131). Within our analysis, we are specifically concerned with the relationship between emotion discourses and one half of the constructed gender dichotomy—the masculine.

**MASCU LINITIES**

In essentialist terms, men are typically reported as—and indeed report themselves to be—less emotionally expressive than women (Balwick, 1988; Brody & Hall, 1993; Fabes & Martin, 1991; Fischer, 1993; LaFrance & Banaji, 1992; Shields, 1991). Such “findings” have led some researchers to talk of “comparative male unemotionality” (Larsen & Pleck, 1999, p. 32) or of men’s “restrictive emotionality” (Jansz, 2000; Levant, 1995). The problematization of men’s reported lower levels of emotional expressiveness has been identified as a central feature of the “crisis in masculinity” discourse (Coyle & Morgan-
Sykes, 1998). Though the contemporary "crisis in masculinity" discourse has been identified as only the most recent in a long line of such constructions (Kimmel, 1987), this has not prevented it from being reproduced in discussions of political and social policy on such topics as health, education, and crime (Whitehead, 2002).

A particular way of doing this, perhaps more appositely, not doing emotions is consistently constructed as problematic and as typical of men. Consequently, explanations are constructed in support of this "fact"; these explanations range from the evolutionary to the psychoanalytic to theories of sex-roles. The dominant explanations for the "fact" of men's comparative inexpressiveness are those derived from sex-role theory (Bramson, 1976; Pleck, 1981) and from broader sociological theories (Carrigan, Connell & Lee, 1985; Connell, 1995). These theories construct "masculinity" or "masculinities" as culturally available resources, as a set of normative roles, or as parts of a structure of social practices respectively. Within both approaches, "masculinities" are constrained, as normative roles or social practices, and one of these constraints appears to be the proscription of overt emotional expression.

More recently there has been a turn to discursive approaches to masculinity, in which "masculinities" are viewed as discursive accomplishments (Edley & Wetherell, 1997, 1999, 2001; Gough, 1998, 2001; Speer, 2001; Wetherell & Edley, 1999). These approaches have sought to identify the discourses and discursive strategies that construct "masculinities," and which consequently afford individuals "masculine" subject positions. Up until now, these discursive approaches have been concerned with identifying those discourses which explicitly construct objects as "masculine," that is, they have been concerned only with talk about "men," "masculinity," or "gender."

Men's self-reported lower levels of general emotional expression in studies such as that of Feldman Barrett, Robin, Pietromonaco, and Eysenck (1998) are, however, typically open to the social constructionist criticism that the participants' responses constitute performative acts: that is to say, the reporting of low levels of general emotional expression can be interpreted as men "positioining" themselves as "men" in accordance with socio-cultural expectations of gender and emotions. Consequently, we tentatively contend that there may be some systematic organization to men's use of emotion discourses. The ways that men use emotion discourses, the 'emotional' subject positions that they occupy, negotiate, and refute may therefore constitute one of the ways by which men do being "men." It is this possibility that our research is intended to explore, and the analysis presented here represents the first tentative steps towards the meeting of that aim.

METHOD

The two data excerpts presented in this chapter are taken from two different group discussions. The men in the group from which excerpt 1 is taken were aged between 17 and 21, and in this group, of the 13 men, 12 were self-identified as European, and one as Hispanic. In the group, the post-doctoral researcher did not comment on the interview of a particular participant. All were either nurses or medical students. In both groups, the use of emotional language was constrained by the researcher, who pointed out that the post-doctoral researcher did not comment on the interview of a particular participant. All these data were obtained between 1998 and 1999. The texts were transcribed by a transcription assistant, who was oriented towards the text. The transcripts were then read and coded by a transcriber, who was oriented towards the text. The analysis presented here represents the first tentative steps towards the meeting of that aim.
"There You Are Man" 49

"..." discourse has evolved in discursive education, and it is clear that emotions of men. Consequences of this comparative study (Brannon, 1976; Jan, Connell & Moore 1984) or "masculine roles, or as they approach, are, and one is not emotional to masculinity, hence (Edley & 1991; Wetherell & discourses and x consequently, these discoursescourses which concerns in studies are, that the participant reporting of as men "positional expectations that there may are repetitive. The ways that they are the ways by which is intended tentative steps..."

aged between 19 and 23 years, all self-identified as gay and as White British. All were engaged in undergraduate or postgraduate study at a university in the south of England. The men in the group from which the excerpt 2 is taken were aged between 21 and 54 years and all self-identified as gay. Four of these men self-identified as White British, one as White Irish, one as White European, and one as Asian (Indian) British. The educational levels of the men in this group ranged between National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) and post-doctorate. Though the men in both groups self-identified as gay, they did not consistently speak from this position in the discussions and consequently should not be interpreted as having done so. The first author and researcher—Chris—is present in both excerpts.

Both these groups of men participated in a group discussion on the subject of "men and emotions," in a discursive task and in a reflective discussion. In each case, the discursive task consisted of the group being split in two and each subgroup being assigned a position (for or against) on a particular statement. The statements were selected on the likelihood that they would evoke the use of emotion discourses. The subgroups were given ten minutes to generate arguments in support of their position. At the end of this time, they were asked to present their arguments to the group as a whole and to a concealed (but in truth nonexistent) panel of judges. The group as a whole was then informed as to which subgroup's arguments had been rated the most persuasive. The winners received a reward of wine or chocolate. The whole group was then invited to reflect on the task in which they had just participated. Excerpt 1 is taken from one group's reflective discussion of that group. Excerpt 2 is taken from one of the subgroup discussions in which the participants were attempting to generate arguments in support of their position.

All these discussions were audio- and video-recorded and were transcribed by the first author, using the transcription system outlined by Jefferson (1985). The texts were analyzed using a discourse analytic approach of the type outlined by Coyle (2000) and Wetherell (1998). This involved reading and rereading the transcripts several times, searching for patterns of language use in the men's constructions of emotions. Throughout this process, we monitored the texts to assess what functions were being fulfilled by the language used: particularly we were concerned with identifying the subject positions that were afforded to the participants. This sometimes involved a micro-level consideration of particular features of language use. The analysis recursively moved between, on the one hand, a global consideration of the constructions that the texts were offering and the rhetorical functions to which the texts were oriented and, on the other hand, a more micro-level focus on textual detail (although not as micro-level as in conversation analysis), with the former being grounded in the latter. Throughout the analysis we were mindful of both the discursive resources that were being drawn upon in the construction of emotions and the subject positions that these discursive practices afforded the participants.
This first excerpt is taken from a discussion in which the men were reflecting on the discursive task in which they had just participated. In this task, the contentious statement had been "The United States of America should cease involvement in Afghanistan." The statement had been selected because of its temporal significance—this group discussion took place on November 14, 2001—and because it was thought likely that the arguments constructed by the participants might involve the use of emotion discourses.

Excerpt 1
92. Ben: humm (5) really I think it was a good choice a good choice for er what we were
93. sort of discussing this afternoon —
94. Paul: = humm =
95. Ben: = i.e. 'cause it is it's very fresh it's very emotional I (.) personally lost a a
96. family friend [in ern New York ] ern so for me particularly it's quite an emotional
97. Chris: = oh dear I apologize
98. Ben: issue =
99. Chris: = mmm =
100. Ben: = ern you know had you have asked about something else you know sort of I
101. don't know () whatever er it wouldn't have had that er impact so to speak =
102. Chris: = ok =
103. Ben: = but yeah (4) it does need you to sort of take a step back and look at the
104. whole picture =
105. Chris: = ok =
106. Ben: = without being reactionary =
107. Chris: = Lawrence =
108. Lawrence: = I don't know I'm er >what was the question? ( ) (group laughed) did I
109. find it difficult? ern we I like contentious issues and I and that issue er I don't know
110. when I go home and stuff my dad's a great one for staring debates like that at the
111. dinner table which my mum loves! ( ) (teeters laughed) ern and it's just kind of slings
112. like that trying to distance ( .) kind of a loss of life ( .) >and I'm not trying to say
113. anything naughty = I'm [inaudible]
114. Ben: = yeah yeah that's yeah don't worry =
115. Lawrence: = trying to distance that from the actions of both sides you know and
116. look at it from a kind of completely objective point of view so I'm not usually very
117. good at it but I was then 'cause I like having an opinion and then just kind of let
118. loose but I like things like that yeah =
119. Chris: = ok right []

Ben begins the excerpt at line 92 with what is constructed as a personal reflection on the emotive quality of the discursive topic and its consequent appropriateness for a discussion group concerned with men and emotions. Through first order intentional positioning—"I think"—Ben positions himself as someone who is able to evaluate the appropriateness of the topic in terms of its warrant this of the discuss was emotion ence, only to the destructi that precipit sequently the killed in that

Of particular emotional sig ity are const sequently, hi constructed a first order, significant. B acational cont emotion-bas Chri's init ment of and Chri's 'apolo Ben's emotion discussion toq the interactio emotional sul stitute a reite an emotive sui context. They first order pos the subject ps position resul however, couc worthy. The v: topic are imp of this topic. 'tions as seccond sponsible for E consequence a structured as the Chri's respin tance of his ow a potentially p Ben shifts the sit ions of the p
terms of its emotive qualities. Between lines 95 and 96, Ben is then able to warrant this initial position, as one who is aware of the emotional significance of the discussion topic, through his first order positioning as someone who was emotionally affected by the events in “New York” (line 96). Ben’s reference, only to “New York,” was heard and is interpreted here as a reference to the destruction of the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, the event that precipitated the United States military involvement in Afghanistan. Consequently the listener and reader must assume that Ben’s “family friend” was killed in that attack.

Of particular interest are the specific features of Ben’s construction of the emotional significance of the discussion topic. The topic and its emotive quality are constructed in the present tense, as ongoing (lines 96 and 98). Consequently, his subsequent disclosure regarding the “family friend” and the constructed high level of personal relevance, in lines 95–96, function to create a first order, intentional, emotional subject position that is contemporarily significant. Ben is exclusively and intentionally positioned within this interactional context as someone with both the contemporary knowledge- and emotion-based right to talk on this subject.

Chris’s initial response, in line 97, can be interpreted as an acknowledgement of and orientation to Ben’s contemporary emotional subject position. Chris’s “apology” functions to position him as in some way responsible for Ben’s emotional subject position. Chris, as the researcher and provider of the discussion topic, takes up the position of the individual responsible for both the interactional and rhetorical context that gave rise to Ben’s contemporary emotional subject position. Ben’s comments at lines 100–101 therefore constitute a reiteration of the constructed effectiveness of the discussion topic as an emotive subject and its consequent appropriateness within the interactional context. They also function as second order positioning. Ben orients to Chris’s first order positioning as the responsible agent and, in doing so, tactically accepts the subject position afforded to him, as someone whose emotional subject position resulted from Chris’s actions (lines 100–101). Ben’s comments are, however, couched in uncertainty and do not explicitly position Chris as blameworthy. The vague generality of Ben’s construction of an alternative discussion topic are implicitly contrasted with the singularly exceptional emotive quality of this topic. The worked-up exceptional quality of the discussion topic functions as second order positioning. Chris retains the position as the agent responsible for Ben’s contemporary emotional position, but his actions and their consequence are constructed as not deliberate. Ben’s subject position is constructed as the product of a unique set of circumstances.

Chris’s response at line 102 can therefore be interpreted as both an acceptance of his own renegotiated position and an attempt to close down what is a potentially personally problematic interactional avenue. At lines 103–104, Ben shifts the focus of the discussion from the personal affective subject positions of the participants, including himself, to the intellectual requirements
of the task. He implicitly contrasts his own constructed emotional reaction to the topic with a requirement for rational evaluation. With respect to effective participation in the discursive task, distanced rational evaluation of the "whole picture" is privileged over his own proximate emotional reaction. This contribution can be interpreted as playing out of an ideological dilemma concerning the relative merits of the rational and the emotional. This interpretation is reinforced by Ben's completion of his turn at line 106. "Reactivity" is interpreted here as pejorative and as describing a hypothetical and resisted position based on an emotional rather than rational appraisal and response. Ben minimizes the importance of his own previous emotional subject position in favor of a first order position as someone who appreciates the need to privilege rational evaluation over emotional reaction.

At line 107, having previously failed to end Ben's turn with two "ok" utterances (lines 102 and 105), Chris explicitly directs the turn to one of the other participants. Lawrence, through first order intentional positioning, positions himself as someone who enjoys tasks of the type in which he had just participated and warrants this construction with an autobiographical narrative (lines 109-111). He then orients to Ben's earlier construction of the requirement to privilege rational appraisal over emotional reactions (lines 111-112).

However, inherent in this construction, privileging as it does rational "distance" over emotional proximity to an event, is a potential first order position for Ben, in which his previously constructed emotional subject position is potentially devalued. Lawrence's subsequent repair, in lines 112-113, can therefore be read as a preemptive counter to this potentially problematic rhetorical and interactional possibility. The repair contains an implicit acknowledgement of this possibility and, as such, functions as first order positioning. Lawrence positions himself as someone who would not be deliberately "nasty."

Ben's response, overlapping Lawrence's repair, therefore functions as both permission to Lawrence to continue his turn and discursive construction and as an acknowledgement of the validity of the construction of rationality as privileged over emotionality. Ben's response also functions to deflect the intimated possibility that his own emotional position is being devalued. Consequently, Lawrence is able to complete his turn and his construction and positioning within the previously negotiated rational position or, as he puts it, to "look at it from a kind of completely objective point of view" (line 116).

The second excerpt is taken from a small group discussion in which the participants had been asked to formulate an argument in opposition to the statement "A man should be faithful to his partner." This statement was selected because a discussion of relationships and (in)fidelity was thought likely to involve the use of emotion discourses. It should also be made clear that the men in this discussion all self-identified as "gay" on the demographic information sheets that they completed beforehand. Indeed, in the excerpt, Eric can be seen to position himself as someone who is involved in a same-sex relationship.

Excerpt 2

36. Alex: = oh we c
37. winning err it /
38. don't care if there
39. Eric: = yeah bec
40. but I didn't really
41. I've had some do
42. really upset me i,
43. discuss it's better
44. Alex: = lemme =
45. Eric: = it's not if
46. the problem is to
47. Alex: = you are it
48. Eric: = I think of
49. about this persona
50. Alex: = possibly c
51. how we're respond
52. Eric: = yeah =
53. Alex: = which I th
54. Eric: = well well =
55. Alex: = but it's it
56. Eric: it's it
57. six months ago i w
58. we conform to like
59. freedom' but but i
60. really on err =
61. Alex: = and if you'
62. Eric: = no but it w
63. very topical I sus
64. very topical I sus

There are three features of the function.
65. Briefly, Alex's or
66. lines 46-50, Alex's or
67. lines 282-293, and in
68. throughout the contradictions from t
69. distort the data. Rate
70. structure and negotiat
71. would otherwise be a
72. authors).
73. The excerpt begins
74. relative importance of
75. sumbly sexual—initi
Excerpt 2

36. Alex: = oh we can argue whatever we want to argue the whole point about this is
37. winning erm (Jeff laughs)) for me the important thing is emotional fidelity (.) and I
38. don't care if there is physical infidelity = [ ]
39. Eric: = yeah because that's sort of what I thought we had in our relationship but but
40. but I didn't really want it that way I was sort of pushed into that position and now
41. I've had some doubts that maybe maybe my partner has had some things and it's
42. really upset me (.) a lot and he's said well it's something you can't it's really hard to
43. discuss it's better just to like leave it =
44. Alex: = hmm = [ ]
45. Eric: = it's not the act so much it's just the other person feels rejected though that's
46. the problem is you still feel rejected and =
47. Alex: = you can feel rejected = [ ]
48. Eric: = I think afterwards though they might the session after is going to be talking
49. about this personally maybe =
50. Alex: = possibly or they will be analyzing how we have spoken to each other and
51. how we've responded to what is a very emotional subject =
52. Eric: = yeah =
53. Alex: = which I think you've not been totally happy with =
54. Eric: = well well well =
55. Alex: = but it's (also it's) an emotional thing for all of us =
56. Eric: = it's it's = well no normally like
57. six months ago I would have said yeah yeah whatever it's no big deal why should
58. we conform to like these societal stereotypes why shouldn't we have more sexual
59. freedoms' but but just within like the last two months I've been dealing with this issue
60. really on erm =
61. Alex: = and if you'd had a gun at home God help you you'd be locked up by now =
62. Eric: = no but it wasn't anger though that's just it no hmmm (10) yeah anyway so it's
63. very topical I suppose in my head (laughs))

There are three features of this excerpt that are of specific interest to a discussion of the functions served by emotion discourse in interpersonal relations. Briefly, they are Eric's construction of an emotional subject position in lines 46–50, Alex's orientations to that position in lines 51–63 and again in lines 282–293, and the functions served by Eric's emotional subject position throughout the interaction as a whole. It should be noted that there are obvious excisions from this excerpt. These in no way represent an attempt to distort the data. Rather they are an attempt to make the process of the construction and negotiation of the subject positions easier to track through what would otherwise be a very long excerpt (the full excerpt is available from the authors).

The excerpt begins with Alex's construction of a difference between the relative importance of "emotional" (line 37) and "physical" (line 38)—presumably sexual—infidelity. He explicitly positions himself as someone for
whom physical infidelity is of relatively lower importance than emotional infidelity. It is to this construction that Eric’s contribution between lines 46 and 50 is oriented. We contend that, through this turn, Eric constructs and occupies an emotional subject position that has immediate impact on the discussion and the interactive context as a whole. There are a number of features of Eric’s turn that make this subject position available and this argument persuasive.

The first feature is Eric’s use of an autobiographical narrative. Within the narrative, Eric constructs himself as unwillingly and emotionally affected and positioned by the actions of his partner. This narrative provides the rhetorical context for Eric’s occupation of an emotional subject position within the contemporary interactional context. This simultaneous occupation of emotional subject positions within the rhetorical and contemporary interactional context is worked up through subtle shifts in tense. At the outset, the narrative is clearly constructed in the past tense. However, by the end of line 47, the narrative is constructed in the present perfect tense—“and now I’ve had some doubts”—and can be interpreted as contemporarily operative. The use of the present tense continues in lines 49–50. This shift in tense functions to make Eric’s autobiographical narrative the basis of an ongoing emotional subject position, which is effective within the contemporary interactional context.

The particular emotion category invoked by Eric—“upset” (line 49)—is, owing to its negative implications for the individual, a rhetorically powerful one. Consequently, Eric’s closing comments in lines 49–50 can be read as both a construction of ongoing communication difficulties within his relationship and as a reflection on the relative emotional difficulty of his participation in the group discussion. That is to say, Eric occupies an emotional subject position that compounds the relative ease with which he can contribute to the ongoing discussion.

When Eric takes the turn at line 61, he offers a construction of the cause of the “upset” subject position. Physical infidelity is constructed as secondary in importance to its affective consequence (lines 61–62). This construction is offered entirely in the present tense and there is a subtle shift in the focus of the constructed affective response. In line 61, the object of the affective response is constructed in the third person. However, in line 62, the definition of the object is narrowed through the use of the potentially self-inclusive second person pronoun “you.” These shifts in object construction and in tense tacitly function to position Eric as someone who does feel rejected. Consequently Alex’s response at line 63, with emphasis, can be read as a simultaneous affirmation of both Eric’s discursive construction and his negotiated ongoing emotional subject position.

Following his contribution at lines 61–62, Eric makes no further contribution to the development of arguments, leaving the task to Alex and Jeff. Eric only significantly contributes to the interaction again at line 268 with a construction of the possibility that the task in which they are participating might not be what the turn at line 2 be asked to speak agreement with the researchers or the researchers might to the discussion afford Alex an emotional position within the minimal way, con 285. In doing so to the emotional position as variably emotional: emotional subject acceptable.

However, Eric construction of t the consequent attempt to minimize the position of his position to his own re the use of reporter sion is subtly re: between his consti the cause of his en two and, important ory emotional c

In line 293, Alex subject position degression as one po: fomed possibility, a However, Eric is it offer any construct he settles for a or (in) fidelity and, by I is finally able to cor current interaction:

CONCLUSIONS

Throughout the individuals occupied s that in both excerpt
might not be what it seems. It is within this discursive context that Eric takes the turn at line 280. He constructs the possibility that after the task they will be asked to speak about the topic "personally" (line 281). Alex offers a tentative agreement with Eric and offers his own construction of the likely interests of the researchers (lines 282–283). He constructs the possibility that the researchers might be concerned with the affective reactions of the participants to the discussion topic. This construction, and Eric's affirmative response, affords Alex an opportunity to orient explicitly to Eric's emotional subject position within the interactional context. He does so in quite a subtle and minimal way, constructing Eric's position only as not "totally happy" (line 285). In doing so, Alex tacitly positions himself as someone who is sensitive to the emotional subject positions of others. In line 287, Alex constructs Eric's position as warranted within a discursive context that is constructed as universally emotional. These rhetorical strategies function to construct Eric's emotional subject position as reasonable and proportional, appropriate and acceptable.

However, Eric challenges and rejects—"well no" (line 288)—both Alex's construction of this discursive topic as a universally emotional context and the consequent appropriateness of his own emotional subject position. Eric attempts to minimize the importance of the interactional context as a determinant of his position. He constructs his emotional subject position as contrary to his own reported ideological beliefs—persuasively worked up through the use of reported speech—and his normalized biography. Hence, Eric's position is subtly renegotiated as the exceptional product of the coincidence between his constructed lived reality and the discussion topic. Consequently, the cause of his emotional subject position is located somewhere between the two and, importantly, is not wholly constructed as a product of the contemporary emotional context.

In line 293, Alex can be seen to respond to this shift in the location of Eric's subject position through his potentially joking construction of violent aggression as one possible emotional response to infidelity. Eric rejects this afforded possibility, as an emotional position that he had been unable to occupy. However, Eric is unable—evidenced by the subsequent ten second pause—to offer any construction of the (emotional) position that he did occupy. Instead he settles for a construction of the general topicality of the subject of (infidelity and, by locating it internally—"I suppose in my head" (line 295)—is finally able to construct his emotional subject position as separate from the current interactional context.

**CONCLUSIONS**

Throughout the analysis, we have argued that in both excerpts certain individuals occupied subject positions that could be categorized as *emotional* and that in both excerpts the other participants oriented to these positions as
emotional. However, despite or perhaps because of this, in both excerpts the individual occupying the emotional subject positions did considerable rhetorical work to minimize the importance of their position within the interactional context. Eric was careful to relegate the cause of his emotional subject position beyond the bounds of the group discussion on infidelity. Similarly, Ben constructed an emotional subject position as secondary, in terms of importance, to a rational one. He also implicitly constructed his emotional subject position as exceptional. Also, both Ben and Eric constructed their emotional subject positions in non-specific terms. Ben categorized his only as "emotional" while Eric categorized his as "upset," albeit "a lot." Both these categorizations are not what psychologists would recognize as discrete emotion categories. The question we must ask are: why did Ben and Eric do this and what functions are served by these actions?

We contend that these actions constitute the negotiation of an ideological dilemma. Ben and Eric take up subject positions, through the use of emotion discourses, that potentially conflict with discourses and subject positions of masculinity. The simultaneous occupation of subject positions as emotional and as masculine, while not impossible, is potentially problematic and requires careful negotiation. Rhetorical strategies, such as minimization and distancing, represent the management and policing of this dilemma. The function and perlocutionary force of any emotion discourse is in part dependent upon the constructed qualities of the emotion. From a discursive perspective, emotion discourses are inherently descriptive of the "status" of the individual and "a description formulates some object or event as something; it constitutes it as a thing and a thing with specific qualities" (Potter, 1996, p. 111). Of the various qualities that an emotion might be constructed as possessing, "intensity" is of paramount importance. The constructed intensity of an emotion has the potential to determine the rhetorical power of a discursive formulation and therefore its perlocutionary force. The quality of intensity is implicit within emotion words (Frijda, Ortony, Sonnemans, & Clore, 1992). Thus the functions served in terms of positioning are likely to differ depending upon the intensity implicit within any emotion discourse. It is not difficult to appreciate that "I'm annoyed," "I'm angry," and "I'm furious"—three discursive formulations grouped within the "anger" category—may differ in the first and second order subject positions that they make available.

In these excerpts then, the intensity and relevance of the emotional subject position is downplayed, so that the individual does not appear too emotional. The occupation of such a position would implicitly conflict with a masculine subject position and the discourses upon which that position is based. Typically, as noted in the introduction, traditional or hegemonic discourses of masculinity proscribe overt emotionality. We do, of course, accept that discourses of masculinity and the explicit occupation of masculine subject positions are absent from these excerpts. However, the individuals in these discussions were male and were participating in a social psychological study concerns towards "men," to do so in a rhetorical am of Eric as to expoor challenge in the dis emerges as emotio as sensitiv line betew We ask number of these conc

However, function is interaction similar for emotion in some general personal relation of emot, not consi discourses, is too great positions as words use of change relationship This said made by w Non-verbal yses of the f of communi interaction relationship
concerned with what men had to say on the subject of "men and emotions." Consequently, their contributions can be interpreted as, in some part, oriented towards meeting the requirements of the study and warranting their right, as "men," to participate.

Though the men in these excerpts do position themselves in minimal emotional terms, according with typical social constructions of masculinity, they do so through an active process of construction and negotiation. Similarly, the other participants, Alex and Lawrence, and the researcher, Chris, can be seen to orient to the emotional subject positions. Further, though they may do so in a minimal manner, they are sensitive to potentially problematic rhetorical and interactional possibilities related to the emotional subject positions of Eric and Ben respectively. Though Ben and Eric are not explicitly invited to expound on their emotional subject position, neither are their positions challenged or ridiculed. Eric's position even excuses him from participating in the discursive task and his lack of involvement is not questioned. What emerges from these two excerpts and their analysis is a picture of these men as emotional beings, as skilful and subtle in their use of emotion discourses, as sensitive to their emotional subject positions, and as negotiating the fine line between doing "emotions" and doing "being a man."

We acknowledge that this analysis is concerned only with the talk of a small number of men in a particular and circumscribed context and that, as such, these conclusions may not be generalizable to other men and other contexts. However, the above analysis does demonstrate how emotion discourses can function in the construction and negotiation of subject positions within an interactional context and, as such, it is invaluable. Further analyses with a similar focus on the effects of context may elaborate the functions served by emotion discourses in the negotiation of subject positions. However, while some general themes for the functions served by emotion discourses in interpersonal relationships may appear across analyses—such as men's minimization of emotional subject positions—it should be appreciated that these do not constitute rules: the number of possible permutations of interlocutors, discourse, subject positions, interactional contexts, and ideological dilemmas is too great. Further, the dynamic nature of the relationship between subject positions and discourses should be remembered. Languages, in terms of the words used, their social meanings, and their functions are in a constant state of change. Thus, the functions served by emotion discourses in interpersonal relationships are not only contextually but temporally determined.

This said, emotion discourses represent one—but the most accessible—mode by which emotional subject positions are constructed and negotiated. Non-verbal, facial, and vocal modes of expression cannot be ignored in analyses of the functions served by emotions in interpersonal relations. Each mode of communication is amenable to analysis in terms of the functions served in interactional contexts. Future analyses must also be similarly attentive to the relationship between interactional context and the subject positions afforded
by emotion discourses. Only then, with analyses that are attentive to the peculiar implicit qualities of emotion discourses, their modes of communication, and their relationship with interactional contexts, will we be better informed about the positions they afford.

REFERENCES


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**INTRODUCTORY DEFINITION**

The aim of this chapter is to explore the concept of identity and its role in emotions and social interactions. The term "identity" encompasses the various aspects of an individual's self-definition, which can change over time and across different contexts. This chapter will delve into the complexities of identity formation and its impact on social relationships.

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