Small Stories, Interaction and Identities
Studies in Narrative (SiN)

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Small Stories, Interaction and Identities
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Small Stories, Interaction and Identities

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Preface

One of the most puzzling aspects of narrative research is the almost irreconcilable breadth of definitions and approaches on the one hand (how many times has the conversation ended with ‘how do you study narrative, then?’) and on the other hand the striking consensus on what constitutes a story but also and importantly what constitutes a story worthy of analysis for the aim of tapping into human experience.

My autobiographical journey to the stumbling blocks of this orthodoxy within narrative approaches involved the transition I made from exploring questions of culture-specificity in prototypical narrative data in Greek (in the early ’90s) to having to claim a place in narrative research for snippets of talk that flouted expectations of the canon. The latter I have come to call small stories, following Michael Bamberg (2004a, b) who has worked with comparable data. By prototypical narrative, I mean personal, past experience stories of non-shared events. As I will show in this book, small stories on the other hand are employed as an umbrella-term that covers a gamut of under-represented narrative activities, such as tellings of ongoing events, future or hypothetical events, shared (known) events, but also allusions to tellings, deferrals of tellings, and refusals to tell. These tellings are typically small when compared to the pages and pages of transcript of interview narratives. On a metaphorical level though, the term small stories is selected as an antidote formulation to a longstanding tradition of big stories (cf. “grand narratives”, Lyotard 1984): it locates a level and even an aesthetic for the identification and analysis of narrative; the smallness of talk, where fleeting moments of narrative orientation to the world (Hymes 1996) can be easily missed out on by an analytical lens which only looks out for fully-fledged stories.

To return to my story of small stories, the prototypical narrative data that formed the basis of my first book (Georgakopoulou 1997) had actually occurred in ordinary conversational contexts (where I was a participant-observer) and not elicited in research interviews. They still however resonated both with the influential Labovian (1972) paradigm and with the key-events research interview narratives and in that respect they were well connected with the Zeitgeist. They were thus well met even if often seen by colleagues as exotic data: the point was that in many ways, be they in terms of how they were structured or of how they signalled their tellability, – both focal concerns at the time –, they could be viewed
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as tokens of a type, a case-study of how people in Greece in ordinary conversations get to tell personal past events experience studies. In this respect, they could easily be placed within the framework of contextual research, partly post-Labovian in spirit, partly drawing on ethnography of communication, which dominated the 80s and much of the 90s in sociocultural linguistic approaches to narrative.

With the benefit of hindsight, this kind of research can be characterized as the second wave of narrative analysis: it had definitively moved from the study of narrative as text (first wave) to the study of narrative-in-context but there was still a lingering emphasis on abstract, formal criteria (minimal narrative definitions were undeniably influential) and textual features as well as a tendency to view context as a surrounding frame, something to be contained and tamed by the analysis. Culture, community and comparable notions that informed the analysis of context (then often called variables) were still defined in somewhat homogenizing terms and certainly, the ideas of multiplicity, fragmentation and irreducible contingency that have now been embraced by sociolinguistics (e.g. Rampton 2001) were far less mainstream.

The increasing realization from a number of conversational studies that things looked different on the ground, that the stories told there did not quite fit the bill, never resulted in a productive dialogue between two parallel traditions: somewhat crudely speaking, the sociolinguistic, post-Labovian tradition on one hand, and the interactional paradigms on the other hand that – crucially – did not see themselves as doing narrative analysis but as doing conversation analysis that looks at narrative (if and when it occurs) as another format of telling. This book sees itself as a bridge between these two traditions inasmuch as it will show how the language-focused analysis of narrative for the exploration of socio-cultural processes can be enriched by the tools of interactional analysis.

More ambitiously, my aim here is to stake a claim for small stories as crucial sites for self- and other- identity construction. It is fair to say that if small stories have not been firmly put on the map of linguistic approaches to narrative, within narrative research that is associated with interviews (often called ‘narrative inquiry’), the lack of an inclusive and coherent paradigm for the analysis of non-canonical storytelling is particularly acute. There, any narrative data that depart from the paradigm of the “life story” tend to be dismissed, seen as analytic nuisance (e.g. as the result of bad interviewing) or subsumed under the focal concerns of the big story (e.g. taken to be instances of incoherent tellings, not yet incorporated into the big story). In the light of the above, this book will sketch a grand vision for small stories: it will launch them as data worthy of the project of identity analysis. More specifically, the book’s analytical aim can be described as three-fold. The first is to chart the interactional features or ‘ways of telling’ of small stories, highlighting their connections with the social spaces in which they are produced but also with those that they re-work in their plots. The second is...
to offer a toolkit appropriate for the analysis of small stories. This involves both re-defining and extending the mainstay vocabulary and introducing concepts that have not been productively applied to the study of narrative. Finally, the aim is to both argue for the validity of small stories as points of entry into identity work and to show ways for engaging in small stories and identity analysis. The book is committed to fine-grained analysis but it goes beyond an approach to stories as texts and as talk-in-interaction and towards a practiced-based paradigm that allows us to document stories as communicative practices enmeshed in people’s social lives. This paradigm attempts to encompass the tellers’ local understandings and theories of their narrative activities as well as the ways in which they interweave their experiential processes of living and telling.

In fact, it is the tellers of the small stories at hand that I would like to thank first. This book would not have been possible had Vivi, Fotini, Tonia and Irene not let me become part of their lives so generously. I hope that they will see aspects of their lived experience in the end result that I offer in memory of Irene who had an untimely death in 2005. I am also grateful to Kostas Demetrellis for letting me have some of his professional pictures of the town, where the data were recorded.

The book also owes a lot to comments and feedback from a wide variety of academic settings and formats (lectures, seminars, conference presentations), particularly a number of panels on narrative that I have been involved in over the years. The discussions I have had with colleagues as part of those panels have been invariably stimulating and special thanks go to Mike Baynham, Aleksandra Galasinska, Stef Slembrouck, and Stanton Wortham; Anna De Fina for hectic panel co-organizing and a lot of fun and therapeutic small talk in the process; Michael Bamberg for his infectious enthusiasm for small stories, his inspirational work and the eye-opening experience of working with him on this and the other side of the Atlantic and learning from the ‘master’. My ideas on identity owe a lot to stimulating discussions with Caroline Dover, Roxy Harris, Constant Leung, Ben Rampton, and Lauren Small with whom I collaborate in an ESRC-funded project on Urban Classroom Culture and Interaction.

Finally, I would like to thank my daughter Eliana and my son Christopher for providing all the necessary and wonderfully inventive distractions in the course of the writing of this book and for reminding me of the fact that the priority should always be in living and telling the stories as opposed to writing about them. It is to them that I dedicate this book.
Transcription symbols

Overlapping utterances are marked by // and/or [ ]
= connects ‘latched’ utterances

Intervals in and between utterances are given in small un-timed pauses. More specifically:
  (. ) indicates a pause that is less than 0.1 seconds.
  ( .. ) indicates a pause that is less than 0.5 seconds and more than 0.1 seconds.
  ( . . ) indicates a pause greater than 0.5 seconds.

A colon marks an extension of the sound it follows; a double colon marks a longer extension.

Punctuation marks are used to indicate intonation: a period a stopping fall in tone;
  a comma continuing intonation; a question mark a rising inflection.

A dash marks an abrupt cut off.

Underlining indicates emphasis.

CAPITALS indicate speech that is louder than the surrounding talk.

> < Indicates delivery at a quicker pace than the surrounding talk

hh hh, heh, he, huh: Indicates laughter

(( )) Indicates editorial comments

( ) Empty parentheses enclose unidentifiable speech.
CHAPTER 1

From narrative/text to small stories/practices

1.0 Introduction

Narrative remains as elusive, contested and indeterminate in meaning a concept as ever, variously used as an epistemology, a methodological perspective, an antidote to positivist research, a communication mode, a supra-genre, a text-type; more generally, as a way of making sense of the world, at times equated with experience, time, history and life itself; more modestly, as a specific kind of discourse with conventionalised textual features (see Georgakopoulou & Goutsos 2000:64–68). It is nonetheless all too easy to underestimate the kinds of consensus that this richness and diversity tend to mask on what constitutes a story but also and importantly what constitutes a story worthy of analysis for the aim of tapping into human experience. In this respect, the typical opening of a book on narrative will be consciously avoided here: rushing to provide the definitive definition of the subject along with a list of definitional criteria (sometimes referred to as minimal) is all too often a perfect way for reaffirming an area’s orthodoxy.

Instead, the approach here will be that of a gradual unravelling of dimensions of narrative hegemony and canonization so that the periphery of narrative analysis will be gradually legitimated. In this way, in the first instance, the definitions of narrative will unfold inductively: by stressing the point of narrative as talk-in-interaction which will bring in the perspective of narrative as telling; more specifically, as a different or alternative format of telling that is selected over others by social actors and that is locally produced and subject to the interactional contingencies of any other format of telling. The implicit hegemony that will be tackled in this respect is both that of narrative as a privileged mode of communication as well as a text in the sense of a finished product.

Thereafter, narrative will be intimately linked with social practices – in this perspective, narrative will be proposed as a discourse in the broad sense of a semiotic system that comprises habitual associations with its spatio-temporal contexts of occurrence. Questions of what this discourse can do that other discourses cannot are not going to go away nor will this study consciously ignore them. It will however address them on the understanding that their answer presupposes an opening up of narrative analysis beyond the reductive confines of a single type of narrative that has monopolized attention; that unless we document the richness
and diversity of narrative genres and cease to hide behind all-encompassing and at times reassuring totalizations, narrative will become increasingly resistant to empirical work and increasingly susceptible to impressionistic slants. In contrast to grand theories, it is the dedicated commitment to the “small” of narrative analysis that this book will seek to promote: the art of focusing on the seeming minutiae, the fine-grained analysis, the prioritising of the communicative how as an analytic focus. This attention to the “little words” will be based on the assumption that they “operate in the service of the big words, and as such are the unobtrusive servants of dialogue” (Billig 1997:143). In this case, and in the spirit of putting the little words at centre stage, the emphasis will be on ‘small stories’ as an antidote to conventional narrative analysis. I will specifically employ the term small stories as an umbrella-term to cover a gamut of under-represented narrative activities.

Within this small stories paradigm the aim is to show how narrative analysis deserves and needs a more intense and explicitly focused dialogue with interactional paradigms of talk and how the ivory tower of the archetypal mode of communication has deprived it of much needed opportunities for cross-fertilization. At the same time, the oft invoked rhetoric of disciplinary differences on the basis of using narrative as a means to an end (e.g. healing people, exploring human psyche) vs. doing narrative (in the sense of exploring the linguistics and stylistics of its tellings), pointing to two camps of the expressivists vs. the productivists, to borrow Freeman’s terms (2003:338), tends to create a false dichotomy, an arbitrary and ill-founded territorialization. The point of departure and the emphasis in narrative-focused work may well differ. In principle, however, there should be recognition that looking at language forms and structures (tellings) without relating them to socio-cultural processes and self-identities (tellers) is increasingly out of place within linguistically minded research. At the same time, constructing macro-accounts without a sense of an analytical apparatus makes the tying down of the enterprise difficult to achieve (see discussion in §3.1); it also lulls analysts into a false sense of security when in reality the issues of narrative definition, tools of analysis, soundness of methodologies, not least reflexivity on what is represented by whom and why, are no less pertinent there too.

1.1 Narrative as talk-in-interaction

Current fascination with vernacular (cf. vernacular, non-literary) narrative spans a wide range of social science disciplines: e.g. sociology, psychology, social anthropology, etc. and is frequently referred to as the narrative turn (see papers in Brockmeier & Carbaugh 2001; Bamberg 2006a; Daiute & Lightfoot 2004; and De Fina, Schiffrin & Bamberg 2006). In these disciplines, narrative is seen as an archetypal, fundamental mode for constructing realities and as such as a privi-
Chapter 1. From narrative/text to small stories/practices

Leged structure/system/mode for tapping into identities, particularly constructions of self. The guiding assumption here is that by bringing the co-ordinates of time, space, and personhood into a unitary frame, narrative can afford a point of entry into the sources “behind” these representations (such as “author”, “teller”, and “narrator”); it can make them empirically visible for analytical scrutiny in the form of ‘identity analysis.’

Within linguistics, the legitimation of vernacular narrative as a valid object of inquiry is undoubtedly owed to Labov’s influential study of narrative structure (Labov 1972; Labov & Waletzky 1967) that was based on personal, past experience oral narratives in interview settings. The study showed that there is structure and systematicity in the storytelling of ordinary folks of the kind that was expected to be found in artful forms of narrative. The analysis resulted in the description of a fully-formed (or classic) narrative which “begins with an orientation, proceeds to the complicating action, is suspended at the focus of evaluation before the resolution, concludes with the resolution and returns the listener to the present time with the coda” (369).1

Hailed for bridging the gap between vernacular and literary narrative, Labov spoke not just to linguists but also to scholars from a wide range of social science disciplines that “had become disenchanted with the traditional positivist-based science that was dominant at that point” (Bruner 1997:62). Narrative was thus embraced as an experiential, anti-positivist mode that opened up new avenues and possibilities for looking into social and cultural processes, and at alternative ways of looking at human beings as communicators and social actors. This antidote to positivism soon took off in an array of disciplines as an alternative perspective, an inquiry that lets the voice of its subjects be heard and that prioritizes the personal, the emotive and the experiential over the impersonal, the rational and the rule-bound.

This privileging of narrative over other kinds of discourse gradually led to a tradition of idealization, essentialization and homogenization of narrative. It is surely this framework of narrative primacy that has implicated a slower and more reluctant move to the exploration of its micro-instances (for a discussion see Georgakopoulou & Goutsos 2000:64–68). Tellingly, Labov’s model that was set to become one of the most influential approaches in the analysis of narrative at least within linguistics ultimately did not lend itself to this kind of study: as sustained

1. Very briefly described, the abstract is a brief summary statement that encapsulates the point of the story; orientation identifies the time, place, situations, and characters; the complicating action answers the questions “Then what happened?”; resolution marks the end of the events of the complicating action; evaluation comprises the devices by which the narrator indicates the point of a narrative, i.e. why it is worth telling; finally, the coda closes a narrative off, normally by bringing it back to the moment of telling.
critique has shown (e.g. see contributions in Bamberg 1997a), narrative was seen in it as a detached, autonomous and self-contained unit with clearly identifiable parts. The crux of the counter-argument is that narrative occurs in some kind of a discourse environment, before and after other discourse activities and is thus enmeshed in its local surroundings. This view of narrative as a sequence, in itself part of a sequentially ordered event, is in Schegloff’s terms, where subsequent work on narrative “should be redirected” in order for us to get “toward a differently targeted and more compelling grasp of vernacular storytelling” (1997:101). What Schegloff has in mind is a conversation-analytic approach to narrative that treats narrative as talk-in-interaction.

Conversation analysts have already been successful and influential in documenting conversations as sequentially ordered activities which both give a glimpse of and provide a platform for social actions and roles (e.g. see Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson 1974; also papers in Antaki & Widdicombe 1998b). In this respect, recognizing narrative as talk-in-interaction cannot be disassociated from exploring the ways in which it relates to its surrounding discourse activity or co-text covering both prior and upcoming talk. Conversation analysis has thus done well to pay attention to the endpoints (entry – exit) of a story (e.g. Sacks 1974) but, as we will show in Chapter 3, there is still much scope for research, particularly with regard to the part that comes between a story’s opening and a story’s ending.

On the face of it, it could be that an intense cross-fertilization of conventional narrative analysis with conversation analysis has been hampered by a tendency towards essentialism and idealization of narrative that has all too often accompanied work on narrative (for a discussion, see Georgakopoulou & Goutsos 2000:64–70). Elevating narrative to a super-ordinate and archetypal mode of communication certainly does not sit well with the project of exploring conversations as the basic unit of ordinary human interaction. At the same time, if we accept Schegloff’s injunction (1997:100) that there are alternative formats of telling and a story is simply one of them, no better or worse, there is a good case for presuming and uncovering systematicity in this format of telling.

The premises of work on narrative-in-interaction could be summed up as follows:

1) Narrative is an embedded unit, enmeshed in local business, as opposed to being free standing and detached/detachable.

2) Narrative is sequentially managed; its tellings unfold on-line, moment-by-moment in the here-and-now of interactions. As such, they can be expected to raise different types of action and tasks for different interlocutors (Goodwin 1984). As we will show in Chapters 3 & 4, this brings into sharp focus the need to distinguish between different participant roles while moving beyond the dyadic scheme of teller-listener.
3) A view of narrative as sequentially unfolding, as outlined above, goes hand in hand with a view of it as emergent. In this sense, its tellings cannot be postulated a priori but emerge as a joint venture and as the outcome of negotiation by interlocutors. Allowing for the interactional contingency of patterns is the hallmark of a sufficiently process-oriented and elastic model of narrative (for details, see Chapter 3) that “opens up rather than closes off the investigation of talk’s business” (Edwards 1997:142) and that accounts for the consequentiality and local relevance of stories. This shift in perspective can turn the analysis into a different enterprise altogether: from solely working with analytical and reified concepts to focusing on their interpretative reality in discourse environments as part of the speakers’ own repertoires of sense-making devices.

4) Narrative tellings are irreducibly situational and locally occasioned: “a good part of [their] meaning is to be found in the occasion of their production, in the local state of affairs that was operative at that exact moment of interactional time” (Antaki & Widdicombe 1998a: 4). As such, their interactional affordances cannot be speculated in advance of local contexts. Attention to the details of their management inherent in specific kinds of interaction is imperative for tapping into issues of identity construction.

We will see in the course of this book how the above premises can inform the mainstay vocabulary of narrative analysis, calling for a rethinking and reconceptualization of narrative as a multitude of genres as well as of the notions of narrative structure, tellability and tellership.

1.2 Narrative and social practice: Beyond the here-and-now of local interactions

A view of narrative as talk in interaction begins to open us a window into narrative as a socially meaningful and orderly activity, allowing us to relate its local sequential management to extra-situational roles and identities in ways that will become clear in this book. It still however provides us with a clumsy way of navigating between the here-and-now of interactions, the fine-grained analysis and the heavy-duty discourses surrounding it, recognizing that any strip of activity is configured on the momentary-quotidian-biographical-historical frames, across socio-spatial arenas. Moving from the micro-to-macro- is not a straightforward

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2. The term originates in linguistic research by Hopper (1987) who views grammar not as residing in hardwired, generative rules but as emergent in everyday social interaction, where over time it becomes sedimented but only provisionally so: in other words, it remains bound to contingency.
matter not just within the study of narrative but more generally in discourse analysis (Georgakopoulou & Goutsos 2004: 187–189). What is more, these terms are taken to be a metaphor for what in reality is a multi-level operation with a multiplicity of levels involved on both ends. However seen, there is consensus on the difficulties involved in the balancing act between the micro-and the macro-, in finding a middle ground between the sheer intersubjectivity that is constructed on the spot and the objective determinism of a reality which is viewed as pre-given and external (e.g. Wetherell 2001).

In this book, this middle ground will be intimately linked with the notion of social practice. Social practice captures habituality and regularity in discourse in the sense of recurrent evolving responses to given situations while allowing for emergence and situational contingency. In Fairclough’s terms (2001: 232), social life itself comprises interconnected networks of social practices of diverse sorts that articulate diverse social elements within a relatively stabilized form of social activity (e.g. family meals). Importantly, these practices, as Fairclough stresses, always include discourse.

The notion of social practice allows for an oscillation between the perspective of social structure and the perspective of social action and agency as both necessary perspectives in social science research and analysis. Put otherwise, an oscillation between relatively stable, prefabricated, typified aspects of communication and emergent, in-process aspects. As Hanks aptly puts it, three things converge on communicative practice: (linguistic) form, activity, and ideology (defined as a system of the participants’ evaluation of their activities). Hanks takes a step further to suggest that in this “moment of synthesis” (230) that practice is, the analyst’s “task is to integrate the three elements without destroying them. This requires carefully considering their respective domains of relevance and validity” (1996: 12). “It is wrong headed, Hanks continues, to try to explain the details of a linguistic form without using the tools of linguistics”. This point can be readily adapted to the study of narrative: although links between narrative and social practices have been established, there is still much scope for bringing those together with linguistic methods of text analysis, which as Fairclough has suggested, the social scientists are more often than not ill-equipped with (2001: 234). We will return to this point in Chapter 3.

An important aspect of discourse within social practices is the way it can be used reflexively to represent its practice as well as other practices. As we will see, this recognition forces attention to processes of intertextuality (and more specifically inter-narrativity) and of complex interactions with past, present and future events and tellings. In other words, it calls for the inclusion in the analysis of a narrative’s life cycle or natural history (Silverstein & Urban 1996): the ways in which it is transposed in time and space, recycled and reshaped to suit local contexts.
The notion of *genre* here is a catalyst, a powerful analytical way of bringing together text and practices, linking ways of speaking with producing social life in the semiotic world. In Hanks’s terms, genres provide a uniquely rich area of research into communicative practice (1996:246). Like other analysts (e.g. Bauman 2001), Hanks is careful to differentiate between earlier approaches to genre as a system of formal features or a type of text, and later approaches to it as a mode of action, a key part of our habitus (adapted from Bourdieu 1977), i.e. the routine and repeated ways of acting into which speakers are inculcated through education and daily experience. In this way, more than a “constellation of systematically related, co-occurring formal features” (Bauman 2004:3), genre becomes a “primary means for dealing with recurrent social exigencies . . . a routinized vehicle for encoding and expressing particular orders of knowledge and experience” (6).

As orienting frameworks of conventionalised expectations, genres force the analytical attention to routine and socioculturally shaped ‘ways of telling’ (Hymes 1996) in specific settings and for specific purposes. However, it is also accepted from the outset that any genre analysis has to calibrate the tension between uncovering habitual and patterned linguistic (and other semiotic) choices and not overlooking the contingent and irreducibly situated language use.

As we will see in the chapters to follow, this dynamic approach to genres has insufficiently informed narrative analysis. We will argue that this is linked with the focus of research on a specific type of narrative, namely the personal experience narrative of past events. The frequent use of this type of narrative as the basis of numerous empirical studies in the social sciences in general and in linguistics in particular has had profound implications about the direction of narrative analysis, creating notions of a narrative canon and orthodoxy, i.e. what constitutes a story, a good story, a story worth analysing, etc. that in turn dictate a specific analytic vocabulary and an interpretive idiom (cf. Bamberg 2004a, b; Ochs & Capps 2001).

One of the implications of this orthodoxy is that it has deterred analysts from the basic recognition that narrative, exactly like other types of discourse, is not a unified and homogeneous mode, but it presents generic variability and in turn structural variability. In Riessman’s terms, it has not led to methods that allow the examination of diverse ways of telling and “counter tendencies (all too frequent in social science research) to objectify the subject” (1997:157). Riessman is right in pointing out that the answer to this problem lies in the systematic development of a typology of narrative genres. This would allow us to explore how different types and topics of stories shape narrative tellings but also to tap into the interpretative understandings that different genres carry (157). A prerequisite for this investigation of generic variability is to include in the analysis stories that depart significantly from the Labovian prototype of the past events personal experience story, in our terms, small stories.
As suggested above, linking work on narrative as social practice with that of
narrative genre can only be done on the basis of the recent re-theorizing of gen-
res away from formal classifications as the basis for text-distinctions and with an
emphasis on the members’ conventionalized expectations about the activities they
are engaged in, the roles and relationships typically involved and the organiza-
tion systems of those activities (e.g. see Bauman 2001). What this means for the
study of narrative is that instead of treating it as a supra-genre with fixed structural
characteristics (i.e, invariant and inflexible structural units), emphasis is placed
on narrative structures as dynamic and evolving responses to recurring rhetori-
cal situations, as resources more or less strategically and agentively drawn upon,
negotiated and reconstructed anew in local contexts. As the awareness that the
fit between a particular text and the generic model can never be perfect (Bau-
man 2001:180) grows, the question that becomes pertinent is: How do generic
representations of narrative structure get situated and become relevant in the
microcosm of specific instances of communication? What kinds of strategies do
speakers use to deal with the gap between what may be expected and what is ac-
tually being done? At the same time, the incompleteness or smallness of narrative
instances be it in the sense of possibilities for revision and reinterpretation (Hanks
1996:244) or simply in the sense of narrative accounts in which nothing much
happens becomes firmly integrated into the scope of analysis as opposed to being
an analytic nuisance. As we will see below, the move to such a practice-oriented
view of narrative genres also requires that we firmly locate them in place and
time and scrutinize the social and discourse activities they are habitually associ-
ated with. In particular, it focuses our attention on the “social values of space as
inscribed upon the practices” (Hanks 1996:246) that take place within narrative
tellings.

Another important dimension, between micro-instances of narratives in lo-
cal interactions and their embeddedness in social practices, involves mid-level
conceptualisation, ways that allow us to overcome the “debilitating dichotomy
between local and large-scale contexts” (Hanks 1996:192). These concepts, ana-
lytical in essence, allow us to tap into contextualization processes and to explore
the participants’ inferences. In this way, they safeguard us against the reading off
of identities or social processes from micro-level choices. There are numerous
concepts here that direct us to the mid-order of discourse with unclear and over-
lapping reference, to echo Coupland & Coupland (2004). Here, I will single out
the notion of indexicality that has been developed and refined within the Ameri-
can tradition of linguistic anthropology (e.g. Silverstein 1976) and has unfailingly
served as a unique point of entry into natural histories of discourse, which are seen
as an integral component of communicative practices.

It is fair to say that indexicality has been systematically shied away from in
the longstanding tradition of treating narrative as a detachable, finished text, as
it has to be the *par excellence* analytical way of describing the invoking of (previously established) social meanings by participants in local contexts. As a notion, it is traceable to Peirce’s semiotic relations, and is frequently juxtaposed to iconicity and symbolism, as another two possibilities of relating the signal to its referent. Within Peirce’s model, two things are apt to enter in the capacity of being its expression and content into a semiotic relation forming an indexical sign due to a set of properties that are intrinsic to the relationship between them. In this respect, they present an existential or physical connection (spatial relations are paramount). Although this existential relationship (in its literal, physical sense) was later questioned, the notion of contiguity as typical of an indexical relationship was taken up by Jakobson (1979) who added synecdoche (the part for the whole) to the conceptualisation of indexicality.

What is important to note here is that the essence of indexicality is in showing up the object of reference, pointing to it or testifying to its “existence” without asserting anything about it. This has been a pivotal aspect in the ways in which the notion was subsequently systematized within research on text-context relationships, particularly as the realization grew that they are hardly ever direct, straightforward and subject to one-to-one mappings. In Silverstein’s (1976) fundamental discussion of indexicality, the importance of the notion lies in its establishment of semiotic links between linguistic forms and social meanings in ways in which they are historically contingent and interactionally emergent. This dynamic re-definition of indexicality entails the development of contingent associations between two variables that can always be defined and understood relative to local criteria (Hanks 1996:14), a premise which is at the heart of indexicality within research on language and social practices. Furthermore, as it is now widely held that linguistic forms do not as a rule reflect social meanings and categories in direct ways, Ochs’s (1992) concept of indirect indexicality has been instrumental in generating research on the anisomporhic and mediated relationships between linguistic forms and social meanings; on how linguistic forms may index attitudes, stances, and activities that are in turn associated with social categories.

In this book, I will make extensive use of indexicality to refer to processes of more or less strategically invoking and reworking histories of associative meanings, previous interactional contexts and shared resources, including previously told stories, in the course of narrative tellings. At the same time, I will closely link the notion with the natural histories of narrative as frequently reflected upon and foregrounded in the data of my study: this means that indexicality is at the heart of processes of (re)tellings and recontextualizations of stories; also of intertextual links and cross-references to previous discourses and practices.

The idea of narrative as part of social practices inevitably leads to pluralized and fragmented notions. As the realization that people participate in multiple, overlapping and intersecting communities has been brought home in sociolinguis-
tics, mainstay notions such as that of a speech community have been duly problematized (see Rampton 1999). There has thus been a definite move from large and all-encompassing notions of society and culture to “micro-cultures”, shrunk down, more manageable in size communities of people who, through regular interaction and participation in an activity system, share linguistic and social practices norms as well as understandings of them.

These are frequently described in sociolinguistics in terms of a community of practice (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet 1999; Lave & Wenger 1991): the notion is symptomatic of a dramatic recasting of “culture”, “community” and the like from their traditional definitions as fixed and static collectivities to symbolic and even imagined constructions that are based on co-participation in specific activities (Rampton 1999). Seen as “an aggregate of people who come together around a mutual engagement in an endeavour” (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet 1999:191), community of practice succeeds in recognizing the importance of shared resources that have accumulated over a period of regular contact and socialization amongst the participants involved. In this way, it shifts emphasis from “language or structure to participants and ways of engagement in some project” (Hanks 1996:221), allowing for them to act partly together and partly as different social actors.

In light of the above, when viewed as part of communities of practice, narratives are expected to act as other shared resources, be they discourses or activities. In particular, as we will show, they can form an integral part of a community of practice’s shared culture as well as being instrumental in negotiating and (re)generating it. Put differently, they are expected to be inflected, nuanced, reworked, and strategically adapted to perform acts of group identity, to reaffirm roles and group-related goals, expertise, shared interests, etc. At the same time, they are also potentially contestable resources, prone to recontextualization, transposed across contexts and recycled thus leading to other kinds of discourses (cf. Silverstein & Urban 1996).

In this respect, it is important to recognize the place of narratives in a trajectory of interactions as temporalized activities (for details see Chapter 3) but also in networks of practices which they can partake in, represent and reflect on. This approach can be contrasted with an earlier emphasis on narratives as texts and their relationships with speaking and writing (for an overview discussion of these approaches, see Toolan 1988: Chapters 2–4). As we will see, the study of narrative as social practice points to new avenues and intelligible distinctions (in the case of the data at hand, mediated vs. face-to-face) for tapping into the (re)contextualization of stories. In general, within the framework of communities of practice, we can begin to address the complexities of interrelationships between conversational stories and other shared resources. Two cases in point come from my data of interactions of an all-female adolescent group living in a small town in Greece (for details about the data-set, see §1.4.1).
First, narratives become available for recontextualization as they are being lifted from one context to another, in other words, being entextualized (see Silverstein & Urban 1996). Entextualization refers to the process of organizing a stretch of discourse into a “text”, a unit that is “bounded off to a degree from its discursive surround, internally cohesive (tied together by various formal devices) and coherent (semantically intelligible) (Bauman 2004:3). This process basically enables speakers to lift a text from one context to another and thus conditions the iterability of texts: in this way, texts are both constructed anew in new contexts (recontextualized) and relationally orientated to their previous contexts of occurrence. In the data from the group of female adolescents, one form of entextualization involves the recording in a diary-like Book of Minutes (literally called “Proceedings”) of the group’s favourite (in the sense of most “memorable” or “dramatic”) stories. Such processes of entextualization are revealing of types of social organization and power relations within the group and with regard to differential entitlement (Shuman 1986) to shared resources. The different roles and modes of participation even in a close-knit group are pre-empted by the framework of community of practice which recognizes distinctions between peripheral and core members and allows for various degrees and types of apprenticeship going on (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet 1999; Wenger 1998).

In the data at hand, it is telling that it is the leading figure of the group who records the narratives in the diary which is kept safe from “prying eyes” (mainly of parents) in her belongings at home. In this way, narratives not only cross modalities wholesale but certain parts prove to be more extractable or detachable than others. As we will discuss (§2.2.4), characters’ speech and punchlines prove to be more extractable than events; put crudely, narrative bits that have to do with the assessment of or commentary on events are more likely to be recycled.

Shared events, be they previously narrativized or not, can also generate other kinds of discourse activities. One of the most noteworthy ones is that of the group’s joint construction of poems that encapsulate a story’s events. These are normally drafted in the group’s leisurely environments of socialization that mostly involve coffee drinking in the town’s cafeterias. It is important to note that in this way the poem drafting introduces a different kind of activity within the framework of socializing, a kind of “literacy event” (Street 2000) where people comment on each others’ writing (the poems are first recorded in a piece of paper, even at the back of cigarette packs) and reflect on issues of rhyme.

Looking at the different forms of entextualization of a narrative in a clear temporal line is arbitrary and inevitably involves a process of reification of overlapping and intersecting practices. However, it is worth observing that in the group in question there seems to be a progression in the entextualization activities that leads from the inclusion of a narrative in the diary to its entextualization as a poem. Furthermore, as we will discuss in §2.2.4, the process of interactional recontextu-
alization of a narrative leads through repeated tellings over time to mini-tellings and ultimately to condensed quotable forms that can be reworked and stylised.

1.2.1 Narrative in time and place

The above suggests that micro-relations of location, that is, where narratives are told and when, are vital constituents of their roles within social practices. In this sense, location refers to the setting or sphere of narrative tellings: in Hill’s conceptual terms, “an interactional zone felt to be dedicated to particular purposes [...] characteristically accomplished at certain institutional loci and felt to have at least a relative temporal stability, that elicits from speakers particular genres and registers of language” (1999: 545). Another dimension of significance in the localization of narratives is to be found in the ways in which physical time and place get to be narrativized.

The turn from narrative as text to small stories as social practices can be compellingly illustrated here with regard to the role of orientation. The study of narrative in situ with regard to (physical) time and place or, equally, of narrativized time and place has a longstanding tradition that goes far back and beyond discourse analyses of narrative.

Time, in particular, has, since Aristotle’s Poetics (1927), figured in all definitions of narrative, as a sine qua non criterion, in its sense of temporal ordering of a sequence of events that constitute a narrative’s plot (e.g. see Ricoeur 1988). This temporality bias has meant that place (more technically and/or interchangeably, space) remained for a long time marginalized in the literature. In addition, the interrelations between time and place were left largely untapped. It is telling that the best-known attempt within a linguistic analysis of narrative to bring them together assigns place a backgrounded role to narrative action. Specifically, in Labov’s (1972; also see Labov & Waletzky 1968) model, the temporal or chronological dimension is still paramount as the definition of narrative is predicated on it.

Narratives of personal experience are seen as “one method of recapitulating past experience by matching a verbal sequence of clauses to the sequence of events which (it is inferred) actually occurred” (Labov & Waletzky 1967: 287). However, in another structural part of the model, namely orientation, time and place come together. Orientation is seen as the stage-setting component of a narrative where reference is made to the time, place, and the participants characteristic of the situation preceding the beginning of the complicating action. Viewed as orientation devices, time and place have often been studied as either the background to narrative action and emplotment (i.e. the imaginative process of weaving events together) or as embellishing material that serves evaluative and addressee-involving functions (e.g. see Tannen 1989). By implication, they have been largely viewed as
teller-led stylistic choices aimed at making the tale more animated and dramatic (for a critical discussion of this view, see De Fina 2003: 367–369).

In the same tradition of structural and stylistic analyses of narrative, it is worth noting that the role of space has recently been reinstated, as the primacy of temporal ordering in narrative as well as the linearity ideas that tend to accompany it have been sufficiently problematized (e.g. see Briggs 1997; Brockmeier 2000; Herman 2001; Hermans 1997). In the same vein, spatial organisation (i.e. locational scenes and shifts) has been at times shown to be equally or even more pivotal for narrative structure than temporality (Payne 1984; Werth 1999). Furthermore, the gradual move away from a referential view of the relationship between narrative telling and told (see Mischler 1995:90ff.) has led to the increasing rapprochement of narrative analysis with postmodernist accounts of time and place as dynamic, shifting, and socially constructed concepts (e.g. Giddens 1981; Harvey 1989; for a discussion see Baynham 2003:347–349).

Within such a conceptualization, the idea of the interpenetrations of time and space, in the Bakhtinian sense of chronotope (1981), has gained currency. In Bakhtin's terms, "the chronotope is where the knots of narrative are tied and untied. It can be said, without qualification, that to them belongs the meaning that shapes narrative . . . spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one concrete whole. This intersection of axes and fusion of indicators characterizes the chronotope. . . . The chronotope makes narrative events concrete, makes them take on flesh, causes blood to flow in their veins . . . Thus the chronotope is functioning as the primary means for materializing time in space" (1981:250). It is true to say that Bakhtin's chronotope remains one of the most elusive concepts within a sociolinguistic approach to narrative; however, the dynamic synthesis of time and space within a taleworld is a view that is being increasingly embraced. Another notable influence, even if with much scope for research, refers to the ways in which a chronotopic analysis can provide a window into the ideologically and symbolically laden aspects of time and space in narrative: in this way, a narrative's chronotope serves as "an optic for reading texts as x-rays of the forces at work in the culture system from which they spring" (1981:426).

Advances such as the above have not always found their way into empirical analyses of narrative where there is still ample room for a systematic study of time and place as interactional devices in the telling of stories. This would shed light on time and place as resources that are jointly constructed on line and adapted to the here-and-now of the storytelling situation. In addition, it would look into the ways in which the various social meanings of time and place are discursively emergent in narratives. Such an approach requires a view of narrative as talk-in-interaction which, as we have suggested, sees narratives as arising in or being prompted by the ongoing course of an interactional occasion. In this way, their design and con-
structional features, including references to time and place, are locally occasioned and interactionally achieved (Schegloff 1997:97–105).

Within such a framework, narrative time and place can be systematically contested, negotiated and/or re-set between participants; in fact, as we will see in §3.6, more so than the events themselves or the characters talked about. In this way, they can be instrumental for each participant’s perspective building and take on past and future experiences. In addition, the relationships between time and place can transcend the boundaries of one taleworld and involve the interplay between different narratives.

We will show that this negotiability and dialogism are intimately linked with the indexicality of place (in its interactions with time), that is, the shared socio-symbolic meanings and expectations that are associated with them (Silverstein 1976). Indeed, time and place as deictic shifters are potentially at the heart of indexing in any discourse (Silverstein 1976). The processes through which this occurs are invariably subtle.

As Blommaert & Maryns have demonstrated (2000:79ff.), the tellers’ orientations to place can be indexed through subtle stylistic shifts in the unfolding of narratives. In the data at hand, as we will show (§3.6), the indexicality of different places lies in the history which they bring with them and the participants’ expectations about as well as associations with specific people, types of activities, and events, that this history has resulted in. In this sense, places are at the core of shared and familiar worlds that both give rise to and are invoked in narrative plots, that is, meaningful configurations of characters, events and actions in specific taleworlds (Ricoeur 1988). This way, the socio-symbolic dimensions of practised place (De Certeau 1984) can be instrumental in piecing together a perspective on events that is naturally open to interactional negotiation and redrafting. Finally, a specific configuration of time and place is not only associated with a specific version of events or perspective on them; it also invokes and allows for or generates certain roles and identities for the participants involved (see §3.6).

1.3 Narrative and identities

The importance of narrative as social practice is intimately bound up with its widely held status as a unique point of entry into processes of identity construction, a privileged mode for constructing identities. As already suggested, however, this premise often lends itself to essentializing work that is more resistant to exploring the similarities in identity construction between narrative and other kinds of discourse. As far as identity analysis within discourse studies is concerned, there is by now a well-established approach to identities as practical accomplishments that are constructed -and even deconstructed- online in the “everyday flow of ver-
bal interaction” (Widdicombe & Wooffitt 1995: 218). This is a far cry from earlier views of identities as singular, static and given properties that at some point in one’s life become finished projects.

The current emphasis on the fluidity and emergence of identities in discourse, particularly in interactional sites, where they can present a multiplicity of meanings, brings together approaches to discourse as diverse as social constructionism and conversation analysis (Widdicombe 1998: 201). Nonetheless, there is less convergence on how the discourse constructions of identities relate to factors that are external to a specific interactional situation (sic. exogenous). In studies of identity constructions through narrative, there has been a longstanding tradition of investigating how pre-existent, socioculturally available – capital D – discourses are drawn upon and employed by tellers in the course of narratives in order to construct, justify, and explicate a sense of “self” and, when applicable, “other” (e.g. see Kerby 1991). Here, subject positions tend to be assumed a priori of the analysis and seen as analysts’ rather than participants’ resources, i.e. as etic rather than as emic categories. Selves and identities are thus viewed as the product of prevailing discourses that are tied to social arrangements and practices; the assumption is that “the positions we adopt tie us into those social practices while providing the content of our subjectivity” (Widdicombe 1998: 200).

In this process, narrative tends to be seen as a privileged mode for self-construction and a unique point of entry into trans-situational features of the self and identity as those emerge in a person’s (ongoing) life story (e.g., Bruner 1991; Carr 1986; Polkinghorne 1987; Sarbin 1986; for a critical discussion see Lucius-Hoene & Deppermann 2000: 201ff.). In view of this exigency, the type of narrative that has monopolized identity analysis is that of autobiography. In turn, autobiographical narratives are mostly elicited in research interviews.

The above pertains to the “where” of identity analysis in narrative, that is, the level of analysis for tapping into identity constructions. In terms of the “how” of identities, studies of autobiographical narratives have been slow to move away from representational accounts of the self (i.e. accounts of the type of person that a life story presents its teller to be) that treat stories as more or less authentic, transparent and unmediated records (for a discussion see Atkinson & Delamonte 2006) to interactional and performative views of identity construction and the ways in which narrators perform and locally occasion themselves through their stories (see contributions in Bamberg 1997a, 2000). A long overdue decisive shift to such views would involve among others documenting how teller and audience co-draft or co-author identities even in a largely “monologic” mode such as a research interview (e.g. see Mishler 1986; Potter & Hepburn 2005). This would be based on a view of narrative not as a self-contained and autonomous unit but as talk-in-interaction.

Within sociolinguistics, research on the communicative how of identities in talk has been flourishing and is well placed to uncover how positioned and posi-
tioning material, socioculturally derived, orchestrates construct a sense of self (cf. Rampton 2005). At the same time, in the case of storytelling in particular, there has been an interest in how aspects of the teller’s self break down, laminate, are diffused, etc. for self-presentation.

To be more specific, details intrinsic or endogenous to the specific situation of a storytelling that have attracted attention mostly have to do with the teller’s choices of code, register, and style (e.g. animating characters’ voices, shifting tenses, switching codes) that render a telling more performed (e.g. Bauman 1986; Georgakopoulou 1998; Hill 1995). Some of these devices, particularly the animation of characters’ voices, commonly referred to as “constructed dialogue” (Tannen 1989) have been closely linked with the so called narrative “double-logic” (Chatman 1990), the narrative exigency whereby there are certain participant roles within the taleworld and certain roles within the telling situation. In this respect, the teller can be a narrator and a character in the tale as well as an “animator” (i.e. the person who physically produces the story) in a telling situation.

As has been documented, the separation between the taleworld and the world of telling provides numerous possibilities for the teller’s self-presentation: it allows the tellers to socialize aspects of their self, as defined by Goffman (1974), by appearing both as narrators and characters in the taleworld. The prime site for this self-lamination is the realm of reported speech. Goffman’s notion of footing (i.e. stances or alignments which tellers take up with regard to themselves and their audiences) is crucial in understanding this process.

As Schiffrin (1990) has explicated it, drawing on Goffman, storytellers can present themselves in the capacity of (a) animator (the aspect of self which physically produces talk), (b) author (the aspect of self responsible for the content of talk), (c) figure, the main character in the story, someone who belongs to the world that is spoken about and not the world in which the speaking occurs, and, finally, (d) principal, the self established by what is said, committed to what is said. Alternatively, they can delegate any of the aspects of author, figure, and/or principal to other characters in the taleworld. Through such manipulations of their kaleidoscope of selves, storytellers can diffuse their agency or responsibility in the social field, create a widened base of support for their views and beliefs, or, generally, cast positive light on them (e.g. see Hill 1995). This line of research has attempted to illuminate the exigencies or specificities of narrative for identity work. In other words, it has mainly addressed the question of what is unique to narrative about identity construction and in this respect it has spoken to social science research on autobiographical research interview narratives.

As we will see in later chapters (particularly Chapter 4), one avenue of research within identity analysis in narrative that merits systematic attention relates to the sequential management of stories as a point of entry into the teller’s as well as the other storytelling participant’s local roles. This sort of research requires an
intense cross-fertilization with interactional paradigms of talk, particularly conversation analysis which has documented links between local participation roles and larger social identities. The idea here is that larger (i.e. extra-situational, exogenous, “portable”) identities can be best traced in discourse through a microanalytic emphasis on the details and sequential management of talk (see Wooffitt & Clark 1998; Zimmerman 1998). The relationship between the two, described as one of “loose coupling” (Goffman 1983; discussed and quoted in this context in Zimmerman 1998:88) and not as a deterministic one, has been illuminated in various occasions of institutional talk (e.g. emergency calls, idem; divorce mediation sessions, Greatbatch & Dingwall 1998). There, roles (sic. discourse identities) tied with the sequence of adjacency pairs such as questioner-answerer, speaker-recipient have been found to provide a platform for larger social identities (e.g. spouse, parent, layperson – expert, etc.).

As we will suggest in Chapter 3, this line of research has not had much purchase within conventional narrative analysis, in part due to the area’s emphasis on autobiographical stories that are but one of type of narrative activity and associated with specific communicative features and tasks. As a rule, autobiographical stories are non-shared, personal experience past events stories. In terms of participation roles, they seem to divide participants into a teller with strong floor-holding rights and an audience with primary and secondary recipients. Furthermore, they more often than not are (or expected to be) well-structured activities that develop in the fashion of a more or less classic narration, that is, move from the reported events and the complications within them to the high point, which they evaluate and resolve (cf. Labov 1972). In stark contrast to that, stories in everyday talk present a fascinating complexity and multiplicity of tellings and conversational actions: they span the continuum from highly monologic to highly collaborative tellings; from past to future and hypothetical events; from long and performed to fragmented and elliptical tellings (Georgakopoulou 2004; Ochs & Capps 2001). It is fair to say that as analysts we know less about the right end of the above continua and more about the prototypical or “canonical” narration of past (non-shared) personal events (cf. Ochs & Capps 2001:Ch. 1).

Drawing on the idea that the participants’ exploitation of conversational (interactional) structures and mechanisms makes visible extra-situational resources, this study will argue for and demonstrate a pairing of storytelling participation roles with larger social identities in non-canonical or atypical narratives, which, as suggested, we shall refer to as small stories. We will show that the telling of small stories is jointly constructed by the participants but with differentiated actions and contributions from each of them. In other words, different participants contribute in varying degrees to different story components, particularly plotline and evaluation. Furthermore, the participants are differentiated in the degree in which their contributions are ratified and taken on board by others or, equally,
challenged and delegitimated. We will also argue that these telling roles make visible and are based on the participants’ larger social (particularly gender) identities, relative standing vis-à-vis one another, and relationships as close friends who share an interactional history.

Looking at the micro-level has implications for the sort of account of identities we provide as analysts and the “whose” of identities we look into. In this respect, research on narrative cum identity within the realm of autobiography or life stories has privileged both a certain kind of subjectivity and certain kinds of identities. More specifically, a focus on the project of storying oneself as intrinsically oriented towards coherence and authenticity has implicated a neglect of the contradictions and inconsistencies, of the ways in which the speakers’ accounts are rhetorically and argumentatively organized in local contexts.

In this respect, the volume of studies have focused on how, even through a dynamic process, tellers gradually move to a unified and rather stable account of self that is interwoven into their life story (e.g., Brockmeier & Carbaugh 2001; Crossley 2000; Daiute & Lightfoot 2004). Common to these studies is the notion that narrative provides the primary structure by means of which we organize our view of self through time allowing us to interpret our present and speculate on our future on the basis of the past but also to re-interpret the past in the light of the current process of narrativizing self.

Self and narrative are intimately linked within this approach that is often labelled as narrative psychology. They are also brought together in ways that emphasize the ideas of autonomy, integration and coherence over those of a fragmented, relational self. Fragmented in this case would refer to self discursively being constructed as doing different things on different occasions that can neither be automatically reduced to a singular and coherent entity nor can they be easily abstracted from local contexts. A relational self on the other hand would be premised on self ultimately deriving its capacity for self-perception and self-definition only through relations with others, that is, “becoming” on the boundaries of self and other, identity and difference (de Peuter 1998).

Both these ideas, however prevalent within broadly speaking poststructuralist accounts in an array of disciplines, seem to be meeting with resistance within narrative analysis. In Roberts’ terms, there is a danger in the area that “narrative

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3. Within narrative psychology, the idea of the fragmentation of self has met with resistance and has been critiqued for its unrealistic lack of accounting for any repetition or rehearsal of patterns through a single lifetime. From this point of view, it is seen as promoting a sense of self that is both untenable and emotionally unbearable for the individuals (e.g. Crossley 2000). Nonetheless, as we will show in §5.5, self “fragmentation”, when placed within a narrative-interaction approach that sees talk as the site for identity work (e.g. Potter & Wetherell 1987; Wetherell 1998), “is able to encompass” the ideas of reiteration of patterns “without theorizing the subject in psychoanalytic […] terms” (Taylor 2005:47).
is used too restrictively to refer to a version of life given at a particular moment as expressing the given story as consistent and sequencing experience as lived, and even, if only momentarily either the self as a consistent surface expression or an inner constant entity” (2004:270). In this way, Roberts continues, linearity remains dominant even if implicit in the use of story and in turn ‘life as stories’ becomes itself a restrictive metaphor emphasizing consistency while overlooking the deficiencies and inconsistencies of speech (idem). In similar vein, Parker alerts us to the risk of prescribing a certain kind of subjectivity through the analysis of narrative rather than questioning how subjectivity is formed. In this respect, he notes that personal narrative seems to be presented as a model of how we should configure ourselves as selves striving for a purposeful and convincing whole (Parker 2003:314). To many, this is a Western type of ideal encompassing neo-Cartesian individualist views of personhood and privileging unity and integration of a singular and “authentic” self through the piecing together of a well-structured and orderly life story (e.g. see de Peuter 1998:32–34).

It may be apparent from the above that there is a definite focus on the project of storying the self within identity work and narrative. We can in fact talk about narrative identity in the sense of the ‘storied self’ as a well-established paradigm across a wide array of disciplines. This emphasis on the construction of self has meant that relational processes of self sense-making have been under-represented along of course with the exploration of how narratives can be told to story the other. Both these under-represented foci can be seen as part of an alternative narrative cum identity approach, more specifically a dialogical one. As de Peuter puts it, “by reconceiving narratives as active dialogues, relationship is privileged over authorship; the multiple centres of organization of the self and their relations, pursuing on the boundaries of self and other, identity and difference, may be celebrated rather than silenced thus ensuring the dynamic tensions among opposing forces which in turn enable the dialogical self to be unfinalizable, emergent and ongoing” (1998:40).

With the exploration of small stories, this book is aimed at opening the scope of identity and narrative research to all the above under-represented foci; it will show how a story’s emerging structure, its place in the sequentiality of talk, is crucial for identity work; furthermore, how meso-level kinds of positions, what Zimmerman (1998:90–91) calls “situational identities”, allow us to capture the habituality and iterability of identities. In this way, the discussion will make tangible a dialogical and practice-view of narrative discourse and identity that adds a temporal dimension to the time frame of an interaction and captures any (dynamically) habitual social action. This temporal dimension captures the dialogicality of stories in my data, the trajectory of narrative and other interactions in the group’s history that informs later social action. Finally, we will show how identities can be signalled through a repertoire of linguistic tools, deployed in a more or less
virtuoso way, including stereotypical ideological uses of language that are conventionally associated with specific groups and types of situations (Bucholtz & Hall 2004: 386).

1.4 Methodological perspectives: Ethnographies of narrative events

We have so far drawn a picture of description and analysis of narrative as/ in social practice with an emphasis on small stories. A vital piece in this puzzle concerns the methodological perspective we adopt as analysts when thinking about narrative data. Without wishing to prescribe or exclude, particularly as the integration of methods with different strengths and weaknesses is currently gaining ground, it is also fair to suggest that one specific methodology that is well suited to a study of narrative as part of social practices is that of ethnography. Like narrative itself, ethnography is variously used as an epistemology, a method, a technique within anthropology, an area in itself, etc. Addressing all the different conceptual and theoretical issues and debates in a proliferating and dauntingly inter-disciplinary area of research is beyond the scope of this discussion. Instead, ethnography will be recommended here for its regard for local rationalities and as a way of tapping into ecologies of meaning-making and the participants’ own sense-making and structuring features, their tacit and articulated understandings in whichever processes and activities are being studied (Rampton et al. 2005: 5).

The sort of ethnography that will be advocated here is inspired by the foundational work of the Ethnography of Communication, particularly by Hymes (1981, 1996), and the direction that it subsequently shaped both in America and in the UK, in the former, in terms of Linguistic Anthropology in particular (for details see Duranti 1997, 2004), and, in the latter, within sociolinguistics and as of lately within Linguistic Ethnography (http://www.lancs.ac.uk/fss/organisations/lingethn/). Linguistic Ethnography (henceforth LE) in particular advocates a place for “home” ethnographies, detailed studies of sites that the researcher may have linguistic and cultural proximity with as well as some kind of first-hand experience and knowledge of. Furthermore, the notion of ethnography is used here broadly enough to cover cases of studies that do not necessarily undertake the sort of time-scale research that feels forbiddingly long and impractical. Street (2004) claims that students and scholars can nowadays feel over-awed by the concept of ethnography as it has traditionally been commandeered by anthropologists and that a useful antidote to this is the ethnographic perspective, as recommended by Green & Bloome (1997): a focused approach to studying particular aspects of everyday life and cultural practices of a social group.

LE, either full-fledged or ‘light’, can be seen as a way out of reductionist approaches to context (e.g. seeing context as a surrounding frame to interaction, as
the conglomerate of singularly identifiable variables, as a post-hoc interpretative frame of reference or equally as an *a priori* agenda-dictating parameter that has to be contained, etc.). More specifically, it can serve as a *context-enriching* tool that allows us to tap into processes of recontextualization and dialogicality thus providing valuable insights into natural histories of discourse which, we have argued, are of paramount importance in locating narratives in social practice. Such natural histories may be indexed in the data; in other words, there may be traces of them but they may not always be explicitly articulated. Accessing them, as we will see in the course of this book, may be of importance for identifying dimensions of context and what is relevant context for any strip of narrative interaction. What I call here context-enriching affordances of ethnography resonates with Heller’s (2001:2) description of ethnography as allowing the analyst to forge ‘linkages among activities, processes, events, objects, people in ways which are not readily accessible to other actors’.

What is also important for any discursive narrative analysis is how ethnography helps analysts stay alert to the potential consequences of what is left out and to the selection and idealization that accompanies every analysis, which inevitably leads to a partiality of interpretations. We can refer to this as ethnography enabled *context-reflexivity*: a critical awareness of context indeterminacy and the impossibility of totalizing accounts. In the case of narrative in particular, ethnography can thus contribute an epistemology for de-essentializing narratives, by placing them within a relativist context of more or less partial and valid accounts within systems of production and articulation. In this way, ethnography can be instrumental in sensitising analysts to the different kinds of access to social lives afforded by narrative as opposed to prescribing the pre-analytical assumption that narrative allows a privileged access. It can also document local theories of what constitutes a narrative and what the role of narrative is in specific communities (Heath 1983).4

More specifically, an ethnography of narrative tellings enables us to shift from the exploration of the sociocultural roles of narrative in whole communities to smaller groups of people or cultures. It is an epistemological demeanour that allows us to move away from the earlier normative and homogenizing approaches to language and culture and towards densely contextualized accounts that recognize the fluidity, contingency and complexity of the phenomena investigated. As Rampton et al claim, “the landscapes of group identity, the ethnoscapes, are no longer familiar anthropological objects insofar as groups are no longer territorialized, spatially bounded and historically unself-conscious or culturally homogeneous” (2005:10–11). In similar terms, “claims to comprehensive description”

4. Tellingly, Goodwin (1990) and Shuman (1986), two of the earlier studies that brought to the fore different kinds of narrative data other than the canonical life story or life event narratives, were based on ethnographies.
of the processes under investigation seem too ambitious, as the object of analysis is recognized to be much more complex, messy and elusive than previously thought of.

We will see the implications of this framework of analysis for the data of this study that happen to be Greek. Adopting an ethnographic perspective on the data in question does not tally with a hasty documentation of the Greekness of the data, in other words an exoticization of the subject *a priori* of the analysis that dictates the exploration of cultural variation as the main objective of the analysis. Instead, the data will be offered here as a case for the analysis of narrative within micro-cultures that may or may not have anything to do with the participants’ ethnicity. In this case, the researcher happens to have grown up in the same community as the participants and on the face of it to ‘speak the same language’. Dismissing the ethnographic element of this study, however, on the basis of the researcher’s ‘familiarity’ with the community under investigation is not warranted by the latest advent of ‘home ethnographies’ that have duly problematized the longstanding tradition of ethnographies of ‘exotic’ cultures and any sharp distinctions between familiar and strange. In fact, as we have seen, the need for and legitimacy of ‘home ethnographies’ has become one of the emblematic statements of the UK LE (Rampton et al. 2005) with which this study is broadly aligned.

Within a framework of LE, the aim here will be to show how identity work in narrative is more often than not based on nuanced processes that mobilize and inflect to varying degrees of implicitness a host of resources; also, how, rather than being kept apart, identities tend to be co-articulated in narrative, as has been shown to be the case in talk in more general (e.g. chapters in Antaki & Widdicombe 1998b; Eckert & McConnell-Ginet 1999). In other words, not only are they enmeshed in local business but they also interrelate in complex ways that makes analytically teasing out one aspect of self from another an artificial exercise. LE will be proposed as an indispensable tool for tapping into those interrelationships, making connections between the analytical concepts (etic) and the participants’ own sense making devices and ecologies of meaning (emic).

More specifically, the analytical pairing of LE and small stories in the data at hand can be abstracted as three foci of interest and separable but interrelated levels of analysis (ways of storytelling, sites, tellers) that are informed by insights from practice-based views of language, as already discussed (e.g. Bauman 2001, 2004; Hanks 1996; Hymes 1996). These three levels of genre analysis work together to make up the moment of synthesis of a single communicative event while at the same time bringing to the moment socio-cultural histories and time-scales (Agha & Wortham 2005). *Ways of (story)telling* capture socio-culturally shaped and partly conventionalized themes and styles of telling (ranging from generic framing devices to modes of emplotment) that are in turn seen as modes of acting, inter-acting, producing and dynamically receiving text, revealing of a rhetorical
stance and orientation to the world. We will mainly discuss those in Chapter 2, while we will go on in Chapter 3 to see how ways of storytelling are habitually associated with the sites of both tellings and tales.

As we have suggested in Section 1.2.1, sites involve socio-cultural spheres and spaces for semiotic activity in real time (cf. site of engagement, Scollon & Scollon 2004) that are not necessarily homogeneous and uni-dimensional but multi-functional and polycentric (Blommaert, Collins & Slembrouck 2005:207). Finally, tellers (Chapters 4 and 5) is a dynamically conceived adaptation of the lay term employed for social actors within storytelling activities, seen here as having a complex make-up, partly personal – autobiographical, partly social – relational (in the case of my data, peer-group identities/ history of friendship, systems of norms/expectations, sense of propriety, among others), and distinctively for the activity of storytelling, partly partaking in a taleworld (as character with other characters) and partly partaking in the here and now (as interlocutor).

As we will show, LE as context-enriching and context-reflexive sensibility can necessitate and facilitate forging linkages amongst these three levels as part of any language focused narrative analysis that aims at navigating micro- and macro-accounts: this involves filling in gaps in each, providing fuller understandings, making otherwise invisible connections or disconnections visible, giving clarity and purchase on what is routine as opposed to incidental and what weight each of them has; gauging experiential processes and understandings vis-à-vis analytical categorizations; documenting the social consequentiality of discourse activities; finally, alerting the analyst to the dangers of treating ways of storytelling as unmediated accounts of tellers as opposed to seeing them as situated actions.

1.4.1 Data

The insights of this book are based on empirical work with narrative data in two different communication contexts. The first, most basic for this discussion and most frequently referred to data-set, comes from the conversations of a group of three Greek women (a fourth female person joins in occasionally but is not seen as a ”core” member) that describe their relation as “best friends”. The group was studied ethnographically in various stages between 1998 and 2000 and the data collection involved: a) 20 hours of audio-taped data that two of the participants, Vivi and Tonia, recorded wearing audio-microphones; b) 60 pages of personal field-notes in the form of a diary; c) relatively unstructured interviews before, during and after the period of audio-recordings. In the interviews, I asked the participants for their thoughts on popularity, friendship, educational aims,

5. The term in the original is kolites, literally meaning glued friends.
relationships with parents, sexual relationships, life in a provincial town and, finally, engagement with popular culture. Some of these interviews elicited retrospective comments by the participants on what was being said and done in parts of the recorded data and they helped me unpick the constantly allusive style and gain some understanding of the web of references to the participants’ interactional history.

When the recordings started, the participants were 17 years old and living in a small town (25,000 inhabitants) in the Peloponnese, South Greece. At that point, they were re-sitting their University entrance exams and, as such, were outside the school framework. Their daily routine thus involved self-study in the mornings, private tuition in the early afternoons, and socializing thereafter, that mostly took the form of hanging out with one another and chatting at cafés. This regular socializing over a long period of time (the participants had been best friends for 10 years) had resulted in a dense interactional history, rich in shared assumptions that were consistently and more or less strategically drawn upon to suit various purposes in local interactional contexts.

I had been researching young people (mainly adolescents) in Greece with regard to their language and socialization practices and with a particular interest in single-sex interactions (they appeared to be the most frequent socialization pattern) and in that process I located the group in question using the friend of a friend network. It was representative of girl groups in the sense that it was small and focused; also, the girls had grown up in the same town, had gone to the same school and came from a similar family background which can be characterized, somewhat schematically, as low-middle class. The families in fact socialized with one another. Vivi’s parents were a bank employee (currently manager) and a nurse. Tonia’s father was a civil servant and her mother a teacher. Fotini’s father owned a centrally located patisserie and Irene’s father was a high-ranking policeman.

The participants had a whole identity kit as an emblem of their together-ness: they dressed similarly, went to the same gym, read the same youth magazines, watched and enjoyed the same TV shows and films and shared music tastes (and regularly exchanged CDs) Specifically, they were into rock, pop music and R&B

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6. This routine was quite typical of a large number of the participants’ contemporaries in Greece. Entrance to a Greek university was highly competitive, with only 1 in 4 candidates securing a place, so re-sits of the “Panhellenic” exams the following year were quite common. (The educational system has undergone certain changes since then).

7. The data were collected before mobile telephony exploded as one of the main means of communication amongst young people in particular.
but they also enjoyed Greek songs. Furthermore, in the ethnographic interviews and their conversations, a number of shared social group representations and language ideologies (i.e. representations that construe the intersections of forms of talk with forms of social life, that is, link language differences with social meanings, Woolard 1998:3) emerged. The most predominant of those involved the participants’ explicit distancing from the local dialect, particularly the broader instances of it that were mostly to be found in the villages surrounding the participants’ home town. The participants frequently made jokes about and mocked a key phonological feature of the dialect, namely the palatalization of lateral /l/ and nasal /n/ before front vowel /i/ (Newton 1972). In contrast, they seemed closely affiliated with and aspiring to what they defined as the Athenian accent. As we will see (Section 5.2), switches to the local dialect are part of the linguistic resources that play an important role in self and other identity work in the course of narrative tellings.

In line with Bucholtz (1999a:212), the above shared linguistic practices can be classified as positive and negative. This distinction should not be taken as an absolute or non-negotiable one. It is rather used here as a heuristic for identifying broad zones of affiliation and disaffiliation which the participants operate with (i.e. draw upon, invoke, cue) when engaging in positionings of others, in this case men. Following Bucholtz (211), positive identity practices are those in which individuals engage in order to actively construct a chosen identity; negative identity practices are those that individuals employ to distance themselves from an identity. These are listed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Imitation of (aspiration to) the</td>
<td>Avoidance /parody of pronunciation and lexis of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athenian accent</td>
<td>local dialect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Correct” pronunciation/use</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>use of foreign (mainly English)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>words or set phrases</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation to language form (e.g. language play, mixing of formal and informal varieties, word coinage, nicknames)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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8. The term for the songs that the participants liked is ‘laika’ (lit: ‘the people’s’) and some of them were being played in the early hours at clubs which the girls frequented. As we will see, the girls frequently rework such songs (which normally have romantic themes) in their small stories.

9. It is important to note here that the Athenian accent is not to be taken as an undifferentiated whole. Although sociolinguistics studies of its variation are sadly missing, participants seem to model their own accent on certain youth-oriented TV shows and media personalities.
As we will see, social space and the town’s topography are of paramount importance in the participants’ small stories. The town itself could be characterized as sleepy; surrounded by mountains and with a distance of about one hour’s driving time from the nearest beach that has made it somewhat intractable to tourists. At the time of the data collection, it was mainly inhabited by professionals (in particular, civil servants) and it appeared to be linguistically and culturally homogeneous but since then it has undergone serious demographic changes with the influx of immigrants from other Balkan countries, particularly Albanians. At the time, the transformation that the town had undergone was mostly along the lines of town planning and topography. The new had replaced the old or in some ways it was sitting at odds with it: old houses had been demolished or were derelict and an easy target for slogans and graffiti (see Picture 1, Appendix) and in their place three- and four-storey blocks of flats had been built. There were very few spots in the town with renovated buildings (see Picture 2, Appendix). Small corner shops had been replaced by boutiques and fashion shops, reflecting the increasing affluence of the families in the vicinity.

In this process, there had been an explosion of youth-oriented leisure places (e.g. cafeterias, bars, clubs). These were mostly concentrated in a street that was pedestrianized (and as a result referred to as the ‘pezodromos’) in the early ‘90s and quickly became a hub for young people. The coffee shops on each side of the street with tables outdoors catered for the favourite activity of leisurely socializing and the coffee-drinking culture of young people in particular (see Pictures 3, 4, and 5 in the Appendix). The parked motorbikes on the one side of the ‘pezodromos’ (see Picture 6 in the Appendix) were a telling sign of the number of young men who frequented it. The girls met on a daily basis in the pezodromos (in their favourite ‘hang-outs’, as we will see in 3.6) and had their coffee outside, weather permitting, or their drinks inside in the evening, in the hope that they would catch glimpse of a man they were romantically interested in. As we will discuss, the narrativizations of such sightings formed a routine narrative activity in their conversations. Most of the recorded data actually come from the socializing in the pezodromos.

Stories abound in the girls’ conversations (on average, ten stories are told in the course of one hour of recorded data) and as, we will see, they are thematically related to issues of importance for the participants, mainly men (two thirds

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10. The pezodromos profoundly changed one of the most traditional parts of the town and was part of a redevelopment plan that raised a small shopping centre opposite it in the place of traditional tavernas and small shops. The only remnant from the old quarter is a small church (St Paul’s) which is exactly opposite a corner bar of the pezodromos and frequently referred to in the girls’ small stories (see excerpt 3.6), particularly due to its incongruity with the goings-on of the pezodromos.
of the stories) and to a lesser extent fashion, beauty, leisure activities, educational goals and experiences, conflicts with parents, etc. Even in the one third of stories however that are not immediately related to men, male-female relationships and sexuality are still focal concerns. Playful language, teasing, and constant referencing to popular culture resources (e.g. songs) occur routinely in the conversations and, as we will discuss, are integrally connected with the stories’ emplotment too.

Data from this study will allow us to look into the ways in which narratives develop over time (i.e. told, shared, retold, referred to, etc.) in small and closeknit groups that share an interactional history and a collective memory: We will also explore the relationship between narrative tellings and a particular point in a person’s life in terms of the development of specific interpersonal relations and modes and sensibilities of sociality. In this case, what will be of paramount importance are stories involving men and heterosexual relationships.

With regard to these stories, we will see how LE was instrumental in linking what was empirically observed to be a fairly routine discourse activity in the audio-recordings (telling stories about men) with the group’s interactional history, their habitual activities in specific sites and their more or less sedimented identities and roles as part of that history. Furthermore, although the audio-recorded interactions in which these small stories occurred constitute the primary data for this analysis, we will see how other data became relevant in the course of the group’s LE study. We will specifically see in Chapters 4 and 5 in particular how LE interviews enabled me to unpack the heavily allusive style of these small stories, particularly in relation to ways of socially categorizing men. Furthermore, how other resources (e.g. engagement and/or referencing of the Book of Minutes, popular songs, the poems that were included in the Book of Minutes) partake in the entextualizations and recontextualizations of the group’s small stories. In fact, these resources brought home the context-reflexive nature of LE: they quite simply made apparent the need to reflect on and expand the ‘data’ for this study. What constituted primary/important/relevant data? And how would the Book of Minutes, for instance, which as it happened was ‘out of bounds’ (the group did not wish to let me have a look at it) have informed my stance to and analysis of the interactional data?

Reflexivity on sources and researcher-researched negotiation about the whole research process is a much more fluid and delicate enterprise than what ‘written up’ accounts make of it with the element of surprise (another emblem of LE) always lurking in it, as we can see below:

Ten days since I got back and something unexpected came in the post (Diary, 18/4/1999):

‘... as the Book of Minutes is out of bounds (sorry about that), too personal, we thought a selection of our poems and stories might do the trick. You can listen to them in the tape attached (excuse the muttering, Vivi’s parents were in the other
This unexpected handing over of stories and poems from the forbidden Book of Minutes proved illuminating as regards what gradually emerged as a stylistic package of ways of storytelling, a distinctive and organized system of verbal and other semiotic resources for self-presentation as well as for social meaning-making (e.g. Eckert & Rickford 2001; see Chapter 5 for details).

The data-set discussed above constitutes the main pool of data for this study. However, references will also be made to a corpus of private e-mail messages exchanged between friends. The corpus comprises two sub-corpora of 3,500 messages collected at different stages (1995–1997, end of 2000–now) from the email correspondence of six Greek informants, three women and three men, aged 28–35 (in the second phase), and supplemented with interviews with them before and after the period of data collection. The informants had on average spent the last 5 years of their lives in England and I have discussed elsewhere how this shapes local language choices, particularly occasional code-switches to English (1997a). Here, it is important to note that all the messages are in Greek, more specifically, in Greek transliterated with Latin characters (commonly referred to as Greenglish). Also, as I have stressed elsewhere, a significant factor in the data at hand is that “the participants know one another personally, their e-mail interactions thus mediating past and future face-to-face interactions” (Georgakopoulou 1997a:145). For the purposes of this study, 600 messages were extracted from the second data-set (100 messages from each of the six participants-informants) involving communication with the four friends that each participant-informant emailed more frequently in the period of selection.

In the selection of all the messages, I ensured that responses to messages were included (and, in that respect, trails of communication followed), as well as previous messages to which the sample messages were responding (when those were available).

To say that the above communication contexts from which the data of this study have been taken are quite different is to state the obvious. Among the many

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11. Anonymity or pseudonymity has been unexceptionally applied to all messages of the two data-sets. I have also obtained the written consent of all the informant-participants’ correspondents whose messages I have analysed (for a discussion of ethical issues involved in the collection of private email data, see Danet 2001).

12. The interviews, relatively unstructured, mostly focused on the informants’ range and frequency of communication practices with friends and acquaintances.

13. It has to be noted that, in the whole of data, same-gender interactions outnumber mixed-gender interactions.
differences, attention should be drawn to the a-synchronicity of email messages coupled with the speed in response (messages are on average responded to within half an hour), as they bear on the stories’ tellability, as we will see in §2.3. Furthermore, in this case, any differences between face-to-face and mediated communication are also closely associated with time constraints: the conversational data involve leisurely and long encounters between the participants while the email data at hand place a high premium on brevity (the messages are very often sent from work).

Despite these variabilities in the contexts of data collection, as we will see in Chapter 2, it is still the case that the stories occurring in the two data-sets present interesting similarities to the extent that they can be grouped together into distinct types. We will suggest that these similarities are intimately linked with certain types of social organization. In particular, we will emphasize the significance of participant relations for the occurrence of small stories we will discuss. In the communication contexts under study there is a shared interactional history that makes for a dense nexus of discourse practices which the participants frequently orient to and reaffirm. In this respect, we can talk about communities of practice resulting from sustained (face-to-face and mediated) interaction over a number of years and yielding a repertoire of shared discourse and social activities, resources, and understandings of them.

14. For a detailed discussion of the differences between computer-mediated and face-to-face communication with reference to the continuum of oral-literate-electronic practices, see Georgakopoulou 1997a.
CHAPTER 2

Beyond the narrative canon
Small stories in action

2.1 The canon

As suggested in Chapter 1, although in principle a diverse (at best rich, at worst fragmented) endeavour, narrative research within linguistics (mainly pragmatics, discourse analysis and sociolinguistics) as well as in numerous social science disciplines tends to employ specific kinds of data and methodologies that in turn generate a specific analytic vocabulary. Here, we will probe into this notion of narrative canon with a view to giving voice to and arguing for the worthiness of the “other” stories that it has silenced, the stories, that is, that remain in the fringes of narrative analysis.

In linguistically oriented studies to narrative, it is not an exaggeration to suggest that the process of canonization is largely traceable to Labov’s (1972) influential model of narrative structure: since then, a volume of studies have focused on the “Labovian” narrative, namely, the research or interview narrative that is invariably about non-shared, personal experience past events, and that occurs in response to the researcher’s “elicitation” questions or prompts. Two prototypes can be identified here: the life story that mostly takes the form of a reflexive and representative account of self that amounts to a more or less coherent autobiography (see Linde 1993). The other prototype is a short-range narrative that gives an account of a certain landmark or key-event or experience that is considered to be pivotal in the formation of the interviewee’s sense of self (e.g. marriage, pregnancy, divorce, etc.). In Labov’s case, this concerned a sensational event, that is, coming close to dying.

Whether analysed linguistically or within the framework of clinical interviews, the place of these kinds of narrative in research has to be assessed in connection with questions about self and subjectivity as well as with the healing process that the narrativization of experience is believed to afford.\(^1\) As Shuman rightly points out, one of the problems with this type of approach to narrative is that it tends to

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1. It is notable here that this belief in the therapeutic functions of sharing stories from one’s life is a guiding assumption within the framework of the narrative-interviewing method in bi-
essentialize the purpose: in other words, “the practice is conflated with the process, and narrative, rather than particular strategies for its use, is claimed to be a curative, healing practice” (2005:9).

To be more specific, two widely held views on narrative are instructive within this approach: first, as suggested in Chapter 1, the significance of narrative as a privileged mode for making sense of self and others and as such a unique point of entry into questions of identity (see chapters in Brockmeier & Carbaugh 2001); secondly, the relationship between narrative and experience which according to many, translates into the compelling idea that we actually perceive the world in narrative form (e.g. Carr 1986; MacIntyre 1981). Even if life is not accepted to be narratively structured, the process of narrativizing it is invariably thought of as involving meaning making, ordering and structuring of the experience. From a linguistically minded point of view, this meaning and structure become a worthwhile object of inquiry into the mechanisms and devices for organizing and perspectivizing discourse (Toolan 1988). From a psychologically oriented point of view, this narrative recollection of the past is seen as being at the heart of self-discovery and the process of storying oneself, i.e. integrating oneself in time (McAdams 1997).

These two foci of interest, although not mutually exclusive, often present themselves as a dichotomy: the “how” of narrative on one hand and the “about” of narrative on the other; how people tell of their experiences in specific contexts as opposed to what story they have to tell about themselves (see Freeman 2003:338ff.). What is notable for this discussion however is that in both cases the narrative data that analysts use tend to be of the same kind: past events stories of personal experiences not known to the audience. As we will argue below, this type of narrative comes with specific communicative features that do not necessarily apply to all (interactional) narratives. However, its frequent use as the basis of numerous empirical studies in the social sciences in general and in linguistics in particular has had profound implications about the direction of narrative analysis, creating notions of a narrative canon and orthodoxy, i.e. what constitutes a story, a good story, a story worth analysing, etc. that in turn dictate a specific analytic vocabulary and an interpretive idiom. It could be claimed too that in a cyclical sort of process, the longstanding assumptions about narrative as outlined above have both fed into a specific type of narrative and have been further strengthened by its analysis.

One of the key-features of the narrative canon emanates from the communicative event in which it tends to occur, that is, the research interview. This not only casts the interviewer in a role of elicitor of a story but it also generates asymmet-

graphical research (in sociology, psychology, etc.) so that the method is often seen as offering chances for a healing process for the informants involved (see Rosenthal 2003).
rical and lacking in intimacy interpersonal dynamics. A spin-off of those specifics is certain participation roles: the prototypical interviewer tends to avoid interruptions or challenges in the course of a story’s telling and refrain from communicating their own experiences, opinions, and feelings; the prototypical interviewee on the other hand tells the story to attentive ears, fills in the gaps, and creates the missing frames of mutual reference (see Lucius-Hoene & Depperman 2000). Within a dynamic and dialogical conceptualization of communication which is increasingly gaining purchase, the picture is certainly not as neat: for one, the role of the interviewer is by no means negligible in the shaping of a story; interviewees too may resist or recast roles (idem). Interview narratives, in their duly problematized form, are thus taken to be co-authorings or co-draftings (e.g. Mishler 1986). Even so, what reflexivity on research contexts has brought home is the idea that the interactional features of narratives are specifically and inextricably bound up with their context of occurrence. In this respect, however problematized, the context of an elicited story in an interview situation still tends to divide participants into a teller with strong floor-holding rights and a recipient.

Thereafter, this narration tends to develop as a well-structured activity with a beginning, a middle and an end, which unfolds in the fashion of a (more or less) classic narration, as Labov called it (1972). This means that it moves from the reported events and the complications within them to the most significant event(s) (sic high point, peak, climax), evaluates (i.e. shows or tells its significance) them, and resolves them. This narrative pattern has been seen as the end-point of narrative development and the ideal form in which to cast the richness, depth and profundity of human experience (see papers in Bamberg 1997a). Its assumptions have pervaded whole areas such as narrative psychology but also filtered down to work on naturally occurring (cf. non-elicited) narratives in ordinary conversational settings. As Ochs & Capps aptly put it (2001), “narrative scholarship is centered on narratives with the following qualities:

- A coherent temporal progression of events that may be reordered for rhetorical purposes and that is typically located in some past time and place
- A plotline that encompasses a beginning, a middle, and an end, conveys a particular perspective and is designed for a particular audience who apprehend and shape its meaning” (57)

Researchers have frequently noted that the narratives told outside research interviews depart significantly from the above qualities (e.g. papers in Bamberg 1997a; Goodwin 1990). Nonetheless, empirical studies of exactly what these “other”, non-canonical stories are like, what the analytical tools appropriate for them are and what their consequentiality can be for narrative cum identity research are still lagging behind.
Ochs and Capps (2001) have identified this lack of research in terms of a set of narrative dimensions, namely tellership, tellability, embeddedness, moral stance and linarity/temporality. Although these dimensions establish a range of possibilities in the form of a continuum, Ochs & Capps convincingly argue that conventional narrative analysis has consistently privileged one end of that continuum. In particular, one active teller as opposed to multiple co-tellers; high tellability instead of low tellability; detachment from the surrounding activity at the expense of embeddedness in the local context; a certain and constant moral stance over an uncertain, fluid and dynamic one; a closed temporal and causal order over open-endedness and/or spatial organization. Another broadly comparable way of putting forth the biases of conventional narrative analysis is by looking at the types of stories mostly researched and the theories of self that this research has mostly drawn upon. We can then say that there has been an over-emphasis on long stories (collected through interviews) at the expense of everyday, small (literally in this case) stories but also at the expense of re-tellings, allusions to tellings and refusals to tell. There has also been an over-emphasis on “past” and “single” events at the expense of ongoing events, hypothetical events, future events and intertextually linked events. Finally, as we have already suggested, there has been an overemphasis on stories about the self and as a means of exploring self as opposed to stories we tell about others as well as the interactional affordances of specific tellings.

To go back to Ochs & Capps, their argument is that “understanding narratives compels going beyond these exemplars to probe less polished, less coherent narratives that pervade ordinary social encounters and are a hallmark of human condition” (2001:57). They illustrate some of those narratives with data from ordinary conversations thus offering a landmark study for the inquiry into less conventional or canonical stories.

There is, however, much scope for research particularly with regard to the following issues:

1) The first concerns the types of non-canonical stories and their textual and interactional features that need to be documented fully and for a variety of contexts. In this respect, as we will see below too, previous conversation-analytic work on storytelling in ordinary exchanges (e.g. Goodwin C. 1984, 1986; Goodwin, M. H. 1990; Jefferson 1978, etc.) should become an integral part of work that will respond to Ochs & Capps’ plea for a systematic critique (and opening up) of conventional narrative analysis. In similar vein, we need to have a full understanding of systematic features about the contexts of occurrence of non-canonical stories. What are the types of social organisation and local contexts that encourage, warrant or equally prohibit them?
2) What are the tools appropriate for the analysis of such stories? Is there a case for redefining or stretching the existing analytic vocabulary, for instance, by bringing in new concepts? A case in point concerns the influential concept of tellability, which is at the core of narrative analysis, and at times being equated with narrativity. Tellability captures the aesthetic, affective, and subjective aspects of narrative; the dynamics of experientiality (Polanyi 1989). Narratives low in tellability are often seen as low in narrativity too (for a discussion see Fludernik 1996). Would that hold in the case of non-canonical narratives? If we accept Ochs & Capps’ instruction to look at such narratives not in aesthetic terms but as a vernacular forum for piecing together an evaluative perspective on an incident, for ordering, explaining, and taking a position on experience (2001:36), what would the place and significance of tellability be in such an inquiry?²

3) Given that, as suggested above, canonical narratives have mainly been used as heuristics for the inquiry into the teller’s construction of identities, what implications would researching other types of narratives have for the identity constructions project?

That a different approach may be required for narratives that depart from Labov’s classic narrative is something that Labov himself admitted in his revised version of the 1972 model:

The narratives that form the focus of this work were normally told in the course of a sociolinguistic interview, where the interviewer formed an ideal audience: attentive, interested and responsive. Though they are fitted to some extent to the situation and often to a question posed by the interviewer, they are essentially monologues and show a degree of decontextualization. They exhibit a generality that is not to be expected from narratives that subserve an argumentative point in a highly interactive and competitive conversation. Such narratives are often highly fragmented and may require a different approach. Yet studies of spontaneous conversation also show a high frequency of monologic narratives that command the attention of the audience as fully as the narratives of the interview. (1997:397, my emphasis)

All the above suggests that what is needed at this point, now that the frequency of non-canonical stories has been duly noted, is to flesh them out, bring to the fore their interactional features, and show what “a different approach” — to echo Labov

² Note that in Ochs & Capps, the importance of tellability is recognized by being accorded the status of a narrative dimension. The acceptance of a distinction between high and low tellability and the association of the latter with the end of the continuum that involves less researched and less conventional stories arguably feed into narrative orthodoxy by implying some kind of an evaluative order. Complex questions can be raised in this respect regarding who defines tellability and how, what its relationship is with narrativity, and if the quality of high tellability in effect makes certain stories better or more worthy of analysis than others.
above- may consist of. The aim here is to contribute to this project of giving voice to and advancing understanding for those other stories that are still in the fringes of narrative research and which we call here ‘small stories’. By putting small stories on the map, the hope is not only that linguistically oriented studies of narrative will review some of their ways of analysing narrative in particular by intensifying links with interactional work on talk but also that biography researchers in a number of disciplines (e.g. sociology, psychology) where the narrative-interviewing method is used extensively, will re-think the benefits and dangers of their main methodological tool for identity analysis from the perspective of the role of narratives in interaction.3 To begin with, opening up the category of narrative to include activities that depart from the canon would have implications for the ways in which narratives are identified within the interview situation. At the same time, being alerted to other means of narrative inquiry beyond the told-transcribed (interview) account raises important questions for biography research: what kinds of cross-fertilization can we have between interview data (specifically prompted for identity analysis) and conversational stories (enmeshed in local business) if we accept that the latter are equally important for self-identity work?

The journey of legitimating neglected stories has entailed naming them, finding appropriate ways of referring to them as opposed to defining them in negative or othering terms, e.g. a-typical, non-canonical, etc. The whole premise of a “canon” is that one “category of narrative is more available and recognisable than others” (Shuman 2005:18). At first, I used formulations (i.e. story-lines, ongoing narratives, see Georgakopoulou 2004) that drew attention to the qualities of fluidity, plasticity, open-endedness and dynamic character of the stories in question. However, when comparing notes with Professor Michael Bamberg whose research on male pre-adolescents at an American school had produced comparable narrative data as mine, i.e. a-typical, I was instantly drawn to his term small stories (2004b, also adopted in Georgakopoulou & Bamberg 2005). In his data, the stories in question are quite literally small in length, something that is not necessarily the case in the stories that will be discussed below. On a metaphorical level though, small stories is somewhat of an antidote formulation to a longstanding tradition of big stories (cf. “grand narratives”, Lyotard 1984): as already suggested, the term locates a level and even an aesthetic for the identification and analysis of narrative: the smallness of talk, where fleeting moments of narrative orientation to the world

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3. This is not to deny the serious ongoing debate within biographical research on the issues, questions, insights but also risks posed by the use of biographical material for social science research. Instead, the point here is that this debate could benefit from identifying an area of possible collaboration with interactional research on a wide range of narratives beyond those that are customarily elicited through interviews.
(Hymes 1996) can be easily missed out on by an analytical lens which only looks out for fully-fledged stories.

The discussion below will first identify certain types of small stories found to be salient in the data at hand. I will argue that the stories coalesce in the ongoingness of their tellings (with links to previous, present and future interactions as well as to other tellings). I will then discuss the stories’ main interactional features with reference to the narrative dimensions of tellership, tellability and embeddedness, in an attempt to identify ways in which narrative analysis can stretch its analytic vocabulary and agenda in order to reach out to those kinds of stories.

2.1.1 The issue of definition

There is a paradoxical situation at play here: if one accepts a closed set of must-have definitional criteria, then the orthodoxy of the prototypical narrative is inevitably perpetuated. In this way, something that is proposed as a counter-hegemony adopts the same hegemonic practices. At the same time, the danger of opening up the category of narrative to include everything is a grave one, particularly in the light of the tradition of essentializing and idealizing narrative, as already discussed. The position followed here is an intermediate one, in the sense that any prototypical features that partake in the definition of narrative are seen as part of a more or less rather than as an either or approach, that is, as a matter of a cluster of different sets of criteria. In the proliferating attempts to pin down narrative, there have been certain abstract criteria that have monopolized the analysts’ attention, although they have been assigned different degrees of prominence by different models. Tellingly, they all come from the literary tradition of the so called narratology (for a discussion see Fludernik 1996:10ff.) and they revolve around basic elements that can be sufficient in defining a minimal narrative; hence, their frequent labelling as “minimalist definitions”. These elements are postulated as universal and have at times been contested particularly with regard to issues of inclusion: e.g. is film a narrative? (Chatman 1990); what happens in cases when the protagonist is not human? A detailed discussion of the controversy falls outside the scope of the present analysis. What is vital for our purposes is to accept that these criteria are etic (analytical) and that their value for the current approach is to be found in their configuration and integration into a combinatorial scheme of narrative definition. The criteria in question are as follows:

**Temporality:** This can be characterized as an inescapable criterion on the basis of its prominence in narrative definitional criteria. It was very simply translated in Labov’s model into the principle of temporal ordering of narrative events: as “one method of recapitulating past experience by matching a verbal sequence of clauses to a sequence of events which (it is inferred) actually happened” (1972:359). It
also links up with the widely accepted narrative exigency of a double chronology, i.e. the narrative told unfolding in narrative time at the same time as the narrative telling unfording in “real-time” (Chatman 1990). It is important to note here, however, that the idea of temporal organization as a constitutive feature of narrative has been problematized in its exclusion of spatial organization. As we will see in §3.6, the role of the latter has been convincingly documented and space (in its interactions with time) plays an important role in a narrative’s plot.

Disruption: This is closely linked with the idea of a temporal ordering and transition from one state of affairs to another. This is where we come close to the conceptualisation of Labov’s complicating action (cf. Aristotle’s peripeteia, Burke’s trouble, 1962). The idea here is that what sets a narrative off is some kind of a problem or disequilibrium that has to be addressed or resolved (cf. resolution, denouement) so that the original balance can be restored.

Consciousness: This captures the most intractable elements of a narrative, the realization that there must be something more to the temporal ordering of events or to the disruption of a state of affairs, some kind of a filtering consciousness (normally human) that makes sense of the events, interprets them, is emotively and psychologically affected, develops more or less strategic and rational responses. In Labov’s model, all these elements are encapsulated by the dyad of tellability and evaluation. Evaluation in particular is postulated as the mechanism by which a narrative’s tellability is more or less explicitly signalled, by a host of linguistic and paralinguistic devices.

The above criteria in their combination provide a skeleton for a crude differentiation between narrative and non-narrative texts. They do, however, fail to include many of the small stories that we will discuss below. More specifically, as we will see, one of the most important stories in the group of female adolescents is that of stories of projected events. As these stories revolve around planning meetings with men that the participants are interested in, as we will see in detail, they are of paramount importance for processes of intersubjectivity. On the face of it, they fulfil the criteria of temporally ordered events that affect the characters talked about. Within a narratological framework of basic elements however, stories of events that have not happened yet tend to be treated as low in narrativity (Fludernik 1996), i.e. in experiential dynamics, and are assigned to the realm of the “disnarrated” (Prince 1988). This schematic way of defining narrative may be instrumental in textual taxonomies but it fails to address issues of narrative as talk-in-interaction and as social practice.

The same applies to the common denominator of all structural and minimalist definitions of narrative, namely that of time sequence or temporal ordering. There is increasing recognition that this criterion needs to become much more
flexible so as to capture “discursive accounts of factual or fictitious events which take, or have taken or will take place at a particular time” (Jaworski & Coupland 1999:29–30). Furthermore, we will see how, although it may be necessary to delimit narrative, it still is not sufficient to capture the richness of narrative activities in everyday practice. These require taking into account the social actors’ perspectives that actually tell stories; the life cycles or natural histories of those stories; finally, the relationships of stories with other discourse and social activities.

To begin to address those aspects, a second set of criteria is needed to complement or as is often the case, problematize the ones above. These can be called emic criteria, as they have to do with the participants’ epistemic and evaluative orientations, their own sense making devices and their local theories of which event or activity constitutes a narrative. To go back to our discussion in Ch. 1, these criteria take us away from a textual taxonomy and towards practice-based views of narrative: what narrative does in specific sites; what the local theories about it are. For instance, in the data from the female adolescents, the term “fasi” was frequently used to both refer to a story and to frame a discourse activity as a story. Comparably, the telling of projections was often oriented to as a storytelling activity and any digressions from it were frequently responded to by the phrase: “Let’s go back to our story now”. These acted as generic framing devices, in Bauman’s terms (2004), in the sense that, through habitual associations, they provided an orienting framework for the production and interpretation of talk. Finally, condensed references to stories (of known events) which, in the life cycle of stories came after numerous retellings, were also oriented to as stories (see §2.2.4); in fact, their relationship with the stories which they referred to and from which they were originally extracted were acknowledged and foregrounded.

The above points to the importance of the social consequentiality as a criterion for treating a stretch of talk as narrative. The guiding questions here are: what does treating a format of telling as a story mean for the prior or upcoming talk? What insights would the analysis be missing out on if a strip of activity were not treated as a story for the participants’ social lives? Telling roles intimately linked with a story’s evolving structure are consequential for the participants’ social life and identities and vice versa, i.e. certain identities reveal themselves and shape local participation roles in the course of a story’s telling (§4.2). Furthermore, stories of shared or known events, previously (re)worked, have a particular relevance and consequentiality that other activities do not have: they are invoked in their power as (co)-experienced past worlds that can provide interpretative grids for things to happen (§3.6). This is an important point in particular with regard to references to those stories of shared or known events, which, as we will see (§2.2.4), comprise very condensed ways of telling, even spectacular fragments of language or one-liners. In this format, they clearly do not fulfil any of the abstract criteria of narrative, yet not seeing them in the framework of narratives as temporalized and
recontextualizable activities with a life-cycle would deprive the analysis of valuable insights into processes of retellings of stories but also of the participants’ joint construction of a collective memory.

2.2 Types of small stories

The examples here will come both from the conversational stories of the adolescents’ group and from the email exchanges. Narratives are of utmost importance in both these communication contexts as ways of jointly interweaving events and characters from daily experience and (re)fashioning interpretations of them, working out and through the emotional impact of them. They are also fundamental acts of sharing and through doing so, reaffirming closeness in positions and viewpoints, putting them to the test, or revisiting them. In the female adolescents’ conversations, as suggested, stories involve their focal concern at that point in their lives, namely romance and heterosexual relationships. As such, they revolve around men that they are romantically interested in or attached to. In the email data, the gamut is broader and events (particularly conflicts) from the professional life figure prominently. At the same time, there are also clear expectations about what kinds of stories are to be told or not in this particular environment: long stories are to be avoided and their infrequent occurrence is framed in ways that justify their occurrence and seek their acceptability (e.g. tellers apologize for having to share a long story, reflect on the fact that its telling may be tiring for the addressee, stress the newsworthiness of the events to justify their telling, etc.). In this way, there is a visible orientation to issues of appropriacy and tellability as shaped in the context at hand and in the light of a requirement for brevity.

The small stories most commonly initiated or told in the data at hand can be brought together on the basis of their main characteristic, namely that they are presented as part of a trajectory of interactions rather than as a free standing, finished and self-contained unit. More specifically, a) the events they report have some kind of immediacy, i.e. they are very recent past or near future events, or are still unfolding as the story is being constructed; b) they establish and refer to links between the participants’ previous and future interactions (mostly face-to-face but also online), including their shared stories. In this way, the stories are not only heavily embedded in their immediate discourse surroundings but also in a larger history of interactions in which they are intertextually linked and available for recontextualization (Bauman & Briggs 1990) in various local settings. We

4. An earlier version of the analysis in this section has appeared in Georgakopoulou 2006a:269ff.
will present them below starting from the most obvious cases of narratives-in-the making and moving to cases of (re)making narratives (for the frequency of types of small stories in the international data, see Table 2.1 below).

2.2.1 Stories to be told

Bidding for a story and telling it later at a more opportune moment is very frequent in conversational events. The initiation in the conversational data at hand is normally of the kind: Θέμησέ μου να σου πω μετά (Remind me to tell you later), A, να μην το ξεχάσω ... (Oh, I shouldn’t forget it ...). On email, this bidding presents a notable inter-textuality, more precisely, inter-mediality between on and off line interactions: stories are initiated and bid for on email, but their actual telling is deferred for an offline interaction:

(2.1) > Pos ise?
Megalh istoria afth pou elpizo na sou po apo koda otan me to kalo vrethoume.
Mou leipoun akoma kapoia chapters allvste, kalo einai na xv kati peran tou Pro-
logikou shmeivmatos.

> How are you?
Long story that, which I am hoping to tell you face-to-face when we hopefully meet up. In any case, there are still some missing chapters, it would be good if I had something other than the Prologue.
(34 year-old female to 40 year-old female).

In the example above, the telling of the story, as well as being explicitly constructed as narrativization-in-process, is deferred to a temporally non-specified future face-to-face interaction. In most cases, however, the stories’ to be told anchoring in offline interactions becomes specific, as we can see below, where the telling of the story is deferred till later that day:

(2.2) Date: Wed, 27 Sep 2000 16:15:55 +0100 (BST)
From: Jannis
To: Klio
Subject: Re: Evrisa ton Charlie (kai th gynaika tou)!!
> Tha sou pv to vrady, megalh plaka.
nai eh? tha erthei katholoy – or is he history?
Jannis
ps thlepathiko: vrizoyme thn idia wra.

5. In a corpus of family interactions, I have reported (2002a) that it is mainly the children who bid in those ways, as a result of the increased pressures they are faced with in gaining the floor from the adult-tellers.
Date: Wed, 27 Sep 2000 16:15:55 +0100 (BST)
From: Jannis
To: Klio
Subject: Re: I gave Charlie (and his wife!) an earful!!
>I’ll tell you tonight, great fun.
Oh really? Will he come back at all – or is he history?
Jannis
ps. telepathic: we give people an earful at the same time.

As we can see above, when the full telling of the story is deferred for the near future, the initiation of stories to be told is normally done with a summarizing statement of the story’s main event(s) (I gave Charlie (and his wife) an earful!!), and/or its point (great fun), reminiscent of Labov’s (1972) abstract. This commonly appears in the message’s subject heading.

The above examples suggest that tellability considerations are very important. Not only is the point of the story previewed and foreshadowed but, as the interviews with the participants revealed, its fulfillment is deferred to an environment that the participants deem more appropriate for performances. In the conversational data, it is notable that deferrals of storytelling are resisted more, as these typical uptakes from the interlocutors show: Ένα ένα θα μου τα λες; (Are you going to tell me one by one?), νάτα τα καλά, πέστα τώρα (here’s the good one, tell me now).

Already, we are beginning to see the intimate links between stories and their contexts of occurrence, which we have frequently referred to here as consequentiality. In this case, the consequentiality of providing what in classic narratological terms could be called a “report” is different in the two environments: what is acceptable and narratable in one environment may not be in another. These contextual links have a crucial bearing on what is taken to be a story and/or a story worth telling. In the email data, stories cast as mini-reports are seen as tellable inasmuch as they are attuned to the contextual exigencies of the communicative medium in which they occur.

2.2.2 Breaking news

In these cases, tellers seem to wish to share the reported events straight away, as they are still unfolding. As in example (2.2) above, some of the stories to be told are also based on the reporting of breaking news. What is provided is the abstract (again commonly to be found in the message’s subject), an elliptical skeleton of the main events (the gist) and their evaluation:
(2.3) From: Nick
   To: Kostas
   Subject: Me pire o Thanasis tilefono
   ke ti mou lei? Padrevndai me tin Eleni to Martio! Tis ekane lei protasi proxthes
   over dinner, meta pirane tous dikous tis, kata to ethimotipikon, ke tora to lene
   se filus.
   Kala nea, e? To mono pu me fovizi ine min arxisun ki ales ke thelouve tetoia . . .
   From: Nick
   To: Kostas
   Subject: Thanasis rang me and what did he say? Eleni and he are getting mar-
   ried in March! He said he proposed two days ago over dinner, then they rang
   her folks, as is customary, and now they are telling friends.
   Good news, eh? The only thing that worries me is if others ((in the original the
   inflection is feminine, i.e. other women)) start wanting similar things . . .

In response, what the receivers seem to dwell on and provide feedback for is
the evaluation of events rather than the events themselves. See for example the
response to 3 above:

(2.4) > Kala nea, e? To mono pu me fovizi ine min arxisun ki ales ke thelouve tetoia . . .
   Ondvs. Mhn trelainesai esy omvs, katse na deis prvta pvs tha adidrasoun oi alles.
   To pio pithano einai na mh boun se sygriseis . . .
   >Good news, eh? The only thing that worries me is if others ((in the original
   the >inflection is feminine, i.e. other women)) start wanting similar things . . .
   Indeed. But don’t you run wild, see first how the others will react. In all
   probability, they won’t enter into comparisons . . .

In the adolescent group’s data, breaking news are also about events that are part of
the teller’s focal concerns; in fact, they invariably report sightings of men that the
participants are romantically interested in. Sightings are newsworthy as they allow
the participants to locate men, that is, to situate them in (social) time and place,
thus “confering spatial and temporal specificity on them” (Butler 1997:29).

(2.5) Participants: Fotini (F), Tonia (T), Vivi (V)
Breaking news stories typically present a carefully drafted scene disruption, which as we have seen, is one of the basic elements of a narrative. This stage setting involves an element of anticipation and the disruption is caused by the coming on the scene of the man in question. This is elevated to the single most reportable event and it is rendered almost in slow motion, with intense focalization on the part of the teller (Mills & White 1997:235), a rarely reported and documented “female gaze” (Gledhill 1993) that scrutinizes the gazed upon man’s posture, outfit, movements and physical appearance and is in this respect reminiscent of popular romance fiction (Talbot 1997). These detailed scenes, rather than being just “description”, are an integral part of eventness. On the face of it, nothing much happens. It is however in the evaluative reflections and reactions of the teller and interlocutors that these slices of life owe their reportability in local contexts.

(2.6)

1 T: Τι: είδα χτες το βράδυ στο Πρίνς? (..)
2 F: Τι: είδες χτες το βράδυ;
3 P: Πήγα με το μπαμπά μου=
4 V: Άλα: πήγαμε πρίνς με το μπαμπά: ((further down))
12 T: Τελοσπάντων (..) >πάμε εκεί πέρα< και καθόμαστε στο τραπέ ζάκι που είναι
13 στην πόρτα (..) εγώ τώρα να έχω θέα του πεζοδρομίου (..) τον Άγιο Παύλο (.)
14 >έρεσες ρε παιδί μου< ο πατέρας μου πλάτη=
15 V: =Τον Άγιο Παύλο! hhhh
16 T: Ωραία (.) >τελοσπάντων< (.) έρχεται μας χαιρετάει ο Γιάννης που έχει το
17 Αβάλον=
((F asks who that is. They return to the story in line 21))
21 T: και τότε που λες (.) όπως καθόμονα έτσι (.) και χάζενα έξω=
22 V: =Ναι (.) που πετάγαν τα πουλάκια=
23 T: =Ποιον βλέπω; (0.5)
24 V: Τη Μαρία!
25 T: Ναι! τη Μαρία (..) λοιπόν βλέπω τη Μαρία (.) μιλάμε έξω απ’ τον Άγιο Παύλο
26 (..) έρεσες είχε παρκάρε το αυτοκίνητο στο γεμιστήριο (.) ως συνήθως και να
27 έρχεται έτσι ((imitates)) (0.5) έμεινα η γυναίκα μιλάμε! =
28 V: =Σ’έστηλε αδιάβα/ότι
29 T: //Ναι κοίταγα που λες (.) κοίταγα (.) αυτός περνούσε έξω απ’ το μαγαζί έτσι (.)
30 κι εγώ ήσουν ακριβώς στην πόρτα (.) και να κοιτάζω εμένα όλη την ώρα (.) μέχρι
31 να περάσε (.) >ξέρας απέναντι< (.) εγώ δεν έχασα ευκαιρία να κοιτάω κι εγώ (.)
32 κοιτάζω/μαστε (.) κοιτάζω/μαστε (.) πόση ώρα
33 ((V and F are singing together)) Για κοίτα με στα μάτια λιοσπάν κι εξηγήσου
34 T: Στο μεταξύ αυτός που λες να κοιτάζω και τον πατέρα μου που ήτανε πλάτη (.)
35 σου λέει ποιος διάλογος είναι αυτός? και να μη μπαίνει μέσα=
36 F: Λες να ζήλεψε κιόλας?
37 T: Σιγά ρε (..) και μετά τον λέω του πατέρα μου (.) πάμε έτσι να περάσουμε από
38 τον πεζόδρομο του λέω (.) κοιτάω κοιτάω (.) δεν ήτανε (.) δεν παίρνω όρκο ότι
39 σίγουρα δεν ήτανε γιατί είχε τόσο κόσμο (.) αλλά για να μην τον δω εγώ (.) αλλά
40 δεν παίρνω κι όρκο (.)
41 V: άφησες τις τιγανέ:τες λιοσπάν hhh
42 T: πολύ ωραία πάντως η Μαρία (.) ένα σακάκι (..) ανα ωραίο έτσι σκοίρο
43 πουκαμισάκι (.) ασφορτι με τα μάτια (.) δε σου περιγράφω (.) τα λόγια είναι περιττά
44 ((V and F are singing together again)) την ώρα που χωρίζουμε
1 T: WHA:T did I see last night at Prince (-(bar))? (..)
2 F: WHA:T did you see last night?
3 T: I went with my dad=
4 V: O:ch we went to Prince with da:d
((further down after joking about Tonia going out with her dad))
12 T: Anyway (.), >we go there< and sit at the little table next to the front door (.)
13 so I had a view of the pedestrianized road (.) St Paul’s (-(church)) (.) >and you
14 know< dad was having his back=
15 V: =To St Paul! hhhh
16 T: Okay (.) >a:n:9:wy< (.) this guy Jannis comes and says hello (.) who’s got
17 Avalon
((F asks who that is. They return to the story in line 21))
21 T: And so as I was watching and looking outside=
22 V: =Yeah (.) the birds flying=
23 T: =Who: do I see? (0.5)
24 V: Mari:a! ((female nickname for a man Tonia is interested in))
25 T: Yes! Maria (.) so I see Maria (.) outside St Paul’s church (.) you know he’d
26 parked the car at the gym (.) as per usual and he was coming like this ((imitates))
27 (0.5) and I was like that!=
28 V: He blew you /away
29 T: //Yeah I was looking (.) looking (.) he was passing outside (.) and I was right at
30 the door (.) and he was looking at me (.) as he was passing by (.) so I didn’t waste
31 any time (.) and I was looking back (.) and we were looking (.) and looking at each
32 other (.) I don’t know how long for
33 ((V and F are singing together)) So look at me in the eyes and explain
34 T: Meanwhile he is also looking at my dad (.) who had his back turned (.) and
35 saying to himself who the hell is that guy? and he wasn’t coming in=
36 F: D’you think he was jeaalous?
37 T: Nonsense (..) and then I tell my dad (.) shall we go past the pedestrianized
38 ((road))? (..) I looked and looked (.) but he was nowhere to be seen (.) I can’t be absolutely sure
39 cause it was packed (.) but I’d have seen him (..) but I can’t be sure (..)
40 V: So you left the pancakes hhh
41 T: But Maria was so handsome (.) with a jacket (..) a lovely dark shirt (.) matching
42 her eyes (.) I can’t describe her (.) the words are not enough
43 ((V and F are singing together again)) At the time of our break-up

The example above shows how the plotline may consist of a single remarkable event (the sighting of a man) that through its intense focalization by the viewer/teller, is rendered as a scene, almost in slow motion. This can be attested to by the numerous imperfective aspect verbs stressing duration coupled with the increase in the teller’s micro-pauses (lines 29–32). In §3.5, we will see in detail how another important aspect of the telling at hand lies in the references to shared resources in the group: e.g. Vivi brings in one line reference to a story of known events (line 40) and three lines later (43) she jointly (with Tonia) sings a line from one of the group’s favourite songs. Another notable aspect in the telling of sightings of men is that who gets to experience or to witness the sighting of which man creates issues of access and ownership to experience that is considered by the group to be narratable. As I will show in detail (§5.2), in locating men in social space, the participants mark them for certain identities, roles, and activities by associatively linking them with plots in the sense of meaningful activity types and event sequences that are routinely attached to specific time and space coordinates. In the process, these plots can be reaffirmed and reinforced in their local use and/or they can render new plots intelligible.

Excerpt 2.7 below, a “breaking news” story, introduces the character talked about with a nickname (line 2, Εκλαιράτη). This is a common way of referring to men (for a detailed discussion, see Georgakopoulou 2005b:165ff.). Eklairette” (line 2) is the diminutive form of a pastry and has loose connections with the fact that the talked about person frequently buys that pastry in quantities from the patisserie that Fotini’s father owns. In the interactional history of the participants, there has been a suspicion that such visits are owed more to the love interest that the man in question has for Fotini and less to the actual pastry. Nonetheless, over a period of three years in use, the nickname has developed added layers of meaning. Its associations with sweetness (the character is frequently referred to as sweet) have lent themselves to the attribution of feminine qualities to Eclairette.

(2.7) Participants: Tonia (T), Fotini (F), Vivi (V).

1 T: A: (.) δε σας είπα. Το πρώι περνάω απ’ το ( .) είχε κόσμο (0.5) πού να το Εκλαιράτη; ( .) πού να το Εκλαιράτη; ( .) νά:το το Εκλαιράτη. Εκεί στη γωνία ( .) με τη σκούπα
4 F: Πε ( .) η σκούπα και το Εκλαιράτη έχουν γίνει // ένα
5 V: // H σκούπα Φύλιπς ρουφάει τη σκόνη
((They all laugh))
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In addition to reporting the latest whereabouts of Eclairette, excerpt 2.7 is about evoking and reaffirming familiar associations regarding the character talked about (e.g. domesticity, sweetness, feminine qualities). The re-affirmation of such associations seems to hold the key to this story’s tellability in the sense of its current local relevance. At the same time, evoking the familiar is a pleasurable activity in itself, as the participants’ playful and allusive collusion in talking about Eclairette suggests.

Breaking news such as 2.6 and 2.7 above are also instrumental in the participants’ joint drafting of dating scenarios and possibilities, as they provide a repertoire of routine events, activities, locations, and roles for the men talked about (for details, see Georgakopoulou 2003a:413–432). In some cases, they even yield or prompt other kinds of storytelling activities, e.g. projections (see below) or hypothetical scenarios. More generally, in both data-sets (interactional and email data), they fashion slices of life and experiential moments which are reworked in tune with the participants’ focal concerns. Comparably, in the email data, the constant cross-referencing to face-to-face interactions allows us to speculate that breaking news subsequently give rise to further plots.

2.2.3 Projections

Contrary to the predominance of past events stories in conventional narrative analysis, stories of (near) future events (sic projections) are by far the most common type of storytelling in the group’s conversations and frequent in the email data too. The taleworld of such projected events, in the same vein as in stories of past events, is temporally ordered and emplotted yet they are clearly one of the most neglected and marginalized narrative types in narrative analysis and narratology (cf. Norrick’s discussion, 2000:Ch. 5).
In the adolescents’ group, projections present a lot of intertextual connections amongst them. To begin, there is an obvious thematic preoccupation that runs through most of them and that has to do with flirting, romance, and relationships with men. As such, projections are typically about planning a meeting with and/or asking out the man that one of the participants happens to be romantically interested in. This planning involves a turn-by-turn co-authoring and negotiation of details in the taleworld, particularly of an orientation kind (e.g. time, place; for details, see §3.6), as we can see below. The male characters of projections fall into two categories: a) those that generate the love interest and b) the mediators, that is, men like Pavlos in (2.8) below, who are assigned a helper’s role in the setting up of the meetings.

(2.8) See Appendix, ‘Talk to him man, talk to him’, Small story 2, for the entire story of excerpts 2.8–2.10

72 T: AEK ((basketball team)) are playing that evening, aren’t you going to say anything? Pavlos SUPPORTS AEK!
73 F: AEK are playing today.
74 T: Wait a minute (…) in the semi final, – the quarter final, if they win today (.)
75 they’ll play tomorrow too
76 V: The match is on early, not //late
77 T: Don’t you remember, when they had Olympiakos’s match ((team)) at 11?
78 V: Bloody hell! Let’s organize it for another day (.) when he’ll be calm=
79 F: =But he may not want to //watch it=  
80 V: =No way! 
11 F: He may not be a big fan!
12 T: Man (.) he’s in a team himself (…) they play every Wednesday

The plotline of projections consists of planned events and verbal interactions. The latter mostly involve interactions between one of the participants and the man she is planning to go out with. As such, they tend to take the form of “You will say – he will say” (example (2.9) below) or, less frequently, “We will say – he will say” (example (2.10) below):

(2.9)

21 F: Tell me now (…) we are talking serious. Okay (…) I bump into Makis right?
22 F: Pavlos is talking to Vivi (…) and Makis is there (.) and what would you tell him (.) WHAT?
23 T: The carols?= ((jokingly))
24 V: The carols ((laughs))
25 F: Not the carols man, assuming this is going to happen (…) right?

6. The stories included in the Appendix only appear in English in the text proper.
It is notable that projections are initiated as bids for co-construction. See, for instance, the plural “guys” and the pronoun “we” framing the telling of the events as a joint endeavour, in the initiation of the projection from which excerpts 2.8–2.9 were taken:

(2.10)

1 F: Guys (...) what are we going to do tomorrow? Contain yourselves and be silenced. What are we going to do?
2 V: First of all you’ll have a cold bath=
3 F: =To relax?
4 V: A cold bath (...) and you’ll have a hot coffee=
   ((further down))
8 V: Fi:ne (...) then you’ll sit down and relax (...) you’ll do a facial..
   ((further down))
13 F: Okay (...) and then?

Furthermore, as we can see, the participants themselves orient to talk about the future as a temporally ordered sequence of events.

In the email data, although the space afforded for co-construction in asynchronous communication is arguably more limited, projections are still framed as co-constructions, with questions to the addressee at the beginning and at the end (see 2.11 below). Here too, projections are about making plans for near future activities but in this case they mostly involve social arrangements.

(2.11)  
> Subject: Re: Tonite  
Pvs sou fainetai to parakatv os sxedio?  
Synadiomaste ekso ap to Notting Hill Coronet stis 7. Paizei tainia me p. gelio stis 8.40 me R. de Niro (Meet the parents, oti prepei gia goneis korhs...), pairnoume ta eisithria kai tsibame kati/pinoume ena poto kapou ekei koda metaksy 7 & 8.40. Ti les?

How about the following as a plan?  
We meet outside Notting Hill Coronet at 7 o’clock. V. funny movie showing at 8.40 with R. de Niro (Meet the parents, just the ticket for parents of a daughter...), we buy the tickets and grab sth to eat/have a drink locally between 7 & 8.40.  
What do you say?
2.2.4 Shared stories

These storytelling activities can be seen as a continuum. Retold stories have attracted in the literature a number of terms (e.g. shared, known, familiar stories) that are either used interchangeably or present fuzzy boundaries amongst them. To avoid confusion, the term opted for here is that of shared stories. Shared stories will be used here as an umbrella term for stories that are oriented to in interactions as familiar either because they have been told in the past or because the events reported in them are known to all or some of the participants, regardless of whether they have been narrativized in the past or not. References are one specific case of shared stories and a largely neglected one by the studies of “retellings” of narratives that tend to favour “the most fully artful texts” at the expense of “alternative and shifting forms available for the recontextualization” (Bauman 2004: 10) of stories such as “reported, rehearsed, relayed, quoted, summarized” (idem) and other forms. As we saw in §1.4, shared stories were labelled by the participants as “group stories” and they were included in the diary-like “Book of Minutes”, which recorded the exciting moments of the group’s leisure activities. From thereafter, such group stories were mostly referred to by means of their punchline rather than retold. In this way, they constituted an integral part of the group’s interactional history and shared assumptions that could be drawn upon on various occasions as brief mutually intelligible comments on states of affairs, social actions and behaviour, as well as third parties.

In this way, their reworkings were mostly in the form of mini-tellings rather than full performances. In fact, such mini-tellings outweigh the commonly discussed in the literature full retellings for group-bonding and other purposes (see Norrick 2000). It is in other words more common in the data to draw upon shared stories selectively and argumentatively. Shared stories are typically mini-tellings, comprising a narrative skeleton, that is, a quick reference or reminder to its events and their resolution (lines 4–7, example (2.12) below). What is normally spent some time on is the point or evaluation of those events. In this context, however, evaluation or point principally refers to issues of current relevance: i.e. what the point of the tale is in the moment of telling.

It is important to note that shared stories mostly appear as argumentative devices in the course of the telling of a projection. In other words, in the context of future narrative worlds, participants draw upon shared past narrative worlds, in order to support and legitimise their own projected version of events. In this way, there is an embedding of storytelling activities going on: as we can see in the Appendix, Small Story 1, stories of projected events form the main narrative frame and shared stories the embedded frame, which is thematically relevant to the main narrative frame (for a discussion of embedded narratives, see Ochs & Capps 2001: 36–40). As Ochs & Capps put it, embedded narratives serve the illus-
tration of a point, support an argument, make a comparison, elaborate, provide an example, etc. In Ochs’ & Capps’ data, embeddedness of narratives refers to their integration into the topic of a conversation. In the data at hand, however, the embedding is of one narrative into another which puts the two taleworlds in a dialogical relationship (Bakhtin 1981): what happened in the past can inform or throw into sharper focus what may happen in the future; it can act as an analogy and be put as a comparison base for what is discussed.

Such mini-tellings of shared stories in the context of a projection tend to follow prefaces such as the one exemplified below. Example (2.12) is part of an argument between Tonia and Vivi that pertains to the course of action which their friend Irene should follow regarding her unrequited love. As we can see, Vivi argues that it is difficult for Irene to move on and let go of her feelings, while Tonia firmly believes that she has not tried hard to do so. As proof for her view, she brings up two shared stories of personal experience (initiated in lines 1 and 35 respectively), which she puts forth as analogies: the message is “this is how I acted in a comparable case, so this is how Irene should act too”.

(2.12)

1 B: Εγώ να σου πω κάτι (...) αυτό το πράμα που έχει η Ειρήνη το χα πάθει με το
2 Γιάννη (...) σου χω πει την ιστορία
3 T: =Με τον τύπο που τα ήχε με την ξαδέρφη σου=
4 B =Ναι (...) την ξαδέρφη μου την Κατερίνα (...) απ’την Αθήνα.
5 Τα ’χανε για κάποιο διάστημα
6 και μετά τα σπάνε
7 και μετά άρχισα να καταλαβαίνω ότι μ’αρέσει ξέρω για αυτός
8 Πήγα ρώτησα την Κατερίνα ξέρω για
9 μου λέει μαλακάς είσαι
10 και τότε ξέρεις τα γνωστά κολλήματα κι αυτά.
11 Τον βλέπω μετά από τρία χρόνια πάλι
12 και ξέρεις πόσο πολύ μου φοβήνεσε

((further down))

22 T: Γι’αυτό σου λέω. Πρέπει να το ξεκαθαρίσει.
23 B: Το ξέρω (...) αλλά η δική σου η κατάσταση ήταν κάπως διαφορετική
24 T: Τι διαφορετική; Όπως κι εγώ το ξεκαθάρισα (...) πρέπει να το ξεκαθαρίσει
25 B: Μπορεί να μην είναι τόσο δυνατή όσο εσύ (...) κατάλαβες, μπορεί να την έχει
26 πάθει πολύ άσχημα

((further down))

34 B: Εγώ νομίζω ότι δεν είναι εύκολο να έχεις φιλία με κάποιον (...) χωρίς να
35 πιθανεί σε κάτι άλλο
36 T: Όχι (...) εγώ πιστεύω ότι έχει σχέση με την προσωπικότητα του άλλου. Πάρε
37 εμένα και το Σταϊόρο (...) για παράδειγμα
38 V: Ναι:
39 T: Δε στις έχου πει την ιστορία?
40 V: Ναι (...) //ναι
41 T: // Που του είπα έτσι κι έτσι (...) και φοβόμουνα κιόλας, αλλά μετά...
1 V(ivi): Let me tell you something. I went through the same thing as Irene's with Jannis (..) I've told you the story=
3 T(onia): =The guy who was involved with your cousin=
4 V: =Right (.) my cousin Caterina (..) from Athens.
5 They were involved for a while
6 and then they broke up
7 and then I realized that I liked him
8 and I go and ask Katerina ( ((if she had a problem with that))
9 and she says don't be silly
10 and then came the real crush, you know.
11 I see him three years later
12 and you know how it all came back to me [...]
   ((further down))
22 T: That's why I'm telling you. She should sort things out.
23 V: I know (.) but your situation was somewhat different.
24 T: Well (.) how different? I sorted things out (..) and so should she.
25 V: She may not be as strong as you are (.) you see, she may be more involved [...]
   ((further down))
34 V: I think that it's difficult to just be friends (..) no strings attached=
35 T: No (..) I actually believe that it very much depends on the personality. Take Stavros and me (..) for instance
36 V: Yeah // yeah
38 T: Haven't I told you the story?
39 V: Yeah // yeah
40 T: // When I said to him that's how I feel (..) and I was dead scared, but then ...

It is widely held that the typical initiation of a past events story consists of a story preface in which an offer to tell a story is made followed by a request to hear the offered story (Sacks 1992). In contrast, the purpose of this preface is to establish a mutual reference amongst participants for the story to follow as opposed to securing permission to tell the story (for a detailed discussion, see Georgakopoulou 2005a:226ff.). As such, the turn in these cases is a question to the addressee comprising recognitional features such as an abstract (line 1 in 2.12 above, basic orientational information, or references to prior tellings (line 2, line 38). Interestingly, in the case of non-shared stories, such features do not occur in the preface but during the storytelling, as part of orientational and evaluative information and/or as involvement strategies (Tannen 1989). The second pair part in this adjacency pair can be a “yes” answer (as in line 39 above) or a contribution that provides some sort of assurance of recognition of the story referred to. As we can see in line 3 above, Tonia supplies an orientational type of information for one of the characters of the story.

A typical uptake of shared stories as argumentative devices is that what is contested is not the authenticity or persuasive power of the reported events themselves but the point or interpretation of them; in particular, it is the validity of the analogy between the story’s events and the issues disputed that tends to be cast doubt
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on and debated over. This is in tune with Shuman’s finding (2005:14) that when stories are (re)told emblematically, that is, as claiming similar experience or offering interpretation on new narrative scenarios, they are frequently challenged as not accurately portraying the latter; in other words, it is not the accuracy of the events of available narratives that is contested but the re-conceptualization or re-categorization of the reported experience in terms of the current narrative activity. This is illustrated in line 23 above where Vivi rebuffs Tonia’s mini-telling of shared events by characterizing them as “a different situation” to that of Irene that is being talked about.

References are the extreme end of the continuum of mini-tellings of shared stories as they are typically brief, frequently one-liners, and take the form of a punchline, a characterisation of a third party based on action in the taleworld, or a formulaic personation (i.e. quoted set phrase that imitates, parodies or generally stylizes a character’s speech style, Sebba 1993:131). In both the interactional and email data, references originate in less recent stories that have attained the status of building blocks in the participants’ interactional history, rich in symbolic associations, and prone to recontextualisation. There seems then to be a process of de-narrativization or reduction that shared stories undergo, possibly after numerous retellings, until they reach a bare minimum of a reference that is as brief and elliptical as any other allusion to shared sources or texts can be. This type of reference becomes somewhat “frozen” in the sense that, as its instances in the data suggest, it does not get reformulated and the wording remains the same, although it is drawn upon on different occasions for different purposes in different ways.

In example (2.13) below, on the basis of my ethnographic study of the group, I am in a position to know that “talk to him man, talk to him” (lines 31, 61) is the punchline of one of the favourite stories from the participants’ interactional history. In this story, the reference was an instance of constructed dialogue, encoding the words uttered in indignation to Mikes by a male friend at the end of a social outing during which Mikes had behaved unsociably. In its de-contextualizations from this original context and re-contextualizations, the reference has come to act both as a quick and elliptical characterization of Mikes, as somebody who is shy and is lacking in communication and social skills, and, more generally, as a stylisation of inarticulate men (for details, see §4.3.1).

(2.13) See Appendix, ‘Talk to him man, talk to him’, Story 2

29 F: And say he’s looking that way (.) how am I going to draw his attention?
30 V: You will speak to him in his language.
31 ((You’ll say)) Talk to him ma:n (..) talk to him
((personation of the character talked about))
((Participants, i.e. F, T& I, laugh))
((further down))
59 F: So (.) I walk in and see him
What am I going to say?

Talk to him man (.) talk to him =

=hh hah hah-uh huh

Come on (.) we are talking seriously now.

So: (..) I bump into Makis right?

In this case, Mike's negative evaluation occurs five times in the course of the telling of a story of projected events, which involves planning a meeting between the participants and two men. The reference to the shared story “talk to him man, talk to him” is gradually worked up by two of the participants (Vivi and Tonia) as the main reason why Fotini should not, as a result of the planned meeting, get involved with Mike. In other words, it is proposed as a source of character incompatibility between the two of them. In this way, a reference to shared events is drawn upon as a running commentary on and a comparison base for events that have not taken place yet.

Quick references to shared stories suggest that the most recontextualizable part of a shared story is a verbal interaction between characters that serves as an evaluative comment and is typically found at the end of the story (as a personation; as in example (2.13), line 31 above).

In the light of the above, references appear to display an affinity with allusions to other shared texts and assumptions in that they are elliptical and cryptic. This is attested to by the uptake of their occurrences. Specifically, the addressees routinely display an understanding and recognition of the fact that such references are indeed shared and familiar. This is sequentially achieved by repetition, laughter, or a minimal acknowledgment response. As can be seen below, V(ivi) laughingly repeats the reference to a shared story (all alone … all alone?) after its first occurrence (line 17) and joins Tonia in laughing after its subsequent mention (line 24). In fact, the initial acknowledgement extends to a two-turn shared evaluation of the quotation by the interlocutors (lines 18–19):

See Appendix, Going out for a crème brûlée, Story 1

Vivi (.) I can’t go up to him and say hi what’s up
when are we going out?
Isn’t it totally out of the blue?=
Why: is it out of the blue?
You’ll get right in there
So Vivi (.) shall I do it like you with Nikos? (.) >all alone all alone<
huhhhhh (…) all alone all alone was cool=
Yeah tops (.) but doesn’t fit in Danny’s case
Got a chewing gum (./) a cigarette?
//No Vivi let me tell you something
listen (.) Nick was sitting at Roma all alone all alone
hheh ((they laugh)) an’ he was having his orangina all alone all alone
but Dan works in Kallisto
and he is not all alone all alone
and he drinks alcohol
so you can’t go and talk to him like that (.) CAN you?

An initial acknowledgement and even reinforcement of the turn that encodes a reference to a shared story seems to be necessary regardless of the type of action the reference performs locally and the addressee’s reaction to that. As can be seen in 2.13 above, F(otini) quickly acknowledges the reference “talk to him man, talk to him” by means of laughter (line 61), despite the fact that she subsequently frames it as “non-serious” talk and is quick to reintroduce the previous topical agenda (line 62).

As suggested, the interactional affordances of references are numerous. In the email data, references normally “re-open“ communication by looking back and alluding to co-experienced (between teller and addressee) events from a previous (as recent as last night, see excerpt 11 below) interaction as well as by providing an evaluation of them (e.g. I am very flattered!!!!!, Bless you … mention! in example (2.15) below);7 in some cases, a coda is also added which closes the gap between the here-and-now of the email message and the there-and-then of the participants’ previous referred to interaction, by providing some kind of a follow-up to it.

(2.15) Subject: Re: last night
         Kale me ehoun pei polla pragmata alla tourta genethlion proti fora! Les tora
         na paroun ta myala mou aera? I am very flattered!!!!!
         Na ’sai kala – you have always been good for my morale (unlike some others I
         will not deign to mention)!
         Polla filia
         H tourta!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Subject: Re: last night
Well I have been told many things but birthday cake never before! Do you
think that I will now get too big for my boots? I am very flattered!!!
Bless you – you have always been good for my morale (unlike some others I
will not deign to mention)!
Many kisses
The cake!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Nonetheless, there are also one-line references to be found that are traceable to less recent, shared stories, as in the case of the adolescents’ group. One such quotable fragment in the email correspondence of two close friends in the data involves: Ti les esy kyria Koula mou? (What d’you say, my dear Mrs Koula?). This is an

7. For a discussion of the role of switches to English in the evaluation of the reported events, see Georgakopoulou 2004.
agonizing aunt personation exploiting the connotations of an old-fashioned Hausfrau in the Greek proper name *Koula*. The reference is frequent in the context of storytelling (particularly in the place of a coda) as an addressee-oriented invitation for feedback.

References in the email data too are based on and evoke shared understandings between addressee and addressee. The following example was explained to me at an interview with one of the participants-informants:

(2.16) **Subject: atakti Vassoula...**

...se epairna piso alla eixa ton palio arithmo. Steile mou to neo kodiko (ksana!)...

Subject: naughty Vassoula . . .

. . . I was calling you back but had the old number. Send me the new code (again!) . . .

The participants had been talking on the phone when the 2-year-old daughter of the participant-informant managed to cut them off: subsequently, the addressee of this message emailed to say that he could not have got through to her, as he was missing the new code of her phone number.

### 2.3 Interactional features

As shown, each of the above types of small stories present their own specific features which are in turn tied to the local norms and practices of the two communication contexts in question. In that respect, this discussion is not aimed at presenting a deceptively homogeneous picture. The contention here is nonetheless that there are broad unifying features that run through the above types of narrative and systematicities that depart significantly from what was labelled above as the canon of conventional narrative analysis. These systematicities pertain to the different stages of the stories’ sequencing, that is, their initiation, subsequent telling, and response to. Here I will single out the most important ones and discuss them with reference to the three narrative dimensions of tellership, tellability and embeddedness. By placing them in the framework of generally accepted ways

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2.1 Small stories in the interactional data</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total small stories</strong> (in 20 hours of conversation)</td>
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<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>341</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
of talking about narrative, I can point to the limitations in the orthodox conceptualization of these modes of operation and discuss the analytical tools needed to tap into the exigencies of small stories.

1) Tellership: The idea of co-construction has been frequently put forth as a new way of looking at narrative and away from the crude distinction between active teller and passive audience (e.g. see Norrick 2000). Ochs & Capps (2001) go one step further and talk about multiple co-tellers as the end of the continuum that has been little researched by conventional narrative analysis. Nonetheless, co-construction is too often used as a deceptively unified term obscuring differences in the participants’ storytelling roles and types of actions raised by them as well as overlooking their intimate link with the type of storytelling involved. In the data at hand, for instance, it is important to note that co-tellership is afforded by the mere fact that the stories told are not about personal experience past events; there is a lack of privileged access to events because they have not happened yet or because they are assumed to be shared experience. This type of co-construction calls for a nuanced approach to telling roles, i.e. who tells which bit of the story and why, as exemplified in conversation-analytic studies such as Goodwin (1984). As we will see in detail in Chapter 4, there are systematic relations to be found between telling roles and a sense of emerging story structure on one hand; and larger social roles and identities on the other hand. In other words, certain tellers contribute more than others to certain story parts (e.g. complicating action, evaluation); also, which part each of the participant contributes more or less and in what ways is shaped by as well as reveals power and other relations between the participants, roles that are accepted as holding above and beyond the immediate storytelling situation. At the same time, a contribution to a story may take various forms and perform various actions vis-à-vis other participants’ contributions ranging from affiliative (e.g. collusion, ratification) to disaffiliative (e.g. contention, disagreement, delegitimation).

What is important to note at this juncture is the need to link the study of tellership with a view of narrative as a sequentially organized activity in which structure emerges on-line and is negotiated by the participants. As already argued, this line of research is well-developed vis-à-vis other types of discourse activities within the conversation-analytic tradition (e.g. see Zimmerman 1998) but it is still lagging behind in conventional narrative analysis (cf. Schegloff 1997).

2) Tellability: The context- and culture-specificity of tellability and the evaluative devices by which it is signalled have been amply documented (e.g. see Polanyi 1989; Bamberg 1997a). There is, however, a longstanding commitment to defining tellability on the basis of aesthetic criteria and ultimately to link it with notions of performance and display of skill and efficiency (cf. Ochs & Capps 2001).
stories in the data at hand show that this is a restrictive definition of tellability, not least as it does not sit well with a model of co-construction (see above) where more than one person is accountable for the piecing together of a story. In addition, the stories are mostly used argumentatively, so aesthetics is simply not as relevant as notions of effectiveness, appropriacy, and consequentiality for the local business on hand. These qualifications do not call for an abolition of the concept of tellability; after all, as we have seen, the participants themselves orient to what locally constitutes a tellable story. They do, however, dictate the need to open up its scope. Two cases in point in that direction are as follows:

In the context of bringing in shared stories and references argumentatively, as discussed above, participants often contest the tellability of stories by labelling them as irrelevant, unrelated to what is being talked about, the point that is being made. In this respect, tellability has not been linked productively with telling roles, co-tellership rights and issues of entitlement (Shuman 1986). Another direction that the re-conceptualization of tellability needs to take is to be found in the revisiting of the relationship between actuality and possibilities. The narrative predominance of past tense accounts has meant that tellability is normally defined on the basis of bringing in possibilities to the actual event (see Labov 1997). This retrospective relation, often seen in teleological terms, is also in tune with research on autobiographical narratives that shows how past events are revised and added new perspectives to on the basis of the teller’s current standpoint at the moment of telling (e.g. Brockmeier 2000; Freeman 1998; Mishler 1986). In the data, however, this retrospective relationship is on numerous occasions reversed in favour of a prospective, anticipatory relationship: as we saw, it is the possible, what has not happened yet (sic projections) that is evaluated on the basis of the actual, of previous events (e.g. references) which act as interpretative viewpoints. Probing into this prospective relationship has implications for the nature as well as the mechanisms of evaluation (see §3.5).

3) **Embeddedness**: As we are seeing in the stories at hand, they present an inter-relationship with the participants’ shared interactional history, with previously experienced events, previous stories as well as interactions in other media. In this way, the emphasis on the relationship with the local context and the conversational event needs to be expanded to capture relations of recontextualization and inter-textuality, more specifically, inter-mediality and inter-narrativity. Put differently, the move away from narrative as a detachable and autonomous event (cf. Ochs

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8. Interestingly, still working with a dichotomous view of teller-listeners, Labov in his revised model (1997) defines a story’s reportability as the justification for the (re)assignment of speaker role to the narrator (406).
& Capps 2001:30ff.) towards its embeddedness in discourse surroundings needs to be spatially and temporally expanded to capture the dis-embeddedness and the re-embeddedness of stories: the ways in which stories are transposed, (re)shaped and recycled across time and space in different contexts (cf. Silverstein & Urban 1996). We will discuss this in more detail in Chapter 3.

2.4 Conclusion: Small stories in context

We embarked on this chapter with the argument that more needs to be done on small stories that depart from the canon of personal experience past events stories, be in the form of life stories, landmark events stories, or episodes from the teller’s past. Opening up the lens of narrative analysis to account for small stories took us to the thorny issue of how we define narrative. Here, I consciously adopted a more or less rather than an either or approach which enabled us to bring together more abstract etic criteria with emic criteria of what is oriented to as a story in a given environment and what the social consequentiality of such an orientation is. I then showed with data of small stories how stories of future events may resonate more in certain contexts than stories of past events; how recent events may form the stuff of stories; how past events stories may through recontextualizations generate elliptical ways of telling, that are nonetheless oriented to by the participants as part of their narrativized past; finally, how stories may be intertextually linked and embedded in one another. By specifying certain types of small stories, we begun to see how including them in the analysis can have implications for some of the mainstay vocabulary. I will next see how models of narrative structure can be re-positioned to be able to account for such stories and ultimately for narratives as social practices.

It is important to remind ourselves at this juncture of the fact that the turn to narratives-in-interaction has to be methodologically grounded and analytically associated with new theories of genre (as discussed in §1.2) and identities-in-interaction (as discussed in §1.3). These paradigms can provide an overarching theoretical coherence to a systematic turn to narratives-in-interaction at the same time as affording opportunities for much needed interdisciplinarities for the future of narrative analysis. First, they allow us to explore narratives as resources suited to carrying our certain actions in certain environments. They also radically redefine research on narrative for the construction of identities. Within the identities-in-interaction framework, the quest for whether narratives are better or worse, more “real” (cf. “authentic”) or more relevant resources than others for the construction of identities becomes methodologically questionable. Furthermore, possibilities open up for looking into the interactional affordances of narrative without any prior assumptions about a necessary or automatic implication of nar-
rative in identity work. At the same time, the analysis of small stories forces us to their recognition as an important site for identity work (see Chapters 4 & 5), that, not unlike life stories, can both construct self in irreducibly context-bound ways and coalesce a sense of self with relative coherence and continuity across contexts (Redman 2005:36).

Finally, it is worth noting how a turn to small stories finds parallels in late modern theory that has become increasingly relevant in linguistics and cultural studies (as discussed in Rampton 2006: Chs 1. & 9). This stresses looking into fragmentation and multiplicity of social practices rather than presupposing certainty about grand theoretical totalities. Within this framework, narratives can be seen as ongoing projects in which improvisation, contingency, contradictions and fragmentation are equally – if not more – plausible and worthy of investigation as coherence, structure and totality. Late modern theory also urges us to reflect on research contexts and to shift our analytical lenses to hidden, small, unofficial and fragmented practices either in the fringes of official sites or in unofficial sites, away from carefully chosen cultural niches. In this respect, interview narratives are no more worthy of investigation than stories that occur within private micro-cultures such as the communication contexts of this study. Research within cultural studies (e.g. see Hey 1997) has shown that such sites present systematic features and are deemed crucial for the understanding of language and subjectivity. It is notable in this respect that the data on which this study is based come from groups of people that can be characterized as forming communities of practice on account of the frequency and intensity of their face-to-face and in the case of email data, mediated interactions. On this basis, we are in a position to suggest that closeknit types of social groups and organization encourage and nourish these kinds of small, fragmented, elliptical but also densely (re)contextualized stories.

At the same time, however, it is all too easy to over-estimate the influence of certain contextual factors at the expense of the analyst’s positioning vis-à-vis the data employed, the questions asked and the analytical emphasis. To go back to the data at hand, it can equally be suggested that it is partly due to this study’s ethnographic perspective that these types of stories with their intertextual linkages and recontextualization features can be uncovered; in other words, that the dialogism, intertextuality and breadth of the types of stories in the case at hand are not necessarily different to that of other communication contexts but can be tapped into by means of a certain methodology and an analytical approach. In all cases, our approach, as we will continue to build it in the chapters to come, advocates the study of the subjectivities that the telling of stories affords or constrains within a reflexive view of the relevant context and the social activity performed.
Chapter 3

Narrative structure in small stories

3.1 Narrative structure beyond Labov

We have already argued that a rich account of the situated practices of narrative partly hinges on a shift away from the hegemony of personal experience past events stories in order to document the generic variability of narrative. In this process, however, I have also begun to show how the mainstay vocabulary of narrative analysis needs to be re-conceptualized and refined so that it can stretch to the analysis of what are currently viewed as “a-typical” stories. Part of this re-conceptualization, as we have seen, involves cross-fertilization with interactional paradigms of talk that allows us to explore narrative as talk-in-interaction. I will continue with this line here by tackling one of the core elements of doing narrative analysis, namely the inquiry into narrative structure. What I will aim at doing here by way of re-assessing the influential notion of narrative as a structured activity is not to propose the abolition of the notion but in effect to put forward an intermediate and in many ways conciliatory position.

At a time at which anything “structural” and “invariant” feels dated and stilted vis-à-vis the post-structural and late modern turn in social sciences, re-appraising work on narrative structure will be seen here within the framework of redirecting and refocusing it in order for it to speak to work of a different kind that views narrative not as text (sic product) but as social practice. At the moment, there is a danger of this cross-fertilization not materializing, as lines of communication do not appear to be obvious or needed. Part of the present task of re-appraising narrative structure then will be to reinstate its significance for the analysis. At the same time, the position of narrative structure in the mainstay vocabulary of narrative analysis cannot be underestimated or overlooked. Over the years, narrative structure has formed not only a powerful analytical apparatus but also an orthodox way of thinking about and studying narrative; in effect a hallmark of a number of diverse perspectives in both narrative analysis and narratology.

Within narrative analysis in particular, the quest for structure underpins ethnography of communication studies and, generally speaking, discourse studies of narrative. It is nonetheless fair to say that, in this case too, the most influential model is traceable to Labov’s study (1972; initially Labov & Waletzky 1967) of narrative structure. Labov succeeded in usefully drawing on a tradition that had
put forth plot or thematic criteria as principles of structural organization in narrative (e.g. Propp 1968). At the same time, his model was also instrumental in incorporating in a model of structure what least lent itself to that, namely the affective, emotive, subjective, and experiential aspects of narrative. This was done by means of postulating evaluation both as a separate structural unit and as a micro-level mechanism that can apply to an entire narrative. Evaluation thus captured a wide range of linguistic means by which a series of events was communicated and recognized as being narratable or reportable.

In the light of the above, Labov’s narrative structure encapsulates the narrative definitional criteria that analysts tend to converge on, as discussed in 2.1, and its profound influence in the field has to be seen in connection with that fact. Specifically, it models both plot (in the sense of a temporally ordered sequence of events that disrupt an initial state of affairs) and its reportability (in the sense of the dynamics of experientiality). It is therefore no accident that the study has been the point of departure for many different scholars in a whole range of disciplines. More specifically, it has inspired a whole post-Labovian in nature line of inquiry consisting of hundreds of empirically based projects1 in a wide range of settings that have documented: the culturally based schematic or scenario-based expectations about structure and the ways in which they shape it (e.g. Chafe 1980; Polanyi 1981; Tannen 1978); the socio-cultural and situational variability of narrative structure; the dispensability of certain parts, particularly the fragility of the abstract and coda in conversational events; the infrequent occurrence of certain structural parts (e.g. evaluation as a separate component) or equally the prominence of them; the cultural values attached to spatial organization in parallel with or as opposed to temporality resulting in the re-assessment of the role of orientation; the context-specific degrees of audience participation during the telling of a story (e.g. Blum-Kulka 1997); more significantly, the context-dependency of the ways in which the point of a story is shown or told.

In general terms, although Labov’s formal clausal analysis was fiercely criticized and rapidly seen as unworkable, the structural components, evaluation in particular, have had an impressive staying power (cf. Bruner 1997:62). As Holmes aptly puts it, “they have proved remarkably robust and have had extensive use for many and varied purposes by researchers in a very wide range of disciplines” (1997:95). Not only have they formed the basis of various elaborations and rami-

1. The Journal of Narrative & Life History volume (1997), a retrospective of Labov & Waletzky 1967, makes reference to several of those. Polanyi (1989) is a notable case inasmuch as it was one of the earlier studies to bring into sharp focus the context-specificity of the model, evaluation in particular.
fications; they have also more or less directly informed the conceptual work out of which narrative analysis has taken most of its mileage in the last three decades. It is thus not an exaggeration to suggest that Labov’s approach seems to have been the one that narrative analysts cannot get away from. In Holmes’s vivid terms, “as I proceeded I found that in whichever direction I attempted to develop the analysis, I kept inescapably returning to the need to first establish the basic structure of narratives” (1997:95). Similarly, Schegloff notes that “it is striking to what degree features of the 1967 paper have remained characteristic of treatments of narrative” (1997:101).

The influence of Labov attests to a profound belief in narrative structure as part of the toolkit of narrative analysis. Although structuralist optimism is currently no less un-fashionable in linguistics than in the whole of social sciences, the need for an analytical apparatus as part of the area’s self-definition still holds strong (Rampton et al. 2005:2). This has to be seen in the context of agreed principles within the field of linguistics, which, however fragmented and diverse, if distilled, assume that it is possible to isolate and abstract structural patterns in the ways in which people communicate. In this way, they prioritize the task of establishing procedures for isolating and identifying them (idem: 2). There are thus good disciplinary reasons for viewing narrative as a structured activity and for employing the quest for structure as part of an analytical inquiry. More importantly, it resonates with other analyses of discourse (see Georgakopoulou & Goutsos 2004:11-14, 70-73). Conversation analysis is one such example of an influential approach that, as we will see below, has uncovered systematicity in structure. Postulating a structure can also provide a way for navigating the two current extremes of discourse analysis: fine-grained, nose-to-data micro-analysis.

2. The obvious parallels between the notion of involvement (Tannen 1989) and evaluation are a case in point. Attempts to formalize positioning strategies have also had to use Labov and the notion of evaluation as a point of departure (e.g. Bamberg 1997a; Wortham 2000). It is notable too that multi-level analyses that introduce narrative dimensions (e.g. teller-tale-telling; narrated vs. narrative event; Bamberg 1997b; Blum-Kulka 1997) not assigned a prominent place or neglected in Labov’s model, more or less explicitly appeal to a notion of narrative structure along the lines of Labov which allows them to investigate the relations and boundaries between different realms of analysis.

3. A serious competitor and to an extent an antidote is that of ethnopoetic analysis (cf. Hymes 1981) which has nonetheless not succeeded in being as influential partly on account of its association with “exotic” (in the sense of non-western) narratives. At the same time, it is notable that thematic/plot criteria (prominent in Labov’s model; e.g. change of scene, time, space, and character shifts) seem to inform the model’s higher-level units. I have argued elsewhere that it is possible to combine ethnopoetics with a Labovian conceptualisation of narrative structure in order to tap into questions that cannot be addressed by one or the other alone (for details, see Georgakopoulou 1997b:23-25).
that refuses to abstract from the local and the particular and macro-analysis that is oblivious to interactional contingency and language choices in local contexts (idem: 189). As Hanks puts it (1996: 233ff.), it is in the dynamic interplay between the habitual, routine, rather stable and pre-fabricated ways of communicating on one hand and the improvised, contingent, and emergent features on the other hand that we begin to gain insights into any kind of communicative practice.

The above remarks notwithstanding, Labov’s model and any post-Labovian work for that matter have been the target of fierce criticism that has more or less explicitly had to do with the place of structural analysis in current studies of narrative. More specifically, the heart of the problem seems to be that the model is ill-suited to work with an increasing emphasis on contextualized, dynamic approaches that view narrative as a situated activity rather than as a detachable and autonomous unit. Inattention to context has become the hallmark of such critique. Furthermore, at a time at which narrative is increasingly employed as a point of entry into identity analysis, structural models are seen as too propositional and ill equipped to deal with the moment-to-moment nuances, projections and contestations involved in situated discourse. This poses a conundrum: how can a powerful analytical apparatus be employed as an empirical resource and a heuristic that is well suited to current concerns of narrative analysis? In their recent attempt to argue for a synthesis between (socio) linguistics and ethnography, Rampton et al (2005) set out the rationale that could in my view be adapted to the argument for the need to retain narrative structure as part of the analytical apparatus in work that ultimately aims at tapping into social processes and practices through narrative. They more specifically argue for the importance of having clearly delimitable processes in the analysis (citing structural patterns as one of them) as a way of ‘tying down descriptions that invite reflexive sensitivity to the processes involved, dwell on their situated particularities and question the fullness and irreducibility of the lived life from which the analysis has abstracted cultural and other structures’ (4).

In this way, reconciling “contradictory pulls in the methodology” may enrich the analysis rather than simply declare them as too unbridgeable a gap. In other words, work on narrative structure can help formulate a more specific remit of the study of narrative as a social practice while providing methods for empirical research through specific coding categories that allow analysts to tap into narrative as an organized set of resources. To echo Hanks (1996), in order to tap into the three separable but interrelated components of communicative practice, that

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4. Again, the retrospective volume of the Journal of Narrative & Life History, 1997, is a revealing example. Most of the 47 entries converge on the problems encountered in the applicability of the model, particularly with regard to the neglect of context and the ways in which it can decisively shape structure.
is, form-activity-ideology (in the broad sense of shared evaluations of actions, people, processes, etc.), we need to “consider carefully their respective domains of relevance and validity”, so that “we integrate them without destroying them” (8). He adds, “It is wrongheaded to explain a linguistic form without the tools of linguistics” (9).

Taking its cue from such a vision of a synthesis, what this discussion will show is how narrative structure can be reconceptualized and opened up to meet the requirements of contextualized studies of narrative as a social practice; this also involves looking into narrative as a mode for constructing identities. I will argue that the first direction that merits systematic research is that of linking structure with a view of narrative as talk-in-interaction, as already discussed; that allows us to document structure as sequentially based and emergent, that is, as a dynamic and on-line construct that sets tasks and raises differentiated types of action for different participants (cf. Goodwin 1984).

In both respects, I will put forth the main gaps and insufficiencies in existing research and suggest certain avenues for inquiry on the basis of the findings of my own empirical projects. I will then take a further step to argue that this sequential and emergent approach needs to be complemented by a temporalized view of narrative that goes beyond the immediate discourse surroundings and across socio-spatial arenas to account for links between stories and for the transposition of stories from one context to another through retellings. All in all, I will argue for an approach to narrative structure that is flexible enough to take into account stories, such as the ones discussed in Ch. 2, that depart from the prototypical past events personal experience story and to thus reflect the diversity of stories in actual conversational contexts. I will show how that would work by bringing together structure with genre as a dynamic construct in the case of three types of small stories, namely breaking news, projections, and shared stories.

3.2 Structure as sequence

As we have seen, Labov’s model has been heavily criticized for seeing narrative as a detached, autonomous and self-contained unit with clearly identifiable parts. The crux of the counter-argument is that narrative occurs in some kind of a discourse environment, before and after other discourse activities and is thus enmeshed in its local surroundings. This view of narrative as a sequence, which in turn is part of a sequentially ordered event, forces attention to its local occasioning and consequentuality. With regard to narrative structure, this means in the first instance that its endpoints, i.e. its beginning and end, are intimately linked with prior and upcoming talk (Sacks 1974).
In this respect, conversation analytic studies have shed light on how stories are prefaced, so that the teller secures permission for a largely uninterrupted turn; how speakers need to display the relationship between a story and prior talk so that they can propose the appropriateness of its telling (Jefferson 1978:220); how soliciting a story implicates a different opening than self-selecting to tell a story; how stories can be followed up by other related stories that function as second stories and how entry to those stories differs from stories that launch a spate of talk (Sacks 1992). Furthermore, how the participation framework in a given conversational exchange can shape a story’s structure in some of the following ways: the tellers may design their stories for certain (principal) recipients, while recipients in turn may offer competing frameworks of a story’s interpretation and evaluation that undercut those of the teller (Goodwin 1986). In this way, conversation-analytic work has convincingly demonstrated the sequential implicativeness of stories, that is, their consequentiality for prior and upcoming talk. As a result, we know more now than we ever learnt from Labov’s study about how a story’s endpoints can be intimately linked with its communicative context of occurrence (including that of an interview). Nonetheless, there is still much scope for research regarding the types of entry and exit for different stories in different settings. For instance, how are different types of story initiation and specific linguistic means mapped together? What are the systematic relations between openings and subsequent tellings? Finally, if we take an interactional view to narrative structure, what does the part in-between a story’s entry and exit consist of and how does it compare with Labov’s structural components?

More specifically, there are two directions of analysis that still merit attention in the attempt to explore fully the sequential aspects of storytelling. The first concerns the treatment of participant roles. Co-construction has been oft advocated as meriting serious attention in narrative (e.g. contributions in Briggs 1996; Goodwin 1984, 1986; Goodwin 1997). Despite this, Labov’s study with its dyadic scheme between a teller and an ideal, “attentive, interested and responsive listener” (Labov 1997:397) followed by a longstanding tradition of research interview narratives in social sciences has arguably set an interpretative idiom where prominence has been assigned to teller-led and rather monologic stories. As Schegloff has pointed out, “narrative is frequently treated as belonging to the basic unit of western culture: the individual doing the telling” (1997:101). Similarly, Ochs and Capps (2001:57) convincingly argue that conventional narrative analysis has consistently privileged stories by one active teller as opposed to multiple co-tellers. This prototypical set-up of a main teller and “an attentive” recipient has implicated a slower move to processes of negotiation in narrative than in other kinds of talk (cf. Goodwin 1997). As a result, co-operation in narrative communication with collusion and involvement on the part of the listeners in the teller and the taleworld has been well
documented (e.g. Tannen 1989). Similarly, Ochs and Capps (2001: 57) convincingly argue that conventional narrative analysis has consistently privileged stories by one active teller as opposed to multiple co-tellers.

The above is intimately linked with a longstanding model of non-sharedness of personal experience. This again takes us back to the Labovian context of storytelling where somebody who knows of and owns their experience makes it known to somebody who hears it for the first time. This set of circumstances generates a salient distinction between a knowing teller and an unknowing listener when in actual storytelling contexts the range, variety and subtlety of participation roles can far exceed that restrictive scheme (e.g. see Ochs & Capps 2001: Ch. 1). It is no accident in this respect that the type of entry most systematically studied involves either telling a story as a response to an interviewer’s question or asking for permission to relate a story to an unknowing audience.

To make the endeavour of reaching out to other possibilities tangible, let’s go back to the group’s small stories. They typically have prefaces the main purpose of which is to (re)affirm mutual reference or knowingness and/or to invite co-construction. This is intimately linked with the types of stories that are common in the data, as discussed in Chapter 2. As a result, the most salient type of entry into a story is as follows:

Teller: Marker: “Let me tell you something” (“Shall I tell you something”? Na su po kati)/ Recognitional question containing story abstract and/or reference to previous telling(s) – (Knowing) Recipient: Answer (confirmation)/ Clarification question/ Double-checking.

This type of entry is typical of shared stories. As we can see in the short excerpt below, a common opening involves the use of the marker “Na su po kati” (Let me tell you something). As I have shown elsewhere (2001), this marker signals that the upcoming talk is going to re-frame prior talk or introduce some kind of a shift in the activity underway, in this case the opening of a story. In shared stories, the preface tends to establish some kind of mutual reference with the addressee(s): this is frequently done by means of a question to the addressee comprising recognitional features such as an abstract and/or a reference to a prior telling, as we can see in line 1 of the short excerpt below. The second pair part in this adjacency pair can be a “yes” answer or a contribution that provides some sort of assurance of

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5. The same applies to second or subsequent stories (i.e. thematically related and comparable stories with the prior one, Sacks 1992) that show affiliation with the prior story-talk. There is thus scope here for scrutinizing disaffiliative follow-ups and cases of lack of co-operation in storytelling situations.
recognition of the story referred to. As can be seen in line 3 below, Tonia supplies an orientational type of information for one of the characters of the story.

(3.1)⁶

1 V: Let me tell you something (. ) I went through the **same** thing as Irene’s with  
2 Jannis (. ) I’ve told you the story=  
3 T: =The guy who was involved with your cousin=  
4 V: =Right (. ) my cousin Caterina (. ) from Athens.

This process of establishing mutual reference is frequently spread over two adjacency pairs, as in cases when the addressee seems to be unsure of the events referred to, asks a clarification question, and receives a reply that jogs her memory (lines 1–4 below):

(3.2)

1 V: **Όπως τότε με το Χρήστο και τον Κώστα που έγινε η παρε ξήγηση, τη θυμάσαι τη φάση?**  
2 T: **Πότε ρε;?**  
3 V: **Τότε με το λογαριασμό=**  
4 T: =**Α ναι: ρε!**  
5 V: **Φάση ε; Έτσι ξαφνικά ( .. ) εκεί που ’χανε βγει έξω**

1 V: It’s like when Christos and Kostas had a row, d’ you remember the story?  
2 T: **When was that man;?**  
3 V: That time with the bill=  
4 T: =**Oh right!**  
5 V: What a story, eh? Just out of the blue really (. ) as they’d gone out [. . .]

The second type of entry, typical of stories of projected events, commonly involves a question in future tense in first person plural (also note below the plural “guys”, line 1):

(3.3) See Appendix, “Talk to him man, talk to him”

1 F: **Guys ( .. ) what are we going to do tomorrow?**  
2 Contain yourselves and be silenced. **WHAT** are we going to do?  
3 V: First of all you’ll have a cold bath=

As we can see above, Vivi orients to this bid for co-construction by offering what turns out to be the first of many temporally sequenced events in the story.

These types of entry are markedly different to Labov’s abstract as the sole opening or equally to the conversation analysts’ common preface of making an offer to tell a story (Sacks 1974). Solicited rather than self-selected stories present yet more different types of opening, as I have discussed elsewhere (2005a) as well as raising issues of entitlement (Shuman 1986) to the experience reported. Finally, another common opening in my email data, which I will discuss in (3.4), suggests

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⁶ 2.12 in Section 2.2.4 provides a longer excerpt from which 3.1 was taken.
the need not just for the investigation of how different types of stories and sequential activities bear on narrative structure but also for the very reconceptualization of narrative structure as dynamically evolving in a trajectory of interactions, rather than merely in the here-and-now.

The point about the above types of entry into a story is that they call for a sufficiently elastic model of narrative structure to allow for a range of options that can be (loosely) matched with generic and contextual variation. Such a flexible model would inevitably shy away from functionally restrictive schemes accompanying the various structural components: for instance, as we saw, rather than viewing an entry into a story as the turn that grants the teller strong telling rights or that provides the addressee with a sneak preview (Labov 1972), other functions (in the sense of actions) can be embraced by the analysis, such as establishing mutual reference with the addressee(s) or securing co-construction for the upcoming story. In similar vein, the analysis ought to stay alert to the systematic relations that different story openings present with subsequent tellings in the sense of the contingencies they set up for different types of telling and roles and action by different participants. As I have argued elsewhere (2005a), prefaces aimed at establishing mutual reference normally do not project a long telling. Instead, they are typically followed by a mini-telling of the story, which comprises its narrative skeleton, that is, a quick reference or reminder to its events and to their resolution (if applicable), as we can see in the example below:

(3.4)

1 V: Let me tell you something. I went through the same thing as Irene's with Jannis
2 (. ..) I've told you the story=
3 T: =The guy who was involved with your cousin=
4 V: =Right,. my cousin Katerina (.. ) from Athens.
5 They were hhh involved for a while
6 and then they broke up
7 and then I realized that I liked him
8 and I go and ask Katerina ((if she had a problem with that))
and she says don't be silly
and then came the real crush, you know.
I see him three years later
and you know how it all came back to me [. . .]

Vivi’s response to the mini-telling of shared events (in line 23) frames an ensuing debate between the two participants as to how and why the story of known events cannot be used as an analogy and as an interpretative guide for the activity underway (see our discussion in Section 2.4.4). In contrast to the above type of preface followed by a mini-telling, it is frequently the case that personal stories of past experience events, particularly when elicited by the researcher, produce what I have called displays, that is, full-fledged (and normally performed) tellings (for a discussion see Georgakopoulou 1998, 2005a:235ff.). In this respect, they are reminiscent of Labov’s stories: in this case too, somebody who knows is asked to tell a story to somebody who does not know and on the face of it wants to find out.

3.3 The emergence of structure

A view of structure as sequentially unfolding, as outlined above, goes hand in hand with a view of structure as emergent. In this sense, structure cannot be postulated a priori but emerges as a joint venture and as the outcome of negotiation by interlocutors in the course of a story’s telling. Allowing for the interactional contingency of patterns is the hallmark of a sufficiently process-oriented and elastic model of structure that “opens up rather than closes off the investigation of talk’s business” (Edwards 1997:142) and that accounts for the consequentiality and local relevance of stories. This shift in perspective can turn the analysis into a different enterprise altogether: from solely working with analytical and reified concepts to focusing on their interpretative reality in discourse environments as part of the speakers’ own repertoires of sense-making devices.

In an influential article, Goodwin (1984) eloquently showed how the way in which a story is told, its sequential unfolding or structure is intimately linked with the distinction between knowing vs. unknowing recipients. In Goodwin’s data the story concerns past events and there is still a clear distinction between somebody who tells to somebody who finds out, which does not easily apply to the data at hand. However, the bigger point is to be found in the ways in which Goodwin’s study demonstrates the need for the analysis to be sensitive to the variety of storytelling roles and participant actions. Telling roles provide an insight into how storytelling can be negotiated moment-by-moment, turn-by-turn and thus emerge. At the same time, an integral part of the emergence of structure are the actions undertaken vis-à-vis the various structural components.
A model of narrative structure should allow and account for possible responses or types of uptake by different participants and with regard to different structural components. More specifically, in the case of story openings, what can be included is a) type of entry: e.g. self-selection vs. soliciting, b) type of story or genre, c) participation framework. We will discuss b) in more detail below, but here we have seen how the preface of a shared story may be different in kind as well as perform different actions to the preface of stories of non-shared events. The participant roles pertaining to a storytelling situation have been found to shape a story’s evolving structure (e.g. Goodwin 1984, 1986). They thus need to become integrated into narrative structure models as a parameter that can present various possibilities beyond the teller-recipient scheme.

Factoring participant roles in allows us to explore the emergence of structural components or story parts on the basis of the participants’ types and degrees of contribution. In fact, there are systematic relations to be found between telling roles (including types of undertaken actions) and a sense of emerging story structure, as we will see in detail in Ch. 4. First, even in cases when there is no clearly identifiable single teller, not all storytelling participants contribute equally and in the same ways to the different story parts, as those will be outlined later in this discussion. At the same time, a contribution to a story may take various forms and perform various actions vis-à-vis other participants’ contributions ranging from affiliative (e.g. collusion, ratification) to disaffiliative (e.g. contention, disagreement, delegitimation) action.

Emergence also allows us to tap into on-line shiftings of structure, highlighting how problematic it is to assign functions to structural parts a priori of the investigation of their interactional status and on the basis of their internal semantics (cf. Edwards 1997). For instance, the idea of structure building to a climactic point of one or a series of most reportable events becomes immediately questionable when placed in the context of on-line negotiations. Furthermore, as we will see, the plot in stories of projected events emerges line by line through a joint piecing and re-drafting of a version of events; in this way, a story is not over until the participants decide so, and it thus infolds inductively.

3.4 The temporalization of structure

The two views of structure, as advocated above, involve processes that are best suited to capturing the here-and-now of a storytelling situation, the interactional affordances of structure. However, as has often been highlighted (e.g. Wetherell 2001), a narrow interactionist approach does not suffice for illuminating, among other things, the “relational orientation of a text to other previous texts and the anticipation of prospective ones” (Bauman 2004:4). Such a pursuit would be
premised on the widely held assumption of dialogicality of language (Bakhtin 1981) that recognizes that “the present of speech is a kind of palimpsest: a layering of past, present and future frameworks all precisely articulated in the actuality of utterance” (Hanks 1996:212); also that “language forms bear traces of their distribution which both dialogises expression and puts it in a context larger than the actual present” (idem:219).

In our case, probing into the relationality of stories requires a temporalized view that recognizes that stories can be part of an interactional trajectory, that is, activities that can be developed in different settings and even media, can be lifted from an original discourse environment and transposed to other contexts. Although recontextualization practices have been well argued for and researched (e.g. Bauman & Briggs 1990), they have not sufficiently been built into narrative structure and order. Two points will illustrate the need for doing so:

a) Participants’ own orientation to and recognition of a bit of structure as impinging or dependent on another. As we discussed in §2.2.2, in Data-set 2 (corpus of email messages), it is common for the participants to open a story and defer its full telling to another, offline and preferably face-to-face, occasion of interaction with their addressee. Bidding for a story and telling it later at a more opportune moment is not uncommon in conversational events either. However, this case presents a notable inter-textuality, more precisely, inter-mediality between the tellings and the events of a story.

(3.5)

Date: Wed, 27 Sep 2000 16:15:55 +0100 (BST)
From: Jannis
To: Klio
Subject: Re: Evrīsa toν Charlie (και η γυναίκα tou)!!
> Tha sou pv to vrady, megala plaka.
nai eh? tha ethei katholoy – or is he history?
Jannis
ps thlepathiko: vrizoyme thn idia wra.

Date: Wed, 27 Sep 2000 16:15:55 +0100 (BST)
From: Jannis
To: Klio
Subject: Re: I gave Charlie (and his wife!) an earful!!
> I’ll tell you tonight, great fun.
Oh really? Will he come back at all – or is he history?
Jannis
ps. telepathic: we give people an earful at the same time.

As we can see above, when the full telling of the story is deferred for the near future, the initiation of stories to be told is normally done with a summarizing statement of the story’s main event(s) (I gave Charlie (and his wife) an earful!!),
and/or its point (great fun). This commonly appears in the message’s subject heading. What is told then is deemed sufficient to either whet the addressee’s appetite or not keep them in too much suspense. What is important for our discussion is that the participants may orient to different parts of a story’s emerging structure as appropriate for different discourse environments.7

b) The role of previous stories in shaping structure. In the data at hand, previous stories but also other shared texts are frequently used as negotiation devices in the course of a story’s emerging structure; they allow or disallow one version of events; they are also used as an integral part of a story’s reportability (see §4.2). This is specifically the case with shared stories that, as discussed in §2.2.4, are more or less elliptically brought in to put forth a view in the course of the telling of stories of projected events.

Intertextuality and recontextualization of storytellings have other implications too for a story’s structure. They are pivotal for the reconceptualization of important components. A case in point is that of evaluation which, as will be discussed below, comprises in the data previous stories (of shared or known events). This means that events that have not happened yet (i.e. possible as in the case of projections) are evaluated on the basis of events that have happened in the past (i.e. actual) thus calling into question the retrospective nature of evaluation which is so much at the heart of narrative analysis: the fact that is, that evaluation is seen as bringing in possibilities to assess, interpret and further shed light on the actual events (as in past events stories; cf. Labov 1972).

A question that arises here is how can previous or shared texts be factored into the analysis? How can we as analysts have access to them? First, what we take a narrative to be and what we deem as an appropriate context for narrative elicitation bears crucially on the inclusion or exclusion of previous texts from the analysis. Keller-Cohen & Dyer (1997) convincingly demonstrate that Labov & Waletzky took active steps to constrain the intertextuality of the stories in their data by controlling the context of the story occurrence (i.e. by means of elicitation), the type of story (“they chose personal stories so as to avoid culturally practised genres”) and the type of teller (“they chose speakers that they thought could lay no claim to the full range of cultural resources available for narrative expertise”: 152). In other words, they saw intertextuality as a resource to manage so that it does not infringe into the analysis which aimed at drawing generalizations across narrative structures and abstracting a stable structure across contexts (150).

As suggested in Ch. 1, a methodological perspective that can provide us with a means of tapping into the temporal frame of a story (e.g. in the sense of the

7. As it emerged from interviews with the email users, brevity considerations are very important in this respect.
interactional history of its tellings, the previous texts and contexts made relevant for its current telling, etc.) is that of ethnography. Ethnography provides us with that extra layer that enables us to recognize relations that pertain beyond the immediate storytelling situation, connections across time and space, and consequences for larger ongoing social projects and social organisation (cf. Goodwin 1990). Ethnographic work in Data-set 1 affords a point of entry into the complex interrelationships which the stories presented with the participants’ shared interactional history, with previously experienced events, previous stories as well as with interactions in other media.

This temporalization, as outlined above, is seen here as part of a two-step process rather than as an operation that undermines the view of story structure as sequentially based and emergent: first, the analysis moves away from narrative as a detachable and autonomous event with a detachable and autonomous structure (cf. Ochs & Capps 2001:30ff.) towards its embeddedness in discourse surroundings; then, this focus is spatially and temporally expanded to capture the dis-embeddedness and the re-embeddedness of stories: the ways in which stories are transposed, (re)shaped and recycled across time and space in different contexts (cf. Silverstein & Urban 1996).

3.5 Narrative structure and/in narrative genres

It is nowadays well recognized that the stories on which Labov based his model of narrative structure, the sorts of stories “told on a round the campfire or on a well what do you know basis”, to echo Edwards (1997:145), are by no means representative or the norm in ordinary conversational exchanges. However, as we have already argued, their frequent use as the basis of numerous empirical studies in the social sciences in general and in linguistics in particular has had profound implications about the direction of narrative analysis, creating notions of a narrative canon and orthodoxy. One of the implications of this orthodoxy regarding work on narrative structure is that it has deterred analysts from the basic recognition that narrative, exactly like other types of discourse, is not a unified and homogeneous mode, but it presents generic variability and in turn structural variability.

This would allow us to explore how different types and topics of stories shape narrative structure but also to tap into the interpretative understandings that different genres carry (157). A prerequisite for this investigation of generic variability is to include in the analysis as many types of stories as possible that depart in some way from the Labovian prototype of the past events personal experience story.

Martin & Plum (1997) took a step in that direction by postulating structural components for three generic variants (recount, anecdote, exemplum) which they
identified as commonly occurring in their data of community and students' narratives in Australia. What is instructive in this study is the variability in what Labov would call complicating action and evaluation, in Martin & Plum's terms, experience and comment respectively: from a single remarkable event to the unfolding of unremarkable events; from an interpretation of the event(s) to a single – prosodically signalled – appreciation. The role of resolution is nowhere near Labov's model either: it is more often than not absent and in its place a cyclical positioning of experience-comment-experience occurs. These findings suggest that the process of scrutinizing narrative structure on the basis of generic variability will inevitably involve a revisiting both of the nature and of the position of structural components.

More specifically, the two basic components of experience and comment (in Martin & Plum's terms), which can be more conventionally labelled here as “plotline” and “evaluation”, need to be conceived of in much broader terms. In the data at hand, as was shown in Chapter 2, the plotline can evolve around a single incident, a series of related episodes, or a series of events that may or may not lead to a high point. In addition, as will be discussed in §4.2, its constituents are not necessarily events but also (characters’) verbal interactions and orientation devices. Evaluation on the other hand, seen as local relevance and consequentiality for prior and upcoming talk (cf. Ochs & Capps 2001), mainly consists of references to previous stories and shared resources as well as to character assessments (see §4.2 and §4.3). Plotline and evaluation then can be viewed as two identifiable and distinct operations that are frequently run by different participants but also raise different tasks and actions for different participants. On the basis of those two main constituents, a model of narrative structure could be built that would allow for “free” elements (e.g. abstract, resolution, coda) to vary in different genres. In the light of our discussion so far, the model ought to include the participants’ types of contribution to the story parts.

Let us now try to represent schematically (see Table 3.1) such a model in the case of three types of small stories that we already discussed in Chapter 2: breaking news, projections, and shared stories, and with particular reference to data-set 1. As already suggested, in data-set 1, these types of stories are thematically and intertextually linked: they concern men that the participants are romantically interested in and they form part of a complex speech event of talking about men (for details see Ch. 5). They thus tend to co-occur: as suggested, shared stories tend to be embedded in projections, where they form part of their evaluation (Table 3.1). Furthermore, breaking news tend to be followed up by either other breaking news

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8. This is significant, given that in Labov's model, characters’ speech and dialogue are seen as evaluative devices, and time and space reference as orientation, i.e. both as embellishments rather than part of narrative action proper.
or projections that involve the same male character (Table 3.1) and thus act as second stories. Excerpt 3.4 above exemplified a story of known events as occurring in the context of a projection. The interrelationships between projections and shared stories will be further illustrated in Chapter 4. For the purposes of our discussion here, we will revisit a breaking news story (excerpt (2.6) in §2.2.2).

(3.6)

1 T(onia): WHA:T did I see last night at Pri:nce ((bar))? (..)
2 F(otini): WHA:T did you see last night?
3 T: I went with my dad=
4 V(ivu): Ooo we went to Prince with da:d
((further down after joking about Tonia going out with her dad))
12 T: Anyway (.), >we go there< and sit at the little table next to the front door (..)
13 so I had a view of the pedestrianized road (..) St Paul’s ((church)) (.) >and you
14 know< dad was having his ba:ck=
15 V: =To St Paul! hhhhh
16 T: Okay (.) >a:nyway< (.) this guy Jannis comes and says hello (.) who’s got
17 Avalon
((F asks who that is. They return to the story in line 21))
21 T: And so as I was sitting there and looking outside=  
22 V: =Yeah (.) the birds flying=
23 T: =Who: do I see? (0.5)
24 V: Mari::a! ((female nickname for a man Tonia is interested in))
25 T: Ye:s! Maria (..) so I see Maria (.) outside St Paul’s church (..) you know he’d
26 parked the car at the gym (.) as per usual and he was coming like this
((imitates))
27 (0.5)) and I was like that!=
28 V: He blew you //away
29 T: //Yeah I was looking (.) looking (.) he was passing outside (.) and I was right at
30 the door (.) and he was looking at me (.) as he was passing by (.) so I didn’t waste
31 any time (.) and I was looking back (.) and we were looking (.) and looking at
32 each other (.) I don’t know how long for
33 ((V and F are singing together)) So look at me in the eyes and explain
34 T: Meanwhile he is also looking at my dad (.) who had his back turned (.) and
35 saying to himself who the hell is that guy? and he wasn’t coming in=
36 F: D’you think he was jea:alous?
37 T: Nonsense (.) and then I tell my dad (.) shall we go past the pedestrianized? (..) I
38 looked and looked (.) but he was nowhere to be seen (.) I can’t be absolutely sure
39 cause it was packed (.) but I’d have seen him (.) but I can’t be sure (.)
40 V: So you left the pancakes hhh
41 T: But Maria was so beautiful (.) with a ja:cket (.) a lovely dark shirt (.) matching
42 her eyes (.) I can’t describe her (.) the words are not enough
43 ((V and F are singing together again)) At the time of our break-up

The example above shows how the plotline may consist of a single remarkable event (the sighting of a man) that through its intense focalization by the viewer/teller, is rendered as a scene, almost in slow motion. This can be attested
to by the numerous imperfective aspect verbs stressing duration coupled with the increase in the teller’s micro-pauses (lines 29–32). The temporalization aspects of this story are also worth noting. In fact, in the light of our discussion so far, it is important to note the inclusion of opening, closing and follow-up in Table 3.1 as operative links with a story’s prior and upcoming discourse activity as well as with other stories or shared resources in the group.

We can see how this is the case in the opening and closing of the excerpt above. The opening comprises a guess who/what type of question (line 1 and then repeated in line 23) that in a formulaic way initiates breaking news in the data: in Bauman’s terms, “it acts as a generic framing device that carries with it certain sets of expectation concerning the further unfolding of the discourse, indexing other texts initiated” (2004:10) in the same way. At the same time, the closing involves Vivi’s one line reference to a story of known events (line 40) and three lines later (43) her joint singing with Tonia: songs are often recruited as a shared text that brings in evaluative perspectives and commentary in the course of a story’s telling. In this case, it is in fact two songs that are drawn upon to add to the story’s evaluation (also see line 33): these form part of the group’s inter-texts that have ended up becoming performance forms, “generically regimented, renewable and repeatable forms of discourse in its communicative economy (idem” 8).

As we have suggested, these intertextual possibilities, part of what we have called here the temporalization of discourse, crucially bear on a story’s structure: they may frame a storytelling activity or index one of its structural components (in this case, opening and closing); they may act as devices through which one of its components is realized (notably evaluation); finally, they illustrate the fluidity and dynamic character of a story’s structure which, as we have argued, can be condensed, reiterated and quoted through various tellings in different contexts.

In the light of our discussion so far, both the nature and the position of a story’s (emergent) structural components are intimately linked with the storytelling participation framework involving the degrees and types of tellership (e.g. main – co-tellership) but also telling roles in the sense of types of contribution to different story parts. This is captured in Table 3.1 in relatively schematic terms as a continuum of participant action with collusion and negotiation as its two ends. The former encompasses actions of ratification and legitimation of interlocutors’ prior contributions, while the latter can lead to delegitimation of contributions. Bold indicates which of the two tends to be more prevalent in which of the two parts (plotline-evaluation) in each of the three types of stories in the data at hand. These typifications are by no means taken to be deterministic; they are instead intimately linked with the communicative practices of the group in question. For instance, while there is extensive negotiation in shared stories and in projections, in breaking news there is collusion in the sense of the participants upholding and reinforcing the emotionality of the main event of seeing a man. This difference is
bound up with local definitions of ownership to and entitlement of experience: stories of known events and projections are seen as open to collaborative drafting (see §3.6 below).

Finally, double arrows ↔ in the Table indicate the flexible positioning of plot-line and evaluation: evaluation can be interspersed in the plotline (cf. Labov 1972) but it can also be followed by (further) plotline in comparable terms as in Martin & Plum’s study (1997).

The interface between narrative structure and narrative genre as discussed above is in tune with the recent re-theorizing of genres away from formal classifications as the basis for text-distinctions and with an emphasis on the members’ conventionalized expectations about the activities they are engaged in, the roles and relationships typically involved and the organization systems of those activities (e.g. see Bauman 2001). In this way, it allows us to document narrative structures (in plural terms) as dynamic and evolving responses to recurring rhetorical situations, as resources more or less strategically and agentively drawn upon, negotiated and reconstructed anew in local contexts. We can see that more specifically with regard to a dynamic redefinition of the category of orientation. In Table

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Table 3.1</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Genre</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Projections</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Shared stories</strong></td>
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3.1, orientation is listed as a constitutive element of the plotline of projections. Below, we will take a close look at this un-Labovian in spirit “function”: let us re-mind ourselves that orientation in Labov’s model was statically described as the background to narrative action. Instead, here, we will place orientation within our framework of a sequential, emergent and temporalized narrative structure. We will thus show that it is interactionally co-drafted and negotiated; integrally connected with a story’s narrative action; and, finally, indexical inasmuch as it evokes associations and meanings for the participants which are in turn instrumental for allowing or disallowing certain scenarios in the course of a story’s telling.

3.6 Time and place in projections: Sequential, emergent and temporalized

Orientation mainly consists of references to time and place. As argued in §1.2, however, once we move away from textualist views of narrative and towards practice-based approaches, time and place become part of situated action and lived experience and their distinctive configuration within the world of a story cannot be perceived in abstraction from the teller’s socio-culturally mediated, experienced time and place. In this respect, our focus on narrativized time and place in here will include the participants’ practised place, the social topography of the spaces they inhabit, tell their stories in and semiotically orient to and rework.

As already suggested (§1.4.1), the participants live in a small provincial town that has historically been a “closed” community: situated in a mountainous area and with no easy access to beaches, this is by no means a tourist destination. Similarly, its residents are by and large people who were born and brought up there. The participants have spent all of their lives in the town in question. Over the period of their regular socializing, space (in its interactions with time, as will be argued) has become an integral part of their interactional history and memory, filled with shared socio-symbolic meanings. As will be shown, these are indexically called upon in the process of the participants’ joint construction of stories. In other words, their invocation comes with expectations about and associations with specific people, types of activities, and events. In this sense, places are at the core of shared and familiar worlds that both give rise to and are invoked in narrative plots, that is, meaningful configurations of characters, events and actions in specific taleworlds (Ricouer 1988). These plots become transportable and recontextualizable resources (Bauman & Briggs 1990): they invoke meanings at the same time as constituting them or acquiring new ones, every time they are interactively constructed, negotiated or contested in local contexts of storytelling.

Within the town’s topography, the most important places for the participants are those that are centered around socializing: cafeterias, bars, pubs, and other such, so called “hang-outs” (stokia), which almost unexceptionally attract people
at the age-groups of 15–30, with a concentration of 18–24 year olds. As we have seen, these hang-outs were added to the town’s landscape in the early ’90s, in some cases replacing the patisseries which used to serve for family Sunday afternoon outings. Few traditional cafés for men remain open and those are in the town’s main piazza, with no vicinity with the youth’s “hang-outs”. Hang-outs are mostly concentrated in a street that was recently pedestrianized and filled with bars on each side. Young people now refer to it as the “pedestrianized” (pezodromos) (see pictures 3, 4, 5 and 6 in the Appendix). Youth-oriented shops (e.g. boutiques, music shops) are also important but mostly as meeting points (see reference to Block in line 95 in Story 1, in the Appendix).

The ethnographic study of the group revealed that the complex semiotics and aesthetics of a hang-out are encapsulated in the so called alphabet of hang-outs, where each letter of the alphabet stands for an aspect of a hang-out that is important for the participants. These aspects mostly revolve around the opportunities they afford the participants for meeting men they are attracted to or would like to get to know better. As such, they come with “different orders of indexicality for their users – different codes and norms as to what is accepted as “right”, “good”, “marked”, “unexpected”, “normal” and “special” semiotic behaviour” (Blommaert, Collins & Slembrouck 2005:207); in this case, having to do with norms and modes of (hetero)-sociality and leisure practices. Below, I have tried freely translating some of them:

**The alphabet of hang-outs**

B(ig) S(creen): This is an important feature of a hang-out, as it allows for showings of sports events, particularly football and basket-ball matches, which are popular amongst young men of the town. The existence of a big screen guarantees attendance by men at specific times (mostly early evening) and on specific days of the week.

Coffee: The types and quality of coffee served in a hang-out seem to be one of its biggest attractions. Coffee is also a favourable topic of conversation for the participants which take pride in their knowledge of what constitutes a good cup of coffee.

Drinks: Bars who serve “plonks” are quickly stigmatized and participants avoid them, unless they afford them exceptionally good opportunities for seeing men they are attracted to.

Men: The men talked about by the participants are their romantic interests, suitors, and, more generally, those they have had or would like to have a relationship with. They tend to fall into two broad categories of those who hang out vs. those who work in a hang-out. They are mostly referred to by nicknames that the participants have coined for them.
Music: Talking points here mainly involve volume (loudness), type (e.g. Greek, pop, rock), and, particularly on the basis of type of music, type of crowd attracted.

Visibility: This is with reference to the street(s) outside or in front of the hang-out and to the passers-by. As will be shown, visibility can have implications for the types of narrative plots that the participants construct with respect to meetings with men (see discussion of lines 22–28 below).

In Blommaert & Maryns’ study (2000:6), place in narrative inevitably interacts with time, particularly at the level of inducing time frames. This applies to the data at hand as well: Different hang-outs are associated with different time-frames, both in the sense of the times of the day, seasons, etc. and in the sense of social time (e.g. festive occasions). Thus, narratively referring to places also invokes certain temporal frames of reference. In turn, such associations between place and time become a part of possible plots, which develop out of habitual and reproducible activities and types of events at specific times and in specific places.

Below, we will see time and place as sequentially emergent and indexical resources in a story’s telling by taking a close look at “Going out for a crème brûlée” (see Story 1, Appendix). The main narrative activity in the excerpt is a story of projected events that is typically co-constructed and comes from the topic of relationships with men. In this case, it involves the planning and debating of a meeting between Tonia and the man she is romantically interested in. As already suggested, this kind of projection occurs in the data numerous times and in all sorts of configurations: e.g. participants at different times jointly contemplate asking different men out. Indeed, on the basis of the study’s ethnography, some of those projected meetings actually happen and even result in relationships. In the excerpt, the different taleworlds and concomitant time frames in the example are clearly marked as Projection, Shared story and Hypothetical scenario.

The process of positing a future taleworld invariably involves negotiating and trying on different versions of events, projected interactions, and last but not least, time and place. In this case too, line after line, the participants go over where, when, how, and why a meeting should take place, if at all. The right place and time seem to be at the core of eventness of past and future taleworlds. As we can see in the data at hand, the projected tale starts off with a co-construction of time and place. Interestingly, Vivi only specifies time, but that implies a specific location too, as can be attested to by Tonia’s inference of it. The first explicit reference to the – until then implied – location for the projected meeting occurs in line 29 (Only when he’s not too busy (...) like late at night). This interactional achievement of time and place is not the only respect in which the data differ from a Labovian view of time and place as orientations. The other difference is to be found in

9. An earlier version of this analysis is to be found in Georgakopoulou 2003c:422–428.
the participants’ negotiation of time and place which is not over and done with at the beginning of a telling, but continues throughout the story’s construction, following on from the different stages of emplotment.

The time and place of projections are an integral part of and have repercussions for the whole configuration of projected events, characters’ actions and interactions. This is so mostly on the basis of the socio-symbolic meanings that they evoke, as discussed above. In particular, as indexical resources, alone or in their configuration, time and place create contingencies for emplotment (e.g. certain types of action, specific events, etc.) on the basis of past associations and expectations. In other words, the associative meanings that are attached to time and place act as guidelines and interpretative viewpoints in the course of constructing (future) talewords. Therefore, participants return to and adjust time and place in the process of positing and negotiating different versions of the projected events.

In the example, a temporary agreement about the time and place of projected events is not reached before line 41. As soon as line 9, Tonia questions the projected time (Why is it a good opportunity?) and three lines later (line 12, Vivi MAN (.) I can’t go up to him and say >hi what’s up<) the projected events too. As becomes evident further down (line 17 onwards), what Tonia in fact objects to are the possibilities for events opened up by the choice of time and place for the projected meeting. She contests those by invoking a time and place scenario from a shared story. The story alluded to is a building block in the group’s interactional history and memory: it involves Vivi “plucking up the courage” to ask out a much older than her (30 years old) “cool guy” and getting a positive reply. The reference takes the form of the quoted phrase that Vivi used upon going up to the guy in question ((Are you)) all alone? All alone?). The phrase was itself an allusion to the slogan of a well-known TV commercial advertising a travel agency (Manos).10

It is worth repeating here how shifts from stories of projected events to stories of shared events, and by extension, shifts from a future time frame to a past time frame, are metapragmatically cued, with discourse markers such as “Na su pokati” (Let me tell you something, for a detailed discussion of this marker see Georgakopoulou 2001:1886–1888). Furthermore, succinct allusions to shared stories (e.g. one-liners such as “Are you all alone? All alone?”) are stylised, set off from surrounding talk, and positively evaluated or ratified by participants upon their mention. In this case, Tonia and Vivi laugh and positively evaluate the quoted phrase (lines 18–19). Nonetheless, in the middle of line 19, Tonia goes on to do something that commonly occurs in the data, as we have seen: she contests the validity of the alluded shared tale as an analogy for the projected one (but doesn’t fit in Danny’s case):

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10. In the original, there is a play on words: monos (alone) with Manos (the travel agency).
Chapter 3. Narrative structure in small stories

18 V:  huhhhhh (..) all alone all alone was coo:le=
19 T:  = Yeah tops (.) but doesn’t fit in Danny’s case

Importantly for the present discussion, she does that on the basis of expectations and contingencies set up by previously experienced place and time, as we can see in lines 22–28 below:

22 T:  //No Vivi let me tell you something
23 listen (.) Nick was sitting at Roma all alone all alone
24 hheh an’ he was having his orangina >all alone all alone<
25 but Dan works in Kallisto
26 and he is not all alone all alone
27 and he drinks alcohol
28 so you ca:n’t go and talk to him like that (.) CAN you?

The notion of affordance is instructive here. Although first employed in narrative psychology, the applicability of the concept to narrative interactional data has only recently been put forth by Ochs & Capps (2001), who argued that out of past events, tellers construct a narrative logic that provides affordances for present and future experience. Put differently, this logic acts as the blueprint for events in the future and provides tellers with the expectation of a similar meaningful connection of events into a plot (idem:192).

A similar argument can be made about the data at hand, with an emphasis on the pivotal roles of time and place in affordances of the past for future taleworlds. Time and place, as we have suggested, become associated with specific events, actors, and actions. Some of those associations can be more or less explicitly traced in shared stories. In turn, such associations create affordances for what is possible and feasible to happen in the future. Interactionally then, actual events in specific time and place can be invoked by participants in order to support and legitimate their own projected version of events or undermine and delegitimize their interlocutor’s version.

This is what we have seen Tonia doing in the excerpt under discussion here. If we go back to lines 22–27, we can see how Tonia explicitly mobilizes place affordances (which are tied up with time affordances too) to contest Vivi’s time and place configuration in the projected scenario. Specifically, the place where a past interaction between Vivi and Nikos occurred is juxtaposed to the place of the projected interaction between Tonia and the man she wants to ask out. They are both hang-outs but indexical of different social meanings and possible plots (i.e. events, types of characters, verbal interactions). Roma is an outdoors café that allows for visibility to the street. As such, passers-by can have immediate access to and, opportunity arising, indulge in frivolous conversations with the people who sit down at the café. In contrast, Kallisto is a bar that serves alcoholic drinks and gets
crowded from midnight onwards. The importance of what kinds of drinks each hang-out serves is highlighted in Tonia’s contrast between Nikos having “orangenina” at Roma (line 24) and Dan consuming alcohol in Kallisto (line 27). The above differences are indexical of different sensibilities and allowed modes of sociability in the two hang-outs. Furthermore, they implicate different affor- dances or contingencies with regard to the types of events and characters’ interactions that can take place in them.

Place affordances invoke in subtle and implicit ways time affordances too. Roma is an early evening hang-out, while Kallisto is a night hang-out. As a result, and on the basis of what transpired in the group’s interviews, it is more permissible and acceptable for a young woman to chat to somebody who hangs-out in the former than to approach people hanging-out, or worse, working, as in the case of the man in question, in the latter. As can be seen, such time and place affordances are assumed to be shared and as such they are implicitly invoked. Vivi tacitly accepts them as evidenced by her re-setting of the projected time and place twice (lines 29–31). Tonia questions this arrangement too (line 32). Typically of the dialogism of past and future time frames in the data, Vivi invokes shared past events (line 33) in order to convince Tonia of the feasibility of a meeting in the newly set time and place. Tonia contests the validity of the analogy between the actual and the projected events (lines 34–35) and, as a result, Vivi re-sets time and place once again (lines 36–38):

29 V: Only when he’s not too busy (..) like late at night
30 T: But can you?=
31 V: Well (.) one afternoon when he’s out
32 T: Will I see him?
33 V: DIDN’T we see him that afternoon on our way to Irene’s?
34 T: When MAN (.) when he was playing backgammon with his friend?
35 It’s different circumstances
36 V: That’s okay TOnia (.) so you’ll go one morning to Kanata’s
37 when he stands at the door
38 you’ll be waiting ((to catch him)) opposite at Hondo’s

This time, the chosen meeting place is a traditional patisserie that could by no means be described or seen as a hang-out. Nonetheless, it presents two distinct advantages: the man talked about works there in the mornings, as this is his family business; also, there is a cosmetics shop, i.e. a youth-oriented landmark, opposite it. Emplotment is thus based on the affordances of the two places.

Tonia goes along with the new scenario for the projected taleworld, but still expresses a reservation about the projected meeting. In the original, her reserva-

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11. According to my observations, the shop in question mainly attracts young women.
tion is expressed by means of the adverbial “puθena” (nowhere) which was freely translated as “out of the blue” (line 74: *why*? *should I go out of the blue*). The choice of the adverbial is arguably indicative of place considerations underlying this contestation too. Further down, Tonia invokes again shared past events (this time less elliptically, in the form of a mini-telling, lines 78–84), in order to defend her own take on projected events. Vivi stresses the habituality of the events referred to (line 85), while Tonia’s response to that typically has to do with the exact location and sphere of action for participants (line 85):

78 T: The gym era (..) remember?
79 The time we’d gone downstairs
80 and the minute we see him we go all the way up again
81 and start looking at him like two idiots
82 and then we stayed until half past five
83 doing tummy exercises (..) and giggling
84 Don’t tell me he didn’t get wind of it then?

Subsequently, Vivi contests the time and place affordances invoked by Tonia’s mini-telling by setting up a hypothetical scenario (lines 89–93). In this, she keeps the place of Tonia’s past taleworld intact in order to undermine the significance of its affordances. Tonia counter-acts with a further reference to shared events (94–96):

89 V: Tonia let me tell you something else right?
90 say we had a girl next to us
91 say we had Paraskevopoulos next to us
92 what would we have done
93 would he have suspected that we fancy him?
94 T: Let me tell you of another incident
95 didn’t he realize when he bumped into me outside Block?
96 what! was I doing there at that sort of time?

In this mini-telling of a shared story, too, details of place and time are paramount. Tonia refers to the exact location of the events (*outside Block*, line 95) and stresses that she “*had never been there at that sort of time*” (line 98). It is not the events themselves or the actors that seem to be an issue of contention or importance here, but where and when they happened, as those in turn set up affordances for the characters’ action and interaction.
3.7 Conclusion

Structuralist optimism in narrative analysis is undoubtedly a thing of the past. This chapter has however subscribed to a mitigated form of it with a view to demonstrating that the enterprise can be reconciled and synthesized with current contextualized studies of narratives as social practices. The position adopted here was that structure can be reconceptualized to embrace the dynamic properties of narrative events. What bringing it into such studies can offer is a powerful analytical apparatus for a fine-grained analysis that effectively “ties down” the analysis.

At the same time as seeing the structuralist glass half-full, post-structuralist euphoria is also something that this study has not taken for granted in an area that, as suggested, has been decisively shaped by Labov’s quintessentially structural model. It was argued that Labov’s legacy is to be found alive and kicking in the following three areas that crucially bear on narrative structural analysis:

a) The treatment of storytelling participant roles that departs from a restrictive dyadic scheme between a single teller (with strong floor-holding rights) and an attentive listener/audience; this has resulted in an over-emphasis on the co-operativeness between teller and audience.

b) The model of the teller’s ownership of and entitlement to the experience reported that mutually feeds into prioritizing past events personal experience stories as prototypes for the analysis of structure.

c) The view of narrative as a finished and detachable (from both its immediate and larger context surroundings) unit with a beginning, middle, and an end.

To compensate for the limitations of the above types of analytical bias, it was argued that a reconceptualization of structure should be directed towards:

a) A study of structure as sequential and emergent, that in itself hinges on a view of narrative as talk-in-interaction.

b) A study of structure as temporalized, that hinges on a view of narrative as dialogic, intertextual and recontextualizable.

c) A pluralized view of structure as variable and potentially fragmented that hinges on a view of narrative as consisting of a multitude of genres.

In general, a move towards the above directions should resist the urge to come up with any fast answers or ready-made packages. As shown here, one way in which to enrich work on narrative structure is to bring in ethnography as a methodological perspective as well as sensitizing, open-ended concepts (e.g. recontextualization, temporalization) that have not traditionally formed part of the analysis. At the level of analysis, the need was put forth for the scrutiny of the relationship between the type of story and narrative structure; the systematic study of telling roles (in the sense of both degree and type of contribution) vis-à-vis structural compo-
nents; the integration of openings, closings and follow-ups so as to capture vital links between a story’s structure and its co-text on one hand and its inter-text(s) on the other hand, finally, the study of the nature, sequential position and relations between different structural constituents, particularly the two pivotal ones of plotline and evaluation. In this respect, we discussed the role of spatiotemporal frames of reference in the emplotment of the data and thus problematized the dichotomy between action and setting that has informed much of the work on narrative structure so far. At the same time, the interactional uses and negotiability of time and place in the course of tellings illustrated the irreducibly contingent and emergent nature of the process of structuring a story.

The main aim of this analysis was to propose a flexible approach to narrative structure that is more amenable to synthesizing work. At the heart of this approach is a balanced inquiry into the interplay between regularities and contingencies, patterns and individual improvisations, that does not miss out on the fleeting but significant moments of the speakers’ local performances, resistances and (re)appropriations of structure. At the same time, a balanced inquiry into narrative structure does not succumb to the temptation of over-emphasizing strategic creativity and agency, thus blinding analysts to systemic constraints and to regular processes that have the power to propagate ideologies and asymmetries.
Chapter 4

Small stories and identities

4.1 From storytelling roles to large identities

So far, I have argued that narrative and identity analysis needs to be redirected so as to tap into conversational small stories as crucial sites of subjectivity at the same time as exploring neglected aspects in the area of autobiographical narratives occurring within interviews. Within a view of narrative as talk-in-interaction, this is closely linked with a focus on how identities are made visible, worked up and attended to in the sequential organization of talk. A pertinent distinction within conversation analysis is that between discourse identities and social identities (e.g. see Greatbatch & Dingwall 1998; Wooffitt & Clark 1998:108ff.). The former characterize the participants’ interactional roles (e.g. questioner-answerer, speaker, (over-)hearer, recipient, etc.) in relation to the ongoing production and trajectory of talk. As they are formed in and by participants’ actions, they constitute the type of activity underway and provide particular resources and constraints for the participants’ display of values within it (see Zimmerman 1998:90–91).

Discourse identities have been shown to be one of the components of the conversational machinery that circumscribe and make salient the participants’ larger social identities, constituted of such attributes as gender, age, professional status, etc. (Goodwin 1987). As such, they provide a point of entry into the exploration of the connection between the micro- and the macro-level of any interaction, in other words of how details intrinsic or endogenous to the specific situation of the interaction make available or visible extra-situational resources. Put differently, these are assumed to furnish for the participants “a continuously evolving framework within which their actions … assume a particular meaning, import, and interactional consequentiality” (Zimmerman 1998:88). In this way, they provide not just the relevant proximal turn-by-turn context but also the distal context for social activities, that is, the oriented-to extra-situational agendas and concerns accomplished through such endogenously developing sequences of interaction.

This intimate link between discourse and social identities has mainly formed the object of inquiry in talk in institutional contexts (e.g. see papers in Drew & Heritage 1992), where it has been shown how institutionally prescribed and pre-allocated roles, at best, shape and, at worst, constrain the participants’ organization of talk (i.e. turn-taking, turn design, sequence organization). As I argued in
Chapter 1, however, discourse identities (in the sense of local participation roles) have remained largely unexplored in a wide range of activities in ordinary talk, in particular in narrative as talk-in-interaction. I have suggested that this is partly due to the concentration of narrative research on the construction of self in a particular kind of narrative, namely autobiography, that is arguably more detachable from its conversational surroundings than the small stories we have begun to explore here. This prototypical narrative normally revolves around the roles of main teller and recipient(s) and, as a result, lends itself less to the exploration of the variety and complexity of participation roles in the course of its telling. At the same time, it is fair to suggest that the distinction between a teller and an audience is in itself a false dualism that obscures the subtleties of participant action, not just within conversational narratives but also in interview narratives.

To link the discussion productively with interactional traditions and notions that have not been fully exploited in narrative and identity analysis, this chapter will take as its point of departure the idea that the participants’ exploitation of conversational (interactional) structures and mechanisms makes visible extrasituational resources and it will subsequently apply it to the case of the sequential management of narrative, as discussed in Chapter 3. In other words, the aim here is to navigate and document links between a story’s telling participation roles (roles that are closely related to a notion of story structure as emergent in the moment-to-moment unfolding of a story) and larger social roles (e.g., gender, age). The latter have been variously described as extra-situational, exogenous (as opposed to endogenous resources that specifically pertain to an interaction), portable, or brought along resources that can in principle but not necessarily or automatically be brought about in any spate of interaction. We are of course not talking about deterministic relationships between such large roles and a story’s sequential management but about a “loose coupling” (Zimmerman 1998: 88).

In this discussion, I will show that such larger social (particularly gender) identities, e.g., relative standing vis-à-vis one another, and relationships as close friends who share an interactional history are made visible by and inform local telling roles. The latter are to be found in the telling of the stories that is jointly constructed by the participants but with differentiated actions and contributions from each of them. In other words, different participants contribute in varying degrees to different story components, particularly plotline and evaluation. Furthermore, the participants are differentiated in the degree in which their contributions are ratified and taken on board by others or, equally, challenged and delegitimated.

First, the above will be shown by means of a distributional relationship between different participants’ types of contribution and action performed vis-à-vis a story’s sequential components: in other words, I will argue that specific participants over a period of time tend to assume specific roles that perform specific actions in storytelling events. Then, two close analyses of storytelling events from
the group of female adolescents will be offered as case studies that will document further the systematic relationship between local storytelling roles and larger social identities. The first will involve the telling of a projection with regard to which I will attempt a fine-grained, turn-by-turn analysis so that the different types of storytelling roles can be fleshed out and the consequentiality of them for a story’s unfolding can be illustrated. The local negotiation and contestation of these roles will also be shown in the ways in which shared stories are invoked and de-legitimated in the course of the telling of a projection. Although the suggestion here is not that social actors will not locally contest, shift or improvise on routine positions, the analysis still wishes to draw attention to the systematic and patterned relationship that is to be found between the ways in which people contribute to a story’s emerging structure and the positionings or resources that hold above and beyond the immediate storytelling situation and that they bring along to it.

All in all, the findings will bring to the fore a close link between identity construction in narrative and a story’s structure as sequentially based and emergent on one hand but also temporalized in the course of an interactional history on the other hand (see Chapter 3).

4.2 A toolkit for identity analysis

As already suggested, the distinction between a teller and an audience, so common in the analysis of (prototypical) everyday storytelling, is too restrictive for the co-construction that is going on in storytelling events in general, and in the data at hand in particular. This co-construction essentially runs through the internal components of a story, inasmuch as the participants assume telling identities or participation roles that have to do with a story’s sequential management. At the same time, co-construction does not mean that the participants equally and in the same ways contribute to the activity under way. In fact, as will be shown below, they differ both in the degree of contribution to a specific story component and in their type of contribution.

Projections form comparable narrative events which present numerous thematic and taleworld inter-connections (see §2.2.3). This comparability extends to their interactive organisation. In other words, the participants’ agendas and types of contribution not only link stories across time and place but also position the participants themselves as “observably and subjectively coherent participants in jointly produced story lines” (Davies & Harré 1990:48). More specifically, as the stories’ qualitative analysis suggested, the stories’ joint construction mainly rests

1. An earlier version of this section is to be found in Georgakopoulou 2006b:87–95.
on contributions to their plotline and evaluation. As discussed in Chapter 3, the plotline covers a story’s projected events, verbal interactions and, in contrast to Labov’s model of narrative structure (1972), orientation (i.e. time, place). The latter, rather than being backgrounded or embellishing material, constitutes an integral part of the plot, on which the final arrangement of events heavily depends. Furthermore, as shown, the process of positing orientation and that of co-constructing the plot’s events are interdependent.

Evaluation on the other hand lies in references to stories of shared past events which we have seen acting as argumentative devices in the context of the telling of projections. We will see in the discussion below how evaluation also rests on assessments of characters talked about, particularly men. These are positive or negative evaluations that are mostly based on personality traits that the participants are united in judging as good or bad. For instance, a typical “bad” male attribute is that of being shy (e.g. Makis in “Talk to him man”, Story 2, Appendix is frequently evaluated negatively by Vivi and Tonia as being shy). On the other hand, being articulate and confident as a man are highly valued and invoked as positive evaluations by the participants.

With regard to the two categories of evaluation above (i.e. embedded stories, character assessments), it is important to repeat here that, in this case, evaluation mainly rests on assessing the relevance of past events for the future taleworld as well as on constructing a perspective on the events and characters discussed. Therefore, devices that render the telling of a story dramatic and enhance its tellability (i.e. internal evaluative devices in Labov’s terms, 1972), while by no means absent from the data at hand, nonetheless do not form the most important component of evaluation in the stories. In this respect, the stories seem to be “less geared to narrative as performance and more to narrative as a social forum for [...] piecing together an evaluative perspective on an incident” (Ochs & Capps 2001:36). Participants dwell on a story’s point almost as much they do on its events.

The qualitative analysis of the data has suggested that there are three types of telling roles that are important as platforms for the participants’ larger social roles and identities:

a) The roles that participants assume vis-à-vis a story’s emerging structure
b) The action performed with each of the contributions vis-à-vis prior story talk
c) The shape of a participant’s story turn, that is, the local linguistic choices and devices in operation.

To shed more light on the results of the stories’ qualitative analysis, 50 stories of projected events jointly told by the three main participants (i.e. Fotini, Tonia, Vivi) were analyzed quantitatively for the telling roles of each participant, more specifically, in terms of the place of each contribution in a story’s emerging structure and of the action that it performs vis-à-vis prior story-talk. The narratives were
sampled so as to have a time-scale that allows for the examination of possible changes or developments. From a pool of data that were collected over 15 months, ten narratives were extracted from conversations that were spaced out every three months. On the basis of the qualitative analysis, three roles had emerged as significant for a story’s sequential management: a) initiation, b) plotline contribution, c) evaluation, which was subdivided into i) embedded stories (i.e. shared stories, more or less elliptically re-told) and ii) (character) assessments. After a story’s initiation, each participant’s turn (regardless of its length) during a story’s telling that contributed to its plotline or was evaluative counted as one contribution and was coded as b) or c) above. Since the stories’ telling was a co-authored enterprise, contributions to a story’s internal components were negotiated and either delegitimated or ratified, sometimes over several turns. Therefore, the action performed vis-à-vis ongoing story talk by each contribution was taken into account too. Specifically, the outcome of every contribution was coded and the number of contributions ratified and/or challenged for each participant was counted. Contributions that were initially challenged but in the end agreed upon and ratified were coded as ratifications. If in the meantime, the initial contribution had been revised in subsequent turns, to take into account challenges, only the final contribution – if ratified – was coded as such.

For instance, in example (4.1) below, Vivi’s prior contribution to the time and place of the story’s events (i.e. that Tonia should go and talk to the guy she is interested in at the bar where he works in the evening) is being challenged by Tonia (lines 28, 30). As a result, Vivi revises her suggestion in two separate turns of plot contribution (line 29, 31). After a new challenge (lines 32, 34–35), she alters her suggestion for the third and final time (lines 36–38). This contribution is being explicitly ratified (line 39, *That’s not a bad idea*).

(4.1) See “Going out for a crème brûlée”, Story 1, Appendix

28 T : so you can’t go and talk to him like that (.) CAN you?  
29 V: Only when he’s not too busy (.) like late at night  
30 T : But ca::n you?=  
31 V: Well (.) one afternoon when he’s out  
32 T : Will I see him?  
33 V: DIDN’T we see him that afternoon on our way to Irene’s?  
34 T : When MAN (.) when he was playing backgammon with his friend?  
35 It’s different circumstances  
36 V: That’s okay TOnia (.) so you’ll go one morning to Kanata’s  
37 when he stands at the door  
38 you’ll be waiting ((to catch him)) opposite at Hondo’s  
39 T : That’s not a bad idea  
40 V: >He’ll see you you’ll see him< he’ll say what brings you here!  
41 T: So: I’ll tell him >I’m going to Hondo’s to get something<  
42 we’ll strike up a conversation about this and that
then I’ll say (.) you going somewhere when you finish here?

heh huh or are you too preoccupied with the milk pies=

On numerous occasions, ratification was implicit, as, for instance, in cases of participants’ collusion, where the next turn builds and expands on the prior turn (e.g. see lines 41–44 in example (4.1) above).

As we can see in the Table below, Vivi is the participant who initiates as well as contributes more to the stories’ plotline (and on an equal basis with Tonia to the stories’ evaluation). More importantly, her contributions are ratified significantly more than those of the other participants. This is particularly evident in the case of evaluation: although, overall, Vivi and Tonia do not differ in terms of the number of their evaluative contributions, Vivi’s telling role of an evaluator is ratified more. This means that Vivi is more instrumental in getting her evaluation agreed upon.

In terms of types of evaluative contribution, Vivi and Tonia seem to be operating with different resources. As I have discussed in detail elsewhere (Georgakopoulou 2003b), Tonia mostly shared stories to justify her own posited version and to dele-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Initiation (N=50)</th>
<th>Plot Contribution (N=1341)</th>
<th>Ratification (N=963)</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
<th>Ratification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fotini</td>
<td>15 (30%)</td>
<td>246 (16%)</td>
<td>61 (28%)</td>
<td>242 (21%)</td>
<td>70 (29%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonia</td>
<td>9 (18%)</td>
<td>500 (33%)</td>
<td>172 (43%)</td>
<td>390 (40%)</td>
<td>180 (46%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vivi</td>
<td>26 (52%)</td>
<td>595 (41%)</td>
<td>458 (77%)</td>
<td>341 (39%)</td>
<td>276 (81%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Embedded stories:

Fotini: 105 (43%)
Tonia: 277 (71%)
Vivi: 150 (44%)
gitimize other people’s versions (77% of her evaluative contributions). In this way, she throws the future plotline into relief by drawing on past storylines.

In contrast, more than half of Vivi’s (and Fotini’s for that matter) contributions to evaluation are made up of character assessments. Tonia’s references to shared stories are frequently delegitimized by Vivi, who offers a different interpretative or evaluative angle to them, thereby questioning their relevance for the future taleworld under construction (see lines 9–10, example (5) above). Of the three participants, Fotini is the one with the least number and effectiveness of contributions to the stories’ plot and evaluation. In terms of her own participation roles, she mostly initiates stories (30%, as can be seen above) and elicits rather than contributes to the plotline of a story (see discussion below). As will be shown below, the participants’ telling identities in the course of their stories allow them to (re)construct, invoke, and sustain their social organization as best friends and members of a group with an internal hierarchy (Goodwin 1990:110).

4.2.1 Telling, situational and social identities

The starting point of this chapter was that local interactional roles and identities can provide a window to larger extra-situational or transportable resources, be they roles, relations, or identities. In Zimmerman’s model (1998:90), the two are linked by means of situational identities: these are brought about by local telling roles and are connected with the topic at hand and the activity under way. In turn, situational identities link the local with the distal context of social activity by proposing to the interlocutors how they should understand the relevance of an exchange (idem: 89) and by invoking the participants’ differential types and degrees of knowledge and skills regarding the activity underway.

In the data at hand, both the topic of projected meetings with men and the participants’ telling-specific identities bring into focus and make relevant situational identities that have to do with role-relevant and topic-relevant knowledge, that is, advice-seeking and – giving on one hand and expertise in men on the other hand. To put it differently, the interrelation between the topic of projections and the participants’ telling identities places them in situational paired identities of advice-giver vs. advice-seeker and expert vs. novice. These arrangements are visible in the participants’ turn design and choice as well as in their storytelling contributions. For instance, as we will see in more detail in “Talk to him man”, plot contributions are frequently elicited by Fotini in the form of questions that position her as an advice-seeker. Specifically, Fotini poses questions regarding the form and content of her verbal interaction with Mikes during the planned meeting: e.g. “And s-say

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2. An earlier version of this analysis is to be found in Georgakopoulou 2002b:87ff.
he’s looking this way, how am I gonna draw his attention?” (line 29); “And what are we going to say man about basketball?” (line 71). In turn, Vivi invariably provides solutions and suggestions to such questions which, as already suggested, mostly – and in the end – have a positive uptake. In addition to the above interactional arrangements, participants display an orientation to the identity sets of advice-seeker vs. advice-giver and expert vs. novice by means of self and other-identity ascriptions that they invoke in the course of their storytelling (see Section 4.2).

This co-articulation of telling-specific with situational identities points to larger social identities consequential for the construction and interpretation of the stories. These have to do with the participants’ group-internal roles, relations, and hierarchies on the one hand and their gender on the other. These identities, to echo Zimmerman again (1998:91) are by and large apprehended, that is, they are latent identities that the participants in this case are aware of and refer to them as a way of accounting, as transpired in the ethnographic interviews. At the same time, as we will see in the close analysis of the data, these identities are also at times explicitly oriented to, that is, activated and providing an operative context for the interaction (idem).

To take each separately, the participants’ telling and situational identities are informed by as well as make visible a status-hierarchy within the group with Vivi occupying a leading position. As discussed, Vivi is the main adjudicator or assessor of the events and characters talked about, that is, the main teller of the evaluative component of a story. As such, her contributions are most instrumental in constructing the point of a storytelling: they gauge and assess the contingencies and consequences of past and future taleworlds. Making and being successful in evaluating in narrative events has been shown to be associated with positions of power (Ochs & Taylor 1992). It is thus far from random that Vivi’s contributions, be they to a story’s plot or to its evaluation, are more likely to be ratified and taken on board in the process of co-constructing the taleworld.

This position of power is also evidenced in other discourse activities. Specifically, Vivi is the person who engages in language play and creative uses of language, which carry a lot of symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1977) in the group in question (cf. Bucholtz 1999a). She is also the record-keeper of the group: she keeps the Book of Minutes, the diary-like record of the group’s exciting activities and moments, safe from prying eyes (i.e. of parents and guardians) and is responsible for updating it. When the group indulge in their favourite activity of registering their experiences in the format of poems (with rhyme), Vivi is the one who actually writes them down afterwards and perfects them. Vivi’s leading position was also attested to during my interviews with the participants. According to the participants, Vivi “knows best” when it comes to relationships with men as she is “street-wise” and “assertive”; she “makes the first move and has the upper hand” when involved with somebody. On the basis of this, it is arguable that Vivi’s posi-
tion of an adjudicator in the storytelling events of the group is intimately linked with her gendered attributes and roles that appear to have symbolic capital in this and other peer-groups at that age (cf. Eckert 2000; Thorne 1993). Specifically, Vivi enjoys popularity, particularly with men. At the same time, she positions herself and is positioned as an empowered woman, somebody who actively resists gender roles in the community that require women at that age to be chosen rather than choose, to be flirted rather than flirt, to be asked out rather than ask out. Similarly, Vivi is the only one in the group who is vocally opposed to accepted gender ideologies according to which girls are not supposed to have sexual desires and engage in promiscuity (cf. Fine 1988). Dressing provocatively and dating older men are part and parcel of her personal rebellion.3

On the other hand, Tonia works with a different model of relationships with men. She invariably opts out of flirting, as she fears rejection. Although she openly aspires to Vivi’s ideas about men and to her popularity – in fact, in numerous interactions, she echoes and seconds Vivi’s positions – her accumulated disappointment in men, as inscribed in the narrative construction of her past, proves too much to ignore. This history seems to filter and play into Tonia’s main telling identity, that is, her frequent appeals to shared stories from the participants’ interactional history as models of future (inter)action and testimonies of her views. Interestingly, as we will see in §4.3, stories from the life story of each of the participants, through their multiple retellings, end up being treated as shared resources for which entitlement issues (Shuman 1986), i.e. ownership of experience, do not apply. However, participants differ in which is more effective in drawing on those resources for various interactional affordances and in having them ratified when used in local contexts.

Finally, Fotini is positioned as the “proper” and “sexually inexperienced” girl. She tends to be respectful and thus not in direct conflict with her parents. A churchgoer (for which she is made fun of by Tonia and Vivi), she is less defiant than the other two and better academically. This profile is well linked with her telling identities through which she seeks the other participants’, particularly Vivi’s, views and suggestions and tries to learn from their experience. As will be shown, she initiates projections more than actually contributing to their plot or evaluation.4

3. As we will see in Ch. 5, however, positionings of older men are complex and the participants’ stance towards them ambivalent. Vivi casts herself as having learnt from her prior experiences and mistakes. Even in this sense, she is still the person that has the tale to tell and that can judge and evaluate others’ thematically related stories.

4. In this way, she is the one that mostly engages in fantasies and positions herself as the desiring subject (for a discussion of the workings of desire in the group’s stories, see Ch. 5).
In all cases, the participants’ larger identities are not only indexed by telling identities but they also inform and are brought to bear on them. In other words, shared assumptions about self- and other-attributes act as resources for legitimating or de-legitimating a future taleworld as well as the participants’ contributions towards its construction. As can be attested to by the place of shared stories, shared resources are vital in the group and they mostly originate in interactional history. As such, they can be best described and understood as forming part of a community of practice (CoP, see Wenger 1998; also discussion in Eckert & McConnell-Ginet 1999). As a CoP, the participants over a period of regular contact and socialization have developed shared ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs and values. These are a repertoire of shared but negotiable resources that can be put to interactional use in order to constitute group membership, roles, and relations. It has been suggested that CoP can be productively linked with Bourdieu’s concept of *habitus* (1977; see discussion in Wilson 2001:347). This embraces a set of dispositions and group norms that generate and regulate practices. Although systematically probing the relations between a CoP and a habitus is beyond the scope of this discussion, it is notable that the participants’ shared resources can certainly be seen as a *habitus* too, particularly at the level of recognizable and intelligible interpretations of experience and sets of belief that are to be found in their shared stories as well as in the “intertextual narrative” of their projections. In other words, stories afford an experiential logic (cf. discussion in Ochs & Capps 2001:183ff.) and they can thus be an integral part of the individuals’ and the group’s identity construction. More specifically, as this discussion is aimed at showing, there is a three-way connection between stories, larger identities, and local storytelling roles. The latter two are mutually informed and operative for a story’s construction. At the same time, larger identities have partly been constructed through lived and textualized narratives and have thus become part of the group’s shared resources.

4.3 Telling and social roles close up

As suggested, the aim of this close analysis of a projection is to show telling roles at work: we will for instance see how the shape of a turn can be of enormous purchase for the progression of a story. We will see questions close up and how they place participants in specific interactional arrangements, that of an elicitor of plot and that of a contributor to plot. Questioning repeats on the other hand are routinely employed for local contestations of the interlocutors’ telling roles. More generally, we will see how telling roles are attuned to the emergent structuring of a story.

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5. For an earlier version of the analysis see Georgakopoulou 2002a:433ff.
particularly plotline and evaluation, and how they make visible the participants; portable identities. We will begin with a tale of tomorrow, a projection (“Talk to him man, talk to him” – Story 2, Appendix). This involves planning a meeting for the day after between the participants and two men, Mikes (the participants’ nickname for Makis) and Pavlos, the former of whom happened at the time to be the love-interest of Fotini. The idea for the meeting has been previously introduced in the conversation but it is only at this point that Fotini takes up the opportunity for a co-construction of a plan for the following day:

(4.2)

1 F: Guys (…) what are we going to do tomorrow?

The question, posed in the plural and addressed to both participants, creates a contingency for a jointly constructed upcoming talk. Vivi self-selects to answer the question and orients to the activity underway as a temporally ordered sequence, as evidenced by the use of temporal markers (first of all … and then… then):

(4.3)

2 V: First of all you will have a cooling bath=
3 F: = to relax?
4 V: a cooling bath (…) and then you’ll have a hot coffee […]
8 V: then you’ll sit down and relax (…) do a facial
9 a pelin’

Tonia joins the telling in line 10 in echoing Vivi’s imitation of the foreign accent in the word “peeling” (a loan word in Greek). This stylization contributes to the construction of a sophisticated person. At this point, Fotini, too, orients to the telling as a temporally ordered sequence of projected events:

(4.4)

12 F: O:kay (…) and then?

From there on, the projected events and verbal interactions between the story’s characters are jointly constructed and negotiated by the participants. Their telling-specific identities, however, differ, in that each participant contributes to the analytically distinguishable components of the story in different ways and to different degrees. These components are as follows:

i) The plotline: Spread over 206 lines (including a digression in lines 110–163), this evolves in an episodic fashion and each episode consists of arising complications in the projected events and verbal interactions responses or reactions to

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6. As we will see in Ch. 5, stylisations form an integral part of identity work in the group’s storytellings.
those complications. The agreed local resolutions of the projected complications make up the following main events of the plotline:

Lines 1–20: Fotini will physically and emotionally prepare for the meeting.

Lines 21–29: The participants will <accidentally> meet the two men (Pavlos and Mikes) at a café.

Lines 47–51: Pavlos, a close friend of Mikes and an acquaintance of Vivi, Fotini, and Tonia will act as the intermediary. He will initiate the conversation.

Lines 58–59, 205–206: V, F & T will brief Pavlos in advance of the meeting on what to say.

Lines 61–66: Pavlos will ask V, F & T to join Mikes and him for a coffee and they will accept the offer.

Lines 67–91: F will then try to strike up a conversation with Mikes by showing interest in basketball (matches of this week and Mikes’s team-playing; lines).

Lines 164–166: The meeting will take place at 10 p.m. so that it does not clash with the basketball match on TV. V, F & T will go out with their female friends before the meeting.

The resolution of the plotline (lines 167–206) concerns the follow up or aftermath of the meeting and is partially achieved in that the participants agree to disagree on whether Fotini should embark on a relationship with Mikes or not. Vivi and Tonia in fact propose another man as a more suitable candidate for a romantic involvement with Fotini.

ii) Evaluation: As we have suggested, evaluation in the data is largely concerned with assessing the story’s male characters, in particular Mikes, who is negatively evaluated as lacking in communication and social skills. As will be seen below, this negative evaluation is gradually worked up by Vivi and Tonia as the main reason why Fotini should not get involved with Mikes. In other words, it is proposed as a source of character incompatibility between the two of them. Before it takes the form of an explicit attribution (lines 178–179), Mikes’s assessment is embedded in references to shared stories. The punchline of one particular group story is referred to five times throughout the co-positing of the projected events. It goes “Talk to him man, talk to him man”, apparently directed by Pavlos to Mikes as the culmination of a social outing during which Mikes behaved unsociably. The allusion to the shared story serves as an implied shared comment on Mikes’s shyness and lack of social skills. The rest of the shared stories (three in total) involve instances of miscommunication between the participants and other people (e.g. parents, previous partners). In similar vein to Mikes’s assessment, it becomes increasingly explicit that the reference to the stories in question negatively evaluates the prospect of a relationship between Mikes and Fotini, two people, who in Vivi’s words, “don’t speak the same language” (line 85).

Finally, the story is wrapped up in line 208, when Vivi introduces a new story using the formulaic (in the participants’ conversations) transitional phrase “and
now something unrelated”, thus displaying an understanding of the closure of the projection.7

Sequentially, the above components in their moment-by-moment unfolding invoke different discourse identities for the three interlocutors. This means that each of the participants orients to and constructs different components in different ways; also, different participants contribute more to the telling of each component than others. Specifically, Fotini’s contributions to the activity underway are mainly in the form of questions that pose complications or problems regarding the projected events. In this way, her prevalent discourse identity is that of a questioner or elicitor; as such, her turns form the first part of the adjacency pair “question-answer”. For the most part of the story, Fotini’s questions are addressed both to Vivi and Tonia (as the use of the Greek plural “you” reveals) and thus do not select one or the other as a respondent. As already suggested, the telling of the projected events itself is elicited by Fotini’s question: “guys (…) what are going to do tomorrow?”.

In the course of the story, Fotini frequently poses questions regarding the form and content of her verbal interaction with Mikes during the meeting: e.g.

(4.5)

22 F:  Pavlos is talking to Vivi, and Mikes is there, and WHAT would you tell him, wha::t?
29 F:  And s-say he's looking this way, how am I gonna draw his attention?
71 F:  And what are we going to say man about ba:sketball?

Fotini’s questions are frequently preceded by discourse markers (e.g. Okay, line 21 below) that signal a continuation of or return to the tomorrow tale. In this way, Fotini visibly treats previous talk by her co-participants as a digression from the story line, which she sees as the main interactional business at hand:

(4.6)

13 F:  Okay .. and then?
14 V:  Then you’ll change your brains, huh huh (…) air them a bit=
15 T:  =take t-them out in the balcony (…) to get a bit of fresh air
16 F:  you can say that again, ’cos I am forgetful, I’ve got a class at two.
17 V:  This is a non-starter.
18 F:  You can say that again!
19 V:  That’s what we have pens for (…) we folks, to write things on our hands=
20 T:  =on our huh forehead huh huh
21 F:  O::kay (…) tell me now (…) seriously. So: (…) I bump into Makis right?

7. The story can, however, be characterized as topically coherent subsequent talk, generated by the tomorrow tale. Vivi relates a telephone conversation with a man whom she used to be romantically attracted to, and ends by projecting a scene during which she will assert her independence from him (222–224). The story is arguably set as a model for Fotini that provides a guide as to how she should stop being “clingy” (line 192) on Mikes.
In line 21 above, Fotini orients to the prior talk by Vivi and Tonia as "non-serious" thus signalling its termination and return to the story line. Similarly, in line 56 below, the marker "anyway" is used to propose that the previous activity is terminated and the storytelling is resumed:

(4.7)

52 V: But Fotini will do it when she's twenty-three, although we'd agreed that
53 F: we've said it, but ( . . ) let's lower it to twenty-two
54 V: no man, twenty-one
55 F: anyway ( . . ) fine, ( (we'll say) ) so:: what's up guys, out for a coffee
56 F: then?

The second part to Fotini's projected adjacency pair is largely provided by Vivi who self-selects as the respondent of Fotini's questions. However, instead of providing answers that push the plotline forward, as projected by Fotini's questions, Vivi's answers tend to evaluate the events and characters talked about. In this way, what seems to rank highly in Vivi's agenda is the consideration of the implications of the planned meeting. As already suggested, Vivi's turns mostly take the form of brief references to shared stories, the most recurrent of which is the personation of Pavlos ("Talk to him man, talk to him"). Consider the following extract:

(4.8)

25 F: Assuming it's going to happen ( . . ) right? what do I tell him?
26 V: you'll speak to the guy in his language, I fancy you huh huh=
27 T: =hih huh It's me=
28 F: =It's me, Fotini. I kno:w you, huh huh ( . . ) d'you know me:?
29 F: And say he's looking this way, how am I going to attract his attention?
30 V: huh huh huh Talk to him man, huh talk to him man
31 T: huh huh huh huh
32 F: COME ON ( . . ) come on you guys, he d-didn't mean it that way,
33 T: they were all friends of the guy=
34 V: Is this what bugs you ( . . ) that they knew him!, didn't you see how the
35 other one ( (Mikes) ) was staring at the stars ( (i.e. not talking to anyone) )
36 F: Well ok:ay, he's shy, t-there you are. What d'you tell him though?
37 T: I'm telling you ( . . ) on Sunday he walked a:ll the way ( . . ) eyes looking
38 down, a:ll the way=
39 F: =You are spoiling it now
40 T: Like a goat

In response to Fotini's question (line 25), Vivi laughingly imitates the accent of the local dialect, which she labels as Mikes's language (for a discussion of the participants' strategic use of the dialect, see §5.2). Fotini, after briefly joining in the imitation of Mikes's accent (line 28), returns to the storyline with her usual contribution of posing questions (line 29). Vivi answers the question with a jocular reference to a shared story (line 30): as in line 26 above, her reply does not really
provide a solution or a concrete suggestion to Fotini’s question. As we will see below, Tonia consistently echoes Vivi’s contributions. In this instance, she aligns with Vivi in laughing (line 31).

Whether the reference to the shared story is understood by Fotini as a negative assessment of Mikes or not is unclear until line 36, when Fotini concedes that Mikes is shy. All that Fotini does here (line 32) is to contest the point of the quoted punchline. In her utterance, the referent of both “he” and “it” (he didn’t mean it) is ambiguous: the utterance can either be heard as referring to Pavlos (i.e. “he didn’t mean what he said to Mikes”) or to Mikes (as in “he didn’t mean the behaviour in question”). However, the contrast between “the guy” and “the other one” in the following turn suggests that “he” is heard by Vivi as referring to Pavlos.

Another one of Fotini’s returns to the story line is illustrated in line 36 (what d’you tell him though?). Tonia (line 37) ignores the question and typically ties the action of her turn with that of Vivi’s (line 34–35): she briefly refers to a story of shared events recent story, as yet another proof of Mikes’s shyness. Subsequently (line 39), Fotini addresses both participants (“you” is in the plural in the original). The utterance “you are spoiling it now” seems to refer to the fact that neither Vivi nor Tonia offered a reply to her question in line 36. Once again, Vivi and Tonia are seen to be de-legitimizing the plotline that Fotini is keen to pursue.

In the course of the storytelling, Vivi’s assessments become increasingly explicit. This is achieved by supplementing references to shared stories which stem from the participants’ interactional history with references to texts from popular genres (e.g. jokes, advertisements, TV commercials, songs) that the participants orient to as shared. Both references to shared stories and to other resources thus seem to be invoked as ready-made evaluations that lend authority to Vivi’s assessment of the characters talked about.8 For instance, in the extract below, Vivi alludes to a popular Greek song as a backing device for her (now explicit) claim that Mikes is not suitable for Fotini. Fotini resists the claim by means of the same type of reference to another popular Greek song:

171 V: He’s not good enough for you ((singing)), the song says it too=
172 T: =But I love this man ((sings)), as the other song says
173 V: Yes (..) the song says it, but it goes to someone else.

Further down, as Fotini keeps on contesting Vivi’s claim that “Mikes is not for her”, Vivi finally comes up with an explicit identity attribute for Mikes (line 179):

8. It is also possible that allusions to shared texts mitigate or downplay the threat involved in negative evaluations of third parties with which not all participants agree.
(4.10)

177 V: Wwhatever he does, he doesn’t do for you:!
178 F: YOU don’t know this:!
179 V: OH COME on, he is not sociable (...) full stop=
180 T: =You don’t sa:y (...) him? But they don’t come more social than that.

Tonia typically seconds Vivi’s position (line 180). As noted already, Tonia is in alignment with Vivi throughout the storytelling. Her turns echo the positions taken up in Vivi’s turns, mostly by paraphrasing (lines 15, 68) or elaborating them (lines 20, 27). They are frequently produced in overlap with Vivi’s prior turn (line 68).\(^9\)

(4.11)

14 V: Then you’ll change your brains, huh huh (..) air them a bit=
15 T: =take t-them out in the balcony (..) to get a bit of fresh air
19 V: That’s what we have pens for (..) we folks, to write things on our hands=
20 T: =on our huh forehead huh huh
26 V: You’ll speak to the guy in his language, I fa::ncy you huh huh=
27 T: =huh huh It’s me=
67 V: =But then you know what Mikes will do, he’ll be staring //the ceiling like this
68 T: //He’ll start doing his own thing

As the above suggests, Tonia by and large does not self-select to answer Fotini’s questions but rather builds an equivalent action with that of Vivi as a response to Fotini. In similar fashion, Vivi colludes with Tonia’s turns when contested by Fotini:

(4.12)

40 T: Like a goat.
41 F: =DON’T YOU run my man down=
42 V: =Okay (..) like a little huh huh goat

For instance, Tonia’s negative assessment of Mikes in line 40 above (like a goat) is restated – albeit mildly mitigated – by Vivi (like a little goat, line 42) in response to Fotini’s objection (line 41). In other cases, there is a two-way collusion going on: Tonia (lines 184, 188 below) aligns with Vivi’s prior turn and is subsequently aligned with by Vivi’s following turn (lines 185, 189):

(4.13)

183 V: No, I’m saying it to save you the pain, since Ekleraki is around=
184 T: =Ekleraki’s s-so:: much better!=
185 V: =By far (..) by far

\(^9\). Cf. Pomerantz (1984:67) for ways of performing broadly affiliative actions (e.g. agreement) with those of the interlocutor.
Interestingly, while Fotini for the most part of the activity does not specifically select Vivi as the respondent to her questions, she frequently does not acknowledge or directly respond to Tonia’s contributions. In fact, as the interaction progresses, she starts to explicitly ratify Vivi as the addressed participant. She does so even in cases in which it is Tonia who has uttered the turn immediately prior to hers (lines 181, 195):

\[(4.14)\]

179 V: OH COME on, he is not sociable (...) full stop=
180 T: =You don’t say (...) him? But they don’t come more social than that.
181 F: Vivi, you don’t know, I may not fancy him once I meet him,
182 he might see me an’ run a mile, you just don’t know.
192 V: You’re so clingy though
193 F: Absolutely not!
194 T: Famous I-last Words.
195 F: No Vivi (...) I’ve got to get it over with, or it’ll eat me up.

The above suggests that Tonia positions herself and is positioned as an interstitial player (Goodwin & Goodwin 1990:107–108) to Vivi, the principal player: Vivi’s participation defines the basic parameters of the sequence and her actions are used as a model for the actions performed by Tonia.

### 4.3.1 Social identities ascribed: Self- and other-claims

The discourse identities enacted by the participants in the course of the activity at hand position them as different types of social actors; more specifically, they invoke and construct an asymmetry between them. Despite the fact that their relation is one of friendship and intimacy, each of them proves to have differential rights with regard to entitlement issues that regulate who has the right to tell, allude to, or comment on what. As already discussed, Vivi in this and other storytelling events positions herself and is accepted by the other two participants as the main teller of the evaluative component of the story. As such, she is the most instrumental participant in constructing the point of the storytelling: her contributions gauge and assess the contingencies and consequences of the projected events.

On the other hand, Fotini’s turns position her as a subordinate participant in that they are questions that solicit advice, suggestions for predicted complications, and solutions to problems. In this way, they make her dependent on others’, particularly Vivi’s, contributions and decision-making. Finally, Tonia’s contribu-
tions are also intimately linked with the participant distinctions of role-related and topic-related expertise that the telling of stories about men brings about; either as an aligned participant with Vivi (as in this case) or as a participant that contends her positions (see §4.3.2 below), Tonia’s contributions too invoke larger social relations of an internal hierarchy amongst the participants coupled with a dependency on Vivi who, as argued, appears to be a leading figure in the triad.

These relations between storytelling roles and larger identities are not unidirectional but dialectically and dynamically evolving. Specifically, the storytelling roles themselves typically gain their validity by means of larger identity claims that the participants accept to hold beyond the local interactional context. In fact, throughout the story at hand, there is an incremental use of explicit assessment or identity claims from one interlocutor about another or about the characters of the tale. These claims are based on knowledge of one another’s opinions, beliefs, and values, as known by interlocutors to hold above and beyond the storytelling situation. In this process of self- and other-identity attributions, larger social identities constitute the relevant context of the moment. For instance, Vivi’s right to invoke assessments and categorisations for the interlocutors and the characters talked about seems to emanate from her accepted social identity amongst the participants of somebody who is street-wise, assertive, and, generally, experienced in the domain of male-female relationships. She claims this right not only for herself but also for her “helper” Tonia:

(4.15)

46 V: And I’ve got a good man.
103 V: While Tonia has done it all!

In contrast, Fotini is self- and other-constructed as sexually inexperienced and “proper”: e.g.

(4.16) (The same excerpt as (4.7))

52 V: But Fotini will do it when she’s twenty-three, although we’d agreed that the
53 standards should go down a bit?
54 F: we’ve said it, but (. . . ) let’s lower it to twenty-two=
55 V: NO man, twenty-one=
128 F: Think about me, being a proper person?
161 F: I won’t call you names, I’m a decent girl (. . . ) I don’t swear.

Participants invoke such identity claims strategically, that is, as part of attending to the local interactional business of positioning themselves vis-à-vis the projected events and characters talked about. Let us take lines 41–49:

(4.17)

41 F: =DON’T YOU run my man down=
42 V: =Okay (...) like a little huh huh goat
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43 F: DON’T run my man down (...) alright?
44 V: Come off it, some man you’ve found, and you’re supposed to be my maid of honour.
45 T: That’s not going to work now (...) is it?
46 V: And I’ve got a good man.
47 F: No: way am I gonna be YOUR maid of honour!
48 V: Don’t be (...) photo-finish ((Fotini’s nick-name))
49 F: “RE” ((affectionate marker)) Christou ((Vivi’s surname)). So: let’s make plans.

As we can see above, Fotini’s repeated challenge (lines 41, 43) is responded to by a relations claim holding beyond the local conversational situation: Vivi reminds Fotini that she has chosen Fotini to be her future maid of honour. (This could imply that Vivi is entitled to an opinion about Fotini’s choice of men). After Fotini’s emphatic dismissal of the role in question (line 47), Vivi brings in yet another relationship “cue” by calling Fotini by her nickname. Fotini reciprocates by calling Vivi by her surname (preceded by “re”, a marker of intimacy, line 49) and returns to the story line. The disagreement, thus, seems to end amicably; nonetheless, whether Fotini should get involved with Mikes or not remains the main point of negotiation and challenge up until the end of the story.

As already suggested, the most explicit relations claim and characterizations are to be found towards the story’s wrapping up: Fotini is characterized as clingy on Mikes (line 192), Mikes is labeled as unsociable (179), and Pavlos as absent-minded (205). Tellingly, all three characterizations are introduced by Vivi and eventually accepted by Fotini, although they are initially contested. To begin with, Fotini contests the characterization as “clingy” (dependent) on Mikes: in l. 93 below, she uses an extreme case formulation (Pomerantz 1986) to do so. Later however, she ends up endorsing the characterization and using it as a self-claim (l. 207 below):

(4.18)

192 V: You’re so clingy though
193 F: Absolutely not!
194 T: Famous last words.
207 F: Cause otherwise I’ll remain clingy as you’re saying, right?

In Fotini’s case, however, the appeal to the same extra-situational identity claim is locally occasioned in a different way. Specifically, it is put forth as one of the reasons for the meeting to take place. In other words, it is employed for a different interactional purpose to that of Vivi and in favour of Fotini’s argumentation line.

10. Each participant has a nickname known only to one another and used affectionately. The use of one another’s surname (as in line 49) is also affectionate.

11. The marker “re” followed by the addressee’s name is commonly used as a device for mitigating disagreement (see Georgakopoulou 2001).
In this way, self- and other- identity claims act as the means by which participants make out, challenge, or defend their discourse identities in the management of the activity locally engaged in.

4.3.2 Sharing and shared stories for identity constructions

We will now move to a second case study to see how telling roles are negotiated and contested in the course of shared stories; also how mini-tellings of shared stories are brought in as evaluative devices in the course of the telling of a projection. The narrative event that will be discussed here is again thematically typical of the group’s preoccupations, in that it is concerned with flirting, romance, and relationships with men. The story of projected events in this case involves the planning and debating of a meeting between Tonia and the man she is romantically interested in. The views of Vivi and Tonia, with respect to this meeting, are clearly opposed: Vivi, in contrast to Tonia, firmly believes that she should take the risk and ask the man in question out. In the course of the conversation, the disagreement becomes more important an agenda than the actual projected meeting; in this way, the central narrative space becomes occupied by shared stories rather than by the – under construction – projection.

In the end, the disagreement concerning the story of projected events remains unresolved and the topic is exited from. In the course of the discussion, however, the participants jointly formulate and agree on aspects of one another’s larger, particularly gender, identities: Tonia admits to her fear of rejection as the main reason for her reluctance to take the first step in the talked about and other relationships with men, while Vivi enacts as well as being attributed the identity of an empowered and experienced woman. In the process, Tonia and Vivi differ in the number and types of small stories they tell, in their contribution to or delegitimation of those stories’ plot, as well as in the local purposes and functions of their stories.

To begin with, in order to justify her own version of projected events, and ultimately to de-legitimize the projected plotline that involves asking Danny out, Tonia constantly refers to shared stories. These stories are put forth as providing evidence and support for her point of view. In the course of this narrative event, Tonia tells three times as many shared stories as Vivi (i.e. 12 as opposed to 4). Tonia’s stories can be characterized as follows:

a) **Stories of co-experienced events** (see excerpt below). These involve similar events and interactions as the projected ones. This comparability of taleworlds makes the (re)telling of such stories ideal for putting forth analogies between the past and the future. In other words, past taleworlds are quickly retrieved in order to offer models for future action or avoidance of it.
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(4.19)

1 T: Να σου πω κάτι, ήρθανε τα παιδιά (…) ο Γιώργος κι ο Κώστας=
2 B: =Ναι:
3 T: Που ήρθανε >και μας λένε πάμε για καφέ;?
4 B: Ν-αι.
5 T: Οι άνθρωποι στην αρχή φαινόντουσαν, ότι ΔΕ μας βλέπανε φιλικά ρε παιδί μου,
6 αλλά >δε μπορούμε να ποιέμε< κι ότι μας ερωτεύετε:τηκαν κεραυνοβόλα=
7 B: =Ε (…) τους αρέσουμε.
8 T: Ωραία (…) λοιπόν (..) κι όμως στην αρχή φιλικά θα βγαίναμε, κι εμείς είπαμε όχι,
9 τους απορρίψαμε (..) και γελάσαμε και μαζί τους.
10 B: Ναι Ρέι Τόνια, γιατί ήτανα από το πουθενά, ήρθανε με τέτοιο ηλιόθεο τρόπο,
11 ακόμα εδώ είσαστε? Κι ήταν και καράβλαχοι εντάξει; Κλοιά σχέση.
12 T: Ρέ Βιβή, είναι ένας εικοσόεξι χρονών, όταν πάει κάποιος και του πει πάμε για
13 καφέ, ΤΙ θα νομίσει;, ότι βγαίνουν στο φυλικό;?
1 T: Shall I tell you something, when the guys came (…) George and Kostas=
2 V: =Yes:
3 T: When they came up to us >and said shall we go for a coffee;?
4 V: Y-eah.
5 T: It was obvious, right from the beginning, that the guys WERE interested, but you
6 couldn’t say that they’d fallen in love=
7 V: =Well (.) they liked us
8 T: Fine, so (.) to begin with we’d go out as friends, but we said no, we turned
9 them down (.) and on top of that we made fun of them.
10 V: Yes Tonia, cause they came out of the blue, and they were so silly about
11 it, “are you still here” (“imitating”)? And they were peasants right? No relation ( (to your
12 case))
13 T: Vivi, what is a twenty six year old going to think, if somebody goes and
13 ask him out for a coffee, that they are going out as friends?

b) Verbal interaction episodes (see lines 21–22, 73–78 below). These involve reported speech and opinion of other people who are invoked as sources of authority and validation of Tonia’s views:

(4.20)

21 T: Τότε με την Κατερίνα πι χι (…) που μας είχες πει ότι >με το που μιλάτε
22 πρώτη φορά< ρε παιδί μου, και σου λέει (…) ρε αυτός γουστάρει //και τέτοια
21 T: The time with Katerina for example (...) when you’d said to us that (...) the
22 minute >you spoke to one another< she tells you (...) he fancies you // an’ things like
23 that.

(4.21)

73 T: =Έλα ρε, όλοι το χουνε παραδεχτεί, ο Χρήστος για παράδειγμα, τότε στη Ρόμα,
74 που ’χρεται και μου λέει τι παίζεται; Τόνια, μ’αυτή την κατάσταση, και του εξηγά ρε
75 παιδί μου τι γίνεται (..) και μου λέει Τόνια λυπάμαι (...) που θα σε στενοχωρήσω, αλλά
76 οι πιθανότητες είναι τρεις, ή ότι είναι ντροπαλός, ή δεν έχει καταλάβει, ή έχει
καταλαβαίνει, γιατί δε θέλει (...) δεν ενδιαφέρεται. Αυτά τα τρία παίζουνε, μου λέει ο Χρήστος, και μην το ψάχνεις παραπέρα.

Come off it, everybody has admitted to it, take Christos for example, that time at Roma when he comes and tells me, what’s going on here? Tonia, and I explain to him what’s going on (...) right, and he says to me, sorry Tonia (...) but I just have to break it to you, there are three possibilities here, either he’s shy, or he doesn’t realize, or he does (...) and he pretends that he doesn’t, ’cause he’s not interested. Those are the three possibilities, Christos tells me, and don’t even look for a fourth.

Vivi, on the other hand, mostly tells or refers to stories of (shared) personal experiences, as we can see below:

(4.22)

14 B: Pe Tonia, >εσένα σε< NOIAξει τι θα νομίσει; Να σου πω κάτι, θυµάσαι τι έκανα
eγώ με το Νίκο=

14 V: Tonia, why >would you CAre<? Shall I tell you so:mething, remember
what I did with Nikos?

At a more general level, rather than telling shared stories, Vivi counteracts Tonia’s tellings.

It is notable that the introduction of shared stories is framed as an oppositional device, mainly through the stories’ prefacing with the discourse marker “na su po kati” (let me tell you something; shall I tell you something?, e.g. line 1 in excerpt (4.19)). As I have argued elsewhere (2001:1886–1888), this marker cues the ensuing turn as presenting something different or new in relations to what has preceded. In addition, akin to other metalinguistic markers, it attempts to secure the floor by signposting the relevance of the upcoming turn, as can be evidenced in its frequent occurrence in interruptive turns.

Although there are routine introductions and subsequent ways of telling (mini-tellings, as suggested) for shared stories, their tellings still bring forth distinct participation roles for the interlocutors involved, in this case Tonia and Vivi. Specifically, while Tonia initiates and tells the plotline of such stories, Vivi provides the evaluation or the point of the events and the characters referred to. In other words, instead of contributing to or, equally, contesting “what happened”, she is mainly concerned with “why it happened”. In this role, she gauges consequences and puts forth a different interpretative spin on the events told by Tonia. For instance, in lines 10–11, she contests the validity of an analogy between the past events and the projected events: Yes Tonia, cause they came out of the blue, and they were so silly about it, “are you still here” ((imitating))? And they were peasants right? No relation ((to your case)). In similar vein, in line 61, she contests Tonia’s take on what she had presented as a specific chain of events by referring to the habituality of their occurrence (well, how many times have we exercised in the gym and giggled?).
54 T: The gym era (..) remember?
55 V: When?
56 T: The time we’d gone downstairs
57 V: //Hmm ((nods))
58 T: and the minute we see him we go all the way up again, and start looking at him like
59 two idiots, and then we stayed until half past five (..) doing tummy exercises next to him
60 (..) and giggling. DON’T tell me he didn’t get wind of it then.
61 V: Well, how many times have we exercised in the gym and giggled? How many
62 times?=

This is a common strategy in the data for contesting shared stories: the events
themselves or their significance seem accepted and in that respect least contestable.
The actual recontextualization of them however can be contested as not relevant
for the activity underway.

To go back to lines 11–12, Tonia in l. 13 continues to display her commitment
to her own posited version of the future events by shifting to the actual plotline of
that: e.g. Yes but what is a twenty six year old going to think, if somebody goes and
asks him out, that they are going out as friends?
Vivi subsequently bids for telling
Tonia, why would you CARE? Shall I tell you so:THING, remember what I
did with Nikos?
Tonia contests the validity of the analogy, prior to the telling:
that was different (17) and she goes on to explain this by essentially becoming the teller
of the events (21–22) that Vivi had tried to initiate. Once again, Tonia is a teller
of events, while Vivi is an assessor or evaluator of the reported events, by being
concerned with their point (23–25):

17 T: =Άλλο εσ' με το Νι'/κο
18 V: //Πού: το άλλο;
19 T: Δε σου: χε δείξει ο άνθρωπος, ΔΕ σε χαιρέταγε πρώτος? Είχες δείγματα
20 B: Τι δεί::γιματα ρε?
21 T: Τότε με την Κατερίνα πι χι (..) που μας είχες πει ότι >με το που μιλάτε την πρώτη
22 φορά< ρε παιδί μου, και σου λέει (..) ρε αυτός γουστάρει //και τέτοια.
23 B: //Ελα ρε είχα δείγματα, εντάξει αυτό μπορεί να το πε έτσι, δεν ξέρεις, μπορεί να
24 της φάνηκε. Το θέμα ήταν ότι εγώ τον κοιτάζα σα μαλακισμένο (..) αλλιώς δε θα
25 χαμε μιλήσει.
26 T: Δε:: νομίζω, >σου μίλησε επειδή ήθελε να σου μιλήσει<=

17 T: That was different=
18 V: =Ηο:ω was it different?
19 T: Hadn’t he shown you? hadn’t he been greeting you fi:rst? You had indications=
20 V: What s-orts of indications?
21 T: The time with Katerina for example (..) when you’d said to us that (..) the minute
22 >you spoke to one another< she tells you (..) he fancies you man // an’ things like that.
23 V: //Come on, you don’t know how she said it, could have been a spur of the moment thing. The issue is that I’d been giving him the eye (..) or else we wouldn’t have spoken.

26 T: I don’t think so, >he spoke to you ’cause he wanted to<=

It is interesting to see the use of questions and questioning repeats (quick, interruptive turns that repeat the interlocutor’s previous utterance or parts of it) in the construction of disagreement through shared stories (e.g. l. 18, l. 20, l. 61 above). According to Pomerantz (1984), questioning repeats act as devices of delaying the uttering of disagreement, since they can be interpreted as repeats for clarification or as signals that the original statement was misheard. Here, questions seem to act as an indirect means of doing disagreement rather than as a delaying technique.

Vivi also employs another strategy for contesting the evaluative angle through which Tonia looks at past events: she sets up hypothetical or possible scenarios within the reported tale world. Let us see the continuation of 4.23 above:

(4.25)

62 T: = Εκεί δίπλα κολλητά?
63 V: Ρέτόνια ήταν άλλοι δίπλα μας // εκείνη την ώρα
64 T: //Όχι (..) αυτός ήταν κι έκανε //κοιλιακούς
65 V: // Ρέτόνια εγώ σου λέω άλλη φάση τώρα, ντάξει; Πες ότι ήταν το κοριτσάκι δίπλα μας, πες ότι ήταν ο Γιάννης δίπλα μας, και πες ότι κακαρίζαμε (..) ενώ κάναμε κοιλιακούς, θα υποψιαζόταν ότι τον πάμε?
66 δίπλα μας,
67 κοιλιακούς,
68 καιπ
69 ότι κάναμε, θα υποψιαζόταν ότι τον πάμε?

62 T: =But sitting right beside someone?
63 V: Ρέτονια there were other people next to us //at that point
64 T: //No: (..) it was just him doing //tummy exercises
65 V: // (((Re))) Τονία let me tell you something else, right? Say we had a girl next to us, say
66 we had Jannis next to us, and say we were giggling while exercising, would they suspect that we fancy them?

In this way, Vivi seems to be attempting to bring in another perspective on the events discussed (for a discussion of hypothetical scenarios, see Georgakopoulou 2001:1892–1893). In the end, Vivi moves from contesting the interpretation of specific chains of events to sweepingly contesting Tonia’s role as a teller of events and blocking bids for tellings. In other words, she contests the validity, appropriateness, and relevance of Tonia’s activity of telling tales. This is evident in line 68, when Tonia in response to Vivi’s hypothetical scenario above, makes an offer to produce more evidence or exemplification for her point through another storytelling episode (let me tell you of another incident). In response, Vivi starts doing what up until the end of this interaction she will do more of, which is to contest Tonia’s bids for tellings of specific episodes as proofs of her point, and, instead, to offer general statements and self- and other- identity claims and attributions:
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(4.26)

69: =Να μη μου πεις, μου χεις πει τόσες, κι είναι ΟΛΕΣ μαλακίες που λες μέχρι εδώ,
70 μεγάλες μαλακίες, δικαιολογίες στον εαυτό σου, γιατί δε μπορείς να του μιλήσεις,
71 γιατί δεν έχεις το θάρρος=

69 V: =Don’t tell me, you have told me so many already, and all of them are NONsense,
70 utter nonsense, excuses that you have been telling yourself, ’cause you can’t go talk to
71 him, simply because you don’t have the guts to do it=  

And a few lines later:

82 V: >Το πρόβλημα< re Τόνια είναι ότι δεν έχεις το ΘΑΡΡΟΣ, το χωμε πει τόσες φορές,
83 φοβάσαι τελικά την απόρρηψη.

82 V: >The problem is< Tonia that you don’t have the GUTS, we’ve gone through this so
83 many times, it’s your fear of rejection.

Tonia on the other hand more or less explicitly resists these contestations of her role as a teller of shared events. For instance, in line 73 (see excerpt (4.21) above), she frames her contribution with unhedged modality (everybody has admitted to it): this signals that a generalized as opposed to a particularistic narrative discourse is coming up. Instead of which, Tonia goes on to narrate a verbal interaction episode that involves opinion expressing by only one person (73–78).

Overall, Tonia formulates more references to past events as well as visibly prioritizing their telling as the main activity at hand. In this way, she attempts to de-legitimize Vivi’s posited version of the story of projected events under negotiation and construction. Specifically, she does that by, on the one hand, displaying a lack of commitment to the future plotline, while, on the other hand, maintaining an increased commitment to past plotlines that throw the future plotline into relief. The related incidents frequently involve speech rather than events, in that they report somebody else’s view, e.g. one of Tonia’s friends, as we saw in excerpt (4.21). This is a well-documented “trick”, by which tellers embed their own views in a story, instead of providing them directly. As suggested in §1.3, by delegating the roles of the author (the aspect of self responsible for the content of talk) and the principal (the aspect committed to what is said) to other character(s) in the taleworld, tellers can mitigate their agency or responsibility for the views and beliefs expressed and/or create a widened base of support for them (for a detailed discussion see Schiffrin 1990:241–259). In this way, their personal commitment is minimized, while at the same time their views gain in validity through other characters’ subscription to them.

According to Schiffrin (1990), this self-lamination holds the key to the power of stories as argumentative devices. Persuasion in their case does not rely on refutation or confirmation that in turn emanates from rational analysis; instead, it exploits subjective, imaginative and affectionate processes, in order to secure the audience’s empathy and involvement. Lines 73–78 in extract (4.21) above illus-
trate this self-lamination, insofar as Christos becomes the author of Tonia’s view that Dan is fully aware of her interest in him but pretends that this is not the case, because he is not interested in her. Interestingly, when Vivi encodes her view on the situation (l. 79 below), Tonia disagrees with it by quoting Christos’s view once again (l. 80–81):

(4.27)

79 V: Να σου πω, πιο πιθανές είναι οι δυο πρώτες (..) ειδικά ότι δεν έχει καταλάβει=
80 T: ΑποκΛΕΙεται (..) ο Χρήστος λέει πάντως ότι μάλλον δέρει (.) κι εγώ πιστεύω ότι είναι ντροπαλός (..) τελείωσε.

79 V: Let me tell you, the first two are more plausible (..) particularly that he doesn’t realize=
80 T: =No WA;y (..) well (.) Christos was saying that he probably knows (.) and I think
81 he’s shy (..) period.

In contrast, in order to defend her own version of projected events, Vivi questions the current relevance of past taleworlds, and counteracts their tellings by offering an alternative interpretative or evaluative angle to them. She also engages in questions and questioning repeats that aim at driving Tonia to logical inconsequentialities.

The roles of a teller and an assessor of tales, as discussed above, are part of an interactional dispute that in the end weighs in favour of Vivi: Tonia accepts Vivi’s angle on the characters and chains of events talked about and promises to think about what course of action she is going to follow. In this respect, this narrative event is typical of other interactional debates in the group in which Vivi is the main adjudicator who gets the others to agree with her formulation of evaluation of the projected events as well as with her self- and other-identity claims. In this respect, her contributions are instrumental in gauging and assessing the contingencies and consequences of past anf future taleworlds. As has already been shown, this is intertwined with Vivi’s position and roles within the group.

The above telling roles ultimately allow us a glimpse into processes of negotiation in storytelling, particularly when stories are brought in as argumentative devices, i.e. to strengthen an interlocutor’s point of view and challenge one another’s take on events and characters talked about. In this respect too, a nuanced approach to the types of contribution and tasks that they raise for different participants is particularly illuminating especially with regard to issues of ownership of experience and entitlement. It is for instance worth noting that the canonical view of stories sees them as projecting some kind of a privileged position for the teller vis-à-vis their reported experience and from that point of view as acting as a least contestable device for putting forth views, shielded against argumentation. This, it is suggested, has to do with the power of experience over processes of rational explanations: the former have often been shown to move the audience through a bid for affectivity and through involving them in the narrated events, while the
latter offer a space for critical engagement and dispassionate assessment (e.g. see Mumby 1993; Nash 1990; Schiffrin 1990). Interactional research on storytelling has nonetheless shown that stories too can be used effectively for socializing and putting forth views. Furthermore, they too can be the object of negotiation and contestation (e.g. Goodwin 1990; Ochs & Capps 2001). In the data at hand, we have seen that small stories do not in fact grant specific entitlement or ownership rights to the teller. Co-experienced or previously told stories are seen as a shared resource that can be brought into current storytelling in order to (de)legitimate a course of action or to assess characters. In this process of recontextualization, however, stories are frequently contested mostly for their local relevance and not for the authenticity or persuasive power of the reported experience. In this way, when stories are enmeshed in local business, we can see how their “legitimacy (import, authenticity) ultimately depends on the web of interactional and intertextual relations in which [they are] entwined” (Shuman 2005:27).

4.4 Conclusion: Small stories and identities in social practice

The aim of this chapter was to put forth the cross-fertilization between narrative analysis and identity studies within the paradigm of small stories. This approach requires an emphasis on how identities come into being as local accomplishments in the course of telling small stories. Analytically, the meeting point of narrative and identity was shown to lie in the participants’ storytelling roles. This was linked with the idea that extra-situational, portable identities can be best traced in discourse through a micro-analytic emphasis on the details and sequential management of talk.

The pairing of the small (micro-) with the large (macro-), i.e. of storytelling participation roles with social identities was argued for and demonstrated first with a distributional analysis and then with the close analyses of two storytelling events involving stories of projected events as the main narrative activity. The qualitative analysis of the stories suggested that different participants contributed in varying degrees to different story components, particularly plotline and evaluation. Furthermore, the participants were differentiated in the degree in which their contributions were ratified and taken on board by others or, equally, challenged and delegitimized.

12. Both these positions have been intimately linked with and to an extent warranted by the narrative turn that has mainly been advocated within narrative psychology (e.g. Bruner 1991; Polkinghorne 1987; Sarbin 1986).
These findings were further shed light on by the quantitative analysis of 50 projections with regard to the participants’ telling roles of initiation, contribution to plotline, and evaluation. Here, evaluation was defined as the process of jointly piecing together a perspective on the events and characters talked about and it was found to mainly rely on embedded shared stories and character assessments. The analysis suggested that one participant (Vivi) not only contributed more to the telling of projections but, more significantly, she had her contributions ratified more than the other two participants. The distinct telling roles for each participant brought into focus the situational identities of advice-seeker vs. advice-giver and novice vs. expert (in the domain of relationships with men).

In turn, the co-articulation of telling with situational identities made visible and was based on the participants’ larger social identity of gender, relative standing vis-à-vis one another, with Vivi clearly having a leading position, and of their relationships as close friends. It was argued that all those transportable identities and the group’s telling of small stories were interdependent, in the sense that the former both came into being through projections and formed an integral part of the participants’ shared resources from their interactional history, including their shared narratives.

The implications of the above findings for identity analysis in narrative, first and foremost, are to be found in the close link between identity construction in narrative and a story’s (emerging) structure, in this case, plotline and evaluation. While such structural parts were initially postulated as analytical devices (e.g. as in Labov’s model, 1972), we have looked at them here following an interactional line of inquiry: as raising alternative tasks and types of action for different participants (see Goodwin 1984:245). Further studies in this direction could shed light on how the relation between locally enacted participation roles and story parts bears on the tellers’ identity construction.

The second important aspect in the relationship between narrative and identities that we have pointed to is to be found in the type of narrative activity the tellers are engaged in, which are in turn mediated and informed by social roles, practices, and relationships. To go back to our three interrelated levels of analysis, ways of telling are intextricably bound up with sites of telling and in turn construct and are shaped by tellers. More specifically, in this case, local telling and situational roles were linked with the activity of constructing future taleworlds as well as with the theme of those tales (i.e. male-female relationships). As I have argued elsewhere (Georgakopoulou 2003b:75–91), at a different level, the specific type of narrative activity is linked with the tellers’ age and age-related social activities, such as, in this case, exploring sexuality and relationships with men (cf. Heath 1984; Kyratzis 1999, for the importance of projections or event-casts for self-construction amongst school-age children and pre-schoolers, respectively). In addition, the types of social activities that the participants indulged in as part of
their daily contact with one another can be seen as instrumental for licensing exploratory discourses, such as tales of events that had not happened yet, which in turn called for a joint construction of meaning-making.

It is arguable that the participants’ CoP as well as the narrative practices central to them are indexes of youth identities. Although by no means exclusive to youth, the participants’ types of social relations and activities tend to be privileged by young people, particularly adolescents. The importance of peer-group socialization and bonding for the adolescents’ mastery of discourses, methods of impression management, and self-presentation has been widely recognized and researched. Similarly, certain discourse activities, such as teasing, storytelling, and gossip, have been proposed as typical of peer-group socialization (see Corsaro & Eder 1990:213). Nonetheless, there is still ample scope for probing into the relations between the co-articulation of youth identities with narrative practices. Explicating links between the two involves looking into the particularities of discourse practices that are intimately linked with peer-group practices in different youth groups. Could it be that “non-canonical”, small stories are more associated with and indexical of youth social practices and identities? What are the points of connection or inter-articulation between youth and gender identities? Some of these connections will emerge in the next chapter through charting the identity work involved in stories that position “other” as a desired subject.

Finally, both a refined view of storytelling participants’ co-construction and the importance of their interactional history, as attested to above, point to analytical ways of looking into self-identity work in narrative relationally and as part of a “long conversation” (Maybin 1996:46) and history of meaning-making.
Chapter 5

Positioning self and other in small stories

5.1 Narrative identities and positioning

As already suggested, conventional narrative analysis has placed emphasis on stories as modes for constructing and making sense of self. This is intimately linked with the prioritising of personal experience stories. However, once we move beyond the narrative canon and toward small stories, constructions of identities become a different enterprise: first, as we have seen, constructions of self can themselves be dialogical and relational to the extent that the social construction of “I” is integrally bound up with that of “we”: fashioned and refashioned through processes of collective memory and shared interactional history. At the same time, doing self is not all that tellers do. They also do rhetorical work through storytelling: they put forth arguments, challenge their interlocutors’ views and generally attune their stories to various local interactional purposes, sequentially orienting them to prior and upcoming talk (cf. Bamberg 2004a). In this respect, the self is not only emergent on-line but also interwoven into local business and situationally contingent.

Furthermore, aspects of self (e.g. gender, age, ethnicity) are co-articulated by interlocutors: negotiated, contested and jointly drafted, simultaneously and to varying degrees of relevance and consequentiality. Last but not least, tellers also construct others. To date, this has mainly been explored through an emphasis on the presentation of characters’ voices, for instance through constructed dialogue (e.g. Tannen 1989). The aim here has been to explore how importing others’ speech and thoughts in the telling of a story fits with aspects of the teller’s self; in this respect, ‘constructed dialogue’ has been frequently studied as a strategy for breaking down, diffusing and laminating different aspects of self for interactional and identity work (cf. Schiffrin 1990, 2000). There is certainly analytical resonance in that line of inquiry and we did indeed see (§4.3.2) how invoking other people’s voices may provide further evidence for a teller’s view.

There is still, however, a missing emphasis on the ways in which constructions of others in narrative take place in their own right and on how ultimately they link up with self-identity work. It is notable in this respect that representations of others have often been linked with vicarious experience stories that in turn have been seen as a second best compared to the eye-witness, experiential mode of
personal narrative. But what about eye witness stories that relentlessly preoccupy themselves with third parties or absent others in the sense of opening up spaces for talking about them? As we have seen, this is a common phenomenon in the data at hand: the stories are commonly about men, both specific and more generic. The men talked about by the participants are their romantic interests or suitors; men they would like to have a relationship with. How far can such alterity talk be seen in terms of identity constructions?

Within discourse analysis and sociolinguistics, the phenomenon of talking about others has commonly attracted content categories and labels such as “gossip”, or “talk about third parties”; more specifically in the case of female adolescents, sex talk and friendship talk have also been used (e.g. Coates 1996). Such characterizations are helpful for capturing the propositional or representational aspects of the phenomena in the data but, in another sense, they are restrictive labels that do not go a long way in exploring the interactional and/or performance aspects of those phenomena. Furthermore, their links with identity work tend to be focused on the speakers’ identities as opposed to the kinds of identities ascribed to the talked about parties and the implications that those can have for self-identity constructions.

Nonetheless, representations of “others” are being increasingly viewed in interactional and constitutive terms, that is, as jointly achieved (through talk) constructions. A case in point is the conversation analytic tradition of membership categorization devices (henceforth MCDs, introduced by Sacks 1992), which departs from the premise that the members’ descriptions of people and the world are not simple representations but constructions of social and moral orders and realities. It also instructs that in order for the analysts to have insights into such categorizations, they should be looking out not just for category identifications, but also for activities that the members themselves routinely attach to categories (see Baker 1997:131–132). This research has drawn attention to the significance of the social actors’ own sense-making devices in any process of categorization. Below, I will show that MCDs are one important way for working up interactional constructions of men in the data at hand.

Another line of inquiry which the present study can draw interesting parallels with is that of “styling the other” which has attracted interactional sociolinguistic, anthropological linguistic and conversation-analytic studies of how the “other” can be discursively constructed. Such studies have unravelling the ways in which “people use language and dialect in discursive practice to appropriate, explore, reproduce and challenge influential images and stereotypes of groups that they do not themselves (straightforwardly) belong to. By performing a variety that is stereotypically associated with a group, they can evoke, represent or even identify with the group” (Rampton 1999:421). The key to this “knowing deployment of culturally familiar styles and identities” is that they are “marked as deviating
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from those periodically associated with the current speaking context” (Coupland 2001a:345). Studies of styling have richly documented the importance of iterative, quotable fragments of language for the discursive (re)-enactment of “other” voices. They have also brought to the fore the difficulties of separating self and other in such cases and of telling “where and how the self is being positioned” (Rampton 1999:422). This perspective is symptomatic of a dynamic approach to language choice and heterogeneity as a marker of style and identity which has an increasing purchase within sociolinguistics and discourse studies (e.g. see papers in Eckert & Rickford 2001): the realization here is that speakers do complex identity work through creatively and strategically mobilizing diverse (often incongruous) language resources that are typically associated with speakers and situations other than the current ones.

In line with the above approach, this chapter aims at shedding light on the interactional resources that participants draw upon to “represent” men, the local meanings of such representations, and their implications for self-identity work. The analysis will attempt to link productively work on MCDs and styling, as outlined above, with small stories. In doing so, the aim is not only to bring in an under-explored apparatus for “other” identities within narrative analysis but also to stretch beyond the typical problematic of styling phenomena and expand their scope in order to make them work for small stories, more specifically for the following crucial aspects of the data at hand: a) the systematic co-occurrence of MCDs with instances of styling as well as with other more or less implicit modes of reference to men; b) the intimate links of the above resources with narrative activities and social practices within which they take place and make sense; c) the consequentiality of a) and b) above for gender identity projections and constructions (in this case, both masculinities and femininities).

To take each issue separately, MCDS and styling in the data are themselves part of a package of language resources mobilized when talking about men. These present a continuum of more or less implicit resources that have developed over time and through the participants’ interactional history; as such, they bear their meanings more indexically rather than referentially, evoking a host of associations (Silverstein 1976). Furthermore, they are recyclable and variously used in different contexts (i.e. recontextualized, Bauman & Briggs 1990). These resources cannot be disassociated from the group’s narrative activities.

Along with an emphasis on the micro devices for constructing others, this chapter will employ the meso-analytic concept of “positioning” as a means of establishing linkages between language choices and larger processes beyond the
here-and-now of interactions.¹ The assumption here is that the business of establishing links between language choices and social processes, including identities is no more straightforward than any connections between text and context can be, particularly since there is a striking convergence on the fact that such links cannot be seen as one-to-one mappings but as complex, indirect, and mediated couplings. We saw for instance in Chapter 4 how it was necessary to posit situational identities at the meso-level of the type of activity underway, in between local participation roles and the participants’ roles and relations with one another. In the search for analytical ways of establishing those – however tenuous – links, a number of related concepts are time and again invoked as mediators, as providing the necessary mid-level between the micro- and the macro-. To mention just few, such concepts include footing, frame, stance, evaluation, involvement, and last but not least positioning. When talking about stance as one of concepts “with unclear and overlapping reference”, Coupland & Coupland make an argument that could be easily extended to all of them, namely that their value is to “direct us to orders of discourse in the mid-range of social contextualization, somewhere between identities and the roles associated with the management of turns or particular communication genres” (2004:29). In that respect, they can be seen as “a useful corrective to analytic approaches which assume that identities can be read off from the surface forms of talk” (Coupland & Coupland 2004:29).

Although potentially applicable to all types of discourse, it is fair to say that positioning has largely informed research on narrative and identity constructions. Within narrative analysis, a volume of relevant studies have directly departed from Davies & Harré’s (1990) seminal paper, in which positioning is defined as referring to “the discursive process whereby selves are located in conversations as observably and subjectively coherent participants in jointly produced story lines” (48). This definition firmly locates the construction of selves and identities in interactional sites (conversations) and in this way subscribes to a discourse-based approach to identity;² in other words, an anti-essentialist, anti-realist approach that emphasizes the emergence of identities in discourse: instead of being, identities come into being through interactions. In addition, the inclusion of observably highlights the fact that all constructions of ‘self’ are manifest in social (inter)-action, in the participants’ exploitation of conversational structures (cf. Widdicombe 1998:203; Zimmerman 1998). The definition also forces attention to processes of joint construction or co-drafting (jointly produced). More specifically, the idea that selves

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¹ Micro-meso-macro should be understood here as a metaphor, a heuristic for analysis. Not only is the distinction a continuum rather than a trichotomy; there are also multiple levels involved on each end.

² It is, however, interesting to note that Davies & Harré work with “made-up” data.
are located in interactions as “subjectively coherent participants” can be linked with the ethnomethodological concept of the “architecture of intersubjectivity” (Heritage 1997:162–163): this refers to the processes through which, in the sequentiality of conversations, participants demonstrate mutual understandings of the local actions performed.

In its history, the concept of positioning, in similar vein as the related concepts outlined above, has exemplified as well as attempting to resolve a tension between micro- and macro-analytic projects: as a result, it seems to partake in the technicalia of interactions (e.g. interactional ways of positioning) and in extra-situational resources and processes (e.g. larger social roles and identities pertaining beyond the here-and-now of an interaction). Positioning in particular has been frequently associated with pre-existing structures (also variably called master narratives, dominant discourses, cultural texts) or culturally available subject positions (in the Foucaultian tradition) that are postulated a priori of specific interactions: the emphasis here tends to be on how such positions shape and are invoked in speakers’ interactional choices. This kind of work does not seem to be tuned into the emergence of positioning processes through details intrinsic to an interaction and has shied away from an exploration of the fleetingness and contingency of positionings in local contexts (for a critique see Bamberg 1997b:335–342; Georgakopoulou 2000; Widdicombe 1998:198ff.; Wortham 2000:164–166).

That said, an interactionally based and dynamic view of positioning seems to be increasingly gaining ground. Departing from a relational and performative view of self, recent studies have explored positioning as comprising resources or strategies by means of which the speakers’ selves are interactionally drafted, (re)fashioned, and ultimately situated in language practices (Bamberg 2004a; Wilkinson 2003). The assumption here is that, rather than being positioned in a deterministic way by out-there structures, speakers actively and agentively select, resist and revisit positions. These processes are more or less indirectly marked or cued in discourse by specific devices which can be subsequently used as an analytical platform for the exploration of speakers’ identities (for examples, see Lucius-Hoene & Depperman 2000; Wortham 2000).

In addition to providing a useful analytical framework for establishing links between language choices and identities, in this study positioning is used as a point of entry into interactional constructions of selves and others, mainly for three reasons:

a) Its strong association with narrative affords us with an apparatus for identity work that is keyed to narrative activities. The project here is to extend concepts that have worked for conventional narrative analysis to less canonical stories as well as to an under-represented focus of inquiry, such as the construction of other as opposed to self.
b) The concept evokes a powerful metaphor of constructing selves and others as a process of locating them or drawing up spaces for them. At the same time, it suggests that identities locate us, “hail us into place as the social subjects of particular discourses” (Hall 1996:5). As will be shown, this process of locating can be very important in the data at hand for social categorization.

c) Finally, the flexibility (and even ambiguity) inherent in the conceptualization of positioning as “doing” and “being done”, “self” and “other”, opens up possibilities for an exploration not only of how speakers take up positions (and in turn are being positioned) but also of how what they say positions somebody else, be their interlocutors or other participants.

5.1.1 Positioning the ‘other’

Interactional accounts of positioning advocate a dialectical relationship between taking up positions and being positioned: both are joint draftings, subject to revision and negotiation. However, positioning also entails the third possibility of current speakers positioning “other” – absent – speakers. This tends to be looked into at the level of a teller’s “representations” of characters in the taleworld. As Bamberg has shown (1997b, 2004a), an indispensable level of positioning in storytelling involves the representation of characters (e.g. descriptions, evaluations) and event sequences and the ways in which these relate to social categories and their action potential. From there on, Bamberg argues, we move into positioning level 2, where the referential and representational aspects of story constructions are put to interactional uses, and rhetorically function to convey how speakers signal their relationships with their audience (2004a:6). In working from these two levels of positioning, the analyst is better situated to make assumptions about the ideological orientation within which the speakers are establishing a sense of self. What is important as an insight in this model of positioning is that through constructions of the other, speakers ultimately engage in self-identity work. Put it otherwise, positionings of self implicate positionings of other.

Nonetheless, as argued, there is still ample scope for looking into the ways in which such constructions or positionings of others take place and how they link up with self-identity work. The first issue to address here is what linguistic resources the participants mobilize for positioning men. We will show that the participants have a style at their disposal that comprises more or less implicit ways of talking about men and in doing so imbuing social meanings and roles to them. This is intimately linked with their storytelling practices and by extension with their group history. Then, the discussion will turn to the consequentiality of this resonant phenomenon of positioning men in the discourse practices of the group for identity work. The question in this respect will be: What kinds of masculinities do the par-
participants construct? How can we connect positioning others and more generally, discourses of alterity with making sense of self? I will argue that the men talked about are predominantly marked for their gendered identities, more specifically their masculinities. Of the available stereotyped masculinities, the ones that are routinely invoked and recontextualized are the two extreme poles of a continuum of social positions, namely those that mark men as tough (hard) or, conversely, soft (babyish, feminine) The key to this is to be found in the social practices that members are engaged in and (re)constituting through their discourse practices: in this case, other-positionings implicate self-identities of femininity and sexuality, since they are integrally linked with the all-important – at this point in the participants’ lives – practices of female friendship on one hand and heterosexual relationships (e.g. courting, dating) on the other hand. Finally, other construction will be proposed here as a site for the articulation of fantasy within such heterosexual relationships.

5.2 Positioning cues and small stories

Talk about others permeates the group’s conversational activities and social practices: parents, teachers and other girls are some of the absent parties that routinely become the talking point. The significant social others though are undoubtedly men. We will thus focus on their discursive representations here as a telling case for processes of identity construction.

Positionings of men in the data are part of a certain style of talking about men within specific storytelling activities. In this case, style is seen as an organized system of verbal and other semiotic resources for self-presentation as well as for social meaning-making (e.g. Eckert & Rickford 2001). A key idea in this strand of research is that style can be creatively and strategically drawn upon by speakers to signal a wide range of social identities and roles. By the same token, the tricky matter of defining style is moving away from distributional criteria towards embracing the following ideas as its constituents: (sociocultural) distinctiveness in the sense of systematic contrasts between different styles in terms of language choices and the social meanings that they signal (Irvine 2001); also, actively motivated symbolic processes of identification or disaffiliation with social groups (Coupland 2001b:196).

Here, style distinctiveness is shaped by and allusive to the group’s shared interactional history; a rich semiotic system that links associatively speakers, speech styles, talked about parties, social categories, and interactional contexts in “key

3. An earlier version of this discussion is to be found in Georgakopoulou 2005b:169–178.
episodes” and “key-events” (that is, lived or interactional narratives) in the group’s history (cf. Bauman 2001; Irvine 2001:77). It comprises co-occurring signals (referred to here as positioning cues) on a continuum of explicitness by means of which men are referred to, identified, socially categorized, and assessed. The main positioning cues are as follows:

**Nicknames:** In their histories of practice, these start off as being loosely connected with the talked about person’s particularities, e.g. physical attributes, personality traits, occupation, habits, etc. However, through repeated uses (recycling) in various local interactional contexts (recontextualization) and for various local purposes, they acquire extra layers of meaning. Over time, their meanings become by and large non-referential, i.e. indexical (e.g. Silverstein 1976): they act as short-circuiting devices that evoke a whole range of associations and connotations for the participants.

**Assessments:** As in the case of nicknames, assessments which invariably refer to personality traits are mediated by the group’s interactional history and tend to be both indexical and frozen expressions. For instance, the characterization of a particular man as “shy” (*dropalos*) has ended up in the group’s conversations evoking notions of lack of communication and sociability skills, which are not necessarily denoted by the term, as is widely used in Greek.

**Membership categorization devices (and category-bound activities):** As Sacks (1992) has shown, social categories frequently go hand-in-hand with activities that members routinely attach to them. Both act as constructions of social and moral orders and realities.

**Stylizations:** These involve exaggerated and performance-oriented quotations or interanimations of men’s voices that introduce shifts to “codes” other than the one of the surrounding talk (and, for that matter, the participants’ baseline idiolect). As both Rampton (1999) and Coupland (2001a) have argued, stylizations bring into play stereotyped images and values associated with types of people, social groups and situations. In the data at hand, stylizations are mostly quoted punchlines or formulaic fragments from shared stories (see below). In this case too, recontextualisation leads to formulaicity in language expression.

### 5.2.1 Positioning in action

The following discussion will show positioning cues at work in stories through focusing on three interrelated processes of locating men, styling men, and assessing men.4

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5.2.1.1 Locating men

As suggested, an important function of positioning in the data is to locate men in physical time and space in the participants’ small town community, that is, to situate them in (social) time and place. These spatiotemporal locations are mostly articulated in stories, here very much in the Bakhtinian (1981) notion of a chronotope: a socio-symbolically and culturally mediated, active synthesis of time and space that crucially defines the parameters of the represented tale world (see §3.6).

This process of locating involves informing other participants of the recent whereabouts of men they are interested in; it also allows them to make plans for future meetings with those men. To understand how this works, we saw in §3.6 what the participants’ social and physical landscape involves.

As suggested (Ch. 2), sightings of men the participants are interested in are reportable events in themselves and they are mostly rendered in the form of breaking news. In locating men, the participants mark the men for certain identities, roles, and activities by associatively linking them with plots. In the process, these plots can be reaffirmed and reinforced in their local use and/or they can render new plots intelligible. Excerpt (5.1) below introduces the character talked about with an i c k n a m e( l i n e 2 , Eκλαιράκι). Nicknames figure prominently in breaking news: conversations take place in public places (normally in hang-outs) and it is important that the participants use their secret code. At the same time, nicknames are positioning cues inasmuch as they conjure up a host of shared meanings that make the activities reported intelligible:

(5.1) [also cited as (2.7)]
Participants: Tonia (T), Fotini (F), Vivi (V).
Bold is used for MCDs

1 T: Oh ::(.) I didn’t tell you. This morning I go past (( )) it was packed (0.5) where’s Eclaire::tte? (. ) where’s Eclaire::tte? ( . ) there’s Eclairette. There in a corner (. )
2 Eclaire::tte? (.) where’s Eclaire::tte? (.) there’s Eclairette. There in a corner (. )
3 with his brush ((or vacuum cleaner))
4 F: Man (.) the brush and Ekleraki have become // one
5 V: //The Phillips vacuum cleaner sucks the dust ((sings a TV commercial jingle))
6 (They all laugh))
7 T: Guys (.) as if he were a woman with a brush (. ) what a thing!
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7 F: I’ll have a house-proud man guys (..) what else do I want?
8 V: Had he had a kourabies ((traditional pastry with icing sugar)) and he was cleaning?
9 T: hhhh hhh (( )) passes and says (.) wow did it rain?=
10 F: =hhhhhh (.) Had it been raining sweets?

“Eclairette” (line 2) is the diminutive form of a pastry and has loose connections with the fact that the talked about person frequently buys that pastry in quantities from the patisserie that Fotini’s father owns. In the interactional history of the participants, there has been a suspicion that such visits are owed more to the love interest that the man in question has for Fotini and less to the actual pastry. Nonetheless, over a period of three years in use, the nickname has developed added layers of meaning. Its associations with sweetness (the character is frequently referred to as sweet) have lent themselves to the attribution of feminine qualities to Eclairette. As we will discuss in detail below, the positioning that this nickname short-circuits is that of a “soft” (sic feminine) man which is systematically juxtaposed in the data with the positioning of a “hard” (sic tough, macho) man. Here, it suffices to note how, in local contexts, shared images and meanings about the men talked about are indexed, added to and reaffirmed.

In addition to reporting the latest whereabouts of Eclairette, excerpt (5.1) is about evoking and reaffirming familiar associations regarding the character talked about. The re-affirmation of such associations seems to hold the key to this story’s tellability in the sense of its current local relevance. At the same time, the reaffirmation of the familiar is a pleasurable activity in itself, as the participants’ playful and allusive collusion in drawing up a positioning for Eclairette suggests. The reported activity of vacuum cleaning gives rise to a playful exchange where an ironic tone is added by the reference to a shared text, a slogan from a TV commercial (line 5) that is sung by Fotini. Tonia adds to the domestic line of association in line 6 by bringing in a membership category bound activity: Cleaning is something women do and not men. This line of association works in parallel with sweetness. The latter is picked up (again) in line 8 by Vivi.

Locating men in the social space of the community and, in the process, invoking activities and events associated with it is not just a playful activity of reaffirmation of shared assumptions. It is also instrumental in the joint drafting of dating scenarios and possibilities. Although I do not wish to suggest that discourse practices automatically and necessarily translate into “real-life” decisions and choices, it is still notable that, as we will see below, the suitability of each man as a partner ultimately hinges on the kinds of (interactionally debated, contested, and negotiated) positionings that the group come to draw up.

In the excerpt below from Story 1, Appendix, there is a synergy of positioning cues with regard to the man talked about that shape the events under construction. The character talked about owes his nickname Carnation (a brand of milk) to the nature of his family business (a traditional dairy-products patisserie). As is the case
with Eclairette, the nickname has developed additional connotations. It also tends to co-occur with semantically related cues (e.g. references to dairy products).

(5.2)

36 V: That’s okay Tonia (.) so you’ll go one morning to Kanata’s
37 when he stands at the door
38 you’ll be waiting ((to catch him)) opposite at Hondo’s ((cosmetic shop))
39 T: That’s not a bad idea
40 V: >He’ll see you you’ll see him< he’ll say what brings you here?
41 T: So: I’ll tell him >I’m just popping to Hondo’s to get something<
42 we’ll strike up a conversation about this and that
43 then I’ll say (. ) you going somewhere when you finish here
44 heh huh or are you too preoccupied with the milk pies?
45 V: heh huh don’t you want to go for a crème brûlée?

Before line 36, Tonia and Vivi negotiate the time and place of the projected meeting with “Carnation”. It is only when the character is located by Vivi in the familiar surroundings of his family business (Kanata’s, the name of the patisserie) and when the meeting is projected there that Tonia seems to agree with the time and space co-ordinates of the projected events (39). The agreed place of the meeting immediately invokes category bound activities which are drawn upon humorously by Tonia as part of her plotting the meeting. The dairy product (milk-pies) is mentioned jokingly as the character’s main preoccupation (line 44), as perhaps one that Tonia will try to take the character away from for a social outing. Vivi (line 45) responds with another joking reference to a dairy product (crème brûlée). In addition to colluding with Tonia in reaffirming shared images about the character, Vivi formulates a suggestion for a date on its basis which is a twist of the theme of “let’s go out for a drink”. By dis-locating the character’s activities from the patisserie and re-locating them in the incongruous context of a date, new associations are momentarily created and evoked.5

As we saw in 3.6, deciding on the plot of stories ultimately hinges on the participants’ joint locating of men in time and place; working around their sports playing or watching activities; considering the implications of meeting them in one hang-out as opposed to another; debating over and rehearsing the lines appropriate for one meeting place as opposed to another.

5. This idea of experimenting with the men’s usual location in stories certainly resonates across the group’s conversations, where one of the frequent imaginary scenarios in projections involves taking male characters out of their surroundings (e.g. in some cases outside the town) and re-casting their usual activities, frequently to a humorous effect.
5.2.1.2 Styling men

Stylizations of men more often than not draw on iterative, quotable fragments of language (see Coupland 2001a:345). This is where the recontextualization of shared sources in the group comes into its own. Every talked about man has developed in the group’s conversations a recognizable voice that is time and again discursively re-enacted and, through such re-enactments, increasingly stylized. Men’s stylized voices are invariably traceable to quotations from shared stories. For stylization to work, the language in which the voice is performed has to deviate from that of the current speaking context. Stereotyped and exaggerated renderings of other voices are a necessary ingredient here. The participants have a wide range of social varieties as well as French and English at their disposal. Of those, they mostly opt for a) the local dialect, frequently mixed with elements of other regional dialects, b) mangika (a sociolect based on slang and historically associated with marginalized groups of men), c) baby-talk, and d) katharevousa (lit. pure; a formal variety of Greek that originates in its long history of diglossia, which was officially abolished in 1976). What they borrow from those sociolects is the pronunciation (particularly regarding a-c above) and a specific (limited in repertoire) lexis. However, the actual instances of stylizations are made up of quotations that have some kind of meaning for the group and are rooted in the group’s shared interactional history. In this sense, culturally familiar codes blend in with and are mediated by micro-culturally shared codes.

A case in point is the colloquial phrase se pao (I fancy you). The group frequently stylizes its (Northern Greek) dialectal form se pőu (note the raising of the unstressed mid-vowel /o/ to /u/). This stylization originates in a quotation from a shared story line involving a truck-driver who made an unsuccessful pass at one of the participants. The use of the dialectal form combines associations of lack of sophistication and unfortunate chat-up lines. It thus stands for a male social type, frequently called by the participants as vλαχος (peasant). In this case, the use of a regional (and, in effect, social) dialect “becomes imagined as connected with focal individuals and scenes, or with characteristic activities and ways of being” (Irvine 2001:31). In turn, those connections or associations “become available as

6. Shifts to higher (formal) registers are not discussed here (for details, see Georgakopoulou 1999). In “Talk to him man, talk to him” in the Appendix, such shifts occur in lines: 69, 70, 89, 93, 94.

7. This is a derogatory term in Greek that can be indiscriminately directed against non-Athenians. Interestingly, the participants, who are not Athenians themselves, use this term to characterize certain social types and groups within their small community. This discourse practice is intimately linked with the participants’ shared linguistic identity practices, particularly their disaffiliation from the local dialect.
a frame of reference within which speakers create performances and within which audiences interpret them” (idem).

As we have seen, mila tu re, mila tu (Talk to him man, talk to him) is another quotable fragment, partly overlapping in connotations with se pau, as it is frequently used to stylize the voice of inarticulate men. It also indexes men's awkwardness around women and shyness, in the general sense outlined above.

As in the case of other positioning cues, what is notable about stylized phrases such as “mila tu re, mila tu” is the reflexivity, meta-awareness and knowing allusiveness that is involved in their recycling (cf. Coupland 2001a). Their use brings up what is known and familiar thus inviting the participants to look for an understanding of what is said beyond the encounter on hand. Tellingly, all of the stylizations in the data are done laughingly and playfully and immediately responded to as such: there is shared enjoyment in the acknowledgement and reaffirmation of the familiar, even if the local use of a stylization may be contested afterwards, as we will see below:

(5.3) From “Talk to him man, talk to him”, Story 1, Appendix
[Dialectal forms in bold in the original]

21 F: Ωραία (…) βρίσκω εδώ κάπου το Μάκη (…) έτσι?
21 F: Tell me now . . . we are talking serious. Okay . . . I bump into Makis right?
22 F: Μιλάω ο Παύλος με τη Βιβή εκεί, κι ο Μάκης είναι εκεί, και ΤΙ ΤΟΥ ΛΕΣ?
22 F: Pavlos is talking to Vivi, and Makis is there, and WHAT D’YOU TELL HIM?
23 T: Τι κάλαντρα?= Τι κάλαντρα
23 T: The carols?= The carols
24 V: =Τι κάλαντρα
24 V: The carols ((laughs))
25 F: ‘Όχι τα κάλαντρα ρε παιδί μου, άμα σου τόχα πρώτα απ’ όλα (…) ντάξει?
25 F: Not the carols man, assuming it’s going to happen (…) right? WHAT do I tell him?
26 V: Θα του μιλήσω στη γλώσσα του τον παιδιό, σε πάνω χα χα χα α
26 V: You’ll speak to the guy in his language, I fa::ncy you hhh=
27 T: Ον ίδιως χα χα χα
27 T: =hhhh It’s me=
28 F: Η ιδία, η Φωτανή. Εγώ σε έξερον; χα χα χα εσ’ δε με έξερεις?
28 F: =It’s me, Fotini. I know you, hhhhh (…) d’you know me?
29 F: Καί πες ότι κοιτάω από δω, πως θα του τραβήξω την προσοχή?
29 F: And say he’s looking this way, how am I going to draw his attention?
30 V: χα χα χα Μίλα του ρε; μίλα του
30 V: hhhhhh Talk to him man, huh talk to him man ((personation of Pavlos, allusion to a shared story))
((They all laugh)) (2.0)
31 T: Καλά: (…) πάντως ο Παύλος είχε πολύ γέλιο
31 T: Gee (…) Pavlos was so funny
32 F: EΛΛ PE(…) EΛΛ PE, έτσι έκανε ρε παιδία, τον έξεραν το χριστιανό=
32 F: COME ON (…) come on you gu:ys, he d-didn’t mean it tha::t way, they were all friends
of the guy=
Makis (nickname Mikes) is the man that Fotini is at that point romantically interested in and the participants are planning a meeting with him. Makis is stylized with regionally marked forms. The first involves a dialectal form (*kalan*dra instead of the standard form *kalan*da, line 23), as a response to Fotini’s question about her projected verbal interaction with Mikes. The second involves the quotable fragment *se pau* (line 26), which we discussed above. This comes as an example of “his language”, in other words, it indexes Makis’s language as a regionally marked variety and himself as a peasant. As instances of stylization constitute a temporary breach of the ongoing activity (cf. Rampton 1999), that is, a ludic and playful moment, they tend to generate further stylizations. The uptake of Vivi’s *se pau* is laughter and further stylizations on the same theme by both of her interlocutors: e.g. the /o/ of *o idjos* (lit. the same; it’s me) and of *kser-o* (know) in lines 27 and 28 is raised to /u/ (*kseru*). Furthermore, *mila tu re, mila tu* indexes similar images, associations, and personality attributes in line 30. Laughter from all three interlocutors is the typical response to the stylizations. However, Fotini, having conformed to the norm of positive uptake, goes on (line 32) to differentiate her position (*come on come on you guys*) and defends the talked about character (*he didn’t mean it that way*).

Stylized phrases tend to co-occur in the group’s conversations thus forming part of a synergy of signals which work together to achieve the hallmarks of instances of stylization, as discussed by Rampton (1999) and others: a temporary breach of the ongoing activity and language use that markedly departs from the co-text. As we can see in excerpt (5.3) above, Tonia and Fotini echo the dialectal shift of *se pau* in lines 27 and 28: O *idjos* becomes U *idjus* (27); in addition, the /n/ of the name Fotini that precedes /i/ is palatalized (as already mentioned, this is a typical feature of the local dialect). Again, laughter accompanies these instances of stylization. This is one of the indications of stylization being taken up by the participants as a playful suspension of the ongoing activity. In point of fact, Fotini twice re-orients (lines 25, 29) to the story under construction as the main business in hand.\(^8\)

The above suggests that not only have repeated performances led to a specific set of stylized phrases but they have also generated a closed set of sequentially immediate responses (e.g. laughter, exact repetition, repetition with variation, further stylization), which can be subsequently followed up by a wide variety of affiliative or disaffiliative moves.

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8. We saw in §4.3 the telling roles that the participants assume in the course of this projection and how these connect with social identities.
5.2.1.3 Assessing men
Positioning men invariably involves an element of assessment (cf. evaluation): past actions and words (in specific time and place) are scrutinized, and, on their basis, future actions gauged, predicted, allowed, and disallowed. It is through a joint process of piecing together events and interpretative viewpoints that the participants decide on who the good men are and equally who should be avoided. Assessments frequently mobilize membership categorization devices. The term *yatɔs* (cat) is reserved for older, cunning, and sexually exploitative men; the term *aθoа peristera* (lit. innocent pigeon) is used for men who tell lies, yet protest too much about their innocence. As suggested above, stylizations too index social roles and attributes. Over a period of negotiation and debate in the interactional history of the group, a list of good and bad male personality traits has been agreed on by the participants: telling lies is close to the top, but being shy, as defined by the participants, is worse.

These assessments come close to Davies & Harré’s (1990) ‘known roles’: they tend to be larger roles and attributes that the participants know to hold above and beyond local storytelling situations. As such, they can be described as the talked about men’s “transportable” identities that can be at any stage brought about in local contexts and made relevant (Zimmerman 1998). The degree of routinization that accompanies other positioning cues is to be found here too. Talk about Eklairette for instance very frequently generates the phrase *Eclairaki kai pali Eclairaki* (Eclairette again and again).

Recontextualizations of assessments often serve as argumentative devices in the course of jointly constructing stories. In other words, participants invoke them in order to defend their own views and challenge their interlocutors’ viewpoint or version of events. In that role, assessments tend to appear later in the course of storytelling as the ultimate negotiating chips, when the argumentative use of other positioning cues (e.g. nicknames, stylizations) has failed. A case in point is *talk to him man, talk to him*, the story of projected events that we have frequently discussed. The gradual undermining of Mikes by Tonia and Vivi by means of stylizations (the phrase talk to him man, talk to him man is brought up 5 times in the course of the storytelling), references to shared stories, and membership categorization devices find a lot of resistance from Fotini. Tellingly, assessments come in towards the end of the story: Mikes is called anti-social by Vivi in line 179; this assessment is immediately colluded by Tonia:

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9. Both are adapted from everyday usage in Greek, but extra meanings and connotations have been added.

10. This was articulated in the ethnographic interviews with the participants.
This assessment goes unchallenged by Fotini; what her next turn simply shows is that she is still keen on the meeting with Mikes. Typically, assessments are accepted as agreed on and un-contestable, holding above and beyond the local context of the current telling.

Assessments frequently involve comparisons between men, which reinforce the group’s agreed positive and negative evaluations of certain personality traits. In the story of Fotini’s meeting with Mikes, Eclairette is towards the end of the story invoked as a more suitable candidate for a date with Fotini than Mikes:

Similarly, in the excerpt below, Tonia has just finished a breaking news story about Yob (nickname), an older man who is frequently labeled as a “cat”. The participants are wary of “cats”, even if they find them attractive.11

11. There are numerous interactional debates in the data as to whether the participants should go out with a man that falls into this category. Over time, and on the basis of Vivi’s bad experience with a specific “cat”, the term becomes increasingly pejorative and the positioning of a man as cat normally precludes a dating possibility.
Chapter 5. Positioning self and other in small stories

1 T: ((Is)) Yob((nickname)) better-looking than Honda ((nickname))?
2 V: Don’t even think about it, >we’ll fall out big time!<
3 F: WHAT d’you see on him?
4 T: ((singing)) What is s/he telling you about me?

Vivi’s response (line 2) to Tonia’s question seems to cancel out the validity of a comparison between Yob and Honda; the emphatic refusal to enter the terms of the comparison also seems to presuppose that the answer that Tonia is looking for is “yes”. Fotini indexes prior knowledge by explicitly asking Tonia what she sees on the man talked about (line 3). Tonia ends this “assessment quiz” by singing the line “What is s/he telling you about me?” (line 4) from a popular Greek song that forms a commonly routinized response in the group to men’s positioning cues (such as stylizations of their voices and assessments). The line seems to serve as an imaginary reaction on the part of the talked about man; it is as if he were addressing the person who had negatively evaluated him. In this way, the mode-switching involved in the line (from talking to singing) signposts and ties in with a shift in voice and perspective.

5.3 Positionings of other as gendered performances

We have seen so far how modes of reference to men and stories about men co-occur and work together in order to evoke images of the characters talked about. It has to be stressed that all such constructions draw on and construct a multiplicity of meanings. They are also locally occasioned: the same fragments of speech perform different social actions in different contexts (Antaki & Widdicombe 1998). Having said that, it still is an inescapable fact of the data that talk about men has to do with sexuality, in the sense of the socially constructed expression of erotic desire (Cameron & Kulick 2003: 4): the men talked about are in any case men that the participants wish to form an erotic relationship with. It is not accidental then that the constructed voices, imageries and personae of those men are deeply gendered and specifically related to notions of masculinity.

As we have seen, details of a man’s body, outfit, gaze, movement etc. are also frequently invoked, particularly as part of tellings of breaking news. Masculinities themselves form a continuum of socially available roles and ideologies. Nonetheless, it is the two extreme poles of this continuum, that is, stereotyped personae of hard men and soft men that are more commonly and conveniently drawn upon. In terms of community wide discourses available to the participants, the former could be called a hegemonic masculinity and the latter a non-hegemonic one. As

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12. An earlier version of this section is to be found in Georgakopoulou 2005b: 172–179.
we will see below, however, these dominant discourses have been reworked over a period of time by the group and are not reflected in a straightforward way.

If we go back to excerpt (5.1), the nickname Eclairette short-circuits a specific gendered representation: that of a man with a feminine side to him. A clear parodic reference to the un-maleness of the reported activity is provided by Tonia in line 6. This line provides us with a glimpse into MCDs and category bound activities. Cleaning is something women do and not men.

Two lines of associations work in parallel here to make up a “feminine” persona for Eclairette: domesticity and sweetness. The associations with sweetness are also picked up again in line 8 by Vivi. Her question is ironic. Language here is a “resource that allows a more subtle reconfiguration of meanings, through allusion, intertextuality, irony and co-operative humour” (Harvey 2002:1146–1147). Interestingly, there is no single label attached to such men by the participants. Instead, the shared representations and evaluations in this case mobilize a whole set of category-bound activities, preferences, and features that are routinely used: e.g. domesticity, likeness of sweets and dairy products, preference for non-alcoholic drinks, particularly orange juice; also physical traits, such as blue eyes, baby face, etc.

Nicknames tend to evoke this kind of soft masculinity (e.g. see the nickname “Carnation”, in “Going out for a crème brûlée” which refers to a brand of milk); stylizations draw upon stereotypical imitations of “camp talk” and/or “baby talk”. Although Eklairette’s voice is not directly enacted in excerpt (5.1) above, the diminutive is telling; also lines 2–3 are modeled on the Greek equivalent of pee-ka-boo: typically of this routine, the question is repeated twice (where’s Eclairette? (.) where’s Eclairette?) with the intonation characteristic of baby-talk, and followed by the “revelation” (there’s Eclairette).

In similar vein, consider 5.2 from “Going out for a crème brûlée”. The character talked about owes his nickname Carnation to the nature of his family business (a traditional dairy-products patisserie). As is the case with the nickname Eclairette (ex. 3 above), through recycling and recontextualization, the nickname has developed additional connotations. It also tends to co-occur with cues that represent the character as a soft man, such as humorous references to the character’s baby-face and love of dairy products (that are themselves associated with babies). In the above example, a dairy product (milk-pies) is mentioned jokingly as the character’s main “preoccupation” (line 44) and one that is set in contrast with a concept of having a social life (e.g. going out on a date). Vivi (line 45) re-

13. The term “new man” remains untranslated in Greek. The term “floros” (roughly equivalent to camp) is infrequently used by the group. In addition, these men are not perceived as gay, although their speech is stylized as “camp talk”.
sponds with another reference to a dairy product that is tellingly in diminutive form in the original.

While MCDs that are associated with the categories of “woman” and “baby/child” as well as camp talk play an important part in the stylization of soft men, it is the local dialect, as we saw it in excerpt (5.3), that provides the main vehicle for the enactment of hard men. Hard men (cf. “macho”; “tough”; referred to by the participants as _adraklas_: “big man”, _varys_: “heavy” but also _gatos/a_: cat, as already discussed), such as Makis (nickname Mikes) and Pavlos above, are talked about by the participants as inarticulate (particularly around women) and lacking in communication skills; they watch and play basketball and football, and they hang out with other men. They are also invariably represented as local men (some of them specifically called _vlaxoi_: peasants) and stylized with (mainly phonological) shifts to the local dialect and a harsh tone of voice iconically representing “hard men”. In “Talk to him man”, the representation of machismo and toughness for Makis is thus engineered by means of indexical cues: regional lexis and phonology, vernacular intonation, stylized set-phrases. In addition, category-bound activities (associated with hard men) are brought in to bear on (allow or disallow) the employment scenarios that the participants try on and jointly negotiate: as we have seen, the fact that Mikes and his friend Pavlos watch basketball at a specific time in a specific hang-out informs the story’s plot. Character assessments are also used as part of a gradual drafting of a position of toughness for Mikes. Thus, drawing up a representation of Mikes as tough in this case becomes part of the local project of undermining Makis.

The two kinds of male persona illustrated above can also be drawn up for different characters of the same story: in such cases, it is arguable that their contrastive relationship brings out particular meanings more forcefully. Consider the following example:

(5.7) Breaking news: lines 1–3 & Hypothetical scenario: lines 5–10: “Soft” and “hard” men

[Positioning cues in bold]

1 T: Βλέπω το Σωτηράκη χτες με καινούργιο μηχάνημα (...) και του λέω (.)
2 >καινούργιο; Με γεία< καλό; δεν είναι μου λέει ((doing a child’s voice)) με
3 το χαμουγελά:κι τον
4 V: =χα χα Το γαλανο ματάκι που //ματίάζει
5 F: //Αντε θα πηγαίνουν εκτός τόρα (.) τα πουλάκια μου (.) Million Dollars και
6 τέτοια=

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14 Local in this case includes a strong affiliation with the community. It is no accident that local men are presented as settled in the community, with no plans or aspirations for leaving it (e.g. for study, professional reasons, etc.). In fact, as we have seen, the local dialect is frequently described as “their language.”
Small stories, Interaction and Identities

The excerpt starts off with breaking news (lines 1–3) which intertextually leads to a hypothetical story line (lines 5–9) involving the main character talked about (Sotirakis). The stylization of Sotirakis (note the diminutive) in line 2 enacts a child’s voice. Other MCDs mobilized here and activities attached to them evoke stereotypical imageries of children/babies: the diminutive form in the character’s name (Sotirakis: lit. little Sotiris), in the reference to his smile (line 3) and eyes (line 4; notably blue); the consumption of orange-juice (line 8; also in diminutive form); the characterization of Sotirakis as a “baby” (line 8) by characters in the taleworld and in similar vein, the bar-woman’s baby-talk (line 10). This representation of Sotirakis is set in contrast with the location of the hypothetical story line in a bar “outside” (ektos) the town: this constitutes a dis-location of Sotirakis, a hypothetical removal from his routine surroundings and activities. The incongruity between Sotirakis and his new surroundings is highlighted in the scene with the bar-woman who is assigned the role of a babysitter (lines 7–9, 10).

Part of the representation of Sotirakis is drawn up by being put in the mouth of his male companions in the hypothetical taleworld (lines 7–9): their voice (in the form of a chorus) is stylized as a stereotypically “male” one, which stands in sharp contrast to the stylization of Sotirakis’s enacted voice (line 2). The un-maleness of Sotirakis is thus juxtaposed to the male-ness and toughness of his friends. As is typical however in the data, both kinds of representation playfully invoke shared meanings, in ways which do not bring to the fore clear, straightforward or sustained affiliations or disaffiliations of the participants with one or the other. Evidence for this was found both during the fieldwork and in the group’s conver-
sational data. To begin, as already suggested, hard men tend to be local, older, and sexually experienced. Although the group, particularly Vivi, oppose the community discourses according to which young girls should not go out with much older men, they also very frequently refer to “bad experiences”, “lessons that have been learnt”, and the “need to be very careful about any kind of sexual attraction towards them”, which they admit that there often is. From this point of view, one can best talk about ambivalence rather than clear lines of affiliation or disaffiliation. Similar things apply to the case of soft men: pros are constantly weighed up with cons and the situation is best described as that of mixed feelings.

In similar vein, in the group’s conversations, although stylizations of both hard and soft men are oriented to as playful, ludic and even parodic instances, the men that are stylized are not statically and unexceptionally constructed as “bad”. Instead, different participants may position themselves differently to the same man talked about in different local contexts and to suit different purposes. For instance, in “Talk to him man”, although all three participants playfully stylize Mikes, they have different views on him: Vivi and Tonia present him in a negative light while Fotini is keen to go out with him. At the same time, as we have seen, although Eclairette is frequently parodied for his lack of masculinity, in the telling of “Talk to him man” he is invoked as a more suitable candidate for Fotini than Mikes. Alliances or lack of them are thus strategically and contextually constructed, and as such, they are dynamic, contingent and even indeterminate. In that respect, judgements of which of the two types of men, hard or soft, rank more highly in the eyes of the participants can only be made as reifications or naturalizations of the data. On the ground, the picture is that of ever shifting affiliations and disaffiliations.

There is also another point to be made here about how the participants position themselves vis-à-vis the community wide discourses that accompany the masculinities that they invoke: while for instance a macho man is a hegemonic masculinity in the community, in the youth magazines that the participants frequently read, this masculinity is counter-acted and the image of a soft man (akin to the Western new man) is beginning to emerge. For the participants, such positionings can operate as a double bind: on the one hand, they contest hegemonic representations of their community in the eyes of their teachers and parents. On the other hand, the non-hegemonic masculinities that are propagated by youth magazines and other sources they are affiliated with, seem to go against deeply rooted perceptions of normative heterosexuality and the fear of homosexuality. In their actual discursive construction though, it is important to stress the reworkings of both these kinds of masculinities in ways that do not allow for a straightforward mapping onto dominant discourses. Constrained by and preoc-

16. We have also seen the girls’ ambivalence towards “cats”.
cupied with the two extremes of “good” and “bad boy” (villain), the participants have added two complicating attributes to each of these discourses: the “good boys” seem to have a feminine side to them and the “bad boys” are invariably local men that are lacking in professional success and mobility. Once again, positionings cannot be accounted for and understood outside the social sphere or locale in which the participants operate. It is in fact the localness and the men’s affiliation with the community that the participants mostly contest in their interactional constructions of them.

5.4 From other-positionings to self-identities

So far, I have shed light on the linguistic resources by which the participants draw up men’s positionings within small stories. I have argued that those resources are stylistic (in the sense of forming distinctive systems for projecting social personas and meanings), indexical and embedded in the group’s stories. They also work together to position men as social actors in specific locales, associated with typical events and activities, ways of talking and (inter)-acting. The identities that they construct for those men can by no means be sequestered from the social practice of dating and courting which is of paramount importance in the participants’ lives (fieldnotes). The men are primarily talked about as potential sexual partners. As such, through the discourse practice of positioning men, participants come to resolve who it is appropriate or permissible to go out with, what sort of a dating scenario suits them, what to say and do in courting situations.

In this way, the joint construction of men’s positionings progressively provides interpretative grids for collectively assessing past, present, and future relationships with men and for drafting shared ideologies of what a good or bad sexual relationship is. This warrants a view of positioning men as a relational process: through their intense preoccupation with the other, the participants ultimately make sense of self as a heterosexual social actor. What their own expectations of a relationship, likes and dislikes are; what their understandings about sexual and social boundaries are.

Heterosexuality and by extension femininity are at the heart of these processes. Both of them are, however, co-constructions: fashioned and contested within the economies of friendship and with reference to shared interactional practices. Female adolescents’ friendship has oft been described as the basis for forms of social subjectivity (e.g. Hey 1997). In this case, it is important to note that the partic-

participants’ identities of femininity and sexuality, albeit negotiated and jointly fashioned, are by no means uniform or undifferentiated. As we have already seen, the four women differ significantly in their gendered identities. Vivi, who is in many ways the leading figure of the group, is the only sexually active member of the group; Tonia faces her heterosexual desires with fear and consistently frames the friendship bonds within the group as a safe environment for working through her fears, as a mediator for her anticipated engagement with the “heterosexual marketplace” (Griffin 1985); Fotini frequently orients to the community’s disapproval of sexually active women at the participants’ age and seeks romantic love (cf. Hey 1997:97–99). Finally, Irene, finds it difficult to articulate or act upon her desires and fantasies except for within the group practice of men’s positionings.

Despite these differences, the participants are all fully aware – even if critical – of the boundaries and constraints of their community regarding what is acceptable female behaviour. In particular, they articulate and debate the tension between finding a “nice guy” and a “cool guy”. As discussed above, “cats” endlessly fascinate them although they have come to agree on the fact that they are “dangerous”. On the other hand, “nice” or “sweet” men (that, as seen, tend to be associated with domesticity) can be “too nice” and “boring” (interviews).

The positionings of two of the men exemplified above, namely Eclairette and Mikes above, over time are revealing of this dynamic: As seen in excerpt 1, Eclairette is routinely and playfully positioned as a nice, sweet, and domestic guy. At the same time, Mikes (excerpt 3) who is a also a potential romantic interest of Fotini, is parodied as one of the crude guys (“vlaxos”) but Fotini is undoubtedly attracted to him and his suitability as a boyfriend is intensely debated. Although Eclairette is on occasion assessed as being more suitable than Mikes (excerpt 5), from the audio-recordings, it becomes apparent that social positions constructed for the two men become increasingly parodic, polarized, and crystallized in the course of six months: the positioning of Eclairette as sweet and domestic is pushed to the emic category of a soft” (cf. camp) man while Mikes is gradually labelled a “cat”. In real life, Fotini does not end up going out with any of them. Instead, she starts dating Vassilis, about whom the group have made the decision – after intense debate – that he is not a cat. Positionings of men are thus ways of both othering and intimating them in the process of the participants making sense of men and of their own heterosexual roles and identities.

There is a notable element of performativity and acting out in this process, as suggested by the frequent use of stylisations, the humorous keying of talk about men and the knowing allusiveness. In this respect, the participants’ discursive constructions of men present interesting parallels with the citations of notions of femininity that have been reported as part of queerspeak (Harvey 2002). In his study, Harvey discusses in detail (1158–1160) similarities between the concept of citationality (adapted from Butler 1993) and other closely related concepts such as
performance (genre), intertextuality, parody, double-voicing and quotations (this list could have easily included stylization). He argues that citationality captures heightened awareness and self-referentiality; it signals vigilance in relation to the code along with a parodic stance (1153), while at the same time being more diffuse and general than parody. Although boundaries between these notions are not clear-cut, exactly as in the cases of citationality, both the orientation to form and the critical strategy are important in the representations of the data: in particular, the stylisations too are “predicated on a self-consciousness, a knowing allussiveness, meant not only to bond speaker and hearer but also to index even to mock the means of its achievement” (1159). In both cases, specific shared understandings are playfully alluded to. There is also a frequent mixing of elements resulting in humorous incongruity.

Citationality in this respect makes a sharper comment than stylization on the degrees of critical awareness and self-referentiality involved in enacting “other” voices. Although work on stylization has stressed that in such cases it is very difficult to locate self and other, relevant studies have by and large brought to the fore instances of playful appropriation of and heartfelt identification with the enacted voices (Hill 1999:547). From this point of view, citationality can be usefully applied to the data to capture the critical distancing and acute meta-awareness involved in the participants’ “doing” of male voices. In addition, there is another layer of meaning that citationality allows to be brought in: the idea that the stylized other voices can be specifically and stereotypically gendered voices. These can be drawn upon and evoked in the social actors’ attempt to develop and reflect on their own gendered voice.

Although not concerned with gender, Rampton (2003) has identified the performative stylization of British “posh” and “cockney” in the conversations of adolescents as a way of denaturalizing cultural class hegemonies: “Through the process of objectification … stylization partially denaturalized this pervasive cultural hierarchy and disrupted its authority as “doxa”, as an interpretive frame that was “accepted, undiscussed, unnamed, admitted without scrutiny” (Bourdieu 1977:169–170; quoted in Rampton 2003:76). This interpretation is not far from Butler’s ideas about the potential for subversion and re-signification of meanings that performative acts have through iterative and sedimented articulations over time: “a potential to break with their original context assuming meanings and functions for which [they were] never intended” (1997:147). By the same token, it can be argued that there are acts of resistance and subversion in the performances of masculinities that the women of this study interactionally put on. As we have argued, the notions of masculinity they invoke are creative reworkings rather than representations of widely available discourses within their community; also, the frequent parodic and playful discursive enactments of such masculinities suggest a critical strategy at work.
At the same time, to echo Butler again, “social performatives ritualized and sedimented through time are central to the process of subject formation” (1997:157). In the data at hand, this would mean that constructing gendered positions for men is an integral process for the participants’ constitution of their own gendered selves: they learn about self through representation of the other, through looking into the boundaries between self and other. They are certainly at an age at which their notions of sexuality and femininities are not settled. Constructing and deconstructing other gendered positions (in this case, male) can thus be legitimately linked with the process of exploring and ultimately naturalizing own gendered positions (Butler 1993).

5.5 Small stories as fantasies

As men’s positionings were invariably embedded in (fantasy events) stories of dating, they placed heterosexual roles and identities at the heart of the participants’ micro- and macro-concerns. Other positionings thus implicated self-constructions of femininity, of finding the right place in the heterosexual market.

In many respects, these reported practices are comparable with the findings of numerous sociological and psycho-social studies of adolescent girls’ private micro-cultures of friendship, which have stressed the significance of relationships with boys in their economies of friendship (e.g. Hey 1997; Griffin 1985; McRobbie 1991). The imperative to intimate and enter the heterosexual market is key to the forms of social subjectivity of adolescent girls. Analysts have in that respect noted that female subjectivity cannot be understood but with reference to how women experience boys and masculinity, as boys are in their head even if they are not around (Holland et al. 1991 quoted in Hey 1997:128). However, if boys are in the girls’ head, they deplorably tend to be absent from the analysis of their discourse practices making for scarce empirical research on exactly how girls bring up, evoke and represent boys in their discourse practices and what this means for their own identities. The difficulties in theorizing women as readers, viewers, spectators, have frequently been noted (Gledhill 1995:73–93) and linked with the longstanding emphasis on representations of women by men. This bias has in many ways denied “recognition of women as makers of meaning out of male images” and by extension of “female fantasies” (74). The same lacuna can be noted in studies of language and gender. Despite the long tradition here of nuanced attention to details of talk as a prerequisite for identity analysis (e.g. see Bucholtz 1999b), talk about others (cf. discourse of alterity) has been consistently neglected. As a result, the analytic vocabulary for linking the two processes of positionality of the other and self-constructions is far from refined or complete.
Given these limitations, this chapter has put forth a connection between other-positionings and self-identities on the basis of combining narrative interactional analysis with an ethnographic perspective on the data at hand. This integrative methodology is in line with the latest practice-view of identities that sees them as bound up with the types of activities participants are engaged in with others in a specific point of their lives (e.g. via Bourdieu 1977; Bucholtz 1999b; Eckert & McConnell-Ginet 1999; Wenger 1998). Within such a framework, there is still much scope for exploring the implications of other-positionings for self-identity. In this study, other-positionings entailed iterative and performative enactments of stylistic resources. Empirical fine-grained analysis could further explore how the interactional construction of gendered positions other than a speaker’s demonstrable ones can be legitimately brought together with the process of exploring and ultimately naturalizing (Butler 1993) own gendered positions. At the same time, excessive performance of masculinity within a heterosexual frame as seen here lends evidence to the theorizing of women’s gendered identity constitution in terms of the other; to put it psychoanalytically, in terms of a lack.18

It is also worth exploring the kinds and trajectories of stories which women (re)fashion across time and space as rehearsal for participation in the heterosexual market. In the data at hand,19 we see narrative romance conventions structuring the planning of meetings with men (cf. Hoey 1997; Mills & White 1997) side by side with intense “viewing” and focalization of men on the women’s part. In this way, to echo Gledhill (1993), “they hold up masculinity up to a view, occasionally aestheticizing it” (80). This arguably provides a “relatively unthreatening access to masculinity”, some kind of “an engagement” which “affords familiarity” (idem). What is interesting for our analysis is, as we showed, how this rehearsal of relationships is enacted discursively, through specific narrative genres that are in turn performed in specific spheres or locales and raise specific interactional roles for the participants.20

18. Interestingly, in line with other feminist analysts, McRobbie sees the current ‘visibility’ of (Western) women in the popular arena and the recent post-feminist discourses of ‘girlpower’ as a form of re-subordination to the Symbolic that re-stabilizes traditional gender hierarchies rather than as a genuine change of sexual identities (2006). Even though women are nowadays seemingly constituted as desiring ‘subjects’ in their own right, McRobbie argues, the demands of the fashion and beauty industry ensure their parallel constitution as dissatisfied subjects.

19. Despite the fascination of cultural studies analysts with ‘girls’ and ‘girlhood’ since the mid-80s, the volume of research is still heavily Anglo-centric in bias (see Griffin 2004).

20. Gledhill (1995:85) goes further to suggest that in the cinematic data which she studies, there seem to be two routes offered for fantasy to women by means of the portrayed types of men: one that turns on difference and distance (crudely speaking, enacted by the “macho” men) and one that turns on similarity and rapprochement (played out by feminized types of men).
Indeed, the systematic exploration of the sites, contexts, and interactional features of the discursive construction of fantasy and desire is only now beginning to be put on the map of sociolinguistics and the links with empirical analyses remain tenuous (e.g. see Cameron & Kulick 2003; Eckert 2002). In line with Cameron & Kulick, Rampton (2006) makes a plea for the scrutiny of the complex interaction between language, visual imagery, sensations, fantasy, desire, and anxieties within sociolinguistics (see discussion in Ch. 9); and he urges for a recognition of processes that bring linguistic analysis closer to the cultural analysts’ discussions of subjectivity and the theorizing of identity in terms of active relationality between self and other, of identifications or dis-identifications (257). This is a well-developed project within psychoanalytic approaches to subjectivity (e.g. Hollway 2004) but the links with socially minded approaches remain to be forged. From the point of view of interactionally based research, a detailed documentation of the sites, forms and (hegemonic or counter-hegemonic) practices of gendered other-positionings should be central to this project.21

More generally, how we can bring psychoanalytic insights into social and interactional models of narrative and identity and if the two are at all compatible are issues at the core of current problematic and still beg answers. And as Redman (2005) notes, “the arrival of a theoretical resolution to this impasse does not appear imminent” (41). This is despite the advent of the psycho-social position (e.g. Frosh 2003; Hollway 2004) that attempts a synthesis between the two dimensions of the psychic and the social thus articulating a paradigm of how social positions and aspects of the social world are ultimately invested with meanings from the inner world of the psyche.22 At the moment, it is not clear how this psycho-social movement will cross-fertilize with a discursive approach to narrative and identity that firmly grounds itself on the analysis of “talk data”. For our purposes, however, what is clearer is the role of small stories in the accomplishment of identity work.

Although psychoanalytic processes are outside the scope of this discussion, there is still an interesting parallel here to be noted with regard to the two types of men that are discursively enacted in the data at hand.

21. Again, the data at hand lend themselves to a psychoanalytic reading of how the systematic discursive enactment of fantasy for heterosexual relationships arguably provides the stage and co-ordinates of desire; to paraphrase Žižek (1997), it “literally teaches” the participants “how to desire” (7). By creating a gap between imagination and representation and by forestalling an immediate reference to real social relations, fantasy is central to the project of relationality, of allowing us to ask the question of “what do others want from me?” (idem: 10).

22. In contrast to the psycho-social position, Billig’s (e.g. 1997, 2001) approach stresses that inner processes, e.g. desire and repression, are still constituted and routinely accomplished in talk-in-interaction and thus should be located and examined inside the processes of dialogue and social order.
that is located in the complex inter-animation of self and other constructions. We will return to this issue in our concluding remarks.
Conclusion
Small stories as the new narrative turn

From big stories to small stories

The main motivation for this book has been to put small stories firmly on the map of narrative analysis, as a timely and needed antidote to the longstanding tradition of ‘big stories’ which, be they in the form of life stories or of stories of landmark events, have monopolized the inquiry into tellers’ representations of past events and of themselves in the light of these events. The guiding assumption has been that stories are privileged forms/structures/systems for making sense of self, by bringing the co-ordinates of time, space, and personhood into a unitary frame so that the sources “behind” these representations (such as “author”, “teller”, and “narrator”), can be made empirically visible for further analytical scrutiny in the form of ‘identity analysis.’ It is by no means an exaggeration to claim that this kind of narrative research, often referred to as the ‘narrative turn’, has grown into a major methodological influence across social sciences in the last twenty years.

My point of departure in this book was my view that the assumptions, sensibilities and interpretive idiom warranted by ‘big story research’ have filtered down to analytic work on conversational (cf. non-elicited) narratives. As a result, they have informed analysts’ definitions of what constitutes a (tellable) story and/or a story that can be used as a point of entry into identity analysis. There is undoubtedly recognition that the narratives told outside research or clinical interviews depart significantly from the autobiographical model; there are also quite a few studies of conversational storytelling that have taken an interactional approach (i.e., narrative-as-talk-in-interaction). Nonetheless, my contention has been that there is still much scope for documenting the forms and contexts of these ‘other’ atypical stories for which I have adopted the term ‘small stories’; the analytical tools appropriate for them; and last but not least, their consequentiality for narrative and identity research which is currently a focal concern in the study of narrative in a wide range of social science disciplines.

I was particularly interested in putting forth small stories as worthwhile for identity analysis and exploring the connection between the two, as much of the research on big stories has tended to treat narratives as more or less unmediated
and transparent representations of the participants’ subjectivities and from there as reflecting back on their identities (for a critique of this view of narrative, see Atkinson & Delamont 2006). In contrast to this, the whole project of small stories research, from what counts as narrative data to how these are collected, analysed and interpreted is an attempt to lay bare as well as providing a viable analytical alternative to the essentialist processes which all too often drive analysts to ‘conflate experience and narrative with the authentic and the real’ (Shuman 2005: ???).

My aim here was thus twofold: To chart the textual/interactional features of small stories and explore how these can feed into the mainstay analytic vocabulary and to propose an identity toolkit, that is tangible ways in which small stories can be explored for the tellers’ construction of self and other.

Before moving to the approach advocated here, it is worth reminding ourselves of what small stories refer to in the book. In general terms, small stories are seen as covering a whole range of under-represented narrative activities ranging from literally small and fragmented tellings to refusals to tell and deferrals of telling. More specifically, the analysis of the conversations of a group of female adolescents and of a corpus of private email messages exchanged between friends brought to the fore two characteristics of small stories: a) the events they report have some kind of immediacy, i.e. they are near future events (projections), very recent or still unfolding events (breaking news, stories to be told) as the story is being constructed; b) they establish and refer to links between the participants’ previous and future interactions (mostly face-to-face but also online), including their shared stories. In this way, the stories are not only heavily embedded in their immediate discourse surroundings but also in a larger history of interactions in which they are intertextually linked and available for recontextualization in various local settings.

To identify these small stories, I adopted a more or less rather than an either or approach which enabled me to bring together more abstract etic criteria (e.g. temporal ordering of specific events) with emic understandings (e.g. participants’ own orientation to an activity underway as a ‘story’). In other words, I saw small stories as not resting exclusively and reductively on prototypical textual criteria but as discourse engagements that engender specific social moments and integrally connect with what gets done on particular occasions and in particular settings. My claim has been that recognizing narrativity or a narrative orientation in certain activities shows regard for local and situated understandings and decisively makes social consequentiality of discourse activities part of the analysis.

**Small stories as social practices**

To explore small stories, I brought together in this book an interactional paradigm largely informed by conversation analysis and sociolinguistic studies of narrative
with a practice-based line of inquiry into language and identities. The combination allows us to look into stories as sequentially ordered activities that emerge on line, amidst prior and upcoming talk, but also as temporalized activities with a life cycle of previous tellings and recontextualizations across time and space as well as with habitual associations with modes of (inter)-acting in specific sites.

I employed the notion of genre as a powerful analytical way of bringing together text and practices, linking ways of speaking with producing social life in the semiotic world. As orienting frameworks of conventionalised expectations, genres force the analytical attention to routine and socioculturally shaped ways of (story)telling in specific sites (social spaces) and by specific tellers (social actors with biographies, relational roles and in this case involvement in tales as characters). I also made use of indexicality to refer to processes of more or less strategically invoking and reworking histories of associative meanings, previous interactional contexts and shared resources, including previously told stories, in the course of narrative tellings.

Documenting small stories as social practices thus hinges on epistemological perspectives that allow the analyst to tap into processes of recontextualization on one hand and to reflect on what counts as data and relevant context for the data. I looked to linguistic ethnography for such a context-enriching and context-reflexive account. The main attraction of introducing linguistic ethnography into small stories research was the ways in which “it combines the reflexive, attentive, local and contextually sensitive research styles with technical forms of language study” (Wetherell, forthcoming: 2). In the light of the common pitfalls of big story research, linguistic ethnography is particularly instrumental for contributing an epistemology for de-essentializing narratives by documenting them as situated actions in the context of more or less partial and valid accounts within systems of production and articulation.

My analysis specifically aimed at navigating micro-levels of language and sequential choices and larger contexts of roles and social identities that shape and are shaped by narrative tellings. Linguistic ethnography facilitated and at times necessitated this navigation process amongst ways of storytelling, sites and tellers.

Small stories as a new perspective in narrative analysis

In the process of specifying certain types of small stories, I also begun to show how some of the mainstay vocabulary of narrative analysis needs to be re-conceptualized and so that it can stretch to the analysis of small stories. Part of the problem here was that this vocabulary had been decisively shaped by the inquiry into big stories and was thus not flexible or nuanced enough to deal with serious departures from the narrative canon. The overall aim however was not to
abolish concepts wholesale but to re-position and problematize them. At the same
time, it was also important that new connections were made with concepts that
had not been productively applied to the case of narrative.

To tap into the conceptual apparatus of conventional narrative analysis, I drew
on widely accepted distinctions such as teller – tale – telling (cf. Ochs’ and Capps’
narrative dimensions, 2001). I specifically looked at the complex teller/tellership
question in connection with identity analysis, but before that I tackled the issue
of narrative structure as one of the most orthodox ways of thinking about narra-
tive. I put forth the need for the scrutiny of the relationship between the type of
story and narrative structure; the systematic study of telling roles (in the sense of
both degree and type of contribution) vis-à-vis structural components; the inte-
gration of openings, closings and follow-ups so as to capture vital links between
a story’s structure and its co-text on one hand and its inter-text(s) on the other
hand, finally, the study of the nature, sequential position and relations between
different structural constituents, particularly the two pivotal ones of plotline and
evaluation. In this respect, I discussed the pivotal role of spatiotemporal frames
of reference in the emplotment of the data and thus problematized the dichotomy
between action and setting that has informed much of the work on narrative struc-
ture so far. At the same time, the interactional uses and negotiability of time and
place in the course of tellings illustrated the irreducibly contingent and emergent
nature of the process of structuring a story. I also argued for a temporalized view
of structure that recognizes that stories can be part of an interactional trajectory,
that is, activities that can be developed in different settings and even media, can be
lifted from an original discourse environment and transposed to other contexts.
Structure can thus both be shaped by previous stories and be dependent on prior
tellings.

In similar vein, I argued for opening up the scope of tellability so as to link
the notion with telling roles, co-tellership rights and issues of entitlement; also
with current relevance as opposed to the longstanding tradition of seeing tellability
as residing either in the events or in their animated telling. I also made a case
for a prospective, anticipatory relationship between actualities and possibilities in
shaping tellability: in the data at hand, and in contrast to much previous work, it
is the possible, future and hypothetical talewords that owe their tellability to the
actual ones and not the other way round.

Small stories and identities: Premises and implications

My small stories and identity analysis was based on the premise that larger (i.e.
extra-situational, exogenous, “portable”) identities can be best traced in discourse
through a micro-analytic emphasis on the details and sequential management of
talk. This inquiry into local participation roles as more or less indirect cues of identity work has remained largely unexplored within narrative analysis, even though it is a well-established approach within conversation analysis. Following Zimmerman’s distinction between discourse, situational and large identities, I analysed telling roles in the conversational stories both qualitatively and quantitatively and showed how the telling of small stories is jointly constructed by the participants but with differentiated actions and contributions from each of them. Furthermore, participants over a period of time tend to assume specific roles that perform specific actions in storytelling events.

Although the suggestion has not been that social actors will not locally contest, shift or improvise on routine positions, this kind of analysis still claims that there is a systematic and patterned relationship to be found between the ways in which people contribute to a story’s emerging structure and the positionings or resources that hold above and beyond the immediate storytelling situation and that they bring along to it. Three types of telling roles are important as platforms for the participants’ larger social identities: the roles that participants assume in relation to a story’s emerging structure; the action performed with each of the contributions in relation to prior story talk; the shape of a participant’s turn, the local linguistic choices and devices in operation.

At a more meso-level, the topic of projected meetings with men and the participants’ telling-specific identities bring into focus and make relevant situational identities that have to do with role-relevant and topic-relevant knowledge, that is, advice-seeking and -giving on one hand and expertise in men on the other hand. These arrangements are visible in the participants’ turn design and choice as well as in their storytelling contributions. This co-articulation of telling-specific with situational identities points to larger social identities consequential for the construction and interpretation of the stories. These have to do with the participants’ group-internal roles, relations, and hierarchies on the one hand and their gender on the other. I discussed how one participant (Vivi) acts as the main teller of the evaluative component of a story and how her contributions are more often than not ratified by others.

Overall, I illustrated a three-way connection between stories, larger identities, and local storytelling roles. The latter two are mutually informed and operative for a story’s construction. At the same time, larger identities have partly been constructed through shared stories and have thus become part of the group’s shared resources.

In the spirit of this study’s framework, the above toolkit for identity analysis allows us to explore small stories both as talk-in-interaction and as social practices. More specifically, it shows us how once we move beyond the narrative canon and toward small stories, constructions of identities become a different enterprise: they are dialogical, relational, part of a history of meaning-making and bound
up with specific activities that people engage in specific sites while telling stories. At the same time, the data at hand led us beyond a singular emphasis on the tellers’ construction of self and towards the under-represented line of inquiry into how constructions of others take place in narrative tellings and how they connect with self-identity work. The analysis thus shed light on the interactional resources that participants drew upon to “represent” men, the local meanings of such representations, and their implications for self-identity work.

As part of the aim of making connections with work that has not been productively applied to the case of narrative, the analysis linked work on membership categorization devices and styling with small stories. In doing so, the aim was not only to bring in an under-explored apparatus for “other” identities within narrative analysis but also to stretch beyond the typical problematic of styling phenomena and expand their scope in order to make them work for small stories. This need arose out of the systematic co-occurrence of styling and membership categorization devices with more or less implicit modes of reference to men in the context of small stories. I showed that constructions of others presented a continuum of more or less implicit and indexical resources that had developed over time through the participants’ interactional history and that ultimately acted as positions that the speakers could actively and agentively select, draw upon, revisit and resist.

My identity analysis thus showed that identities in small stories could be invoked and traced both as roles and types of participation and as ways of telling and style. Importantly, in both cases they are partly based on iterability, quotability, regularity and sedimentation that result from recurrent associations between events and characters in specific time and place. This close link between identities construction and emplotment provides further evidence for the benefits associated with recognizing certain discourse activities as narrative; in this case, for including any fleeting moments of narrative orientation to experience in the narrative and identity analysis project. It also provides us with insights into the perennial question of what is specific to narrative about identities construction. The discussion here has avoided tackling this issue with the essentialism and celebratory spirit that has characterized much of the big stories research. It is however notable that our analysis has shown small stories as salient social moments for making sense of self and other, as habitual systems for projecting social personas and meanings onto specific locales, which in turn provide interpretative grids for assessing past, present, and future. Perhaps more importantly, as vital social practices for rehearsing, exploring and negotiating the gap between actual and possible, reality and imagination.

There are certain parallels between this study’s practice-based approach and what is loosely referred to as ‘critical’ discursive psychology (see Wetherell, forthcoming). The latter does not follow the conversation-analytic agenda as strictly
and faithfully as discursive psychology and it thus recognizes that over time particular routines, repetitions, procedures and modes of practice build up to form a personal style, a psycho-biography and a life history that can be seen as a ‘personal order’ which becomes a guide for how to go on in the present (ditto). The personal order thus comprises ‘organized flows of meaning-making practices’ with ‘regularities and repetitions in relational positioning that are often most evident in people’s narratives, but not exclusively so’ (8). But exactly as with small stories, such regularities are not seen as incommensurable with a view of social actors ‘as unfinished, agentive and as continually in the process of construction and reconstruction’ (idem).

There is clear potential for a productive dialogue between small stories research and critical discursive psychology as part of the future agenda for small stories. This alliance can further the project of framing the micro-analysis of small stories as a window into the micro-genetic processes of identities as ‘in-the-making’ or ‘coming-into-being’ (Bamberg 2004a, b) forming the background against which identities in life-event or biographic interviews can become foci of investigations within the framework of more traditional narrative methodologies. By conceptualizing small stories as the sites of engagement where identities are continuously and collectively practised and tested out, future work can show how these practices lend themselves to developmental prerequisites that may lead to the ability to engage in more reflective positions in the form of life stories that are typically elicited in clinical or research settings.

Ultimately, as Bamberg has stressed (2006b:3) too, the aim of small stories and identities research is not to dismiss or do away with big stories but rather to open up a route to a deeper reflection of what big stories are, how they operate and how they can be used more empirically and more productively (for a defense of big stories, see Freeman (2006). And although we think that it is necessary to enrich the data of big stories research with small stories that occur outside research interviews, small stories can also offer a transferable agenda for big stories within interview settings. First, their mere inclusion in the analysis would mean that there is a place for data that routinely gets dismissed by biographical approaches (i.e., it is not seen as a story), is seen as an analytic nuisance (i.e., as the result of bad interviewing) or subsumed under the focal concerns of the big story (i.e., viewed as an instance of incoherent telling, not yet incorporated in the life story, etc.).

Second, small stories urge the analyst to stay alert to and address what Potter and Hepburn (2005) have referred to as ‘contingent problems’ of research interviews, mainly the fact that interviews are often not seen, transcribed or analysed as ‘interactional data’.

In the case of narrative data in particular, failing to address these problems means that what is often presented as a ‘big story’ is more of a series of small stories, heavily co-constructed, with nuanced telling roles, deeply embedded into the
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interview co-text and context, and, amongst others, intertextually linked. At the same time, the small stories perspective forces analysts to recognize that doing self is not all that tellers do in interviews (even if, as communicative situations, interviews engender a good deal of accountable talk in the form of stories). They also do rhetorical work through stories: they put forth arguments, challenge their interlocutors’ views and generally attune their stories to various local, interpersonal purposes, sequentially orienting them to prior and upcoming talk. It is important to place any representations of self and any questions of a story’s content in the context of this type of relational and essentially discursive activity as opposed to reading them only referentially.

The small stories perspective also opens up other ways of “construing the relationship between lives and their stories” (Bamberg 2006b:12), ways that are in tune with a dialogical and dynamic view of self as presented here. Otherwise, as Bamberg stresses, “as long as interviews are used as the method par excellence to collect and analyse ‘how people represent their experiences and understandings of events and aspects of their worlds (Mishler 2005:318)’ without analysing how these representations are actually put to use in particular contexts in order to accomplish interactive business, people’s lives are running the danger of getting prematurely fixed and potentially reified or essentialized (Bamberg 2006b:12).

In the light of the above, part of the validity of analysing small stories for purposes of identity research lies in the ways in which this approach opens us up and urges us to scrutinize the inconsistencies, contradictions, moments of trouble, rupture and tension, and the tellers’ constant navigation between different versions of selfhood in local contexts. However well established the line of identities-in-interaction may be in the context of the analysis of conversational data, this emphasis is still in contrast to the longstanding privileging of coherence by narrative approaches (as recently acknowledged by Benwell & Stokoe 2006).

In this book, I have documented the on-line construction of identities through small stories in leisurely, liminal and largely ‘safe’ (i.e. non-hostile, non-conflictual) environments and with an emphasis on small stories for socialization, intimacy (re)affirmation and peer group (re)formation. Beyond this, there is a multitude of sites and contexts of both ordinary and institutional exchanges, more or less charged with inequalities and power relations, that wait to be explored with the small stories perspective and where small stories can offer a critical agenda for exploring longstanding preoccupations of narrative analysis (e.g. coherence, structure, tellability, tellership rights) as well as more recent concerns (e.g. the role and forms of narrative in new media and in a globalized world). In all these domains, small stories research can serve as the new narrative turn, one that has learnt from the emphasis on the lived and told and is well-equipped to offer an epistemology and an analytical framework for the messier business of living and telling.
Appendix

Story 1, ‘Going out for a creme brûlée’

Participants: Tonia, Vivi
Context = Tonia and Vivi are having a leisurely coffee while waiting for Fotini to join them. This projection is initiated thirty minutes into a two-hour recorded conversation. Numerous breaking news stories have been told before, one of them involving Danny, the character of this story.

Story of projected events

V(ivi): Παιδί: μου (.) ΕΛΑ να καταστρώσουμε το σχέδιο μας τώρα =
1 V(ivi): Come on man (.) let’s make our plan now =
T(onia): =Ποιο σχέδιο παιδί μου! =
2 T(onia): =WhAt pla:ni n! =
V: Για το Ντάνυ ρε. =
θα πας αφαίρεσε και καλά =
και θα του πεις >γεια σου γεια< =
τι κάνεις καλά =
pάμε για καφέ? =
Αντε ( .. ) αυτή τη βδομάδα που ναι ευκαιρία =
3 V: For Danny man. =
4 You will go carefree =
5 and say >hi to him< =
6 what’s up =
7 wanna go out for a coffee? =
8 Got to be done this week ( .. ) it’s a good opportunity =
T: Γιατί είναι ευκαιρία τώρα? =
9 T: Why is it a good opportunity? =
V: Γιατί απ’ την Πέμπτη κι έπειτα θα χει πολλή δουλεία =
που θα τελειώνει κι η νυστεία =
10 V: Cause as of Thursday he’ll be very busy =
11 with the fasting coming to an end =
T: =ΡΕ Βίβηι: ( . ) δε μπορώ να πάω να του πω >γεια σου τι κάνεις καλά< =
pότε θα βγούμε =
δεν είναι ξεκάρφωτο? =
12 T: Vivi: MAN ( . ) I can’t go up to him and say >hi what’s up< =
13 when are we going out? =
14 Isn’t it totally out of the blue? =
(Reference to) shared story

T: Pe Βιβή (.) να το κάνω δηλαδή όπως με το Νίκο? (.) >μόνος μόνος<
17 T: So Vivi (.) shall I do it like you with Ni:kos (.) >all alone all alone<
V: ((χα χα)) (..) Καλό το μόνος μόνος=
18 V: huhhhhh (..) all alone all alone was coo:=

Back to projected events

T: =Φοβερό δε λέω (.) αλλά δεν κολλάει στο Ντάνν
19 T: = Yeah tops (.) but doesn’t fit in Danny’s case
V: Και TI να του πεις?
Έχεις τσιγάρα!! (.) // τσιγάρο?
20 V: So WHAT will you say?
21 Got a chewing gu:m (.) // a cigare:tte?
T: // Όχι ρε Βιβή να σου πω
λοιπόν πρόσεξε (.) ο Νίκος που λες ήταν στη Ρόμα μόνος μόνος
χα χα κι έπειτα πορτοκαλιδίτσα μόνος μόνος
ο Ντάνν δουλεύει μέσα στο Καλλιστώ
και δεν είναι >μόνος μόνος<
και πίνει αλκοολίχα πράματα
>δε μπορείς να πας να του πεις τίποτα< (.) ΜΠΟΡΕΙ;ς;
22 T: //No Vivi let me tell you something
23 listen (.) Nick was sitting at Roma all alone all alone
24 hheh an’ he was having his orangina >all alone all alone<
25 but Dan works in Kallisto
26 and he is not all alone all alone
27 and he drinks alcohol
28 so you can’t go and talk to him like that (.) CAN you?
V: Μόνο όταν δεν έχει πολλή δουλεία (.) αργά το βράδυ μπορείς
29 V: Only when he’s not too busy (..) like late at night
T: Μπορείς;ς=?
30 T: But ca::n you=*
V: =Ωραία (.) ένα μεσημέρι εξω
31 V: Well (.) one afternoon when he’s out
T: Του βλέ:πω?
32 T: Will I see him?

(Reference to) shared story

V: ΔΕΝ τον είδαμε εκείνο το μεσημέρι που πηγάσαμε στην Ειρήνη?
33 V: DIDN’T we see him that afternoon on our way to Irene’s?
T: Πότε τον είδαμε PE (.) όταν έπαιξε τάβλι με το φίλο του?
Είναι διαφορετικές οι συγκυρίες
34 T: When MAN (.) when he was playing backgammon with his friend?
35 It's different circumstances

Back to projected events

V: Καλά: ρε ΤΟνια ωραία (.) θα πας ένα πρωί στον Κανατά
eκεί που κάθεται στην πόρτα
θα τη στήσεις καραούλι απέναντι στο Χόντο
36 V: That's okay TOnia (.) so you'll go one morning to Kanata's
37 when he stands at the door
38 you'll be waiting ((to catch him)) opposite at Hondo's
39 T: Άνετ είναι κακό αυτό
40 V: That's not a bad idea

T: >The gym era (..) reme:mb er?
V: >He'll see you you'll see him< he'll say brings you here!
44 heh huh or are you too preoccupied with the milk pies=
43 then I'll say (.) you going somewhere when you finish here?
42 we'll strike up a conversation about this and that
41 T: So: I'll tell him >I'm going to Hondos to get something<
40 V: χα χα Δεν θες να πάμε για κρεμούλκες?
45 V: heh huh don't you want to go for a crème brûlée?
((Further down. Projection is interrupted by greeting friends))
47 T: Αλλά σου λέω ρε σου:
νιατί? να πάω εγώ έτσι απ' το ποθενά
αφού ο τύπος έχει καταλάβει τι παίζει=
73 T: But I’m telling you:
47 why:? should I go out of the blue
75 Since the guy knows how I feel=
V: =Pe Τόνια ΤΤ να καταλάβει
ΤΤ έχεις κάνει για να καταλάβεις?
76 V: =Τονία DOES he know?
77 WHAT have you done for him to realize?

(Reference to) shared story

T: Εποιή γυμναστήριον (..) Θυμάσαι?
pou 'χαμε κατεβεί τις σκάλες
και με το που τον βλέπουμε να κατεβαίνει ξα::ναγυρίζουμε πάνω
και κοιτάγαμε σαν ηλίθια
και μετά κάτσαμε μέχρι τις πεντέμιση
και κάναμε κοιλιακούς (..) και κακαρίκαμε.
Δεν κατάλαβε τότε?
78 T: The gym era (..) reme:mb er?
79 The time we’d gone downstairs
80 and the minute we see him we go all the way up again
81 and start looking at him like two idiots
82 and then we stayed until half past five
83 doing tummy exercises (..) and giggling
84 Don’t tell me he didn’t get wind of it then?
85 V: \textit{Ναι} (.) loisipon pòseis forèes échoume kánei órganon kai kakkariaxoume me ta paidia?=
86 T: \textit{Εκεί δίπλα κολλητά?}
87 V: \textit{Πώς έχεις εκείνη την ώρα}
88 T: \textit{// Θα λέγαμε σε ποιο μέρος, κατ’ αυτή την εποχή}
89 V: Tonía let me tell you something else right?
90 say we had a girl next to us
91 say we had Paraskevopoulos next to us
92 what would we have done
93 would he have suspected that we fancy him?

\textbf{Hypothetical scenario}

\textbf{V:} \textit{Πώς είχες συν λέω άλλη φάση τώρα ντα:ξει?}
\textbf{\textit{πες ότι όταν το κοριτσάκι δίπλα μας}}
\textbf{\textit{πες ότι όταν o Παρασκευόπουλος δίπλα μας}}
\textbf{\textit{τι θα πρέπει να κάνουμε}}
\textbf{\textit{να υπονομαστεί ότι έμεις τον πάμε?}}
90 V: Tonía let me tell you something else right?
91 say we had a girl next to us
92 say we had Paraskevopoulos next to us
93 what would we have done
94 would he have suspected that we fancy him?

\textbf{(Reference to) shared story}

\textbf{T:} \textit{Να σου πω κι άλλη φάση}
\textbf{\textit{Δεν κατάλαβε τότε που με πέτυχε μπροστά στο Μπλοκ?}}
\textbf{\textit{τι! έκανα εγώ εκεί ekeinì tìn ώρα?}}
94 T: Let me tell you of another incident
95 didn’t he realize when he bumped into me outside Block?
96 what! was I doing there at that sort of time?
97 V: \textit{Είπαι; Υποψιά:ζεται?}
98 V: Does he know? Does he suspect?=
99 T: \textit{Μα ποτέ δεν είχα ξαναπάει τέτοια ώρα}
100 T: \textit{But I’d never been there before at that sort of time}
101 V: \textit{Δεν έχεις σημασία (..) αυτό είναι το τυχαί o νιστί μα φορά γίνεται} 
\textbf{\textit{δε γίνεται κάθε μέρα}}
102 V: That’s not important (..) that’s what we call accidental
103 cause it happens once
104 it doesn’t happen every day
Story 2, ‘Talk to him man, talk to him’

Transliterated Greek is used for this story, as there are certain dialectal forms that have been discussed in Chapter 5.

Participants: Fotini, Vivi, Tonia

Context = Fotini, Vivi and Tonia are moments into their conversation as part of their daily chat over coffee at a café. The planned meeting with Mikes actually takes place the following day. The discussion on this occasion (1 hour of recorded data) is dominated by references to Mikes.

1 F(otini): Peðja (...) ti tha kanume avrio? Iremiste ce sjopite. TI tha kanume?
1 F(otini): Guys (...) what are we we going to do tomorrow? Contain yourselves and be silenced. WHAT are we going to do?
2 V(ivi): Katarçin tha pas na kanis ena krio banjo=
2 V(ivi): First of all you'll have a cold bath=
3 F: =Na χαλαρω:so?
3 F: To relax?
4 V: Ena krio banjo (...) ce tha pçis ena zesto kafe=
4 V: A cold bath (...) and you'll have a hot coffee=
5 F: =Ama pjo ena krio kafe?
5 F: What if I have a cold coffee?
6 T(onia): Pai c'anapoða (...) tha kanis ena zesto banjo (...) ce tha pçis ena krio kafe<
6 T(onia): Can be reversed (...) you'll have a hot bath (...) >and a cold coffee<
7 F: ((laughter))
8 V: Orea (...) meta tha katsis na χαλαρωση (...) na kanis mjå peripisì prosopu
8 V: Fine (...) then you'll sit down and relax (...) you'll do a facial (...)
9 ena picilin ((imitating the foreign accent))=
9 a peeli//ng ((imitating the foreign accent))
10 T: //Ena piilin ((laughs))
10 T: //A peeling ((laughs))
11 F: //Ena piilin ((they all laugh))
11 F: //A peeling ((they all laugh))
12 V: Θa pas liyo stî Reveka (...) na kanis masazh:( ((imitating a French accent))
12 V: You'll pop to Rebecca’s (...) have a massa::ge
13 F: Orea (...) ce meta?
13 F: Okay (...) and then?
14 V: E meta 0’alakisa liyo ta mjala su, χα χα (...) tha t’ærísis liyo=
14 V: Then you'll change your brains, huh huh (...) air them a bit=
15 T: òta t-ta vyalis liyo sto balkoni (...) na parune /aera
15 T: =take t-them out in the balcony (...) to get // a bit of fresh air
16 F: // òxe tora na leo, jati eyo tora kseynao, ðio i ora ti Bentî eyo maðima
16 F: // you can say that again, ’cos I am forgetful, I’ve got a class at two on Thursday
17 V: cero poli=
17 V: This is a non-starter=
18 F: =C’eyo!
18 F: =You can say that again!
19 V: 
Jafto eçume ena stilo (...) ce ta yrafume stà çerja, o kozmos=
19 V: That’s what we have pens for (...) we folks, to write things on our hands=
20 T: 
=Gec sto metopò ksero yo ((laughs))
20 T: =on our huh forehead huh huh
21 F: 
Ja peste mu tora (...) sovaro milame. Orea (...) vrisko eyo kapu to Maci etsi?
21 F: Or:Kay (...) tell me now (..) seriously. So: (..) I bump into Makis right?
22 F: 
Mila o Pavlos me ti Vivi eci, c’o Maci ine eci, ce ti tu les, TI TU LES?
22 F: Pavlos is talking to Vivi, and Makis is there, and what would you tell him, WHAT?
23 T: 
Ta kalandra?
23 T: The carols?
24 V: 
=Ta kalandra ((laughs))
24 V: =The carols ((laughs))
25 F: 
Oçi ta kalandra re pëði mu, ama su tiçi prota ap’ola(...) daksi? TI tu leo?
25 F: Not the carols man, if it’s gonna happen (..) right? WHAT do I tell him?
26 V: 
Θa tu milisis sti ylosa tu tu pëðju, se paxu χα χα
26 V: You’ll speak to the guy in his language, I fa::ncy you huh huh=
27 T: 
χα χα U iðijs
27 T: =hih huh It’s me=
28 F: 
I iði, i Fotini. Eyo se kseruc, esi de me kseris?
28 F: =It’s me, Fotini. I know you, huh huh (..) d’you know me?
29 F: 
Ce pes oti citai apò òdo, pos òa tu travisko th brosoçi?
29 F: And say he’s looking this way, how am I going to attract his attention?
30 V: 
(((laughs))) Mila tu re, mila tu
30 V: huh huh huh Ta:lk to him man, huh talk to him man
31 T: 
Kalal(...) pandos o Pavlos içe poli jeljo
31 T: Gee (..) Pavlos was so funny
32 F: 
ELA RE (...) ela re, c’tsi ek-kane re pëðja, ton -gzerane to χrístjano=
32 F: COME ON (..) come on you guys: he d-didn’t mean it that way, they were
33 F: all friends of the guy=
34 V: 
=Afto: se pirakse(...) pu ton gzerane!, de gitazes ton allo pu citaze t’asterja
34 V: =Okay (..) he was walking //like a little goat ((laughs))
35 F: 
Is this what bugs you (..) that they knew him!, didn’t you see how the other
36 F: one ((Mikes)) was staring at the stars ((i.e. not talking to anyone))
37 F: 
KALA:, iné dropalos, orea. Ti tu les?
37 F: Well o:kay, he’s shy, t-there you are. What d’you tell him though?
38 T: 
Eòo su leo (...) ti Girjaci pròqoraje apò kato meçri pano (...) me ta matjá
38 χàmila, v:ò olo //to dçorno
38 T: I’m telling you (..) on Sunday he walked a:ll the way (..) eyes looking down,
39 F: 
=a:ll the way=
39 F: =Mu to χàlate tora (.)
39 F: =You are spoiling it now (.)
40 T: 
Sa jìba milame
40 T: Like a goat
41 F: 
=MIL MU vrizis ton adra=
41 F: DON’T YOU run my man down=
42 V: 
=Endaksi (...) erçotane //sa gatsikaci ((laughs))
42 V: =Okay (..) he was walking //like a little goat ((laughs))
43 F: 
MI mu vrizis ton adra (...) endakisi?
43 F: DON’T run my man down (..) a:right?
As more, pu pijes ce vlices adra c'esi, c'ime ce kubara su

Come off it, so:me man you've found, and you're supposed to be my maid of honour

That's no:t going to work now !

Don't be (..) photo-finish ((Fotini's nick-name))

“RE” ((affectionate marker)) CHRIstou ((Vivi's surname)). So: let's make plans.

Fine (..) you go in, see Makis=

I go AAARGH (..) waving hands

You'll tell him, are you a jerk? Talk (..) talk ((laughs))

Ce le i Pavlos ti nea? PAME (..) tha tu pi i Fotini

And Pavlos says what's up? LET'S GO (..) Fotini will tell him ((laughs))

=Oçi re, ikosiéna=

= No man, twenty-one=

=Telospaçandon (..) orea, ti n:ea re peďja, pos apo do kafe (..) kafe? //Kafe

=Anyway (..) fine, ((we'll say)) so: what's up guys, out for a coffee (..) // coffee

RE MALAKIES LETE? EMLs tha pume ja kafe, na tus pume pame ja kafe?

DON'T TALK NONSENSE! WE will invite them for coffee, shall we have a coffee?

Re tha tu pume ti tha pi (..) tu Pavlu, jati //den gzeri

“We need to tell Pavlos (..) what to say, cause //he doesn't know=

=Oçi vyali to χαρτακι (..) χ;:; katse jati χαθικα, nja stiymi, //afto den do lei tora

He will produce a piece of paper (..) ((ell: he'll say))o:h wait a minute, I'm lost, //

doesn't say this here

Then big Pavlos will say, girls DO SIT DOWN SIT DOWN
Orea, kseperastice! Meta kaðomaste
Fine, hurdle overcome! Then we sit down=

=Ala meta o Mices kseris ti ða kani, ða citai etsi //to tavani
But then you know what Mikes will do, he’ll be staring //the ceiling like this

=Tha arçisi ta ðika tu=
He’ll start his thing=

=Tutestin? ((shift to a higher register))
=Which is?

=Tutestin peri bасетiku periepowered menu ((uptake of the shift))
Which is basketball-related

=Ce ti ða leme mori peri bасetiku periepowered menu?
And what are we going to say which is basketball-related?

=Mori ða pezi i AEK ecino to vraidí, ðe ða pis? INE AEK o Pavlos!
AEK ((basketball team)) are playing that evening, aren’t you going to say any-
thing? Pavlos SUPPORTS AEK!

=I AEK pezi simera.
AEK are playing today.

=Perimenne (. . .) sto mikro teliko, - ton braimiteliko, ama kerðisi simera (.)
Wait a minute (. . .) in the semi final, - the quarter final, if they win today (.)

=ða peksi c’avrio
they’ll play tomorrow too.

=Re to ðune noris, ðen do ðune //arya.
Man the match is on early, not //late.

=De þimase pu íçane ton Olibiako edeka i ora?
Don’t you remember, when they had Olympiakos’s match at 11?

=Gamò tin atiçia mas! Na to oryanosune j’ali mera (. ) na ine iremos=
Bloody hell! Let’s organize it for another day (.) when he’ll be calm=

==Bori na mi ðeli omos na to //parakoludisi=
But he may not want to //watch it=

=Apoklìrete!
No way!

=Bori na min ine fanatikos!
He may not be a big fan!

=Re (. ) ine ce se OMADA (. ) kaðe Tetarti pezi
Man (.) he’s in a team himself (..) they play every Wednesday

=Kala lei=
She’s right=

=Pistevis e? Bascet?
You think so? Basketball?

=Po::s! po::s! (ingroup marker of agreement and approval)
Su::re! su::re!

=Re peðia, ða pume stin arçi, peðia pezete ksero yo meðavrio?
Guys, first we’ll say, guys are you playing the day after tomorrow?

=peðia pezete meðavrio, olo esi c’o Pavlos ða milate?
guys are you playing the day after tomorrow ((imitating Vivi)), only Pavlos and
you will do the talking then?

=ða su pi o Pavlos //c’esena
Pavlos will say something// to you too
89 F: 
// ti thα tu po evo, thα tu po, mιpos pezete etsi os omas?
89 F: 
// but what am I going to say to him, are you by any chance playing as a team?
((shift to a higher register with the word “omas”))
90 V: ne mori (...) thα su pi o alos
90 V: yes man (...) he’ll tell you
91 F: Δε bisteu:
91 F: I don’t think so::
92 T: Uu::
93 F: Kaβhe Gιrjaci::? Me kostu: mi? ((shift to a higher register with the word “kostumi”))
93 F: Every Su::nday? In a suit?:
94 V: Θα les esi (...) me kostumi? Me kostumi ine kuχlos?
94 V: You’ll say (...) in a suit? In a suit he’s god’s gift? ((line from one of the group’s poems))
95 F: Aneksaτitιa an δε don evo δι=
95 F: Not to mention that I haven’t seen him=
96 T: =Kostumi? Papijon?
96 T: =Suit? Bow tie?
97 F: Θα forajе se mjα periptosi (...) aLA δε do vlepo
97 F: He’d wear it on one occasion (...) bUT I don’t see that happening
98 V: Na padrεti?
98 V: If he got married?
99 F: Siya min badrεti (...) tɛtɔs pu ine=
99 F: As if (...) the way he is=
100 V: =Δε gzeris, mιpos ton tiljiκsis ((laughs, imitates the local accent))
100 V: = You never know, you might just wrap him ((laughs, imitates the local accent)).
101 T: Me aluminοxarto ((laughs))
101 T: In silver foil ((laughs))
102 F: Katse re, eδo mono to onoma tu ksero, tora sxoljazume
102 F: Hang on, I only know his name, we’re just saying now
103 V: Eno i Tonja ta κi kani o:la!
103 V: While Tonia has done it all!
104 T: PSEX:MA TA! Ti les mori kukla mu? To niçi vlepo (...) e?
104 T: A pack of LI:ES! What are you talking about doll? Gee (...) look at your nails!
105 V: Dzami
105 V: Groovy!
106 V: =Mmmm (...) spiropuleics aiδies! Ce lei i Tonja (...) tu lei ja su Dani
106 V: = Ohhh (...)what Spiropoulian ((Spiropoulos is Tonia’s surname)) bull! And Tonia goes (...) and says // hi Danny
107 F: // C’erçete o Fondas=
107 F: // And Fondas goes=
108 V: =Mι les onomatα!
108 T: =Don’t give names!
Small stories, Interaction and Identities

113 V: *Ce tis lei o Fondas (...)Fondas. Ne Fonda mu (...) ne (Danny is Fondas's nick-name in the group))*
113 V: And Fondas tells her (...) ((my name is)) Fondas. ((ellipsis for she says)) Yes my Fondas (...) yes ((Danny is Fondas’s nick-name in the group))
114 T: *Labis Ba:bi mu (...) labis!*
114 T: You're shiny my Ba: bis (...) you’re shiny! ((punch-line of a widely circulated joke in Greece. The humour is derived from the language play of the punchline)) ((they all laugh))
115 F: *Re (...) eyo kseris ti fovente? Ana avrio vyume ce tu po Mice?*
115 F: Man (...) you know what I’m afraid of? Suppose we go out tomorrow and I call him Mikes? ((group's nick-name for Makis))
116 V: *Tu pai*
116 V: It suits him
117 F: *Ela re (...) siya*
117 F: Come on man (...) as if
118 V: *Pestu dhe mu pai ja Macis, tha se leo Mice. Re malaka, ti eleje ecini i malako?*
118 V: Tell him you don’t look like a Makis, I’ll call you Mikes. Hey man, what was this wanker of a woman saying?
119 right in your shop? ((Fotini's father owns a patisserie)) When she came in? Is it big?
119 fifteen metres or something //something like that ((laughs))
120 F: *Δekapende metra //kati tetço ((laughs))*
120 F: fifteen metres or something //something like that ((laughs))
121 T: *Mesa aspri?*
121 T: Is it white inside?
122 V: *Ti alo boris na mu δοσις?*
122 V: What else can you give me?
123 T: *Δε μου vjeni, pos Θα ti vyalo?*
123 T: Can’t take it out, how AM I going to take it out?
124 V: *Ne ine mikri, ine mikri*
124 V: Yes it is small, it is small ((laughter))
125 F: *Ade na kano eyo kuvenda m' afiti ti jineka!*
125 F: How could I converse with that woman!
126 V: *Aporo poz de jelajes. Eyo ixa ksescisti sto jeljo!*
126 V: I was amazed at how serious you were. I was in stitches!
127 T: *Eyo de borusa (...) de gratjomuna*
127 T: I couldn’t (...) couldn’t keep a straight face
128 F: *Eyo pu ime ce semnos anthropos?*
128 F: What about me being a proper person?
129 V: *Ne re (...) sa gino to fortiyadzi*
129 V: Yes man (...) like the time with that lorry driver ((Talk about the lorry driver in lines 130–158))
159 F: *Endometaksi esi de bires ena tilefono=*  
159 F: In the meantime you didn’t even ring me=  
160 V: =Ne malaka (.) enja i ora to vraði?*
Yes man ((lit: wanker)) (.) at nine in the evening?

161 F: \textit{Ne re (.) mi se po c’eyo tora (.) ime semmo koritsi (.) ce de vrizo.}

161 F: I won’t call you names now (.) I’m a decent girl (.) I don’t swear.

162 V: \textit{Ne ayapi mu!}

162 V: Yes dear!

163 F: \textit{Fteo eyo: (.) na mi se paro avrio pu θα vyume me ton adra mu?}

163 F: Will you bla:me me (.) if I don’t take you out tomorrow in my date with my man?

164 V: \textit{Re cita, na kanonisume me ton Pavlo, na pume kata tis ōeka.}

164 V: Look guys, we must arrange it with Pavlos, say for ten o’clock

165 T: \textit{Ce pume me ta koritsja meta?}

165 T: And then go out with the other girls?

166 V: \textit{Ce prin (.)> prin< (.) jati me tom Bavlo na pume kata tis ōeka.}

166 V: No before (.) >before< (.) if we are meeting Pavlos at ten.

167 V: \textit{Eyo re pedi mu dën gzero, ala mu fenete ksevrameni i dalgia.}

167 V: I don’t know guys, but somehow I don’t think this is going to work.

168 T: \textit{Ce sena? Ti su lei ja sena?}

168 T: You too? What is this ((he?)) telling you about you? ((singing, allusion to a pop song))

169 V: \textit{Ti su lei ja mena?}

169 V: What is he telling you about me? ((sings))

170 F: \textit{Ine i teleftea mu prospa θja, saz milao ilikrina}

170 F: It’s my last attempt, honest

171 V: \textit{Re den gani ja sena, to lei ce to azma=}

171 V: He’s not good enough for you ((sings)), the song says it too=

172 F: \textit{=Re afto ton antropo eyo ton ayapao, pu lei to alo trayudi}

172 F: =But I love this man ((sings)), as the other song says

173 V: \textit{Re (.) to lei to trayudi, ala pai j’alon afto}

173 V: Yes (..) the song says it, but it goes to someone else.

174 F: \textit{To ksero re ayapi mu, //ala}

174 F: I know my love, //but

175 T: \textit{// Astine na prospaθisi //ala}

175 T: // Let her try// but

176 F: \textit{// Afto pu su leo, dën gzeris re pedi mu, bori ana vyume na kani // ce}

176 F: What I’m saying is, you don’t know man, if we go out he may do// and

177 V: \textit{C-ce na kani kati to pedia, dën gani ja sena!}

177 V: W-whatever he does, he doesn’t do for you:!

178 F: \textit{Afto: dEN do kseris}

178 F: YOU don’t know this!

179 V: \textit{ELA MORE, acinonitos (.) telia ce pavla=}

179 V: OH COME on, he is not sociable (..) full stop=

180 T: \textit{=Ela re: (.) aftos ine cinonikos, te:ras cinonikopiisis}

180 T: =You don’t say (..) him? they don’t co:me more social than that.

181 F: \textit{Re Vivi, den gzeris, bori na min don thelo ton antropo}

181 F: Vivi, you don’t know, I may not fancy him once I meet him

182 F: \textit{bori na me ði ce na stripsi, dën gzeris}

182 F: he might see me an’ run a mile, you ju:st don’t know.

183 V: \textit{Oçi, to leο, ja na min daleporithis, afu ecis to Ekleraci=}

183 V: No, I’m saying it to save you the pain, since Ekleraki is around=
184 T: \textbf{=Re: to Ekleraci ine sa:fos anotero=}
184 T: \textbf{=Ekleraki's s-so:: much better!=}
185 V: \textit{Ska::les, ska::les!}
185 V: By far, by far!
186 F: \textit{Oçi skales skales VIvi, afto na mu eksijisis (. ) OS PROS TI?}
186 F: Don't by far me VIvi, you tell me (. ) on account of WHA:T?
187 V: \textbf{>Os pros omorfja<=}
187 V: \textbf{>On account of looks<=}
188 T: \textbf{=>Os pros anthropos=}
188 T: \textbf{>On account of character<=}
189 V: \textit{=> Os pros prospokotita< (. ) san χαρακτιρας}
189 V: \textit{=>On account of personality< (. ) character}
190 F: \textit{Oçi tora sovara, ama de jini tipota, afto elera ce tis Tonjas (. )}
190 F: No seriously now, if nothing comes out, I was saying to Tonia (. )
191 F: \textit{ce de me pisteve (. ) an telika de vyume //ksero yo c’afta}
191 F: and she didn't believe me (. ) say we don't go out //and so on
192 V: \textit{Toso kolimeni pu se si mori!}
192 V: You're so clingy though!
193 F: \textit{Apokliete!}
193 F: Absolutely not!
194 T: \textit{To χυν p-pi c’Ali.}
194 T: \textit{Famous l-last wOrds.}
195 F: \textit{Oçi Vivi (. ) prepi omos na to kseperaso, jati de mu kani kaθolu kalo διλαδι ( . )}
195 F: No Vivi (. ) I've got to get it over with, or it'll eat me up (. )
196 \textit{jati stenoxorjeme //adika ce}
196 F: cause I get a bit upset //with no reason
197 V: \textit{Jati stenoxorjese?}
197 V: Why get upset?
198 F: \textit{Endaksi jenikos (. ) c’anxonomes //tzaba ce verese pu lene}
198 F: Generally speaking (. ) just stressing //with no good reason
199 V: \textit{//Re Fotini (. ) dem brocite na su fiji i //kapsa}
199 V: \textit{// Fotini (. ) it's a crush and won't go //away}
200 T: \textit{Asto na cilisi //min do-}
200 T: Just take it easy //don't-
201 V: \textit{//Asto ce min do piezis=}
201 V: Don't force things=
202 F: \textbf{=>Ωa to paro apofasi omos pedja, an de jini tipota}
202 F: \textbf{=But I’ll come to terms with it guys, if nothing comes out of it}
203 V: \textit{Oreal! jafto na vyume, ala avrio de jini tipota?}
203 V: Fine! That's why we should go out with them, but say nothing happens?
204 F: \textit{Θa leo ine illihios (. ) θa to paro apofasi}
204 F: I'll say what a jerk (. ) I’ll come to terms with it
205 V: \textit{Jafio su leo (. ) o alos ine poli afirimenos (. )}
205 V: That's why I’m saying (. ) the other one is absent-minded (. )
206 V: \textit{ama dem bas na tu pis ikosi fores (. )>Pavlo mu afio c’afto<}
206 V: if you don't remind him twenty times (. ) >Pavlos so and so<
207 F: \textit{Ne (. ) alios eyo θa mino kolimeni opos les, katalaves?}
207 F: Yeah (. ) cause otherwise I’ll remain hooked as you’re saying, right?
208 V: *As četo tora! Pjós me pire tilefono tin Girjací?*
208 V: Now something irrelevant! Who rang me on Sunday?

((They talk about the phone conversation between Vivi and George in lines 209–221))

222 V: *ilikrina su leo (.) ama ton do ce kikoloforisi edo (.) pano apo δ[jo meres]*
222 V: honestly (. ) if I see him around here (. ) for more than two days in a row

223 V: *exume jini biljes (.) ṭa tu po δen aksizi (.) δe su ksanamilao (.)*
223 V: that’s it (. ) I’ll tell him it’s not worth it (. ) I’m never gonna talk to you again (. )

224 V: *ute fili ute tipota (.) ade ja!*
224 V: no friendship no nothing (. ) goodbye!

224 V: *e ( ..) na mas koroiđevi o Joryacis c’o katb Jorgacis!*

224 V: well ( ..) we can’t have this or any litte George take us for a ride!

Pictures of the town

Figure 1
Figure 2

Figure 3
Figure 4

Figure 5
Figure 6
References


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In the series *Studies in Narrative* the following titles have been published thus far or are scheduled for publication:

9 BamberG, Michael, Anna De FinA and Deborah SchiFFrin (eds.): Selves and Identities in Narrative and Discourse. viii, 350 pp. + index. *Expected September 2007*


Narrative research is frequently described as a diverse enterprise, yet the kinds of narrative data that it bases itself on present a striking consensus: they tend to be autobiographical and elicited in interviews. This book sets out to carve out a space alongside this narrative canon for stories that have not made it to the mainstream of narrative and identity analysis, yet they abound as well as being crucial sites of subjectivity in everyday interactional contexts. By labelling those stories as ‘small’, the book emphasizes their distinctiveness, both interactionally and as an antidote to the tradition of ‘grand’ narratives research. Drawing primarily on the audio-recorded small stories of a group of female adolescents that was studied ethnographically in a town in Greece, the book follows a language-focused and practice-based approach in order to provide fresh answers and perspectives on some of the perennial questions of narrative analysis: How can we (re)conceptualize the mainstay concepts of tellership, structure and evaluation in small stories? How do the participants’ telling identities connect with their larger social identities? Finally, what does the project of storying self (and other) mean in small stories and how can it be best explored?