

**Girl talk in sociology (Prior, 1994a, 1994b, 1998)**

Sean (talking in the group about his draft dissertation prospectus):

it's thought that- it's argued that- there's a lot of evidence that-  
girls ruminate more than boys do  
and that if they get together and engage in expressive social support,  
then the content of that is going to be, it's going to be like vocal rumination,  
it's going to be very negative, and then there's also an interpersonal theory of depression that says that  
when someone expresses negativity,  
the other person is much more apt to deny its legitimacy,  
which increases the seriousness of the person's negativity  
and so when you get two girls together engaging in expressive social support,  
one is going to express some negative things, they're going to ruminate out loud,  
the other one is likely to deny that, that those feelings are legitimate in some way, and that could increase  
the negativity of that person, but=

Thomas: =Could I say something?

Sean: sure

Thomas: ( ) That doesn't seem to make sense to me, I mean, yes  
I expect that that girls are getting together and engaging in expressive support,  
but I wouldn't expect that they- that they would dismiss negative feelings

Sean: What would you expect?

Thomas: I would expect the opposite

Sean: Why?

Thomas: Because I would expect that they would be getting together in-  
to listen to each other's feelings and not necessarily just dismissing it,  
as- I would expect boys to do that because they would try to move away from emotion,  
to well, "Ok, you have this problem now what can you do about it"  
whereas I think girls are much more likely to be comfortable with listening to emotions that- both  
negative and positive

***Conversation continues and then Professor Elaine West challenges the hypothesis this way:***

Elaine: it seems like the critical issue is what's happening in these interchanges  
and if in fact it does generate kind of, you know, mutual gloom and negativity

Sean: umhm

Elaine: you know, you tell me about your problems and that makes me more depressed  
and I'll tell you about mine and you'll get more depressed,  
and then I'll say "I'm depressed" and you'll say [*Elaine laughs*]  
"there's no reason to be you know" [*Elaine laughs, general laughter, loud voices and laughter*]

Elaine: and, you know, but but that may not happen and then you know in a lot of  
cases um, you know, people do want to sort of let off steam and that is cathar(sis)  
but we have no idea what's happening, at least I have=

Sean: =uh, well, we can look at it to some degree so=

Elaine: =well, you can try it, but I think that of all your hypotheses, this is the one that's  
really the most controversial and also the one's that least amenable to test in the kinds of data we actually  
have


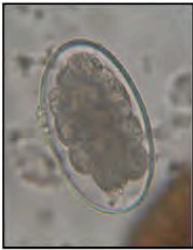



My final example comes from an on-going case study, *Becoming a biologist: Laminated trajectories of literate activity and disciplinarity across the lifespan*, in which I am drawing on life-history, semi-structured, and text-based interviews; observations; texts that reach back to elementary school years; and my own memory in order to explore how Nora, my daughter, and Ben, her husband, became and continue becoming biologists.

***Seeing self-medicating red colobus monkeys: Nora goes to Kibale, Uganda.***

In the summer after her junior year, Nora spent three months at Makerere Biological Field Station in Kibale National Park, Uganda. She had worked the previous year with Thomas Gillespie doing parasitology lab work in the School of Veterinary Medicine. His interests included doing a follow-up study of an observation from his dissertation that suggested male red colobus monkeys were eating the bark of African Cherry trees to self-medicated for Nodule Worm Egg parasites. The bark was known to kill the parasites at particular stages of their development. Gillespie had observed males engaged in this behavior and was interested extending that observation and in seeing if females did as well. Nora went out each day with several field guides to collect the data, flew it back to Illinois, and analyzed it at Gillespie’s lab at Emory University (where he had taken a position just before she left for Africa). Below are two slides from Nora’s presentation of the research at the 2010 Association for Environmental Studies and Science Conference in Portland, Oregon:

Study System

		
Red Colobus Monkey ( <i>Procolobus rufomitatus</i> )	Nodule Worm Egg ( <i>Oesophagostomum</i> sp.)	African Cherry Tree ( <i>Prunus africana</i> )

Where ethnomethodological studies of professional vision (e.g., Goodwin, 1994, 2007) have typically focused on the seeing an object in interaction, complex objects cannot be seen in a single take (cf. Latour’s 1999 discussion of the circulation of reference in pedological studies of the Amazon). In this instance Nora could not see a self-medicating monkey. That vision involved a chain of seeings (seeing the monkey, seeing its feces, seeing the documentation to link sample to individual), and seeing the parasite in the fecal sample through a microscope.

Methods - Objective 1

- Conducted May – July 2008 in Kibale National Park, Uganda.
- Followed 11 red colobus (5 females, 6 males).
- Focal animals were identified, after they were seen ingesting *P. africana* bark.
- A total of 1472 activity scan samples were collected.
- 193 fecal samples were collected, with a minimum of 11 fecal samples/ focal animal.
- Fecal samples were screened for *Oesophagostomum* sp. using standardized methodologies at the Primate Parasitology Reference Laboratory at Emory University.

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