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Strike 3 : an exploration of bullying attacks among adults

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STRIKE 3:
AN EXPLORATION OF BULLYING ATTACKS AMONG ADULTS

A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of the Department of Communication Studies
San José State University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Patricia Cosaro
August 2007

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ABSTRACT

STRIKE 3 AN EXPLORATION OF BULLYING ATTACKS AMONG ADULTS

By Patricia Cosaro

Bullying is a phenomenon that happens within most aspects of life – from childhood through adulthood. This thesis defines “bullying” as the conscious repetition of mistreatment towards another. Because multiple people are involved, bullying is inherently a communicative problem.

This study examines the ways in which gender may affect the tactics of bullying behavior used by adults. This study presents an explanation of how one is “othered” – both in the sense of the roles that a person plays as victim and bully, but also in the differences played out in the behavior in terms of gendered tactics. The concept of power plays a large role in the mind of both aggressor and victim. The type of bullying employed in an act appeared to relate to the desire to maintain or increase a person’s status, or decrease his or her opponent’s (i.e., the victimized colleague).

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PROLOGUE: BATTING PRACTICE

Personal Narrative

Let me introduce you to the world that encompassed a year of my life. Built in 1942, Municipal Stadium is an old-fashioned ballpark that adds to the charm of watching the game but is not conducive to running a business with 21st century technologies. The small-town stadium atmosphere invites people into the friendly wide-open arms of the front gates. Welcoming all to the nation's favorite pastime is a series of large wooden panels, decorated with the hand-painted, full-color logos of *every* minor league team – even those in the independent leagues. A large panel showcases the history of professional ball in the city, including dates, players, and logos of old franchises that once played at the stadium. Walking through the concourse onto the field for the first time, where I was supposed to meet the general manager for a quick intern tutorial, gave me chills. The grandstand was worn; it had an unkempt sort of charm where I could tell that many people had sat throughout previous seasons and cheered for unknown players.

Joe, the General Manager of the team, was waiting for me in one of the red box seats. “Well Trish, we’re going to go ahead and give this a try,” he mused, almost speaking to the ballpark at large rather than greeting me, his new employee, directly. He was not a real people person, but he loved baseball. He knew baseball. And I trusted that he was going to teach me the business of baseball. “How did you know to wear a sweater today? You must be a natural.” I did not quite understand what he meant at that moment, but I figured I was not a real part of the team just yet and I would learn later.

Looking back, there were many red flags raised in my first few days. I often wonder – if I had more “real life” experience, if I were less naive, if I paid more attention to my surroundings – would I have walked away?

We walked back into the tunnel towards the offices. Apparently, baseball had not quite been such a big business at the stadium’s inception sixty years ago. The offices looked like they had been forcibly thrust upon the dissenting concrete structure. We entered Joe’s office first, a slanted room with no windows that most likely once stored equipment. Thousands of signed baseballs in collector cases lined the walls – in some places three balls deep – making the room even darker. A rickety old table struggled to stay upright in the corner. “Have a seat. I’ll get Paul.” I ducked beneath several decades-old pendants hanging from the ceiling and perched on the edge of the sturdiest looking chair. When Joe re-entered the room, I briefly thought he might have just brought his young son in to meet me. Paul was the Assistant General Manager and looked like he was 12-years-old on a very mature day. “Welcome aboard, Tricia.” Paul smiled and gave me a firm handshake. “Smart idea with the sweater there. These walls don’t block any cold. We’ll get you a space heater. Joe is going to meet with Steinbrenner now, our team’s owner. So I’ll show you around the place.” Paul led me out of the “office” and took me around to introduce me to the rest of the staff: the Front Office Roster.

I met Pete first. Rather, he stumbled across our path as we walked down the hall. He leered at me, indignant that Paul and some strange girl had just distracted him from a recent thought. Pete was a chain-smoking alcoholic who was currently fighting three

DUI charges, two of which included a child-endangerment charge for having his kids with him in the car during one of his drunken vehicular excursions. If you asked him to stop smoking in the office, he would blow smoke in your face. He was also the facilities department. Pete, a brilliant craftsman and artist, was responsible for all of the paintings on the outer walls. He had been a member of the stadium staff for as long as anyone could remember. For that reason, no one seemed to mention any of his many indiscretions. We walked by him and entered the ticket booth. “This will be your office,” Paul told me. “You’ll be sharing with Ruth, our ticket manager.” Ruth barely looked at me. She seemed annoyed that I had interrupted her work.

“Well – let’s go meet the marketing department shall we?” Paul took me down the hall, past the main entrance and just past the concession stand. This office was standard size, with a large window behind a beat-up couch pushed against the back wall. There was a desk in each opposing corner so that two men faced each other from across the room. Jason was a Massachusetts Institute of Technology graduate who ran the marketing department. He was constantly on the lookout for bigger and better opportunities, but currently he was responsible for securing sales sponsorships. Jeremy was in the back corner. He was my direct supervisor and a college boy who had never quite grown up. He regularly bragged about how he only graduated college because of a buddy’s creative mathematician-like skill regarding his grade average. His role as my direct supervisor would be to monitor my progress as he taught me how to act as the communications/public relations department for the team.

“Have a seat on the couch,” said Jason, grinning over at Jeremy.

“You have a boyfriend?” asked Jeremy spinning around in his chair to fully appraise me. “Or wait – would that be sexual harassment?” I laughed. The three of us stared at each other for a few seconds.

“Who’s your team?” Jason asked.

“Dodgers,” I replied instantly without hesitation.

“My girl!” cried Jason. “Dodger fan. She can stay.” The three of us laughed.

“So I guess you want something to do huh?” Jeremy asked. “Umm, I guess you can work on these mailing labels. I’ll get back to you.” I took the stack of handwritten notes and walked back to my office.

My office. Given the space constrictions, the office was really a six-by-eight foot old ticket window booth. Three openings lined the back wall; they were presently closed with wooden door panels on hinges. Paul was right – the walls did not even attempt to retain any of the minute amounts of heat that the weak winter sun gave off, but those same walls managed to conserve every bit of the cold. My “desk” was a broken end table shoved in the far corner. A 1993 model Apple Centris computer that did not work sat squarely on the table. I squashed myself into a chair and tried to focus on typing the labels; the permanently blurry screen flickered and mocked me. I discovered that my keyboard did not have the ability to type the letter “G.” Jeremy took the mailing labels away and said he had another project I would be working on in about a week anyway.

Ruth’s area took up the great majority of the room, as this was the ticket office. I was merely an imposition. And now, I was threatening her role as the woman of the team. She glowered at me. Throughout the year, she would make her distaste for me

widely known throughout the stadium. And so it began. I would sit in my office, bundled up in a sweater and scarf (and gloves when there was not too much typing involved), waiting for an assignment that I knew would receive no credit. My work was often taken away and replaced with either menial tasks (filing, photocopying, mailing labels, brochure folding) or with no work at all. I dreaded the daily walks down to Jeremy and Jason's office. Inevitably, the conversation would stop when I walked in. The two boys would share knowing glances with one another. I hated the constant nit picking, faultfinding, and criticism of a trivial nature. Often there was a grain of truth (but only a grain – such as a typo or numerically reversed stat in an initial draft) in the criticism to fool me into believing the criticism had validity. The criticism was based on distortion, misrepresentation, or complete fabrications. I imagined them giggling like schoolgirls every time they got me to trip up on a project.

As I would sit for seemingly endless hours in the ticket office corner, Ruth would often make comments about the new ticket intern whose name was Calvin – my own victim that season. One day he walked in an hour after my daily start. I do not know what came over me at that moment, but I looked up and with a hearty grin greeted him, “Heya Sparky!”

Ruth cracked up. I watched the juxtaposition of the tears steaming down her face in laughter as Calvin looked back at me, obviously hurt by my newly imposed nickname. Ruth grinned at me, “Brilliant!” Despite Calvin's jovial welcome into the “Good Old Boys” club I now so desperately felt alienated from, the nickname stuck. Somehow, I felt a step up when he would groan about how much he despised the nickname. I longed to

find opportunities to bully Calvin. If he cringed at my behest, for a brief moment, I was not the victim. For a three-week stretch, the two of us were sent to a large warehouse to fold pocket schedules and bundle them in convenient display boxes. Calvin came back from lunch one Tuesday, “I bought you a sandwich from Togo’s. You like Turkey right?” I looked up in surprise. “Listen, I’ve got to ask. What’s the deal with the Sparky nickname? It’s obnoxious.”

I looked at him. “I have no idea,” I replied honestly. “It just sort of came out one day.”

“Man – I hate it. Makes me feel two-feet tall. And everyone thinks you’re some sort of ingenious humorist for coming up with it.”

So, I *had* done something right. That night when I dropped off the finished boxes, I made sure to point out that “Sparky wasn’t as quick in the folding department.” Everyone laughed.

Simultaneous with the criticism was a constant refusal to acknowledge me and my contributions and achievements or, at times, to even recognize my existence. The season had begun and the “Marketing Department” was out looking for sales. “I hate day games before summer,” Jeremy announced to the world one morning. “How the hell do you get butts in seats for those games? People don’t take work off to watch rookie ball.” He noticed I was standing in the office doorway. “You. Here’s a project. Get butts in seats on the Wednesday day-game in May.”

I was so excited. This was a real project. Like I stated earlier, I had completed a marketing internship with the Oakland Athletics Baseball Club the previous season. One

of my tasks there had been to write up reports on the success of the incentive draws from promotional campaigns. I was relatively sure that loosely translated to “getting butts in seats.” Even better – I had an idea. Jason had said it himself: “people don’t take off work to watch rookie ball.” So, what if the game was *part of* a workday. I was going after the educational angle of baseball – and gunning for field trips. I wrote up a publicity pitch that proposed opening the stadium early. Schools, camps, and other youth organizations would be invited. We would set up booths relating baseball to school subjects (e.g. history – how did the game start? how have the rules and uniforms changed? Math: keeping score is a statisticians game; geography: players today come from all over the world; physical education: how do the players stay healthy?). I surmised that if we gave free tickets away to the children, adults would pay to accompany them. The fans would then spend additional money on food and souvenirs.

“I don’t know that we’ll have time to put this together,” commented Jason.

“It’s never been done before. No proof it’ll work,” agreed Jeremy. “Nice try though. Jason and I will bring it up to Joe next year.”

I heard them mumbling to each other as I walked away. I had a sickening feeling that they were making fun of what I had thought was a very good idea. I had worked hard on my concept. I could not go back to my office because Ruth had made it clear I was not welcome there at the moment – she was on a personal call and had locked the door – besides, at this point I did not know of any project I could work on (much less one that would not require a “G”). I walked out to the stands and watched the players taking their aggressions out on a baseball during batting practice. The ping of the ball against

metal bats was satisfying and yet felt off-kilter, because my mind always wants to hear a “crack” when bat connects with ball. The contradiction seemed to fit me in my current position. As the days passed, I became increasingly lonely. I was so frustrated – why could I not figure out what I was doing wrong? Why didn’t I fit in?

About halfway through the season, Calvin and I were called into Joe’s office. Jason was rocking back and forth in one of the rickety chairs and Jeremy, who did not entirely trust the integrity of either the table or the chairs, was wandering around the room trying to make out the names on the signed balls. I immediately wondered if they were going to fire me. But why would Calvin be there to witness this if I was? Was I going to be fired for bullying Calvin? Damn you Sparky!

“Each season we have a little contest for the interns,” said Joe. “August 8 will be Restaurant Night here at the park. Your job is to sell the sponsorship package to various eateries: 100 tickets for \$100. We do this every year and I think Jason and Jeremy have the interns compete against each other. Paul will have a board in his office keeping track of the number of sales. Last year our PR intern sold three Restaurants. Ruth was our ticket intern and she sold one. As you can tell, sales isn’t easy. For every 100 establishments you approach, you may get one ‘yes’ and 99 ‘no’s’. The franchise record is 17 – from about ten years ago.”

“And here’s the fun part,” continued Jason. “Tricia, you’re my pony. I always get the PR intern. Jeremy takes the ticket intern. The scoreboard will be posted in Paul’s office, just above all the previous records.”

“Please note the highest sales record in modern history. Completed by ‘Bizarro Jason’ at nine Restaurants. Beat that little ones.”

“Jeremy won his intern year. You will all have names – so we know which horse to cheer for. Jeremy was ‘Bizarro Jason’ because he wanted to be me.”

“Sparky, of course will be known as, ‘Sparky.’” Calvin gave me an ice-cold stare at that pronouncement. “Tricia, you’re a theatre major. So your horse will be ‘Drama Queen.’” I was, in fact, a Theatre Arts major. But I was certain that nickname was meant to be insulting.

“Now Drama Queen,” cautioned Jason, “I’ve never lost.”

I looked directly back at Jason. “I have no intention of losing.” This was my new chance. I would beat them all. I was going to beat the franchise record. I was going to prove I was better at something than every person who had ever stepped foot in that room. They all laughed.

With blessings from Joe, Jason, and Jeremy (and no “G”-less typing to complete), I hit the pavement with my Restaurant pitch. Two days later, I rolled into the office mid-day. “And where have you been?” Ruth questioned as she eyed me warily. After the time that had passed during the season, I do not think she was accustomed to seeing me in a good mood.

“Selling Restaurants.”

“Don’t get your hopes up. It’s not easy,” she warned.

“Oh, I know. Selling these packages is harder than I thought.”

“Told you. I only sold one, and my skirt was shorter than yours.”

“I only sold two today,” I reported. I quickly discovered that by soliciting Restaurant Night packages, I was able to stay out of the office for days at a time without feeling guilty. Each afternoon, I would report to the stadium for game-day duties bearing several envelopes of new Restaurant Night sponsors. Then I would slink back to my office and make the best attempt possible at zoning out until the game began. Paul was visibly impressed. I was beating the pants off Calvin, despite him also being very good at selling the packages.

The day before the official Restaurant Night, I arrived at the stadium early, having just completed my final sale. Paul was due to announce the results in Jason and Jeremy’s office. Jeremy was talking excitedly to Calvin when I walked in. “I can’t believe you pulled off ten! I never thought anyone would beat my record,” a very animated Jeremy was crowing. Jason was sitting quietly and sullenly at his desk.

“I beat your record, too,” I offered. Jason spun around so fast, I thought he might fall out of his chair.

“There is no way I lost this year. No way. Sparky sold 10 Restaurants. The only way you sold more is because you’re a chick. Did you offer the tickets after selling sexual favors?”

“Ruth is a chick. And you lost with her last year.” I was not happy that Jeremy was attempting to thwart my glory.

“Well?” prompted Jason. “How many did you sell? Did I win?”

“Yes. We won,” I said. “23.” I left Jason alone to gloat over Jeremy and Calvin. I was not in the mood to celebrate any more. Subconsciously, I left because I did not

believe I had been invited to stay and celebrate, despite me being the horse that had run the race. I did not even bother to look for any “G’s” before I started the working on the daily program for the game.

“Tricia, come here,” screamed Jason several hours later, jerking me out of a rather comfortable trance I had managed to surrender to by focusing on the rhythm of the flickering monitor. “When I ask you to update the website, I expect you to do it correctly. This is ridiculous. We have people looking at this every day, and they notice when things are wrong. I do not want anyone thinking I’m incompetent even if *you* are! Damn it! Just go fix it now!” He was yelling now. I was almost in tears. “Can you believe her? I heard . . .” I heard them talking and snickering as I took the laptop and ran back to my office to correct my boneheaded mistake. Their emphasis on their pronouns made my heart pound. “She” was obviously me. How could I have been so stupid?

I resented being denied training necessary to fulfill my duties. I had worked hard to get where I was. I had given up my senior year of college to work 90-hour weeks. Of course I would occasionally get things wrong, I was an intern – I was there to learn how to do it right. I felt like I had given up so much. I was supposed to go on a celebratory trip to Vegas with my college roommates. Joe declined vacation. A line delivered almost straight out of the mouth of the character, Bill Ludlum, from the movie “Office Space – “Yeah, we’re going to need you here during that time.” A dear friend in the Army had requested I visit him before he shipped out. Vacation declined. I graduated from college. “You know, most of our interns have skipped their ceremony,” cautioned Joe. We struck a deal – I was allowed go to the ceremony but I skipped all the masses

and dinners thrown by the school for the departing seniors. My friends no longer bothered to keep in touch and invite me to various social gatherings. I was no longer free to live my life as I so chose. I was completely alienated from my coworkers, and yet those same people had caused me to lose touch with my friends as well. I did not dwell much on my status as a social pariah; I did not feel that my friends would understand why I put up with my job – I was doing this for my career, not my health.

“What did you screw up this time?” Ruth spat at me as I flung myself to the floor next to her desk and used the only available electrical outlet to plug in the laptop with the website software. I looked down at the website that I had so grievously gotten wrong. “Tomorrow MLC Try to Take Down Oaks, Thursday August 8.” Today was Wednesday – specifically Wednesday, August 7. Referring to a calendar, I confirmed my newfound suspicion. Tomorrow was Thursday, August 8. The website was correct. “Nobody likes you anyway,” mentioned Ruth as I started to get my courage back. “They’re probably doing it on purpose to get rid of you.”

From day one, she had glared at me, called me names, and reminded me that she could kick my ass. She was not going to bother me at all today. I yanked the cord out of the wall and triumphantly marched back down the hall into their office to explain what had just proven to be their error, not mine. “Oops” said Jason.

Oops I thought, oops! You practically had me in tears, and you did not even bother to take a second look at the egregious error to ensure it was actually wrong? I began having a panic attack. The constant attempts to undermine my position and my status, my worth, my value and my potential had my world crashing down around me.

“You know Trish,” offered Jeremy in a seemingly consoling voice, “this is the first time we’ve ever hired a woman for the PR position. I mean it even makes more work for me since I have to go into the locker room to get the signatures for autographs and stuff. You’d have to be really awesome if we’d ever think of hiring another girl for this.”

Now I understood. I was being singled out and treated differently. Everyone else could get away with murder but the moment I put a foot wrong - however trivial - action was taken. Pete occasionally showed up for work – always drunk – and the staff just rolled their eyes. I got stuck in traffic and ran in fifteen minutes late the day that the nearby university had their commencement address, and I received a written notice that if it happened again my pay would be docked. That was rich. Dock my pay? I made \$35 a game (not per day – just per home game). I trudged out of the office and stormed down to the copy closet once no one could see me anymore. Surprisingly, I still cared that the daily programs were printed in time for the evening game.

I heard the door slam before I saw her. “Like I said, nobody likes you.”

Not now Ruth, please, I thought. I turned and rolled my eyes at her.

“You’re a liar.”

“How?”

“Everyone knows you lied about having class so that you could come in late. Joe knows. You’re lucky he hasn’t fired you.”

“I’m not going to get into this with you right now. I’ve been done with school since June.” I walked towards her and reached around her to try to open the door. She grabbed my wrist and twisted it behind my back.

“Bitch! You are a whore!” The door started to open. Ruth shoved me back into the wall – hard. She whirled around and slammed the door on a very shocked looking Joe.

“Don’t you ever try and fucking touch me again. I’ll kick your ass.”

The door opened again and I saw Steinbrenner staring open-mouthed at the two of us. “Is everything okay? I need to check my mailbox.”

“Fine. We’re just having a conversation. You can come back in a bit.” Ruth pushed the door closed again.

I didn’t feel like dealing with this right now. Apparently, not even the general manager and the team owner would be able to intervene, although I quickly noted that they certainly had not tried very hard. I slumped down next to the copy machine and watched as black dust from the toner cartridge rose up into the air and settled down onto my shirt, staining my white blouse. Ruth whirled around and slammed the door behind her way out. Somehow, the sound of the key turning the lock did not surprise me.

I was isolated and separated from colleagues, excluded from what was going on, marginalized, overruled, ignored, and sidelined. I was belittled, demeaned, and patronized. I was humiliated, shouted at, and threatened, often in front of others. And now, I was locked in a closet.

I could feel the testosterone pulsing inside of me. I was mad. Nowhere had I signed up to be subjected to this kind of treatment. I knew what Joe's response would be, "We just need to work together. I don't know what goes on outside of here, but here, we need to work together." Paul would shake his head and say, "you shouldn't let them get to you." Jeremy and Jason would say nothing but I knew there would be a plethora of jokes about this after I was gone. I had reached my end. I was done playing. Game over.

I grabbed a piece of paper out of the bottom drawer from the copy machine. I found a black pen that had fallen beneath the machine some time before.

Dear MLC,
Due to the inability to protect employees from harm, I must regret to inform you that I will be resigning immediately. I am saddened to say that I must leave because I am in constant fear for my safety. I want to express my truest gratitude for the lessons I have learned during my time here.
Sincerely,
Tricia Cosaro
Associate Director Public Relations

I made six copies. I thought about writing a note to Calvin, to let him know that I felt badly, that for those brief moments we shared a similar status. Instead, I pulled out my cell phone and dialed Jason's extension. "Hello Jason? It's Tricia. I'm locked in the copy room. Can you come let me out?" I could feel the snickering as I hung up my phone.

The next morning, I lay in bed wondering what their reactions would be as they arrived for the day. Despite the fact that I had just run away from my job, I felt strangely at peace. My phone rang. It was Jeremy. "I got your note. Are you okay? My God, did

anything else happen? I'm sorry – I didn't think you got hurt." My reality of discontent was shaped by the way my colleagues' treatment forced me into a corner and literally, into a closet. In the attempt to maintain a gender status quo, the staff treated me with alternative genderized bullying tactics. I was subtly maligned by the males who did not believe a female belonged among them and overtly attacked by another woman who had cherished her role as the sole "girl" prior to my arrival.

I went back a month later to meet with Joe. "Wow. I don't know what to say to you," he began. "I'm sorry you didn't feel safe here. You should know you were. Steinbrenner and I would never let anything bad happen to our employees. We've never had anyone just sneak out of here in the dead of night before."

I said nothing.

"Well, here's your last paycheck. I'm sure you need that. Also, I want you to know how impressed everyone was with your sales ability. Here is your commission on all of those sales. I didn't actually believe that anyone would break the franchise record. I want you to know we had a celebration planned for you that next day. A plaque, champagne, and everything."

"Thank you," I said dully.

"Here's your plaque. We drank the champagne."

CHAPTER 1: PRE-GAME WARM-UP

Introduction

The one constant through all the years, Ray, has been baseball. America has rolled by like an army of steamrollers. It has been erased like a blackboard, rebuilt, and erased again. But baseball has marked the time. This field, this game: it's a part of our past, Ray. It reminds of us of all that once was good and it could be again.

- Terrance Mann in *"Field of Dreams"*

I thought baseball was life. I had grown up as an avid fan of the sport and now I had the opportunity to be a part of it – I was offered an internship in the position of Associate Director of Public Relations with a minor league ball club. Since I had just finished an internship with the Oakland Athletics, I assumed this would be similar. I showed up on my first day ready to tackle my new position and went home at the end of that day thinking how lucky I was to have such an exciting job. I knew it would be hard. I knew it would be time consuming – 9AM to 1AM, six days a week. I knew I was at the bottom of the status totem pole, but I was ready to serve my time as a peon before working my way up in seniority, to a place where I had any sort of authority over the projects I worked on or the tasks I was assigned to complete. Besides, I thought, how hard could it be working in an industry I adored and a field I loved? At the time, I did not realize that my new job would be the place where I would be bullied past the point of no return and still suffer the effects years later.

"We live in a cynical, cynical world." These words, spoken by the fictional sports agent Jerry Maguire in the film by the same name, are an astute reflection of my reality.

Right now, I am petrified that you might roll your eyes and laugh or that you might violently crumple and trash this paper while mumbling, “What a load of crap.” Both examples are a form of bullying in my world. Today, I am paranoid person. When I see two of my coworkers talking, I fearfully and illogically think they are talking about me. I stress about the fact that I may not be performing as well as I could in my current job, despite my history of unanimously positive performance reviews. If my supervisor calls me into his or her office, or asks if I am available to talk later, I begin to panic. Constructive criticism makes me flinch.

Bullying is a phenomenon that happens within most aspects of life – from childhood through adulthood. I believe most people would agree that bullying is an unpleasant situation, but people have differing opinions on what constitutes bullying. Any mistreatment of another can be considered bullying; however, for the purpose of this thesis, I define “bullying” as the conscious repetition of mistreatment towards another. One must also acknowledge that because multiple people are involved, bullying is inherently a communicative problem.

Most individual definitions of bullying are based on personal memories developed during the emotional warfare of childhood. A 1996 study (Salmivalli, Karhunen, & Lagerspetz) assumed that all children were somehow involved in childhood bullying practices, whether through direct participation or observation. I polled a small group of college students to see how they defined the subject. Their responses included themes of negative acts in which the goal is to make “the bully” feel superior and the “bullyee” feel threatened. Examples included picking on kids (typically the same group every time),

teasing, stealing from them and beating them up; physically making people feel bad about themselves; psychologically intimidating or hurting another person; and purposely exclude another in order to gain a sense of power and respect. Each person I spoke with had his or her own interpretation of how to define the occurrence. Perhaps this was a reflection of the widely held stereotypes of gender in the bullying process – boys as physically aggressive anonymous bullies versus girls as covert and subtle manipulators (Bjorkqvist, Lagerspetz, & Kaukiainen, 1992; Bjorkqvist, Osterman & Lagerspetz, 1994; Eagly & Steffen, 1986; Mumby & Putnam, 1992). I will return to this concept of gender in much more detail in the literature review as well as the discussion of this study's results. However, for a moment let me step back into the world of sports.

A pitcher on the baseball field uses a variety of pitches against his or her opponent. A fastball provides a metaphor for the notion of masculine bullying. The ball is thrown hard, fast and directly towards the strike zone in front of the batter – a direct and visible challenge. In contrast, a curve ball represents feminine bullying. The pitch appears as though it is heading toward home plate in one direction, but slyly changes its route at the end – tricking the batter's perception of when and where to swing the bat. Pitcher and team alike agree that both types of pitches are necessary to win. As adults, we use both masculine and feminine forms of bullying against our victims. I use the term "victim" to describe the person on the receiving end of aggression not because they have no recourse, but because a person in a bullying situation often feels victimized during the occurrence. All types of harassment are bullying if the actions of the perpetrator have the effect of hurting another mentally or physically; cruel actions alone do not constitute

bullying if no harm is perceived. Bullies and victims alike are men and women of all races, ages, and classes. Harmful events initiated by one individual towards another happen in all organizations regardless of size or type.

As stated earlier, I define “bullying” as the *conscious repetition of mistreatment towards another*. In adults, this mistreatment generally manifests in a combination of humiliation and/or the withholding of resources and support – in turn preventing the victim from succeeding at his or her assigned tasks in a given aspect of life. The defining characteristics of bullying are increased psychological stress and damage to health, self-esteem, relations with family and friends, and/or economic livelihood. Wounds that can result from long-term bullying have many of the same features of abuse – a sense of betrayal, elements of self-doubt and blame, and feelings of hopelessness and anger (Dellasega, 2005).

Keeping with the baseball metaphor, this pre-game warm-up is representative of the standard broadcast introductions before a game. Much like a broadcaster/announcer tells the audience who is playing, shares some past game results, and explains player/team statistics, as I begin this examination of bullying, I will review the prior claims of researchers from varying disciplines before I discuss this subject from the perspective of the communication discipline in this chapter. I will then define the purpose for this particular study, and I will explain my perspective on why this matters in contemporary society. The Scorekeeping chapter will describe how I will accomplish the study. This thesis will use autoethnography and interviews to share my own personal narrative of my experience with adult bullying and the tales of ten individual bullying

experiences from men and women of varying backgrounds. I will then explain the theme of power through the concepts of metaphors and gender, found in all of the stories through a thematic analysis in the Team Statistics chapter. The Final Score chapter holds the conclusion and will elaborate the future plans for this particular study, which includes a performance. The performance script is chapter four, with my personal narrative serving as the plot and composite characters developed from the ten interviews.

Statement of Purpose

This study examines the ways in which gender may affect the tactics of bullying behavior used by adults. I question the ways that “feminine” and “masculine” bullying instances differ based upon the biological sex of the bully and victim.

Since bullying rests heavily on one’s perception of the acts committed, answers to these questions require a look into the personal experiences and examples of people who have been victims and bullies, including myself.

Justification for Study

“I’m convinced that bullies are emotionally damaged people unable to function rationally in a logical world. Unfortunately, understanding that may or may not help a subordinate survive working under a bully” (Dellasega, 2005, p. 37). As I deconstruct the gender behavior involved in bullying, I believe that rationality – defined by Mumby & Putman (1992) as intentional and reasonable behavior – will likely play a very small role in the thought process of a bully or victim. The idea of looking at genderization

within bullying aligns with Mumby & Putnam in that the objective of this thesis “is not to reverse binary oppositions but to problematize the very idea of opposition and the notion of identity upon which it depends” (p. 468). I do not believe that the tactics of bullying are restricted to only one of two categories based on gender. Rather, I am interested in how gender intersects with the varying tactics.

Bullying is social in nature but this is not, however, a subject widely studied in communication; most studies originate from psychology, education, or business management disciplines (Eagly & Steffen, 1986; Monks, Smith, & Swettenham, 2003; Vega & Comer, 2005). Yet, without communicative interpersonal interactions, the concept of bullying could not exist. These interactions create three roles played in incidents of aggression (Dellasaga, 2005). The first is the aggressor – or the bully – who is the individual actually attacking his or her target. The second is the victim or the target of the abuse; this is the person who experiences harm. Third is the bystander – the person or people who stand by and encourage the situation, either through action or inaction. Most victims of bullying know that the experiences can cause lasting trauma.

Evidence from neuroscience has demonstrated the likelihood that other vertebrate species experience long-term effects of bullying (Neergaard, 2006). Scientists at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, watching big mice intimidate smaller ones, found that the stress of being bullied set off genetic changes in the brain. A month later, the bullied mice still withdrew from all of their peers. The genetic code of humans and mice is so similar that some scientists believe the human genome can be decoded by studying clues in the mouse genome. The Human Genome process of sequencing the 3

billion DNA subunits and identifying all human genes was completed in 2003. Further biological study to decode meaning is still underway. Therefore, the leap between rodents and humans is not so wide and it is important to see that bullying is a phenomenon that creates harm in all victims.

The existing research regarding bullying is divided into three main categories: Gender differences, bullying and aggression in children, and bullying and aggression in the workplace (referring specifically to the behavior of adults). I begin with a review of gender differences because methods used to study aggression are different in the study of children compared to the study of adults. The two sets of results may provide larger margins of gendered findings that pertain primarily to children; yet, both are gendered experiences in terms of bullying.

Gender Differences: Opposing Teams or Inter-squad Scrimmage?

Humans spend a majority of time spent awake communicating with others. Despite occasional grumblings by some, everyone must communicate with the opposite sex – fathers, mothers, siblings, schoolmates – and as we grow older, bosses and co-workers. Therefore, it is imperative that we not only learn to communicate with one another – regardless of gender – but also that we understand the reasons behind any differences that may occur. There have been questions surrounding the different communication styles of men and women and the way they interact with each other since the advent of communication. There are numerous research articles and books written on

the subject of gender communication, with most of them drawing the obvious conclusion that men and women are different (Baker, 1991; Buzzanell, 1994; Frances 1979).

There have been many attempts to explain gender differences in communication; genetics and environment, commonly referred to as the nature versus nurture debate, are at the top of the debate list (Canary & Hause, 1993; Dow & Wood, 2006). Yet whether genetic or learned, these assumed differences become part of the communication pattern that everyone experiences through daily interactions. American society tends to view males as aggressive, independent and objective (Doyle, 1995). By contrast, females tend to be seen as submissive, dependent, and subjective (Wood, 2005). For years, researchers reported that males were both more physically and verbally aggressive than females (Terman & Tyler, 1954). However, much of this research dealt only with children and young adults. There are many studies that research this difference in communication style – some looking at the existence of “typical” behavior, while others compare interactions (Andrews, 1987; Ashcraft & Pacanowsky, 1996; Martin, 2003). Delving into the idea of gender communication, one can find that interactions between men and women in an organizational setting bring new complexities. Kendall and Tannen (1997) summarize such unique constraints involving an institutional structure as one

in which individuals are hierarchically ranked, a history of greater male participation...periodic external evaluation in the form of raises...and a situation in which participants are required to interact regularly with others who are neither kin nor chosen affiliates (p. 81).

This further underscores the need to understand the deeper meanings of gender communication differences, such as those that occur within the workplace.

Sax (2005) argues that there are very distinct scientific differences between the sexes. He disputes Fausto-Sterling's (2000) claims that the division of the human race into two sexes is an artificial invention of our culture. Instead, he puts forth that "there is no either/or – there are shades of difference" (Sax, p. 6). To demonstrate this perspective, Sax developed a quiz to determine the level of masculinity or femininity for North American children ages eleven through eighteen. The feminine test asks questions about cooking and colors – asking true/false questions about being meek and mild in a group, while the masculine test questions the subject on cars and risky activities. Despite his assurance that the quiz is only to determine the level of gender behavior, Sax's quiz actually reinforces all of the stereotypes for how children should act if they want to play a masculine or feminine role. He even goes as far as to cite congenital adrenal hyperplasia (CAH) to describe levels of brain activity in girls who act like tomboys. As I am not a medical doctor, I cannot dispute this particular claim – however, I do take issue with the phrasing of CAH as a mutation in comparison with "normal" girls.

In contrast to Sax, the results of a research analysis by Canary and Hause (1993) claim that there is a minimal difference between the way men and women communicate. The authors argue that one should not see significant differences between the sexes when observing communicative behaviors, but instead, stereotypes and expectations, such as Sax's, act against valid measurements in differences between the sexes, thus letting the definitions of the differences relate to culture. They observe that "reliance on stereotypes, polarization of the sexes, lack of valid measures, and dearth of theory all work against an understanding of sex differences in communication" (p. 129).

Pollack (1998) supports Canary and Hause and refutes Sax's arguments by calling them myths that infer boys are merely prisoners of their genes. Pollack instead introduces readers to the concept of the "Boy Code." This is a learned behavior that develops as boys grow up being told to "be a man." Pollack argues that boys are living behind a mask of masculine bravado because to show their true self could be considered shameful. This reinforces the concept of the male bully – by learning to fight (potentially taking out aggression on the young and the weak), the masculine bully protects his perceived honor. Sax, on the other hand, believes that girls who act aggressively may lower their standing in the eyes of their peers – assumed to be girls in the same age range – whereas the boys are increasing their status by fighting. He found that male chimpanzees are about twenty times as likely to fight as females of the species. However, although female chimpanzees rarely fight, when they do, the hostility toward their opponent can last for years whereas the males appeared to become better friends. I am forced to assume that this claim refers to physical or other visible aggressiveness because, in the observations of others, feminine bullying often raises one girl's status toward the position of a "Queen Bee" (Wiseman, 2002), as her aggression is disguised through words and alleged friendship. Additional research has shown that parents often give positive rewards for interpersonal and social skills in daughters, while rewarding physical aggression in their sons (Wood, 2005).

A 2003 study measured the effect of feedback from managers to subordinates and found that when delivering performance feedback, males employed a direct approach, while females took a more participatory approach in order to involve the subordinate in

the conversation – before eventually leading up to the direct feedback (Lizzio, Wilson, Gilchrist, & Gallois, 2003). These feedback techniques were defined as “gender specific.” The subordinates then described the effectiveness by gender, and as originally stated by Baird and Bradley (1979), strategies employed by the females were said to be both effective and easier to enact and accept. However, findings from Lizzio et al.’s study provided little support to show that the gender of a manager had any influence on the subordinate feedback strategy evaluations. Instead, evaluations were measured as equal when either gender employed “gendered” techniques –avoidant, no feedback/direct and traditionally masculine, or feedback-only in a more feminine approach. This supports the argument that it is not the gender of an employee, but rather the context, that provides cues for evaluation of a manager or subordinate’s communicative effectiveness based upon role-appropriate behavior. Based on the assumed social skills between women, many young women entering the workplace are encouraged to look to other women as mentors. Often, after a period of observation, these younger women learn to take on “masculine” communication traits in order to differentiate themselves from the remaining “powerless” women in their organization (Ashcraft, 1998). Thus, the cycle of gendered expectations is perpetuated.

In looking at the research that examines the role of gender communication in the workplace, the most prominent theories to emerge are the feminist theories in the critical paradigm. There appears to be a certain notion that “only women have gender” (Mumby, 1996, p. 288). If the behavior of men was considered the standard for the basis of an organizational gender analysis, then any deviations found in research would be the

“genderization” of women. Yet, per the observations of Mumby (1996) and Jacques, (1993), it is not possible for either sex to avoid performing gender. Instead, the differences correlate to individual identities and there is no specific norm with which a person of either sex must strive to conform.

Some of the existing research looks at stereotypes that both genders play into in order to appease societal expectations implying that gender communication is merely a symptom or example of a larger critical issue. Mulac, Seibold, and Farris (2000) conducted a study using role-play that supports the aforementioned managerial and feedback studies. They measured both the language used in the criticisms as well as the third-party reaction. They found that there were definite traits that seemed to be more indicative of each gender, but that “male” qualities were also used by females and vice versa. Additionally, the authors compared the results of this study to research conducted in a non-organizational arena and found that contrary to the research by Lizzio et al., there were no differences that could be found between men and women. Once again, an argument can be made that there is no significant difference between the communication of men and women, but rather assumed roles create conceptions – regardless of which sex enacts a particular “gendered” behavior.

Bullying and Aggression in Children: Hit-by-Pitch.

Sex differences are generally created along a structure of social norms (Bjorkqvist et al., 1994). Many of us grew up reciting the popular Mother Goose Nursery rhyme,

What are little boys made of?
Snips and snails, and puppy dogs tails

That's what little boys are made of!
 What are little girls made of?
 Sugar and spice and all things nice
 That's what little girls are made of!

In turn, many of us have heard the terms “boys will be boys” and “that’s just the way girls are” (Wiseman, 2002). American schools are powerful agents for gender socialization. When many of us think of education, we envision the classic “reading, writing and arithmetic.” But each culture’s system of education (the United States school system in the case of this thesis) also instructs children how they are expected to behave in order to fit the cultural expectations of their gender identity (Bate & Bowker, 1997). In schools, physical aggression is often acceptable in young boys, but highly discouraged in girls. Boys learn to communicate so their ideas and opinions are broadcast to others. On the other hand, girls often learn to use communication to create and maintain relationships (Wood, 2005). These rules of communication are maintained well into adulthood, where the styles are merely refined.

Several studies show that school age children display distinct gender roles in aggression (Bjorkqvist et al., 1992; Lagerpetz, Bjorkqvist, & Peltonen, 1988, Salmivalli, Lagerspetz, Bjorkqvist, Osterman, & Kaukiainen, 1996). Among children between four and seven-years-old, boys tended to show aggression to control others, while girls used aggression to protect themselves (Wood, 2005). The results show that boys have more of a tendency to become angry, but it is important to recognize that, while anger may be a motivator in an aggressive act, anger is not aggression. It appeared as though physical aggression by women was used only as a last resort – as though women have a desire to cause psychological harm in those who have offended them, and men feel the need to

create physical harm (Strandmark & Hallberg, 2007). Girls tend to use indirect means of aggression versus the more direct manner found in boys. Indirect aggression is a method of attacking another in a way that cannot be directly traced back to the bully. Examples of indirect aggression can be seen in rumor spreading or peer exclusion, where an incident could be explained away as a simple mistake (Simmons, 2002). One explanation for this is developmental speeds of children; biologically, society assumes girls will develop verbal skills sooner than boys (Bjorkqvist et al., 1994). Stronger social skills would support the theory that girls would lean more heavily on covert aggression, since they would be using qualities that come most naturally to them. In turn, one could then assume that boys use physical aggression as children and slowly begin to use more covert forms of bullying as they grow older and catch up with females in regards to social and verbal skills.

If a pitcher in a baseball game hits the opposing batter with the ball, there is a chance that the act was accidental. Also possible is that the pitcher's team is angry with the batter's team, and the batter is receiving a painful warning or retaliation. Regardless of the reason, pitchers on each team receive a warning by the umpire. If it happens again, the pitcher will be thrown out of the game, regardless of intent. Some people say hitting a batter with a pitch is unacceptable sportsmanship, while others believe it is merely a part of the game. These opinions are strikingly similar to the way bullying is handled in schools where the first offense receives a warning, and the second receives some form of punishment (California Department of Education, 2003). For example, at Ladera Elementary School in Southern California, the first time a child is caught bullying

another student, he or she is sent to see the school counselor. It is not until the second time the bully is caught that a recordable disciplinary action is taken based upon the severity of the offense, ranging from detention to suspension. Many people are beginning to believe that bullying deserves a zero tolerance policy, while others still believe bullying is just a part of growing up.

The National Association of School Psychologists estimates that, in the United States, over 160,000 students miss school every day because they are afraid of being bullied (Pollack, 1998). Many schools are now beginning to recognize that bullying can no longer be dismissed as harmless teasing or as a normal phase of growing up. Definitions of bullying among school age children emphasize that bullying and harassment entail a disparity in actual or perceived power and “strength” between the persecutor and the victim. To consider one a victim of bullying, the person involved must find it difficult to defend himself/herself in the actual situation. If a coach humiliates a player in front of others, some may believe that the put-down is meant to be motivating or a form of discipline. Yet, although the child may perceive great harm, he or she often feels that recourse is not allowed – a feeling that often continues into adulthood and life in the workplace. One individual example of this recently occurred in Temecula, California (Student Bully Sign, 2007). When a middle-school student was suspended from school for bullying a classmate, her mother decided to personalize the punishment further. The girl’s mother made her stand on a street corner wearing a sign that read, “I engaged in bullying behavior. I got suspended from school and this street corner. Don’t be like me. Stop bullying.” The seventh-grade girl later stated that she

thought it was an appropriate punishment, but one might question whether the potential humiliation of one bully will decrease or increase the potential for subtle, covert bullying methods as the girl becomes an adult.

Some research chose to remove the concept of the individual in order to look towards the environments where harassment and bullying took place. Liefhoghe and Davey (2001) argue that in many cases the organization plays an equal role in mistreatment to the victim and perpetrator. Moving away from the focus on individuals in bullying, they put forth that “research does not offer a definition of bullying – rather, [it] examine[s] the implications of the different ways in which the term bullying is used” (p. 375). Typical research on bullying frames the issue as an interpersonal conflict using two approaches. The first models itself off literature on schoolyard bullying – aggression theories dominate. In the second, bullying is an extreme social stressor with the effects from stress creating the phenomenon. Liefhoghe and Davey argue that the political goals of an organization create certain atmospheres in order to maintain the power balance. The authors used the term “bullying” to draw out examples of difficult situations from the subjects interviewed.

Bullying and Aggression Among Adults: Foul Ball.

Many academic articles on workplace bullying begin with a statement similar to: In recent years, workplace aggression [could be replaced with bullying and/or harassment] has received increasing attention from researchers, practitioners, the media, and the general public (Aquino, Tripp, & Bies, 2001; Coyne, Seigne, & Randall, 2000;

Douglas & Martinko, 2001; Hatcher & McCarthy, 2002). Although extreme forms of interpersonal mistreatment are what capture the attention of popular media, milder incidents of rude, discourteous, and thoughtless actions within the workplace happen daily. Many victims may simply try to ignore the perpetrator – excusing his or her behavior with a rationale the victim spontaneously creates in his or her mind at the time of the event. Lutgen-Sandvik, Tracy, & Alberts (2005) state that victims of bullying in the workplace are often ashamed of the victimization and may not understand their own inability to fight back against their aggressor.

More than 90% of adults experience workplace bullying – psychological and/or emotional abuse – at some point within their work careers (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2003). In 2005, approximately 800 United States workers were polled about incivility in the workplace. Ten percent stated that they saw someone bullied daily within their workplace; 20% reported being the direct targets of an aggressor at least once a week (Pearson & Porath, 2005). Lutgen-Sandvik claims that her research indicates a link between this workplace abuse and workplace violence, as the perpetrator becomes increasingly more threatening to his or her target. Employees who perceive themselves as victims experience high levels of fear and anxiety – paranoid that others may be “out to get them.” Such perceptions adversely affect work performance and decrease motivation. Additionally, repeated exposure may trigger the desire for retaliation, which could potentially end in a destructive pattern of violence. Lutgen-Sandvik points out the high cost of employee emotional abuse to the organization. Employee energy gravitates away from productivity towards self-protection. A high level of staff turnover leads to

increased expenses, as the organization must train new employees. The use of sick leave intensifies and costs of medical and worker's compensation claims rise. Finally, the organization may ultimately pay a high price in corporate reputation if the organization loses credibility.

Similar to Lutgen-Sadvik's description of abuse as tied to fear and anxiety affecting performance and motivation, Glomb (2002) defines workplace aggression as an assessment of reports on the number of times an aggressive behavior is reported by the victimized employees (before the worker feels the need to quit the organization entirely). Her results show that there are varying events that can become aggressive incidents, such as organizational, job-related, and personal experiences. Data shows that workplace aggression creates an escalatory pattern as the severity of an encounter rises with the negativity of employee outcomes. These outcomes are considered in conjunction with a psychological take on the emotion of anger. "Workplace deviance has been defined as voluntary behavior that violates significant organizational norms and, in so doing, threatens the well-being of the organization or its members, or both" (Bennett & Robinson, 2000, p. 349). Much of the work on aggressive behaviors has been approached by researchers with the assumption and/or limitation that such bullying behaviors are a phenomenon occurring by single individuals, thereby ignoring social and work group factors that may influence those individuals' actions. Glomb and Liao (2003) suggest the harassing behavior of group members can manipulate the antisocial traits from an individual out of the group.

Many authors focus their studies on the specific characteristics or traits of the persecutor or victim. Due to the rhetorical nature of bullying, the act is known by many different names. Varying terms used by scholars to describe acts of interpersonal conflict include petty tyranny, workplace harassment, antisocial behavior, workplace victimization, bullying, incivility, mobbing, social undermining, emotional abuse, and abusive supervision (Aquino & Lamertz, 2004; Einarsen, 2000; Lee, 2000; Salin, 2001). Based on the range of vocabulary, Aquino and Lamertz created a framework to discover the ways that interpersonal interactions can lead to patterns of victimization based on four classic social roles. The first is the *provocative victim role* – people who act aggressively report being targets more often. Second is the *submissive victim role* – people with low self-esteem and who are very introverted have high reports of victimization. The next two examine the roles of the perpetrator. The *domineering perpetrator role* is a person who exhibits micromanagement, emphasizing authority and status difference – generally a superior versus subordinate mentality. Finally, the *reactive perpetrator role* results in aggression as a response to a violation of standard practices, or the feeling of identity threats. Organizations with a high level of any combination of the aforementioned social roles are also likely to have high levels of stress reported by employees.

Albertsen, Nielsen, and Borg (2001) conducted a study on the correlation between stress and a perceived psychosocial workplace environment and found that a workplace filled with poor psychosocial factors causes harm to one's psychological health. The most common finding was a positive correlation between stress and conflict – for both males and females. The authors explored the role of sense of coherence (SOC) on stress

symptoms, concluding that a negative correlation existed between a person's SOC and the amount of stress that he or she experienced in a given workplace. In my experience, I vividly recall my stress levels increasing as I entered the building each day and that each passing nasty remark made me feel further removed from "the group" of my colleagues. Expanding on the concept of SOC as seen in Albertsen, Neilsen, and Borg's 2001 study, Hoge and Bussing (2004) researched the varying methods that work stressors, sense of coherence and negative affectivity (NA) influence strain. Correlations are not singularly related to specific exposures because different people have different tools and inherent traits that will determine his or her response to work stressors, SOC or NA. Since people differ in their response to work stress, research on the effects can be a helpful indicator of the propensity of mistreatment in the workplace.

In their experiment they examined whether those exposed to bullying used the same coping strategies as their peers who did not experience bullying victimization. A "coping concept" refers to the effort one makes to reduce or deal with the demands of the job and/or the pressures placed on the individual by the organization or internally by the person (Hogh & Dofradottir, 2001). Looking back, I question the demands placed on me by the minor league baseball club. From an objective standpoint, the job requirements were basic; yet, I placed an enormous burden on myself trying to prove to my colleagues that I was "worthy" of their respect. While the majority of employees experience stressor occurrences in the workplace, results showed that there was a difference in coping strategies used between groups but that changes in behavior were not related to the

amount of harassment exposure. Instead, the individual had perceived himself or herself as victimized.

Many researchers have approached aggressive behavior with the assumption and/or limitation that such bullying behaviors are a phenomenon occurring by single individuals, thereby ignoring the group mentality of social and work-group factors that may influence those individuals' actions. Organizations are structured systems comprised of complex networks of interpersonal relationships characterized by power, status, and prestige differentials (Hogg & Terry, 2000). They looked at social identity theory as a method to describe the categorization of social groups that can produce the phenomena, concluding that identity-related constructs and processes have the ability to inform others about organizational behavior. Interpersonal relationships are what define the majority of interactions within an organization. In a study examining the occurrences of social undermining and social support, an important aspect to comprehending the outcomes is importance of recognizing personal experiences (Duffy, Ganster, & Pagon, 2002). Results showed that social undermining had a stronger correlation with employee outcomes than did social support – much like people tend to remember negative events and gloss over positive occasions. When both support and undermining came from a single source, the result maintained a negative connotation. This make sense in that the victim may no longer trust the communication of the perpetrator, so even instances truly meant as supportive may now be perceived as having negative implications.

The introduction of technology has begun to wear away at the line between work-life and personal-life, making it difficult to distinguish interactions between the two.

Pearson and Porath (2005) suggest that, because of the fast-paced and high tech environment in which the world is currently working, a lack of time to be “nice” is feeding workplace incivility. For example, the ability for instant communication electronically at any hour of the day begins to negate both the need and ability for interpersonal communication between employees, which some researchers believe may be contributing to ability of bullies to deploy relational poison in a relatively anonymous fashion. “Thanks to technology, the world is going bonkers. And it’s going to get more bonkers – bonkers squared in a few years with bonkers cubed on the way” (Tom Peters qtd. in Thach & Woodman, 1994, p. 30). This tongue-in-cheek statement is applicable to a workplace environment faced with ever-increasing technological advances that allow employees much more anonymous personae when communicating with co-workers.

Computers can be extremely distracting and are often considered to be socially distancing. Matheson and Zanna (1988) found that while computer-mediated communication increased personal awareness, in many cases, public self-awareness was marginally lower than that of counterparts who engaged in face-to-face communication; this could lead to many misunderstandings where the recipient feels threatened due to his or her interpretation of the two-dimensional communication. Barrett and Turtz (1998) claim that the influx of technology has altered the structure of modern organizations. In their look at past literature, they found that the majority of works looking at computer-mediated-communication were “void of focus on a human component” (p. 275). Rather, technology took the form of electronic memos instead of two-way communication. Interpersonal relationships, therefore, diminish based on the situational omnipresence of

technology. Face-to-face communication provides for the “richest form of communication, while other mediated channels are relatively leaner” (Sullivan, 1995, p. 49) because of the limitations that electronic media often places on the intentions of the communicator. Due to the lack of closeness involved, it is now simple to message a co-worker whenever a thought strikes (often in the heat of the moment). One can then continue about individual business until the recipient messages back. Technology is developing into a stream of conscious environment for the workplace – conversations take place without any simultaneous interaction between parties. Yet, because there is now more opportunity to communicate with parties of all levels within the organization, employees are adopting the practice of “CCing” (or carbon copying) several others on all electronic communications. Overall, this decreases productivity because more people must take time to view an electronic conversation than would normally have taken part only between the two main parties in a face-to-face interaction. The lack of non-verbal communication within electronic exchanges further impedes the efficiency of email by often increasing perceptions of rudeness or hostility (Bordia, 1997). A more cynical view is that the CC phenomena actually allows an aggressor to communicate with more colleagues and create a group dynamic of bullying by inciting a group of workers to choose sides or try to get them to gang up on a specific employee in a very subtle manner.

Gary Namie, a social psychologist and founder of the Workplace Bullying and Trauma Institute in Bellingham, Washington, believes that workplace bullying is a silent epidemic (Said, 2007). A 2003 study by Namie’s institute, discussed in a recent *San*

Francisco Chronicle article, discovered that 37 percent of workplace bullying victims were fired, 33 percent quit their job and 17 percent transferred to another department. The bullies were punished in only four percent of the cases (Said, 2007). Research shows that when someone is bullied: half will spend company time fretting about whether the incident will occur again; half will think about changing jobs; and one-quarter will purposely lower their efforts at their job. A few of those affected will steal from their employer, and some will sabotage their organization's equipment (Pearson and Porath, 2005).

In baseball, a foul ball counts as up to two strikes, but a batter can only be called out if a subsequent foul ball is caught in the air. This is often how aggression is played out in the workplace – the victim may potentially lose face with colleagues, but he or she cannot be fired for the actions (or comments) of others. After a while however, victims may feel that they are standing at home plate, swinging away, just trying to stay alive. Those who do eventually strike out are often captured on camera throwing equipment or punching the water cooler.

Results from a national survey showed that there were not many differences regarding the personal experience of self-reported bullying between workers, or middle or senior managers. The existence of bullying, the length of occurrences, and the hierarchical status of the harasser had strong similarities amongst all status groups (Hoel, Cooper, & Faragher, 2001). The discrepancies emerged when the experience of bullying was compared across group levels. Negative acts affected lower-level workers more frequently. While managers reported bullying in the form of extreme (and seemingly

impossible) work pressures, workers complained more about the exposure to derogatory or exclusionary behavior.

Due to increased interest regarding the research question of why people mistreat one another in the workplace, Aquino and Bommer (2003) examined the concept of organizational behavior in conjunction with different indicators of social status – hierarchical position, gender, and race. The authors hypothesized that citizenship within an organization would deter abuse of fellow employees based on “social attractiveness and bonds of mutual obligation and reciprocity” (Aquino & Bommer, p. 374). The study authors believed that workplace bullying would not be as prevalent in groups with close personal ties. Despite this hypothesis of the golden rule – treat others as you would want to be treated – prior research shows that those with higher status receive treatment that is more favorable. Yet, contrary to the hypothesis, citizenship in organizations aligned closer with groups of perceived victimization – low versus high structural status – with and no apparent effect on gender. Instead of an organization with a multitude of friendly members, cliques tended to form based on popularity. Similar to studies conducted in schools (Prinstein & Cillessen, 2003), adults grouped themselves based on those who seemingly had power versus those most likely to become victims. The authors are quick to mention that it is too soon to reject previous theories based on the null conclusion of this particular study. Although prior studies show that higher status relates to better treatment, this does not put high-level employees in a position immune to victimization.

Extending upon previous research regarding perceived abuse in the workplace, Aquino and Bradfield (2000) looked at the situational variables of job status in

accordance with personality traits, hypothesizing that there would be a highly negative correlation between an employee's organizational level and the level of self-perceived victimization. Using a victim precipitation model, the authors predicted that those perceived as exhibiting high or low levels of dominating behavior would report more injurious actions than those perceived as being moderately dominating. This suggests that people who see themselves as helpless victims will continuously fall prey to bullies. It would be interesting to look at examples of personal stories to see if there is an increased occurrence of certain types of bullying victimization if people self-report that they are chronically victimized regardless of situation. Smith, Singer, Hoel, & Cooper (2003) found that those most likely to be victimized in the workplace were those who had been both victims and bullies themselves as children.

Looking at the identity – the “toughness” of managers – of those who may create a bullied atmosphere, revealed three types of superior performance. The first is negative behavior – actions cause distress when present, but have no positive effect when absent, such as being humiliated in front of fellow employees. Second is behavior that causes distress when absent and enhancing to subordinates when present, such as receiving confidential information. My minor league baseball experience falls into these first two categories. The third category is not discussed at length in the article, but is termed positive behavior – enhancing when present but has no negative effect when absent, such as charismatic leadership (Rayner, 2003). Based on the methodology used by Rayner, there were no “bullies” identified. Rather, managers were simply labeled as tougher than others; the concept of bullying is left to individual subordinates for judgment. Based on

my definition of bullying, a manager labeled as “tough” may actually be creating a repetitive perceived harm in the eyes of the victimized subordinate. Because my manager (a male) had never had a subordinate before, he may have tried to appear “tough” to prove his leadership capabilities – instead he showed himself as a bully. In a study discussing the history of sexual harassment (Bender, 2004), the author uses the garment industry as an example because a majority of workers were male before being infiltrated by women. The male leaders felt they had the right to “teach” the women the way it was in the male industry. In my case, I was the first female to ever work in the public relations sector of this particular minor league club. My manager felt my sex created a need for me to prove my competence to join their team. My experience revealed that his form of “tough love” turned out to be bullying.

Previous studies have verified the seriousness of workplace bullying – reporting that bullying leads to negative well-being such as anxiety, depression, irritation, and psychosomatic complaints (Coyne et al., 2000). This suggests that personality traits can give an indication of those most at risk for victimization. Victims exhibit qualities of submission, desiring to avoid controversy and conflict. Other traits of individuals susceptible to bullying included those who are traditional, dependable, anxious, and sensitive. A limitation noted by the authors is the difficulty in obtaining an equal distribution of employees across occupational strata; most studies focus on white-collar occupations. Additionally, victims who participate in most studies must openly come forward with their experiences, leading to a self-selected sample.

These studies have found a higher amount of workplace bullying in the United States in comparison to European countries after using a revised version of the “Negative Acts Questionnaire” (Lutgen-Sandvik et al., 2005). The findings suggest that bullying is most effectively measured on a continuum – an occurrence that grows in intensity over time.

Key Issues of the Study

If bullying has such a wide spread presence, it would be helpful to look beyond the problem in each individual circumstance and instead look towards the inherent basics of bullying. “Boy bullying” is associated with physical violence – the feared fifth-grader beating up the first-grader for his lunch money. In contrast, “girl bullying” has a connotation of quiet and subversive tactics – a best friend suddenly turning on another, sabotaging friendships with silent but knowing looks. The stereotypes come from observations of typical bullying styles in elementary school age children. As scholars, we cannot investigate the purpose until we can describe the phenomenon. If everyone has experienced bullying in childhood – what happens when we grow up?

In examining the differences between the types of bullying, I use the term “gender” to refer to the assumed personality traits assigned to each sex by American society. In contrast, “sex” designates a biological characteristic relating to anatomical male and female characteristics (Doyle, 1995). In this particular study, I am not looking at the broader spectrum of sexes and gender roles that may include more than two distinct divisions. I am interested in closing a bit of the gap that currently exists in

communication research. Because a majority of literature on the subject of aggression takes place outside of the United States, my study will focus on solely American experiences. Additionally, I will be taking the stories of individuals at face value and examining the differing types of gendered behavior. Since I do not have psychology training, I will not be looking at the psychological effects on victims and bullies – the interpretations I make will be taken from how the subject states that he or she felt during an occurrence of bullying. I am looking to see how gender may affect the effect of bullying incidents as people are “othered” or marginalized in their workplace.

RQ: How one is “othered” – both in the sense of the roles that they play as victim and bully, but also in the differences played out in the behavior in terms of “masculine” and “feminine” tactics?

As previously stated, this study defines “bullying” as a conscious repetition of mistreatment towards another. It is possible for a person to be bullied in a singular incident, but I have decided to speak only with subjects about events that occurred multiple times. Therefore, the subjects speak towards their own progression through a period in their lives when the bullying occurred. What are the implications of gendered bullying among American adults? I look at the motivations behind particular *types* of bullying. After all, it is not habitually males using “masculine” bullying and females using “feminine” techniques in the workplace. In the end, I originally expected to find that both genders use both types of bullying behavior, but that the different types affect the “victim” differently. Instead, I found that the primary player in bullying is power.

CHAPTER 2: SCOREKEEPING

Methodology

In order to research how people are “othered,” I use both autoethnography and in-depth interviews to explore the potential genderization of bullying in adults. Interviews allowed me to engage in a joint conversation with the participants with disregard for any potential bias or validity of events, but with a greater focus on a communicative outcome from the recalled event (Ellis, Kiesinger, & Tillmann-Healy, 1997). Because I was looking for the reasons behind the varying types of bully behavior, a useful set of results was found through in-depth interviews with individuals. The in-depth narrative interviews “capture the significant richness” (McCracken, 1988, p. 65) of the juxtaposition of similarly experienced themes but vastly different stories. Since my study is relatively small, I was careful not to commit a fallacy of the average by generalizing too far from the results. I did not look solely at differences between genders but rather among them.

Rather than looking at a small set of variables and a large number of subjects for “the big picture,” autoethnography and interviews allowed me to get a detailed understanding of the personal stories of the relatively few subjects. Individual experiences with bullying and the circumstances surrounding them are unique and interpreted differently by each person. I conducted extended, in-depth interviews of people between the ages of 25-65 (adults past the traditional ages of schooling). Ten participants were equally divided between male and female.

Subjects were initially recruited using a strategic networking technique, including a snowball effect where people familiar with my project contacted acquaintances who expressed interest in sharing their story. My first foray into recruiting study participants was speaking to an undergraduate gender class at San José State University. I discussed the plan for my study and shared some of the research from literature on the topic. I distributed my contact information and asked people to contact me if they, or anyone they knew, may be interested in telling their own story. I heard nothing. After discussions about my pending study at my workplace and with friends and family, four people replied that they were interested in sharing their experience with bullying for the purposes of this study. However, I ultimately decided against interviewing any acquaintances. For a similar reason, I opted against speaking with anyone at the company where I work. Despite having over 10,000 employees, I believe that interviewing people about their experiences on bullying at our mutual company would be a conflict of interest – especially as people may discuss events that are confidential with the Human Resources department.

To ensure anonymity, I placed an ad on Craig's List Bay Area that read,

Hello, I would like to invite you to participate in a series of interviews about your experiences with bullying for a Master's thesis project at San José State University. More specifically, I am interested in learning about the different types of behaviors adults use to bully others. My hope is to distinguish varying types of "gendered" tactics.

If you choose to participate, I would like to schedule an interview with you; it will last approximately one hour and will be recorded. We can set up a day and time that is convenient for us both. If, after completing the first interview, you would be interested in participating in future

interviews, after you have had time to ponder the phenomenon of bullying, I will hold on to your contact information.

The ad ran from Sunday, March 18, 2007 through Sunday, March 25, 2007. Contact information (such as telephone numbers and e-mail addresses) was collected only as participants proactively reached out to me and viewed and signed a consent form (refer to the attached letter of approval from the IRB committee in Appendix A). I received my first response less than 45 minutes after placing the ad in the Community section of the online bulletin board. Throughout the week that the ad was live, over 40 people emailed me to let me know that they had a story to share. Some people had no desire to meet with me about the study, but sent me emails briefly describing their story. A couple people did not share anything personal, but responded to the ad stating that they were very excited that “this subject was finally being looked at from a thoughtful perspective, instead of being dismissed.”

Qualitative methods are both descriptive and interpretive in nature; descriptive, because detail is crucial as people recall their own experiences as both victims as well as bullies, and interpretive, because, as the researcher, I use careful analysis through multiple readings to determine the significance of any observations. I was interested in interviewing adults because the stereotypes come from observations of typical bullying styles in elementary school age children, and I believe it is important to examine the development of behaviors and stereotypes as children enter adulthood.

I did not expect any risks to the participants other than what they would encounter in daily life. However, there was a possibility of emotional discomfort resulting from

memories of past bullying experiences and several participants did begin to cry during the interview. Some participants may have actually benefited from the experience and discussion with a heightened sense of their role as both victim and bully. They were given a choice to participate at a time that was convenient to them, or they were given the option to forego participation at anytime; one participant felt uncomfortable with the video recording and decided not to continue. Two subjects made appointments to meet with me and simply never showed up. There was no compensation awarded to subjects for participation in this study.

Recordings and interview notes were generated and collected throughout the course of this study, so strict confidentiality procedures were practiced. All video recordings were conducted on a DVR digital video camcorder. I decided to video tape all participants because of the initial realization that I currently own a video camera. However, I decided to include video instead of simply recording with the lens cap on because the video allowed me to capture the interview exactly as it occurred (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). Because bullying can be such a sensitive topic, I did not want to alienate any participants by seemingly ignoring them as I scribbled notes throughout the interview. Also, because a performance script created from composite characters is part of this project, having the interviews captured on video will be extremely helpful for developing a future performance because I will be able to review specific body language and tonality to create the characters.

After each interview, the tape was transferred to a password-protected file on my computer and the tape was deleted. All recordings were separated into individual clips

and labeled with the participants chosen pseudonym – an American League baseball team name for men and a National League team name for women. Letters of consent from participants will be kept for three years (beginning from the completion of the study), separate from the audiovisual material and interview notes. Participants all received a signed copy of the letter of consent (refer to the attached letter of consent). No tests or questionnaires were utilized. As bullying is a deeply personal issue, it would not be appropriate to use solely quantitative data collection methods.

Instead, based on my interest in examining the relationship between gender and marginalization as stated in my research question, the interviews took the form of a conversation and were guided by the following questions.

1. Do you identify yourself as a male or female?
 - a. Why? Would you please identify some of your masculine and feminine qualities?
2. Please finish this statement. “A bully is . . .”
3. How would you explain bullying to a child?
4. How would you explain bullying to an adult?
5. Tell me about an act of bullying that you remember from your childhood.
6. Tell me about an act of bullying that you have experienced recently.
7. Describe a time that you have been a victim of bullying.
 - a. Why was it bullying?
8. Describe a time that someone may have felt that you bullied them.
 - a. Why do you think that person may have felt that way?
9. Is there anything we’ve discussed (or anything we haven’t yet) to which you’d like to add?

Since bullying is such a personal issue, I felt that autoethnography should also play a large role. Originally, I planned to conduct this study through ethnography. However, I soon realized that my own experiences with the subject of bullying left me too close for any attempt at an objective observation of the phenomenon. I have a very personal stake in the results of this study; my experience shapes my interest in the topic

of bullying. Autoethnography helps to “disrupt and deconstruct” existing beliefs for the purpose of a more balanced account (Denzin, 2006, p. 333). An analytical personal account about myself as part of a group enables me to look inward to offer a description of a conflict of cultures (Goodall, 2000) – or rather, some insight into the roles of both bully and victim. Autoethnography allows me to define myself as who I am in relation to this thesis. The personal narrative in the prologue was not based solely on the on my memory, but recreated through a review of emails I sent to my parents and friends. I also utilized a journal I wrote during the year of my internship to document all of the behaviors in case of a potential harassment accusation, both of which expressed my frustration during that time. Additionally, although this thesis was written several years after the incident, I began studying the topic of bullying during my first year at San José State University, shortly after the events occurred, making my memory much clearer for initial drafts of the narrative.

According to Goodall, autoethnography is a way of making a scholarly effort to include myself amongst the context of others. I do not attempt to conceal my involvement by referring to myself as “the author,” nor do I claim that I am a purely objective voice simply reporting the results findings. In this sense, I do not try to visualize the mass audience that will comprise the readership of this paper (Zinsser, 2006). Instead, I am presenting myself with my pre-existing biases to the reader in order identify myself within the subject. This will better allow the reader to understand the representation of bullying. It is prudent to acknowledge my own background with this

subject, and by attempting to see myself as others could see me; I am more open in my study to look at the different perspectives offered within the interviews.

After completing all ten interviews and crafting my own narrative, I used a thematic analysis to code the data, which is framed in the Chapter 5 analysis. As stated above, the data (participant studies) was collected via recording on a video camera. I took limited notes during the actual interviews, but crafted a much lengthier de-briefing of my thoughts and observations once I returned home after each interview. This allowed me to focus on notating and identifying any patterns within the conversation with each individual. I then re-watched all ten interviews and combined and catalogued related themes by arranging and rearranging index cards on the floor that had varying behaviors and themes written on them (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). I found several themes that could arise from categories I discerned in my review of the interviews. However, the theme I focus on my analysis in Chapter 4 is the result of finding similarities in all ten interviews. Based on my research, I found that power was the overarching theme – explained by the sub-themes of metaphors and gender.

I then created a performance script based on the interviews as well as my own story. The script is a composite of my own story and the experience of those who shared their stories. Creating composite characters within the social sciences is not a new occurrence (Foster, 2006). For the purpose of this research project, bullying stories can be intensely personal and creating composites is in accordance with the IRB requirements because they are able to provide the ultimate anonymity for those who participated in interviews.

The insights that the interviews and autoethnography provide lead to evidence of self-belief rather than merely finding facts. The topic of bullying and gender lends itself to be an interpretation of interpretations because such a phenomenon involves the perception of the subject, which makes explicit the relationship of author to knowledge – a world of subjects and a world of partial truths. If told the same story, the character of “bully” and the character of “victim” would likely have varying accounts of the event.

CHAPTER 3: THE GAME

Interviews

The narratives that follow describe the powerful encounters with aggression and bullying that study participants experienced and shared with me during one-on-one interviews. Questioning why incivility seems to be increasing in the workplace as well as looking to uncover the implications of incivility, Pearson, Andersson, & Porath (2000) studied the effects of spiraling and cascading exchanges. The study looked at incidents such as receiving a nasty or demeaning note, being treated like a child, being berated for action in which one played no part, being excluded from a meeting, and having one's credibility undermined in front of others. In relation to bullying in the workplace, the cascade of occurrences can progress from a nonphysical slight into outright interpersonal violence. The greatest characteristic of incivility is the ambiguity of intention – the intent to harm is not obvious to everyone and the effect occurs only in the perception of the victim. Departing from traditional interests on general aggression in a more physical form, Cortina, Magley, Williams, & Langhout (2001) looked closer at subtle, nonphysical incivility, arguing that, “Some might dismiss these routine slights and indignities – some of which lack overt malice – as trivial” (p. 72). However, the negative results stemming from surveys collected from Scandinavian workers overwhelmingly documented these seemingly meaningless bullying tactics.

Whether we are talking about personal insults, status slaps (quick moves that bat down social standing and pride), shaming or “status degradation” rituals, “jokes” that are insult delivery systems, or treating people as if they are

invisible, these and hundreds of other moves are similar in that they can leave targets feeling attacked and diminished, even if only momentarily. These are the means that assholes use to do their dirty work (Sutton, 2007, p. 10).

At the beginning of this year (2007), Robert Sutton published a book called *The No Asshole Rule: Building a Civilized Workplace and Surviving One that Isn't*. This book, which discusses the psychological abuse that occurs in many organizations, has become very popular in mainstream bookstores despite being a scholarly work. The reason for the popularity may be the simple way the author describes the abuse: perpetrators are assholes. I interviewed ten men and women about such psychological organizational abuse and, to them, the occurrences were not merely about “abuse,” “aggression,” or other euphemisms to describe bullying. The participants as well as myself (upon reflecting on my own experiences) viewed the incidents in a highly personal manner and described the people involved in a much more colorful manner – “asshole” being only one of many terms.

The interviews for this study took place in various San Francisco Bay Area Barnes & Noble bookstore cafes. Since the participants were strangers recruited from a web-hosted bulletin board, I chose a public meeting for safety reasons but I also wanted one that had a more intimate atmosphere where people would feel at ease and comfortable speaking with me about perceived vulnerabilities. The second question I asked was how they would define bullying to a child. I was not as interested in these results; however, since bullying can be a very sensitive subject, I wanted to get the conversation rolling around a concept they would undoubtedly be familiar with: schoolyard bullying. Discussing bullying from a younger perspective gave the

participants a bit of time to become more comfortable with both the subject and me before I broached the topic of their current situation.

The first two people I spoke with were women. I immediately learned that I would have to tweak my interview style a bit in order to obtain personal stories. I was fairly confident that these participants had personal stories they wanted to share, or they would not have responded to my Craig's List posting. However, as I explained the purpose of the study was for an academic research paper, they began sharing their thoughts on bullying in general. Personal stories were qualified with a statement such as, "but that's just my story, so I don't know how much help that will be . . ." As the interviews progressed, I was much more overt about specifically being interested in their individual stories – all of which had similar themes, despite the varying plot lines. Below are summaries of their stories describing how they felt marginalized and the roles that they played as both victim and bully; names have been changed and identifying factors eliminated to provide anonymity.

Female Participants

Below are the stories of five women who spoke with me regarding their experiences with adult bullying. To further protect their identity, only their race and age range is provided for a physical description. Their stories are told in alphabetical order of the National League Major League Baseball team name that identifies them for the purpose of this study.

Astro.

To Astro, an African-American female in her early 30s, a bully is “an ignorant someone who derives pleasure from the pain of others.” She believes that she is being “inadvertently” bullied by the younger generation of college graduates entering the workplace due to their sense of entitlement, but that “some of the younger chickies may think [she is] a bully.” Astro states that although she is at the same low-level as the other girls in her department, she is in the middle of a career change and therefore has far more “real world” work experience than her colleagues. “One girl I work with thinks she should be CEO by age 30. She got a promotion and then we had to work on a project together. She very visibly didn’t appreciate me showing her the ropes.” Astro is very proud of her past experiences and is threatened by the younger girl who has the same level of industry-specific experience – and most likely more industry-specific education. Despite a twinge of jealousy, Astro also is frustrated that her colleague isn’t more accepting of a mentoring relationship. “I told her boss that she didn’t seem to want to do the projects she thought she was too good for. She very obviously got annoyed and started trying to prove to the office that she had bigger balls than me. It’s the MTV Generation and so she’s pissed that it’s not me, me, me.” In retaliation, Astro is attempting to turn this experience into a learning competition. “I’ve been doing a lot more work now – staying late and coming early so the office folks can understand where my experience is.” She stated that it has paid off, and she is now due to be promoted.

Cardinal.

A Caucasian female in her mid-30s, Cardinal believes that a bully is “somebody that is extremely insecure and the only way to make them feel better is for them to put others down.” Cardinal was very excited to speak with me and share her story. She stated that she felt it would be cathartic to finally tell her story to someone who wasn’t so emotionally invested in it. Cardinal accepted a position left open because the previous holder had taken a different job within the same department. “That woman had it in for me from the beginning – when I began noticing that things were incomplete.” As Cardinal went about designing new processes, the other woman “began poisoning the well by talking to fellow [colleagues]. I was the new department scapegoat. I took the place of another girl who had just been let go.” In both cases, her colleagues were aware of the wrongdoing, but were afraid of the perpetrator so no one in the department took any action. “Then my team imploded and I got a new boss. She was big on ‘big picture’ ideas but worse with details.” The original perpetrator began collaborating with Cardinal’s new boss – sneaking around and whispering behind closed doors. “My new boss wanted 30 minute morning, afternoon, and end of day reports regarding what I was working on. Then she would get angry with me that I wasn’t getting all of my work done. Seriously? I spent more time telling her what I was working on than working on it.” Cardinal then decided to follow corporate guidelines for dealing with harassment – she took her problem to the Human Resources department. This angered her boss immensely who displayed her displeasure by “showing up 30 minutes late to our scheduled HR meeting and Blackberrying (using email on her phone) through the whole

thing. Her absence and lack of attention kept trying to show me that she was more important than me and I couldn't try and find someone bigger than her to help me."

Ultimately, Cardinal took a new job with a different department at the same company. "I just feel bad that so many people have to give up something they love because of assholes that can't be corralled. Good news? The Devil Wears Prada bitch of a boss got fired a month after I left. Bad news? That department is about to lose another good employee because of the other woman."

Cub.

To Cub, a Caucasian female in her late-20s, a bully is "someone who puts others down to make themselves feel better." Cub doesn't feel that she is bullied often because she is aware of how widespread it is and looks out for it among her peers. She qualifies this statement by saying "of course, I do have a lot of masculine qualities – like I'm really forward and I take charge, so maybe I'd get bullied more if I was more girly. If a bully ever puts you down for something you know isn't wrong, I just do not just acquiesce." In her experience, "I know people try to bully me the most probably through guilt trips. They try to get you to do something you don't really want to, but they guilt you into it." She tells the story of her cousin embarking on a sales venture and her first target customers were her family. "She tried to solicit me by telling me that she had 'exciting news to share!' It was total deception and deceit." Cub views this as a form of bullying that is more subtle than the overt bullying that followed when her cousin's husband and her aunt called to berate her for not listening and buying into the sales pitch because her

cousin needed the money. “It was a total abuse of power. She wasn’t confident in her own skills so she tried to guilt family into paying her off. Of course they wouldn’t call it bullying – but they knew they were being underhanded.”

Phillie.

A bully is “annoying” according to Phillie, a Caucasian female in her mid-30s. Phillie grew up as a “total tomboy” and does not believe she is the kind of person people feel they can bully easily. “If I am talked to in an aggressive way, I will get in their face and I will try to take control of the conversation. I intimidate that person right back.” Phillie gave the example of one of the superiors in her department. He is known for raising his voice, making many hand gestures, and walking towards people in a menacing fashion when he is upset. Yet, she states that he will overtly disagree with someone if he or she tries to have a “Crucial Conversation” – a method teaching corporate employees how to hold difficult conversations with peers and/or superiors (Patterson, Grenny, McMillan, Switzler & Covey, 2002) – with him about his threatening and aggressive mannerisms. “I just want to punch that prick so bad sometimes. But in the workplace you have to be much more subtle – you have to go after them in little ways.”

Red.

Red, an Asian female in her late-50s, defines a bully as “a person who goes out of their way to be just awful to me.” Red believes she is the “kind of person that causes bullies to step up the level of their bullying.” She is a native of San Francisco (“one of

the very few”) and is an observer of public aggression: “Bullying has increased to alarming, astonishing levels in my San Francisco. I experience and witness behaviors while riding Muni or working in offices that leave me in shock.” She has a very timid and submissive personality – viewing herself as a constant victim, almost stalked by bullies. “Bullies are so aggressive – they never listen.” In her opinion, this results in one-way communication: “Their way or the highway right? It’s their way only. It always has to be their way.” She feels a hatred emanating off of the bullies as she travels around the city. “They really loathe people like me. I become a vilified target and the nastier of the nasties do drive me to flee, in horror.” Red feels that she has been targeted and harassed enough that she no longer feels forced to stay in a situation where she is bullied. When on public transit, she gets off at the next stop. When working in an office, she will leave the building. Red did not know of a time when she may have been considered a bully because no one had ever spoken to her about it, “I am very kind. I go out of my way to be kind.”

Male Participants

The five males describe their roles involving bullying behaviors below. They are not listed in the order that I interviewed the participating subjects, but like the female participants, the tales are listed in alphabetical order using pseudonyms from Major League Baseball team names out of the American League.

Blue Jay.

Blue Jay is a Caucasian male in his mid-40s. A bully is “all of the dicks at my last job.” Blue Jay was feeling very isolated when we spoke. He noted that his experience was the reason that he was now in therapy. “Now I’m getting all worked up about this now again. I’m such a pussy, probably the only guy who couldn’t suck it up.” He had relatively recently quit a job due to bullying because he believed that management did not know how to address the issue properly. “There was this maybe if I ignore it, it would just disappear – ‘I can’t see you, so you can’t see me’ – mentality bullshit.” He felt as though he were the only one who had experienced bullying, despite describing his witness of another victimization prior to his. “I was good at my job. The others became jealous. There was a guy they used to beat down and make miserable before me and he quit. But I never thought much of it because he really was such a baby bitch. Then they turned on me.” Blue Jay described an environment of suspicion and gossip where “it wasn’t just gossipy chicks, it was the guys talking.” Male coworkers using covert tactics victimized him and as such, Blue Jay associated the bullying with (acknowledged) female stereotypes. “The guys would go out for smoke break. By the end of the afternoon, everyone would know everything. It was worse than a gossipy women’s knitting circle – sorry about the sexual stereotypes.” I believe that this interview was the most poignant discussion because of his final comment to me. “It gets to a point. You either bring a gun to work and kill everyone, or quit. You never saw me on the evening news because I chose the latter.”

Oriole.

A bully is “a part of everyday life or whatever fancy quote you need to make your thesis sound smarter,” said Oriole, a Caucasian male in his early-30s. I was quite surprised that Oriole contacted me about his interest in the study since once we began speaking, he attempted to wrest control of the interview by trying to make a joke out of the entire study. I suspect that he was nervous about seeming like “less of a man” by telling his story to a strange female; he was potentially threatened by a perceived loss of power by divulging personal information. Oriole does not see himself as a bully. “I doubt anyone close to me would think so. But probably anyone from the outside thinks so.” He states that his personality is to “bully” people all in fun. “We rib each other, act like we’re all superior and that they’re an idiot in just that instance, but it’s really all in love.” However, his opinion that no one close to him would think he was a bully may depend on whether or not those affected are fearful of expressing that they are actually feeling harm done to them. “That’s just us – my whole family is like that – sarcastic little bitches we are.” There was such a sense of pride in Oriole that some may consider him a bully. Then I asked him to tell me about a time when he had been the victim of bullying and his demeanor drastically changed. “Well why don’t I just write your whole thesis for you. Oh God – wait. Are you going to go write how I’m a big bully now? I mean – you’re serious aren’t you? You are actually going to get a degree for writing about how people are mean to one another?” His parting comments reflected a common current belief about bullying. “Everyone goes through that [bullying] – builds character. When

you're a kid you learn to fight. When you're an adult you suck it up. Face it. People are dicks."

Ranger.

Ranger, a Latino male in his late-20s, spoke of a bully as "a punk-ass bitch and that ain't necessarily a bad thing." Ranger is a lawyer and views bullying as a means to more power and success in his workplace. "Dude – I am a lawyer (cue mean, insensitive lawyer jokes here), so there's probably quite a few prosecutors who hate my guts and plenty whose guts I hate right back. But that's not necessarily a bad thing. It means I'm doing my job." In this respect, Ranger views bullying as something required to discredit witnesses and the opposing council in order to win a case. "Truly, I see bullying everyday. It's a tactic you have to use and put up with in the courtroom to gain the upper hand." He acknowledged that the prosecution is acting in exactly the same manner and there are several lawyers he does not enjoy working with for this very reason – including several partners within his own firm. He is a very confident individual and sees aggression as an attitude to be worn somewhat with a badge of honor; he has a healthy respect for bullies. Ranger does, however, understand the severity of victimization. "A true bully though, they're insecure bastards, and that's all." I asked him if anyone thought of him as a "true" bully. "Oh shit! My daughter's mother – she hates me now. She thought of me as a bully and I'm damn glad. I told her. I warned the bitch – if you ever, *ever*, try to take my daughter from me, I will rain down all the legal hellfire I can muster, and you will lose. She tried. She lost." In this case, Ranger readily admitted to

being extremely insecure of losing custody of his child. He felt the need to manipulate his daughter's mother to try to gain power over her to get what he wanted.

Royal.

To Royal, a Caucasian male in his mid-20s, a bully is “exacting authority negatively on someone lesser than you.” In his view, he had experienced his latest bout with bullying the morning of our interview and he was angry. “Some dumb chick was bossing me around because she thought I wasn’t doing stuff correctly, when in fact it wasn’t my fault because I’m depending on other people for the results.” I inquired as to the role of the “dumb chick” and was informed that she was his superior. Royal is a young man just starting out in his career and feels extremely threatened by the demands of his boss. He believes that she bullies him “and the other guy at [his] level, which is so gay.” Royal was “freakin’ pissed off because [he] has an authority complex. And really, bullying doesn’t accomplish anything.” He does not like being told what to do, he stated. I asked him to talk a bit more about why this experience was bullying. “Because she is higher up than me,” he said with a look of incredulous obviousness. “So she has the ability to talk down to me and tell me what to do, even if she doesn’t have the right to.” Royal then stated that gender did not play a role in adult bullying, but inadvertently used gender stereotypes to explain his belief. “Gender isn’t an issue anymore – in my opinion. She acts like a dick and we’re her little pussies. Guys, girls, whatever. She just gets off on telling us what to do.”

Tiger.

Tiger, a Caucasian male in his early-30s, believes a bully is “someone who thinks they’re better than me and tries to prove it.” Tiger is a bartender and often has to deal with inebriated people making rude comments and harassing him. “Surprisingly, the drunk morons don’t bother me at all. They know I have the power since I’m the one yielding the alcohol. And most of them know – if they’re dicks, they just make up for it by leaving a bigger tip.” Instead, he feels his boss is the bully. Tiger believes that most of the bartenders and servers he works with are college-educated people who “are just playing around until we figure out what we want to do.” His boss (which is one of three managers on duty on any given night) makes his or her presence known by publicly ridiculing the staff. One evening, Tiger got busy and a drink was not made until a patron had finished his meal. “The manager came over and started yelling at me in front of the whole crowd. I get it dude – you’re in charge. But he announces to everyone within earshot that I’m going to have to eat that drink out of my nightly tips and he’s not going to comp that bill.” Tiger shared that he was not sure if this was bullying because the atmosphere around the situation was very tense, and many said later that they felt embarrassed for Tiger. However, he wanted to share his story because it made him rethink the amount of power he gives away to other people. “I’m 32. Do I really want to spend my nights being yelled at by a fucking prick who gets his jollies by changing the rules because he hates himself?”

All of these stories involve the theme of bullying. Yet, each one involves a very different plot. My own story and each of the interview stories above are very unique descriptions – brief insights into each participant. This is done to show that the victim/aggressor thread can be similar throughout, regardless of the specific arena where the events take place. Bullying is the commonality between all of the situational accounts in this thesis; the following performance script shares those stories by using composites to demonstrate the common themes in a single story.

CHAPTER 4: STANDINGS

Performance Script

To share the stories of the interviews and my autoethnography, experiences from all ten participants are included in this script, based upon the themes discussed regarding their personal stories of victimization and bullying: power, metaphors, and gender. Quotes and experiences from males are attributed to male characters and those from females are credited to female characters. Since my personal experience involves a baseball stadium environment, the characters are based on the plot from my own interactions and accounts will take on the metaphor of baseball within this examination of bullying.

Cast (in order of appearance):

Announcer: Play-by-play commentator of a baseball game. This character should be played as a voice that one would hear calling a baseball game over the radio in the style of old Dodger broadcast personality Vin Scully.

Dodger: This script is told from the perspective of the female main character. The plot is my autoethnography and the name “Dodger” invokes the traditional rivalry between the Los Angeles team and the San Francisco Giants.

Logic: This character is the only “rational” character. Logic is able to see the implied meaning behind words and actions and explain to the audience what Dodger is thinking with a wry sense of humor.

Brave: This character is the only national league (female) opponent for Dodger. For 13 years in a row (not counting the baseball strike in 1994), the Braves made the playoffs. They won the World Series only once. Brave is a character that plays to win but does not necessarily know how to succeed. She does not play by the “rules” for the workplace.

Yankee: This character is the General Manager of the MLC baseball club. The Yankees are often considered the most formidable opponent. With more World Series

Championships than any other team in Major League Baseball history (26), the Yankees do not always make the best decisions and have not won a World Series since 2000.

Athletic: The Athletics are generally seen as a ball club with a free-spirited attitude. They do not always follow protocol. The character of Athletic is Dodger's direct superior. As she is an intern, it is his job to teach her how to accomplish her tasks, but Athletic is more interested in proving to himself that he can succeed and does not know how to teach.

Sox: This character's name can refer to either the Red Sox or the White Sox. Both are teams that were often mocked for their inability to win a championship, but both have done so in recent years (2004 and 2005 respectively). Also, in 1918, the White Sox were dubbed the Black Sox due to a scandal. In the same vein, Sox is a character whose intentions are sometimes good but very misunderstood by his "victims."

Devil Ray: This character is the newest addition to the MLC staff, much as the Devil Rays are to Major League Baseball. Despite raw talent, the Devil Rays baseball club's best performance since their inception in 1995 is "not last." However, misjudging them late in the baseball season has cost several teams their spot in the playoffs.

(Dodger USC, face down on desk amidst piles of books and papers. Low lighting. Baseball game announcer calls a game on the radio.)

Announcer: Pratt heads down third to try to distract Schilling, faking a potential steal of home. And the first pitch taken by Stevensen at the knees for a strike. Regular habit of Pratt it seems – when Pratt's at third. Next pitch grounded by Stevensen to the third base side. Ryan Taylor gets the baseball and across the diamond – in time, retiring Stevenson by half a step.

And the MLC still holding their opponents scoreless. No runs in the inning – one hit, a double by Phil Pratt, no errors and one runner left on base for the Bee's in the top half of the second. Due up for MLC in the bottom half of two Ryan Taylor, Robert Flynn and top of the order Kevin Good. Our score after one and half – MLC 2 and the Bee's nothing. MLC's gonna have to keep this up if they're gonna rise up from the bottom of the barrel in this division – no thanks we're sure due to the incompetence and ineptitude of current intern, Dodger . . .

(Game cuts out as alarm clock goes off. Music plays – Bowling for Soup's, "High School Never Ends." Lights full up as Dodger awakens suddenly and begins throwing papers and books into a school bag.)

Music: Four years you think for sure / That's all you've got to endure / All the total dicks / All the stuck up chicks / So superficial, so immature / Then when you graduate / You take a look around and you say HEY WAIT / This is the same as where I just came from / I thought it was over / Aw that's just great

Dodger: *(Turning the alarm off.)* Damn it – damn nightmares. Okay. Got the paper done – last all-nighter of the year I swear. Why did I think it was a good idea to work full time while trying to graduate?

Logic: *(Smirking USSR.)* Why? Because she thought throwing herself into her work would be a real efficient way to take her mind off the pain of a breakup. A job is impartial – it can't shoot you down. You can drown yourself in it. She was partially right.

(Dodger exits SL. Re-enters SR and set now represents the baseball stadium front office. Logic remains onstage for the duration of the performance, observing and commentating as necessary.)

Brave: You're late.

Dodger: What? No I'm not – it's 9:00 right now.

Brave: It's 9:02.

Dodger: Whatever, sorry. Excuse me. *(Tries to squeeze past Brave to a tiny makeshift desk in the USSR corner.)*

(Brave pushes her chair back just in time to trip Dodger as she passes. Dodger flails and stumbles to her desk.)

Logic: *(Standing next to Dodger's desk.)* Built in the middle of World War II to increase society's moral, this old-fashioned ballpark may add to the charm of watching our national pastime, but it is certainly not conducive to running a 21st century business.

Dodger: Um, hey – Brave?

(Brave overtly ignores Dodger. Dodger gets up and begins to "close" the window – her back is to the audience.)

Brave: What the fuck do you think you're doing?

Dodger: I'm closing the window. It's cold in here.

Brave: It's not cold. This is the ticket office. Those are the ticket windows.

Dodger: Well . . . I'm really cold – my seat is right in the way of the draft.

Brave: *(Getting out of her seat and walking over to Dodger – physically pushing her out of the way.)* Oh sack up. Are you seriously such a pussy that you can't deal with the cold?

Logic: Strike 1.

Dodger: *(Sitting back down and looking up at Brave.)* I was cold.

Brave: *(Smiling.)* Well, it's my office now isn't it? Why yes it is – you're only here for this one season. So, I win. And I want the window open.

(Brave sits back down at her desk and glares at Dodger. Types something on her computer – sound of instant message is heard. Brave looks at Dodger, then back down at her screen and snickers.)

Logic: *(Looking down at Dodger.)* You've imposed on her role as the sole woman in this organization. A co-ed front office means she may not be able to be one of the guys.

(Dodger gets up and walks down the "hall" DSR to another office.)

Dodger: *(Startled.)* Oh, hi Yankee.

Yankee: Just leaving. Just leaving. Leaving you in good hands here. Just talking about how we're giving this a shot. Give 'em hell. *(Pats Dodger on the back and exits.)*

Logic: *(Following Dodger and watching Yankee leave.)* Yankee may be the general manager – but a people person he is not. Most oblivious General I've ever seen . . .

(Instant message sounds again. Athletic smirks at Sox and mouths something unintelligible to the audience.)

Athletic: Have a seat on the couch. You have a boyfriend? Wait, wait – don't answer that. That would be sexual harassment.

(Dodger laughs meekly.)

Sox: Yes, that's a bitchy question anyway. Umm, here. I guess you can work on these mailing labels. I'll get back to you."

(Dodger leaves, to return to her desk.)

Athletic: *(Quietly, to Sox.)* Dude, there's no way she's got a boyfriend. Total butterface. *(Instant message sounds.)*

Logic: And so it begins for today.

Brave: *(As Dodger enters.)* You know, I can totally tell that you're a loser. I mean – I saw your car out of the window. You totally have to be pathetic to put a SJSU decal on your car. Who would admit to having gone there – talk about an 0fer.

Dodger: I still go there. I graduate in May.

Brave: Right. Then how can you have a job? Everyone knows you lied about having class so that you could come in late. Yankee knows. You're lucky he hasn't fired you.

Dodger: I'm done with classes. I'm writing a final thesis. I meet with my professor twice a week.

(Brave laughs and sits down at her desk. Instant message sounds. Sox enters the office.)

Sox: Hey chickitas. Dodger – you done with those labels?

Dodger: Yes.

Sox: Great – I'll go take those to Yankee. Hang tight.

Logic: No credit. Sox will get that.

(Devil Ray enters as Sox departs.)

(Devil Ray enters SL.)

Brave: *(Relieved for the distraction.)* Ah – so my intern decides to show up. Where have you been? Trying to get laid with those two dicks down the hall no doubt.

Dodger: *(Over Brave's rant.)* Heya Sparky!

(Brave begins to laugh hysterically. Devil Ray stands frozen to the spot, looking as though he is about to cry. Dodger smiles broadly.)

Devil Ray: Devil Ray. My name is Devil Ray. *(Exists SL.)*

Brave: So what do you think of my new intern, Ray Ray the Devil?

Dodger: I think – kind of a pretty boy don't you think?

Brave: *(Laughing.)* Completely.

Dodger: You think he'll last the season?

Brave: I'm sure he'll be here – but probably just the one, but he talks a big game but he doesn't know much about baseball. No balls on that one. Of course – not everyone can get the PR internship. That's the one most people would kill for.

Dodger: Really?

Brave: Oh totally. But I didn't feel like sacrificing my life for those hours.

Dodger: So you applied for this job?

Brave: *(Instant message sounds.)* Athletic wants to see you.

(Dodger leaves and walks down the "hall." Logic stops her before entering.)

Logic: Prepare yourself. There will be nit picking, faultfinding, and criticism here. Perhaps a grain of truth, such as a typo, to fool you into believing the criticism has validity. The basis? Distortion, misrepresentation or complete fabrications.

(Dodger enters the room and Athletic and Sox instantly cease their banter. They look at one another, to Dodger, then back to one another and snicker while exchanging knowing glances.)

Athletic: Hey. Sox and I have a charge for you. Well, two of them actually, if you can handle both of us.

(Devil Ray enters from SR carry three sandwiches.)

Athletic: Sparky! Dude – you so the man. Came through in the clutch with lunch!

Devil Ray: *(Passing out sandwiches to Athletic, Sox, and keeping one for himself.)* Devil Ray. The name is Devil Ray. I hate that damn nickname – makes me sound like a total pussy.

Sox: Come on man – every good team player needs a good nickname. Think about it, when Stan Musial stepped on the field he was a man playing among boys. Stan the Man?

Athletic: Oh, I got one! The Sultan of Swat. The Babe. Who is more legendary than the Great Bambino himself – Babe Ruth.

Devil Ray: Sparky? It just doesn't quite have the same ring to it.

Dodger: What about Shoeless Joe Jackson? A simple guy who loved baseball and got mixed up with the wrong people and never lived it down.

(Athletic, Sox, and Devil Ray look at one another. Athletic mouths something unintelligible to Devil Ray – who laughs.)

Logic: Looks like your nickname has stuck to him. You have inadvertently helped induct him into the “Good Ole Boys” club. And yet – he will view you as the aggressor even when his friends call him “Sparky.”

Sox: Okay kiddos. Every year our interns have a little playoff series. I'm sure you've already heard about it.

(Devil Ray nods and punches Athletic on the shoulder jovially. Dodger shakes her head.)

Sox: No huh? Okay then. Each year we have a Restaurant Night here at the park. Packages are \$100. Yankee bills this as a community program to win goodwill with our neighbors. But Athletic and I here always pit the interns against one another in a contest.

Athletic: Sparky – you're my horse. Dodger – you're Sox's pony. Loser caddies winner's golf clubs in the end of the season tournament.

Dodger: There's a golf tournament?

Athletic: Not for you.

(Athletic, Sox, and Devil Ray laugh.)

Sox: Dodger, this is the first time we've ever hired a girl for the PR position. I mean it makes way more work for me since we have to have a man to go into the locker room to get the signatures for autographs and stuff. You'd have to be really really awesome if we'd ever think of hiring another chick for this. And here's the thing. I've never lost this bet with Athletic.

Athletic: Last year the PR intern sold three packages. Brave sold one. My record from when I was an intern was nine packages.

Dodger: I have no intention of losing.

(Athletic and Sox look at one another.)

Athletic: Sparky, maybe you can sell a package to your family's restaurant before they close this month.

Devil Ray: My God. You tell one person something and by the end of the afternoon everyone knows about it. You guys are worse than a gossipy knitting circle.

Sox: Anyway, you two can start selling tomorrow. I'm not an intern – so I will not be in. I have to take care of some stuff with my fucking whore of an ex-wife. I told her – if you ever try and take my daughter from me . . . I will reign down all of the legal hellfire I can muster. And she will lose. Bitch. I don't even care if she hates my guts for this. That's my little girl.

Athletic: Good luck man. We're on your side. Come back when she raises the white flag.

(Dodger leaves the office, with the three men chatting and ignoring her. Exits SR, lights fade to black and come up again on the "home" desk.)

Logic: *(Speaking to Dodger, although she cannot hear.)* Tough day.

Dodger: *(Throwing stuff to the floor and sinking in her seat with a defeated attitude.)* I'm exhausted. It's like they don't want me to learn anything there. I am good at my job. It's like their jealous of me. I've worked hard to get where I am. I am giving up my senior year of college to work 90-hour weeks. Of course I am going to occasionally get things wrong, I am an intern – they are supposed to teach me.

Logic: What's the plan of attack now?

Dodger: I have to win. I have to set the record. I have to outsell everyone who has ever worked there. I have to prove not only that I'm good enough – I have to show all of those dicks that I'm better. All of them. Yankee – he doesn't even care. Brave – she hates me. Athletic and Sox – I just know they bitch about me when I'm not looking. Devil Ray – I can't give him the pleasure of beating me. I have to show all of them. I'm so screwed if I don't.

Logic: Your life is no longer your own.

Dodger: *(Picking up the phone and slowly wandering off stage while talking.)* I know – I’m sorry it’s so late. I know I said I’d be there . . . No, no – I’ll be at the graduation ceremony. I just can’t go to any of the dinners for our department. I told you, I’m working. No – they’re not really that hard on me. I just have to play their game. No – I’m just gonna crash for tonight . . .

(Exits SR, lights fade to black and come up again on the stadium office. Re-enters SR and set now represents the baseball stadium front office.)

Brave: Where have you been?

Dodger: Canvassing the neighborhood. Sparky and I . . .

Devil Ray: *(From off-stage.)* Devil Ray damnit!

(Brave grins at Dodger and laughs. Dodger sighs and a smile appears on her face.)

Dodger: SPARKY and I . . . we’re selling the Restaurant Night packages right now.

Devil Ray: *(Appearing briefly SL.)* Screw. You.

Brave: *(Still smiling.)* Oh totally. Selling those Restaurant packages is hard. I sold one last year, but I didn’t really try that hard. That’s just an intern thing – this year, I’ve still been working the obscene hours so they’ll see my effort to improve the ticket office and I’ll get another promotion. I’m happy to show you the ropes on how to get those packages sold though.

Dodger: *(Suspiciously.)* Okay.

Brave: So how long have you been pitching?

Dodger: Three weeks.

Brave: Have you gotten any yet?

Dodger: Yeah. Twenty-three.

Brave: *(No longer smiling.)* Well damn. Who would have thunk you’d try to prove you have bigger balls than me by wearing a short skirt? Maybe you should consider going into sales. You would obviously be a lot better at that . . . *(Instant message sounds.)*

Logic: Did anyone else feel the sting of that backhanded compliment? Brave is proud of her job and threatened by a new and younger girl with the same level of industry specific experience.

Sox: *(Screaming.)* DODGER, come here! I need to speak with you now.

(Dodger scurries down the hall to the office – looking scared.)

Logic: Looks as though setting a new franchise record isn't enough after all.

Sox: When I ask you to update the website I expect you to do it correctly. This is ridiculous. We have people looking at this every day and they notice when things are wrong. Damn it. Just go fix it now!"

(Dodger stumbles out of the office holding a laptop. She is crying.)

Sox: Can you believe her? I give her one real task when I'm gone and she still sucks.

Athletic: You know, I heard . .

(Dodger returns to her corner in the ticket office SL.)

Brave: What's wrong with you? What did you blow this time?

Dodger: *(In a choked whisper.)* Website.

Logic: *(Reading the computer screen from behind Dodger* "Tomorrow MLC Tries to Take Down Oaks, Thursday August 8." Huh. Today is Wednesday.

Dodger: The website is correct.

Brave: Well that doesn't surprise me. Nobody likes you anyway.

Logic: Strike 2.

(Dodger runs down to the SR office.)

Dodger: *(Tossing the laptop in front of Sox.)* Check a calendar.

Sox: Oops. *(Sox takes shoe from his foot and mimes putting it in his mouth.)* Well then, ignore my obnoxious rant and go ahead and go make copies of your record setting receipts before tonight's game.

Logic: Can you see the explosions as her world crashes down around her?

Athletic: *(Laughing.)* That was harsh man.

Sox: Oh come on – I’m just a sarcastic son of a gun. I rib you all like I’m superior, but it’s all in love. No one’s going to survive without a thick skin. Tough love builds character. That’s why you learn to fight when you’re a kid. Then we grow up and you suck it up. Face it. Generally, people are dicks.

(Dodger exits and heads CS. Turns her back to the audience and begins looking for something in her bag. Sound of a door slamming.)

Brave: Like I said, nobody likes you. You’re a whoring liar, a bitch, and a bully.

Logic: Pot. Meet Kettle.

Dodger: Not now Brave, please?

Brave: You come in here like you know everything. It is so not cool of you to try and show everyone up, like you’re better than us. No one cares if you can sell twenty-three restaurants. You think just because you have some talent at selling sponsorships that Yankee will make you a manager? No, because no one likes you.

Yankee: *(Entering SR and walking CS.)* Oh hello. Everything okay? Do you have those receipt copies for the program?

Brave: *(Pushing Yankee back off-stage without physical force.)* We’re having a conversation here. We’ll be done shortly.

Yankee: Okay. You sure everything’s all right? Let me know if there is any problem. Remember we need team players here. I don’t know what goes on outside of here, but in this stadium, we need to work together.

Brave: *(Turning back to Dodger.)* Don’t you realize that everyone is talking about you behind your back? Devil Ray hates you because you won’t stop calling him that nickname. And Sox and Athletic talk about how inept you are all the time to all of us – even Yankee. No one disagrees . . .

Dodger: I’m not going to get into this with you right now. I’ve got copies to make before tonight’s game.

(Dodger walks towards Brave and tries to maneuver around her. Brave grabs her wrist, twists it behind Dodger’s back and shoves her back so she falls DSC.)

Logic: Strike 3.

Brave: *(Standing over Dodger's slumped body.)* Don't you ever try and fucking touch me again. I'll kick your ass.

(Sound of door slamming and lock turning. Dodger pulls a piece of paper out of her bag and begins writing.)

Dodger: Isolated. Excluded. Marginalized. Overruled. Ignored. Sidelined. *(Lifting her head.)* Belittled. Demeaning. Patronized. Humiliating.

Logic: Don't forget locked in a closet.

Dodger: *(Fumbling through her bag and pulling out a cell phone.)* Hey Sox. I have those copies for you, but it may be a few minutes since I'm locked in the copy room.

(Laughter. Pause.)

Sox: My God. I think she's serious. What the hell happened?

(Athletic walks over to let Dodger out of the room.)

Athletic: *(Seriously.)* You okay? *(Helps Dodger stand. She lets him.)*

(Dodger and Athletic walk back to the SR office.)

Dodger: I've already finished the draft of tomorrow's program. *(Hands Sox a folded piece of paper and exits DSR.)*

Sox: *(Unfolding Dodger's letter and reading.)* Dear MLC Staff. Due to the inability to protect employees from harm, I must regret to inform you that I will be resigning immediately. I want to express my truest gratitude for the lessons I have learned during my time here.

Sincerely,

Dodger O'Megly

Logic: *(In a sing-song voice to the tune of "Take Me Out to the Ballgame.")* For it's one, two, three strikes you're out at the old ballgame.

Sox: I didn't realize she was so afraid of Brave.

Athletic: I guess you reach a boiling point. You either bring a gun to work and kill everyone or you quit. She won't be on the evening news because she chose the latter.

(SR and SL lights fade. Dodger enters USC.)

Dodger: You win some. You lose some. I just wish I could tell which one this was.

(Dodger continues DSC, through the audience.)

Logic: Hey.

(Dodger turns to face Logic, acknowledging the character for the first time.)

Logic: You know you're not the only one.

Dodger: Do I?

(Cut to black.)

Announcer: And the 1-0 pitch from Stream misses down low and the count goes to 2 and 0. Stream nails one across the plate for a strike to make it 2 and 1. Stream, continuing to work quickly, misses on the outside corner – 3 and 1 to the leadoff man, Adams, in this inning. Adams, the number six hitter for the Bee's, is 1 for 2 in the game. He singled in the second, walked and scored in the sixth. Adams swings and misses at the 3-1 pitch to bring the count full. Three balls, 2 strikes, nobody out, top of the ninth. Stream into the wind, but time is called. Now Adams stepping back into the batter's box. Stream now preparing for the payoff pitch: Here it is, and Adams checks his swing. Got him! Strike 3 called.

CHAPTER 5: TEAM STATISTICS

Analysis

The reality of discontent experienced by myself, and those who shared their stories with me, was shaped by the way their treatment forced them into perceived corners (or the literal closet). Aggression, translated into today's oft-misunderstood vernacular, is bullying – at any age. Because the definitions of gender and bullying can both be interpreted in so many varying ways, many people in differing settings could experience this theme. Yet, the strongest ethical appeal of an ethos driven argument may do nothing more than cause a reader to respect the researcher and think, “Oh yes. The researcher has done his or her homework.” It is the appeal to someone's emotions through a pathos driven exposé that could cause someone to act on this (or another's) research (Aristotle, 350 B.C.E./1991). Despite the existing research examining the psychological and physical costs of aggression (bullying) in the workplace, not many researchers have looked deeper into the individual stories of those affected (Tracy, Lutgen-Sandvik, & Alberts, 2006).

I began this study looking to describe the occurrence of bullying in relation to the performance of “masculine” and “feminine” tactics. I found that the overarching player in my bullying experience and those of the people I spoke with is power. I refer to power in the sense of a person's perception of social status in the particular environment where they experience bullying, and that person's ability (or inability) to defend him or herself against colleagues. According to Foucault (1980), power is the strength upon peoples'

actions in order to interfere with their ability to act in the way they truly desire.

Drawing from current theories of victimization as well as a growing practical concern about violence in the workplace, Aquino (2000) found that employee perceptions of victimization related to varying types of conflict styles as well as perceived roles within a hierarchical structure. One striking conclusion is the implication that “low status” employees are targeted when exhibiting both integrative (assertive conflict behavior) as well as being overly obliging. As stated by Aquino, “one sobering conclusion that emerges from these finding is that low status employees may be damned if they do assert themselves and damned if they don’t” (p. 189).

In contrast, one man who spoke with me felt that his profession as a lawyer forced him to act as a bully because he would be expected to use it to win cases. In addition, he used aggression to instill fear in his ex-wife to regain custody of his little girl. Instead of displaying any sort of remorse, this man wore the title of “bully” as an accolade to be displayed with pride. It seems as though many people subconsciously believe that power is a commodity to earn in the workplace alongside a salary. Foucault states, “It seems to me that power *is* always already there, that one is never outside, that there are no margins for those who break with the system to gambol [sic] in” (1980, p. 141). Indeed, many feel that they experience various forms of aggression from their peers or others with a similar “level.” In this case, it is important to note that the power levels may have nothing to do with titles awarded by an organization, but rather with the ability of a bully to intimidate his or her victim. However, it is important to note that such power struggles are not one sided. There are two sides in every event, and in this study, I was only able to

obtain one version of each person's story. The characters in the script above each show both sides of their personalities. Throughout their brief encounters, all play the role of both victim and aggressor. Accordingly, Krippendorff (1995) believes that power is not an object, but is defined through interpersonal relationships. In my discussions, the themes of metaphors and gender defined the role of power in the attempt to relate experiences with bullying.

Metaphors

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) argue that metaphors play a large role in how humans process their thoughts, "The essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another" (p. 5). Because people often do not understand why a workplace bully initially targets them, they often use metaphors to recount their story – using unlike things to help better understand a situation through previously known entities. An examination of personal feelings resulting from bullying occurrences by Tracy, Lutgen-Sandvik, and Alberts (2006) found that it would be beneficial to describe participant experiences in metaphors. They found that victims compared themselves to children, slaves, prisoners, animals, and heartbroken lovers. All of these metaphors appeared in my various conversations with participants for this study. However, three metaphors appeared repeatedly in every person's story: sports, battle, and body.

Sports appeared to be the most common metaphor in terms of discussing the workplace. Many offices use sports metaphors on a daily basis as part of the corporate "buzzword" jargon. The script above could theoretically take place in any office setting

– yet, my experience literally took place at a sports stadium. The majority of people I talked to stated that they were expected to “perform” and be “team players.” This type of mentality within a workplace creates an atmosphere of competitiveness where an individual is out to “win” in order to succeed in his or her own career path. Many victims were called “losers” or described themselves as such when discussing bullying experiences. Additionally, when attempting to deal with a situation, several people cited the need to “play the game” in order to get by unscathed. The metaphor of sports ultimately relates to the theme of power discussed below because one must have some control over another to win the game.

Another metaphor that appeared often was the concept of battle. Terms describing battles and warfare were prevalent when discussing a history of bullying in a particular environment. One woman told me about how the job she had been hired for was “one everyone would kill for” but when her ideas continuously “got shot down,” she realized she was “part of the firing line from new management.” It was common for participants to feel that they were constantly fighting for their job only to “crash” when they became exhausted. One man stated, that due to his line of work, he “expected to be on the front line” but that he did not expect “to fall so quickly with no brothers coming to aid a fellow soldier.” Another man described how he turned the tables on his victim, causing her “to wave a white flag.”

Finally, body references appeared in some form in every interview. References to the body were almost exclusively sexual in nature. The word “fuck” was used by every participant. Generally, it was used to punctuate the feelings that an incident of aggression

caused. More than half of the people referred to the belief that they were “fucked” or “screwed” interchangeably, as they discussed a sensation of helplessness around the situation. This connotes the victim being in a position of sexual submission – relinquishing power to the aggressor. Words describing genitalia were also very prominent in the conversations. Crude names for female sex organs were typical metaphors for victims, while male names were bestowed upon aggressors. Men were more likely to use the female words, such as “I felt like such a pussy,” whereas both sexes referred to their aggressors as “dicks.” Thoughts and feelings that expressed an interest of regaining control were peppered with terms such as “sack up” and/or “grow some balls,” once again insinuating male dominance. I found it interesting that there was no distinction in the stories as to the actual sex of the victim or aggressor in regards to when such terms were utilized; the metaphors were purely based on the levels of control people felt the characters had in a particular situation.

Gender

Gender is a theme that I felt necessary to discuss because of my initial research question. The first question I asked each participant in the interview was, “Do you identify yourself as a male or a female?” Every participant identified themselves as their biological sex. When I questioned the masculine and feminine gender qualities, all of the female participants explained their “girly” side and continued to share some things that society may consider to be masculine – the descriptor “tomboy” emerging in four out of five of the female interviews. Yet, when I asked the male participants about their gender

qualities, all five focused solely on masculine traits and, when I questioned further about possible feminine qualities, all responded with a variant of “I am a guy.”

In a similar respect, Acker (1990) theorizes that companies are organized in a way that creates a “gendered” society. Part of her argument is the set-up of companies that are almost entirely male, thus causing women to act like the men in order to move upward. Acker believes that many feminist theorists avoid writing about gender in organizations because the idea is so deeply embedded in our culture. While this theory of gendered organizations does not focus specifically on the communicative aspects of men and women inside such structures, Ashcraft describes and elaborates upon the environment that are a cause for certain behaviors within gender communication. Kendall and Tannen (1997) expand on the communication aspect of Acker’s theory and suggest that by probing into dialogue that takes place in the workplace – in both mixed gender and single-sex interactions – a researcher would find a deeper insight into the chain of command in an organization. In other words, one can see how gender communication often parlays into situations of power. The feminist theory is a reference point used by many scholars in critical arguments regarding the need for reformation in communication between the genders.

Ashcraft (1998) uses the personal stories of a feminist to critically analyze the conflicts faced by a woman in the business world. She uses her own style of communication to portray the personal story of how gender imbalance has played a role in her professional life. I was looking to see how this affected incidents of bullying. Ashcraft shares personal anecdotes of events occurring throughout her life that shape her

belief in the need for feminist reformation. The examples are stories to which both many women and men can relate. The re-examination of gender roles can bring about significant change in the culture of organizations that focuses on and expects traditional “male” behavior from employees.

Despite finding that both genders did in fact use both types of bullying – overt and covert tactics – I was interested to learn that in the recollections of bullying experiences, the sexes tended to self-segregate within their stories. Other than the initial question regarding what gender the participant believed him or herself to be, there was no distinguishing lead to talk about single sex experiences. Yet, females described situations involving other female colleagues and males discussed groups of fellow males despite working in environments with both men and women. In the script above, the two women characters are relegated to one office and the men all work in a separate office regardless of job description. Another result that stood out within the interviews was the language used to describe the sexes. Both men and women tended to refer to males as “men,” yet both sexes called females “girls” or “chicks” – implying youth or inexperience; “guys” was the term to refer to mixed company. Derogatory feminine terms, such as “bitch” and “pussy” were utilized to describe the perceived victims, while sexualized masculine terms, such as “dick” and “asshole” applied to the aggressors. Sexes also differed in speaking about occurrences in which they were the victims. Women tended to make short statements within their story about how they were aware “that this sort of thing happens to everybody” or “happens all the time.” These reminders served as a kind of verbal hiccup when telling specific details. In contrast, several men commented that they

must be very weak because they were the only ones who could not put up with bullying – not one woman made a similar comment. This could potentially be a result of childhood experiences where females were used to a much subtler form of aggression.

Investigating the associations between feminism and postmodernism within organizational communication, Mumby (1996) believes that our concept of “gender” must be altered in order to show that gender is not simply a section to be viewed in the business arena, but instead a concept that wholly encompasses the processes that drive an organization. If this concept is accepted entirely, gender will not be a separate entity that can be removed from organization communication for study. He begins with feminist theory and moves towards a newer version of these ideas in postmodern feminism. He argues that that gender must be a “defining, constitutive feature of the organizing process” (p. 259). If gender becomes a concept completely embedded within a company, then there is no longer a possibility to “do gender” in research. From a postmodern feminist view, the main character in the script (based on my own story) endured subordination based on the language used to describe her, including the varying gender and sexually charged metaphors discussed above. Coworkers attempted to force all players into a gender-label based on the absence of females previously working in that particular environment. Instead, they chose to discuss Dodger’s presence with one another – demeaning her through their language choices, also seen in the body metaphors above. However, in conforming to gender stereotypes, Dodger’s male colleagues chose to bully through the use of the typically assumed “feminine” form of indirect aggression, while her sole female colleague, Brave – threatened by the presence of another female in

the department – chose to confront her perceived enemy through physically aggressive means. It is possible that the women who comprised the character of Brave felt the need to use a more overt method of bullying because they needed to stand out before they could increase their status.

Gender is a social institution within organizational culture defined as a “moving phenomenon” (Martin, 2003). Martin is interested in discovering how men and women see themselves as “gendered” within the workplace instead of viewing every action as measured as masculine or feminine. Martin uses stories from varying companies to explain her view of gender as a practice, viewed as a “system of action.” The question of choice or accountability is also raised. Martin asks if gender behavior occurs due a choice of free will or if actions occur due to the pressures of an institution. She believes that institution of gender needs to be further incorporated into the daily practices of business within organizations in order to further theories and research.

Overall, all of the participants seemed to describe their experiences in terms of a power play – metaphors and gender groupings were a means of describing the power levels being granted or taken away in a particular situation. In the case of one woman interviewed, she described being bullied by management because a much younger woman colleague appeared to be trying to get ahead too quickly. The older woman felt her status (perceived power) was threatened and in turn tried to degrade the younger woman so that there would still be a differential in power despite an equal “official” level in the office. Most often, a victim of harassment and bullying is “teased, badgered, and

insulted, and perceives that he or she has little recourse to retaliate” (Einarsen, 2000, p. 381). Therefore, this concept assumes that conflicts between two or more people of similar power levels should not be considered bullying. Instead, an alleged aggressive situation could be characterized as a conflict between equals rather than bullying. In turn, this would define all repetitive conflicts between a superior and subordinate as bullying. It may be easy to view power as something bestowed upon someone – a title that a person either has or does not have. Andrew’s (1987) study found that gender does impact confidence and perceived success. She also states that men and women use varying criteria to begin a case that will eventually lead to a persuasive or argumentative situation. Beck (1979) helps one understand the psychological realm of verbal communication. The different codes and tags that females use in speech are one aspect that may come across in an analysis of how women attribute success or failures. According to Wang (2006), discourse is the tool that creates and alters existing power structures. However, despite the criteria for “ideal dialogue,” reminiscent of Socrates’ and Aristotle’s teachings where all involved are free to ask questions and make their own arguments with no constrain or fear, Wang argues that this ideal dialogue is unattainable as institutional power marks its presence either covertly or overtly, but in is play regardless.

CHAPTER 6: FINAL SCORE

Conclusion

Through this study, I have reviewed the claims of prior researchers on gender and aggression. Because bullying is an occurrence that all people are likely to deal with during their lives, how victims and aggressors alike describe those phenomena is an important topic to study in communication research. In order to find themes within unique stories, I shared my own personal experience with bullying and spoke with ten people about their own bullying traumas. Based on those interviews, it appears that metaphors, gender, and power arose most often in the stories.

As Bate and Bowker (1997) succinctly stated, “Communication creates and recreates gender” (p. v). People create stereotypes in order to create meaning in the chaotic world around us. Constraints connected to gender stereotypes can interfere with job performance as well as personal self-esteem. Based on existing gender stereotypes, I expected to find a distinct difference in the “genderized” types of bullying, but see that adults of both sexes employed both overt and covert tactics. I did see males and females using both forms, but ultimately I discovered that the concept of power played a much larger role in the mind of both aggressor and victim. The type of bullying (masculine or feminine) employed in an act appeared to relate to the desire to maintain or increase a person’s status, or decrease his or her opponent’s – the victimized colleague.

My plans for this particular study include submission for conference presentation, performance, and ultimately, publication. I have previously performed a version of my

personal narrative in two separate San José State University communication classes. However, the participant interviews add depth and increase the fullness of the final performance script in Chapter 4. Obviously, a thesis paper surpassing 100 pages will be too long for publication in an academic journal and will need to be cut in size. However, because so much of the existing literature focuses solely on the experiences of one gender, I will not carve this study based on gender or sex. Instead, I will tone down the themes and focus on a single finding from my thematic analysis, such as the significance of power in acts of bullying.

Future research studies on this topic would benefit from a much larger sample than the self-selected grouping portrayed in the script above. It would also be interesting to compile quantitative results along with the in-depth interviews. The “Negative Acts Questionnaire” as administered by Lutgen-Sandvik, Tracy, & Alberts (2002) would correlate well with an expanded examination of gendered bullying tactics. A study in the Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health (2007) recently claimed that those who perceived that they are treated unfairly at work are actually at a high risk for heart attacks. This result would lend itself towards a communicative look at bullying and the physical health of those affected instead of just their mental health within an organization. Additionally, to expand upon understanding the occurrences of adult bullying, additional research would also benefit by investigating the relationships between blame, the victim and the quest for revenge after perceived personal injustice. “Revenge is part of the social fabric of organizational life and is also at the center of many organizational conflicts” (Aquino, Tripp & Bies, 2001, p. 52). Results from the

Aquino, Tripp, & Bies study support a direct relationship between blame and revenge – providing evidence for researchers to include personal acknowledgments into psychological works of revenge and forgiveness. From a communicative standpoint, many who believe that they have experienced unjust behaviors feel the desire for revenge but do not act on it – communicating with the perpetrator in other manners in what may constitute a cycle of bullying as seen by some of the responses in this thesis study. For me, this Master’s study is a form of revenge. I spent a season of baseball being put down and told that I was lacking in intelligence and ability – now I am able to channel that frustration and doubt into an academic study to bring more attention to a widespread phenomena. Several participants in this study also mentioned that they were interested in taking part precisely for that purpose – telling their story to bring more attention to bullying.

This study was conducted in the San Francisco Bay Area and all participants are residents of this area. The youngest participant was 26-years-old and the oldest was 57-years-old. However, the average age of people involved in this study was the mid-30s. This is an age that aptly lends itself towards an investigation of bullying; people are in the middle of their careers and most people in this dynamic have worked in several environments. The people in this study are all white-collar workers – I did not receive any responses from people in the manual labor sector. Moreover, although the participants were of varying ethnicities (African-American, Asian, Caucasian, Latino) there was no control for this and no results were ascertained based on race or ethnicity. Perhaps indicative of the “Silicon Valley” in the San Francisco Bay Area, all participants

were part of a self-selected sample based on responses from Craig's List – an online community bulletin board. Therefore, all interviewees were technologically savvy and had access to the Internet. In addition to the self-selected sample, respondents were filtered based on their schedule and willingness to have the interview videotaped. Also, there is the potential that these stories are on the extreme end – either regarding the actual events that took place or the current emotions of the participant because they felt compelled to take time out of their schedule to share a very personal story. After posting my call for volunteers in the general community section of Craig's List, I was amazed at the volume of responses I received (over 40 in a single week). However, some people were very concerned about the possibility of any video interview ending up on the public sharing video site, "YouTube," and the fear of retribution should anyone see the video. Despite assurances that this would never happen and anonymity conditions explained in the consent form, I decided not to interview this category of people out of respect for their concerns.

Shame is a natural feeling to occur in the mind of both males and females after a bullying experience. The thought that you or I "knowingly" entered into a direct path of victimization and remained put, can lead to an enormous sense of injustice (Namie, 2004). Eventually, this can lead to an intense desire to prove to the external world that I, as the accused, am not the person portrayed by my bully. This may have played a part in participants' willingness to share their stories of victimization and yet stumble when it came to discussing times when they acted as an aggressor. "How can you take the bite out of a bullyfied office? An important first step of changing workplace bullying is

helping people to understand that it's more than just kid stuff" (Tracy, Lutgen-Sandvik, Alberts, 2006). What are some of the personal experiences when we look beyond the current stereotype? In relation to the field of communication, people who experience bullying may find that they are able to maintain a sense of their power simply by gaining the ability to put a name to the situation.

While baseball is traditionally perceived as a game to be played and enjoyed from a masculine perspective, it is actually a game consumed by all sexes (for more in-depth information on woman and baseball, refer to Ardell, 2005). Even though men are typically seen as physically stronger than women that may not be a mitigating factor in baseball. Baseball requires timing, coordination, background knowledge, control, and desire – traits that are not typically assigned exclusively to either gender (Heaphy, 2004). Therefore, it is easy to conclude that the genders may act differently, but that they are certainly not two polar opposites. The late commissioner of baseball, A. Bartlett Giamatti, spoke of sports as, "that aspiration...to be taken out of the self...for a moment in touch...with a joy...free of all constraint. It is a sensation not of winning, but of fully playing" (cited in Pollack, 1998, p. 273). Players who may be bitter rivals in a heated match-up are indeed peers in the same game. Similarly, people are involved in bullying incidents throughout their lives playing the position of sufferer, observer, and aggressor at varying times. And like in baseball – win or lose – there will eventually be another game to play and ultimately another occasion where you will have to deal with a form of bullying.

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APPENDIX A

San José State Human Subjects – Institutional Review Board Approval Letter

San José State
UNIVERSITY

**Office of the Provost
Associate Vice President
Graduate Studies & Research**

One Washington Square
San José, CA 95192-0025
Voice: 408-924-2427
Fax: 408-924-2477

E-mail: gradstudies@sjsu.edu
http://www.sjsu.edu

To: Patricia Cosaro
3339 La Mesa Drive #9
San Carlos, CA 94070

From: Pamela Stacks, Ph.D.
Associate Vice President
Graduate Studies and Research

Date: June 5, 2006

The Human Subjects-Institutional Review Board has approved your request to use human subjects in the study entitled:

"An Exploration of the Genderization of Bullying in Adults"

This approval is contingent upon the subjects participating in your research project being appropriately protected from risk. This includes the protection of the anonymity of the subjects' identity when they participate in your research project, and with regard to all data that may be collected from the subjects. The approval includes continued monitoring of your research by the Board to assure that the subjects are being adequately and properly protected from such risks. If at any time a subject becomes injured or complains of injury, you must notify Dr. Pamela Stacks, Ph.D. immediately. Injury includes but is not limited to bodily harm, psychological trauma, and release of potentially damaging personal information. This approval for the human subject's portion of your project is in effect for one year, and data collection beyond June 5, 2007 requires an extension request.

Please also be advised that all subjects need to be fully informed and aware that their participation in your research project is voluntary, and that he or she may withdraw from the project at any time. Further, a subject's participation, refusal to participate, or withdrawal will not affect any services that the subject is receiving or will receive at the institution in which the research is being conducted.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (408) 924-2480.

cc. Dr. Jay Baglia- 0059

The California State University:
Chancellor's Office
Bakersfield, Channel Islands, Chico,
Dominguez Hills, East Bay, Fresno,
Fullerton, Humboldt, Long Beach,
Los Angeles, Maritime Academy,
Monterey Bay, Northridge, Pomona,
Sacramento, San Bernardino, San Diego,
San Francisco, San José, San Luis Obispo,
San Marcos, Sonoma, Stanislaus

APPENDIX B

Study Consent Form

**San José State
UNIVERSITY**

**College of Social Sciences
Department of Communication
Studies**

One Washington Square
San José, CA 95192-0112
Voice: 408-924-5360
Fax: 408-924-5396
E-mail: commstud@email.sjsu.edu
www.sjsu.edu/depts/commstudies

Agreement to Participate in Research

Responsible Investigator(s): Patricia Cosaro, B.A.

Title of Protocol: An Exploration of the Genderization of Bullying in Adults.

1. You have been asked to participate in a research study investigating implications of gendered bullying in America.
2. You will be asked to engage in a conversation with the investigator, discussing questions relating to your personal experiences with bullying. You may choose to participate at a time that is convenient to you, or you may choose to forego participation altogether.
3. There is a possibility of emotional discomfort resulting from memories of past bullying experiences.
4. No discernable benefits are expected. However, participants may potentially and indirectly benefit from the discussion with a heightened sense of their role as both victim and bully.
5. Although the results of this study may be published, no information that could identify you will be included. Data collected for this study will be kept in a locked cabinet and will be linked to participants only through pseudonyms.
6. There will be no compensation awarded to subjects for participation in this study.
7. Questions about this research may be addressed to Patricia Cosaro, 650-438-0245. Complaints about the research may be presented to Dr. Jay Baglia, Ph.D., Assistant Professor Communication Studies San Jose State University, at 408-924-5377; or Dr. Dennis Jaehne, Ph.D., Department Chair Communication Studies San Jose State University, at 408-924-5360. Questions about a research subjects' rights, or research-related injury may be presented to Pamela Stacks, Ph.D., Associate Vice President, Graduate Studies and Research San Jose State University, at 408-924-2480.
8. No service of any kind, to which you are otherwise entitled, will be lost or jeopardized if you choose to "not participate" in the study.
9. Your consent is being given voluntarily. You may refuse to participate in the entire study or in any part of the study. You have the right to not answer questions you do not wish to answer. If you decide to participate in the study, you are free to withdraw at any time without any negative effect on your relations with San Jose State University or with any other participating institutions or agencies.
10. At the time that you sign this consent form, you will receive a copy of it for your records, signed and dated by the investigator.
 - The signature of a subject on this document indicates agreement to participate in the study.
 - The signature of a researcher on this document indicates agreement to include the above named subject in the research and attestation that the subject has been fully informed of his or her rights.

Participant Signature _____

Date _____

Investigator Signature _____

Date _____

The California State University:
Chancellor's Office
Bakersfield, Channel Islands, Chico,
Dominguez Hills, Fresno, Fullerton,
Hayward, Humboldt, Long Beach,
Los Angeles, Maritime Academy,
Monterey Bay, Northridge, Pomona,
Sacramento, San Bernardino, San Diego,
San Francisco, San José, San Luis Obispo,
San Marcos, Sonoma, Stanislaus