"Alex is a NICE kid":
The Socialization Functions of Teasing
for Adolescent Males

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This paper advances a sociolinguistic analysis of "teasing" and "gossiping" within focus group interactions among adolescent males (ages 14-15). In line with recent linguistic anthropological work, I argue that the meanings of different linguistic strategies are not only relative to the specific interactions, but are also quite precarious as indexes of varying levels of solidarity among the adolescent males. Using Positioning Analysis, I demonstrate how subject positions are made available and linguistically indexed. The resulting argument stands as relatively novel, sociolinguistic contribution in ongoing explorations of how micro-discursive positions constitute gendered identities.

1. Introductory Remarks

I have two modest aims with this paper. The first is to suggest a way to understand the social practice of teasing by examining it functionally—in other words, as a discursive identity project in which boys *interactively* index various conventionalized repertoires of masculinity. My second aim is to use a small excerpt of focus group data, involving five teenage boys and a moderator, to demonstrate a sociolinguistic method (positioning analysis—Bamberg, 1997, 1999a, 1999b, 2000a, 2000b) with which to analyze teasing activities. I argue that this method can be seen as a salubrious "middle-ground" form of

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analytic engagement that is situated between critical discourse analysis and traditional conversation analysis.

2. What is Teasing?

Teasing is one of the most ambiguous, ubiquitous, conceptually enervating, and analytically elusive forms of interaction (Drew, 1987; Pawluck, 1989). Some view it as a way to reduce social tensions, to connect with others, or to teach children relational skills—basically as a tool for socialization (Tannen, 1993; Eder, 1993; Cameron, 1997). Others couple it with bullying and view it as an incipient social evil that often culminates in violence (Pollack, 1998; Garbarino, 1999). I will briefly unpack these two general and fashionable views and explain why my present work brackets both of them.

2.1. View 1—Teasing as Oppressive/Hegemonic/Macho Masculinity

Recently, there has been a surge of interest concerning how adolescent males are complicit with or resistant to "hegemonic/macho" forms of masculinity. Teasing—especially in the wake of recent school shootings—has been cited as one of the top culprits that causes boys to lash out in violence. This view is perpetuated by gender activists from the AAUW, the Ms. Foundation, the National Education Association, the Harvard School of Education, and the U.S. Department of Education, as well as crisis—writers like Pollack (1998) and Garbarino (1999). These authors argue that boys are inundated by a patriarchal cultural-code that teaches them to be complicit with stoic masculine social norms. The result, they argue, is "hegemony"—seen as incipient misogyny, exploitative sexuality, aggressiveness, unemotionality, and a drive for control. The solution, as purported by the U.S. Department of Education's "gender-equity" specialists, is to radically re-socialize males away from conventional maleness through social egalitarianism—which involves a combination of gender-neutral pedagogy and policing of stereotypical masculinity.

2.2. View 2—Teasing as a Way of Establishing Solidarity/Doing Friendship/Being Playful

While not denying that teasing can be harmful, other thinkers working within sociolinguistics and ethnography (Tannen, 1993; Eder, 1993; Cameron, 1997; Straehle, 1993; Schriffrin, 1994; Pawluck, 1989) have variously argued that teasing is a way to enhance solidar-

ity, strengthen social bonds, experiment with novel linguistic responses or "come-backs" (and with the adolescent vernacular in general), or communicate liking without being held accountable for one's feelings. Teasing is argued to be a highly collaborative activity that builds rapport indirectly.

2.3. View 3—Teasing as a Gendered Identity Project for Adolescent Males

While not rejecting these views, my argument in this paper trades very little on either of them. For my present purposes, teasing will be approached analytically. That is, while the content of teasing may seem hostile or even pseudo-complementary if taken literally, the subsequent receipt and micro-interactive management of teasing will be analyzed as it is mediated through certain contextualization cues (here, linguistic devices) that metacommunicatively signal that the meaning of the teasing has at least two interrelated functions: 1) as a way to index/(re)produce different versions of masculinity and 2) as a means to produce different ways of doing friendship, or "solidarity work."

In beginning this way, I am arguing that I do not think it is useful to begin an analysis of teasing by simply looking for its general social utility (or lack thereof). I would like to begin with a more conceptual or structural (linguistic) account of how "teasing" activities are interactively managed (see Drew, 1987), and then build up from there an account of how teasing—as a social practice—is a gendered identity project for adolescent males. I will show that for boys, teasing is a way to try out or play with some of the most salient and conventional notions of "masculinity." Boys are often socialized to try to be funny, cool, controversial, tough, and attractive to girls. Teasing is one social practice that *does* masculinity, as it is used to accommodate these socialized pressures. Also, it is within the act of teasing that boys often demonstrate linguistic variation with how—within the act of teasing—they metacommunicatively index these conventionalized notions of masculinity, either by directly embracing them, subverting them, mocking them, resisting them, or reinventing them. As they do this, solidarity—work or friendship—activity is produced. In the short analysis of teasing that follows, I analyze teasing by examining the ways in which it is performed in conversational interaction, determining what linguistic strategies are used, how they are used, and what their interactive effects are.

3. Central Analytic Insight

In offering a markedly analytic account of teasing, I want to stress, in consonance with recent linguistic anthropological work (Duranti, 1997; Hanks, 1996), that the interrelationship between the linguistic devices used, the subject positions drawn-up, and the type of teasing activities thus indexed are (as a unit) *equivocal* with regard to the resulting *meanings* they have for the boys within their interactive settings. In other words, the interactive meanings are relative in so far as they make possible various degrees and styles of solidarity among the boys. This insight is consonant with Tannen's (1993, 1999) work on the relativity of linguistic strategies—that there is never a one-to-one relationship between a linguistic strategy or linguistic construction type and the interactive meaning of the social act that ensues. It is also consonant with Elinor Ochs (1996) methodological insight that social activities like teasing are never directly indexed — linguistic forms alone. Rather, linguistic forms index an array of interactive "stances" (what I will call "subject positions"). I look at how certain salient linguistic devices make available certain epistemic or affective subject positions that, within the specific interaction, index conventional social acts, in this case teasing.

In this vein, I want to argue that the linguistic devices used to index the activity of teasing can be seen, in a way, as equivocal, in so far as the interactive meanings make possible different forms or degrees of solidarity. For instance, the boys often "speak for one another" (by using 3rd person pronouns) to index certain epistemic subject positions that in turn index a kind of teasing activity, but the interactive functions of that particular teasing strategy can mark quite equivocal solidarity strategies—the teasing can save face, mark mild hostility, or act as a colluding mechanism. I show how the interactants themselves (with and against each other and the moderator) make available a range of masculine subject positions with multiple interpretations.

4. How to Analyze Teasing Interaction

4.1. Linguistic Devices Used

To analyze teasing activities, I focus on the use of several of the more salient and common linguistic devices for teasing. These include:

Speaking for Another—Using 3rd person pronouns distinctively

Collusion—Latching of turns/simultaneous speech (interruption and overlap)

Recycling—Repetition of certain lexical items, such as hedges and support tokens

Prosody—Exaggerating intonation and laughter (emphatic stress)

4.2. Positioning Analysis

I employ Michael Bamberg's (1997, 1999a, 1999b, 2000a, 2000b) "positioning analysis." As a methodological tool, positioning analysis is a way of connecting the ethnomethodological and conversation analytic orientation of studying participants as they are locally and sequentially constructed in discourse (bottom-up emphasis) with critical discourse analytic impulses to combine content analysis with performance analysis of *how* conversational topics and interactive strategies are linguistically indexed, for which kind of audience(s), and in terms of which self-presentation strategies. This way of connecting ethnomethdology with discourse analysis stands as a relatively novel sociolinguistic contribution for studying the processes by which micro-discursive positions constitute gendered identities (similar to the work of Bucholtz, 1999). I specify how positioning analysis works at three distinct, but interconnected, levels of analysis, where one level of specificity enables the next level (see Bamberg, 1997). Analysis proceeds cumulatively from level one through level three.

Level 1—*How the conversational units (characters, events, topics, verb structure, etc) or general conversational structure are positioned in relation to one another within the reported events*. In line with a CA orientation, the general concern is with analyzing how the contents or units of conversational organization are sequentially situated across turns. In other words, which linguistic devices and sequential arrangements are being used and in what order? For instance, at this first level of positioning attention is given to how characters are constructed and how they are set within the ongoing series of unfolding events. In addition, attention is paid to how the opening and closing of turns are structured, what the linguistic structural preferences, or "unit types," are and how they are organized, and how turn taking or distribution patterns are made salient.

Level 2—*How the speaker both is positioned by and positions*

him/herself to the actual or imagined audience. This level concerns how the content and structure of the talk are interactive effects. In other words, *how* conversational units are distributed and managed within (and as an effect of) certain distinctively interactive or discursive *modalities*. For example, what are the conversational units *doing* interactively in institutionally-saturated settings like interviews or focus group interactions or in more quasi-natural/free-interactive settings? With this level of positioning, a critical discourse analytic focus begins to emerge. The structure and content of conversation is analyzed as a *means to an end*—one that is concerned with situating conversational structures within certain distinctive audience-driven interpretive modalities. The analytic focus at level 2 concerns the indexical establishment of certain subject positions and social acts that are ideologically meaningful as indexes of the particular interactive moment. Focus is given to the particular discourse modes being employed and to the ensuing effects for the interaction.

Level 3—*How do the narrators position themselves in answering the specific and general* questions of "Who am I?" and "How do I want to be understood?" This level of positioning is a culmination of the previous two levels. Because the linguistic devices used do more than simply specify the structure or content of what is being said, but additionally "point to" broader identity projects at work, what emerges at this level of positioning is a more distinctively critical focus on the question of "Who am I?" or "What kind of person do I want to be seen as?" The analysis at this level addresses how various discursive repertoires are indexed into the interaction. Attention is also given to the various ideological tensions produced as multiple subject positions are managed, resisted, or reworked. The different positions or identity claims described at this level are not meant to hold across contexts. Because they are highly interpretive as scholarly exercises, they are debatable given different academic predilections.

5. Analysis and Discussion

I will now apply positioning analysis to an excerpt of focus group data involving five adolescent males where a distinctive style of teasing is being performed. The five adolescent males (aged fourteen - fifteen) all know each other and consider each other friends, and the excerpt below comes during a point in the discussion where the boys are talking about what they do (as friends). The moderator introduces the topic (see transcript below). I will follow with a five-part analysis of how the teasing is structured and what it is doing.

5.1. Section 1

(1) "Alex is a NICE kid," lines 1-13
Participants—Moderator 1 (M1); Alex (A); Bobbie (B); Carl (C); Dirk (D); Earl (E); Moderator (M2)

  1. M1: So what about some other events, or secrets, any secrets,
  2.   do you share secrets, that=
  3. D: =*We* <u>don't [have any secrets</u>
  4. B: [*We* definitely <u>don't have any secrets</u> (1.0)
  5.   well, *we* talk about what other kids are doing in school=
  6. D: =yah=
  7. C: =like what do you mean, secrets?
  8. D: *We* pass rumors about other people,
  9.   yah, [that's a very, I like that
 10. B: [yah (1.5) like did you hear Jenny's going out [with Tom]=
 11. D: [or the]
 12. M1:   =Give, give me an example
 13. B: It's like oh, did you hear Jenny's going out with (fades, under breath)

The topic of "sharing secrets" is foregrounded by the moderator. The receipt of this involves Bobbie and Dirk immediately colluding through latching/overlap, simultaneous speech, and 3rd person pronoun use to point out that "we" (an epistemic subject position that secures collusion and functions to position the "we" against what the moderator is suggesting through his question) definitely don't have secrets, but (with a hedge, "well," line 5) "we" do gossip and "pass rumors" about other people, which Dirk "likes" (line 9) and with which Bobbie concurs ("yah," line 10). Dirk and Bobbie position the "we" as a "we" that valorizes gossiping and passing rumors. It is here that Bobbie and Dirk begin to drawn up a version of what boys do (i.e. masculinity) that is potentially "against the grain": positioning themselves (the "we") as rumor spreaders.

5.2. Section 2

(2) "Alex is a NICE kid," lines 14-25

14. M1: (to Alex) Are [*YOU*] doing that as well?=
15. A: =***I don't know***=
16. C: =or like how Liz did <inaudable> you hear about that=
17. M1: =at Dover's and St. Mark's?
18. D: ***ALEX*** **IS A** <u>N I C E</u> **K** **ID—(drawn out) (laughter)**
19. M1: [I know, I know, I think that I figured that out a little bit already]=
20. D: <u>Real nice</u>=
21. C: =like what do you, what does that mean, "<u>nice</u>"?=
22. E: *Alex* is pretty borin(g) (fades out—under breath).
23. D: [*He's* uh, I think] *he* could make friends with [**ANYBODY**]=
24. B: [*He's* like a (bore)] [**ANYBODY**]
25. =And <u>he does, he could, he</u> **DOES** (looks to A for agreement)
26. (**Laughter, 3.0**)

Then, the moderator asks for an example (line 12), and no sooner than an example is provided, the moderator quickly, through light-hearted tying mechanisms (intonation + smiling), shifts the discussion away from the giving of examples in general to Alex's specific role in this, putting him, as a participant in Bobbie and Dirk's behavior, directly on the spot ("Are YOU doing that as well?" line 14). The emphatic stress on "you" singles Alex out and acts as a pre-sequencing contextualization cue that signals that the moderator (and perhaps others) might have a reason to doubt Alex's complicity with Bobbie and Dirk's behavior. It places Alex in a defensive and slightly vulnerable position (because he is positioned as distinct from the "we" of Bobbie and Dirk and is now the subject of the moderator's query) of having to account for his alignment with Bobbie and Dirk's rumor spreading. In addition, because Bobbie and Dirk are the high frequency speakers, the question to Alex is as much an invitation for him to answer as it is a pre-sequential invitation for Bobbie and Dirk to comment about him or offer their perception of Alex's alignment with them. This combination of linguistic activity within this particular exchange foregrounds the teasing activity.

Alex's receipt ("I don't know," line 15) is both quiet (indexing an epistemic subject position of passiveness) and non-defensive. Then in line 18, Dirk's comment (speaking for Alex) positions Alex exactly as the kind of "nice kid" that they are not (the emphatic stress, the speaking for another, and the subsequent laughter are contextualization cues and tuning mechanisms that, taken together, signal that the comment "Alex is a NICE kid" is less a complement than a quasi put-down). The receipt of the moderator (line 19) indexes an epistemic subject position of having already figured out what Dirk is saying, and as such, the moderator colludes with Dirk's sentiment and is thus a co-conspirator in the teasing activity. This opens the teasing up. The "niceness" of Alex is recycled several times (lines 18, 20, 21), and in lines 22 and 24 it is interpreted as being "boring." Dirk and Bobbie continue to speak for Alex (using "he") to note in consonance and with stress that Alex could "make friends with ANYBODY" (lines 23-24). Bobbie's recycled hedges and look to Alex for agreement in line 25 seem almost charitable, as a compliment rather than an insult. This further complicates the meaning of the teasing activity. It is very unclear what this teasing means to the boys, how Alex feels about it, and what the function of it is for the boys (particularly Bobbie and Dirk)—whether it functions to mark a quiet hostility, to sincerely compliment Alex and thus to signal alignment with him, to allow Bobbie and Dirk to collude and "do" their friendship, or to challenge the conventional etiquette represented by the moderator's questions.

5.3. Section 3

(3) "Alex is a NICE kid," lines 27-37

27. M1: Now Alex, what is your opinion?
28. A: (quietly) <u>I don't know</u>, I like to make friends (1.0) [with people=
29. C: [=not anyone at St. Marks
30. B: Right, yah=
31. M1: =But *they* say you <u>can make friends with</u> [**anybody**
32. B+D: [**ANYBODY**!=
33. M1: =and I am assuming that *they* are not able to <u>make friends with anybody</u>
35. B: Well, *we* can too=
36. D: =I couldn't=
37. B: =certainly if *we*, but uh, but *we* choose not to.

This section, like the others, begins with the moderator shifting the dialogue that has been about Alex directly to Alex, asking, "Now Alex, what is your opinion?" in line 27. Again, Alex hedges (a linguistic move he recycles again and again) and re-indexes the epistemic subject position of passivity. His statement is cut off by Carl and then Bobbie, and then the moderator steps back in with "BUT" (line 31), a device that subtly challenges Alex to address the gravity of Bobbie and Dirk's statement that he can not only make friends, but can make friends with "ANYBODY." The "but" signals that Alex's response in line 28 was not quite taken-up in the way the moderator wanted. The moderator directly positions Alex in the epistemic subject position of having to answer for Bobbie and Dirk's assertion.

In lines 32-37,. Bobbie and Dirk emphatically re-stress the "anybody" by overlapping the moderator (an attempted alignment through emphatic stress and collusion), but then the moderator shifts it back on Bobbie and Dirk by positioning them as boys who are not able to make friends with anybody. He tests the integrity of their self-presentation. Bobbie and Dirk's implied self-position in all of this is exposed by the moderator and is immediately taken-up by both Bobbie and Dirk. Bobbie's receipt is a repair, an assertion that "we certainly" could make friends if "we" wanted to, but "we choose not to" (lines 35 and 37). Dirk simply and straightforwardly remarks, "I couldn't," and offers no repair. His receipt is simply an agreement with the moderator, once again indexing a subject position that he has been unashamedly advancing. While Bobbie's attempted repair indexes a subject position that is more equivocal than Dirk's, both signal that being like Alex (able to make friends with anybody) is not something they aspire to—either because they choose not to (Bobbie), or because they simply can't and don't seem to care (Dirk)—again, making more conspicuous that their remarks earlier about Alex are teasing and subtle put-downs, not compliments.

5.4. Section 4

(4) "Alex is a NICE kid," lines 38-54

38. M1: (to Alex) You have a lot of friends at=
39. A: = Not at uh, St. Marks, they are[
40. B: [Who do you talk with Alex?

41. A: (quietly) a lot of people=
42. B: =do you talk with anybody or do you just sit alone at lunch
43. and eat your lunch?
44. A: Yah, I just, probably, I guess=
45. E: =that sucks=
46. A: =(very quietly) **yah**
47. C: [No, uh, that girl, that read a book=
48. D: [=from the class
49. B: [oh, this is (2.0), oh boy, we can erase this, that part, right?
50. M: Okay, okay (1.5)
51. D: Now why are you saying names again on there?=
52. B: =I started to say something, yah, a certain someone who read Star Trek
53. books during lunch last [year
53. D: [Oh yah, Jennifer Modden.
54. **(Laughter, 3.0)**

This section involves three main occurrences. First, it is the site for Alex to continue to recycle his typical hedges and quiet speech, allowing himself to be cut-off by Bobbie who puts him on the spot ("Who do you talk with Alex?" line 40). Alex's hedges (line 44) and equivocations re-enforce his passivity, making him an easy target once again. Second, the image of Alex sitting alone at lunch acts as a catalyst for Carl to chirp in to playfully remind the others of "that girl" that they all know who used to eat alone and read Star Trek books at lunch. This little gossiping exchange is performed with constant overlap and collusion among Bobbie, Carl, and Dirk and is met with several seconds of laughter when Dirk bluntly blurts out her name (line 57). And finally, this section is relevant as another moment for Dirk to assert his bluntness (underscoring his self-position of flat-out talking about others without reservation). This leads to laughter (which sanctions the comment) and acts as a pre-indexer of what is to follow.

5.5. Section 5

(5) "Alex is a NICE kid," lines 55-end

55. B: [No, last year, last year, (to Dirk)
56. D: [Yah, who's that girl (2.0) She did that? (2.0) No, but um, (1.0)

57.   <u>yeah</u> (referring to Alex) *he* can, *he* is very, <u>uh</u>, unoffen-
        sive. *He* never,
58.   <u>hardly</u> ever insults someone without (2.0), <u>uh</u>, *he* only
        insults someone
59.   when *he* is joking around=
60. B: =and *he* doesn't ever joke around
61. D: =and <u>that's not often</u>=
62. B: =Not <u>often at all</u>=
63. D: =AND [*WE*, we insult people **OFTEN**, very often, and
        we are NOT
64.   joking around
65. B: [It's like part of *our* life=
66. D: =Not Carl, Carl's also, *these* (pointing to Carl and
        Alex) are the <u>very</u>
67.   quiet ones, and *he* (motioning to Earl), used to be a <u>very</u>
        <u>quiet one</u>,
68.   but *he's* starting to change=
69. B: =But *he's* coming=
70. D: =*He's* like coming out of the [<u>cell</u>]
71. B: [the <u>shell</u>]=the <u>shell</u>, so to say=
72. C: =*he's* coming into *his* own (1.0) **(laughter)**
73. M2: What do you mean, coming out of the "<u>shell</u>"?
74. D: Well, *he's* (makes a cage-like formation) locked in this
        little [nut
75. B: [<u>nut</u>, yah
76. C: Yah (laughs)=

Dirk cautiously (recycling several step-wise moves—hedges and false starts) attempts to reconnect the dialogue back to Alex's ability to make friends with anybody, speaking about him only in the third person as "he." The reason Dirk reconnects the dialogue back to Alex has to do with the fact Dirk did little to repair the moderator's challenge that he could not make friends with anybody, like Alex could. Dirk did little to repair this or challenge it—he matter-of-factly said that he couldn't make friends with anybody (line 36) in an almost momentary dis-alignment with Bobbie. It is likely here, from lines 55 onward, that Dirk expands his sentiment. He makes it clear how he wants to be seen in all of this, and he performs his own identity *vis-à-vis* continued sub-tle mocking of Alex. His cautious hedges and false starts are the per-formance of an almost gracious sort of maneuver, one that looks as if it

is complementary to Alex, referring to him as "unoffensive" and as someone who hardly ever insults someone unless he is joking around. This might seem complimentary if taken out of context. However, Bobbie and Dirk's overlapping comments that follow serve not only as colluding mechanisms, but also to undo whatever might have seemed to be a compliment in Dirk's comments. Continuing to refer to Alex in the third person, Bobbie and Dirk emphasize through repetition that it isn't often at all that Alex even jokes around.

Then, in line 63, Dirk's self-position (performed through the "we" voice) comes in as a juxtaposition to Dirk and Bobbie's forced posi-tioning of Alex as someone who never insults or jokes around. Dirk notes with emphatic stress that, unlike Alex, "we insult people OFTEN, very often, and we are not joking around" (lines 63-64). Dirk and Bobbie have positioned themselves as diametrical opposites of Alex-unlike Alex, they want to be seen as intentionally offensive. Their forced positioning of Alex not only indexes a "teasing" activity and a put-down of Alex, but it also acts as a juxtaposition for their own identity project—namely, that they insult people intentionally, and even more so, are candid about admitting it outright within this inter-action. In fact, their admitting their behavior is not met with appre-hension or shock, but rather laughter. They not only assert their own self-positions, but they also valorize a type of rebelliousness and impropriety that may constitute a version of masculinity, and they do so lightheartedly. Bobbie's comment that this is "part of our life" (line 65) further solidifies the generality of their stance. Bobbie and Dirk go on to equate Carl with Alex, noting in a pejorative fashion that they are both "quiet ones." Earl is positioned in the third person as one who "used to be a very quiet one," "but" (line 69) he is starting to change (he is becoming more like Bobbie and Dirk). His change is a "coming out" process (a change for the better), and his former quietness is asso-ciated with the image of being locked in a "nut,""cell," or "shell." At this point, Bobbie and Dirk have extended their teasing to the entire group, and as such, their own identity projects and self-positions have been shaped within and against the entire group, even the moderator.

6. Conclusions
    First, it is important to note that the teasing is accomplished with minimal overt tension or verbal dueling. This does not mean that the teasing was unsuccessful, for the function of teasing is not simply to

create tension or advance a hostile strike. In fact, the teasing here trades on very little of the traditional or stereotypical macho-masculine tough-guy posturing. Yet on the other hand, the teasing is not simply a way to collude with one another, or to bond with friends. While Bobbie and Dirk definitely collude in teasing, it is not obvious that the function of their collusion is to solidify their friendship. Also, it is not obvious that their teasing of Alex has damaged the solidarity of their friendship with Alex. This does not suggest, however, that teasing has nothing to do with enhancing or diminishing the solidarity among friends. It is only to suggest that teasing has a more complex meaning, one that is being constantly worked out, revised, and re-advanced. The solidarity being advanced is not "I-like-you, you-like-me" solidarity, but a solidarity that involves mutual participation and complicity in the production and maintenance of a certain identity project, or version of masculinity. For Bobbie and Dirk, the teasing is less about verbal dueling, working out "inner" aggression, or seeing who likes whom the most. My hope is to have shown that teasing is more centrally a way to try-out versions of masculinity, and as these boys participate in this "trying-out" or experimenting (through the use and re-use of certain linguistic devices) different solidarity-work is simultaneously performed, and different senses of solidarity constantly emerge and transform. By allowing himself to be teased, Alex is not necessarily dominated by Bobbie or Dirk, nor is he necessarily a casualty of the version of masculinity they are trying out. Rather, he participates in the sanctioning of this version of masculinity through his performance of passivity and laughter. In this way, he can be seen to be in collusion not only with Bobbie and Dirk as friends, but also (and more importantly) with the larger socialization of a certain kind of masculinity—in this case, one resistant to traditional or adult—like versions of "niceness," gregariousness, or politeness.

Transcription conventions

Pronoun use: Italics;
Collusion: [Brackets];
Recycles: <u>Underline</u>;
Prosody: **Bold**

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