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# The War of the Roses: Ritual Shaming, Morality, and Gender on the Radio

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The *War of the Roses*: Ritual Shaming, Morality, and Gender on the Radio

By

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
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## **Abstract**

In this thesis, I show how a current radio program, *War of the Roses*, acts as a ritual of shaming that affirms the social order as moral order, involving moral condemnation, degradation of social identity, and public embarrassment (Goffman, 1956, 1967; Turner 1987). I use discourse analysis (DA) (e.g., Bergmann, 1998; Tracy, 2001; Tracy & Mirivel, 2008) and membership categorization analysis (Baker, 2000; Roulston, 2001) to examine eight transcripts from multiple versions of the *War of the Roses* radio program across the country. The basic premise of the radio program *War of Roses* involves a “caller” who suspects her or his partner of infidelity colluding with the radio DJ to devise a test to confirm whether or not the partner is in fact “cheating” on the relationship. The sequencing of the show inevitably involves exposing and confronting the cheater with their infidelity, and embarrassing the cheater in the public forum of the radio medium. Specifically, I trace how morality is enacted as a dynamic of talk-in-interaction, which requires a negotiation and authorization of claims, and involves differential access on the part of the DJ, the “cheater,” and the victim to the social discourse of shaming and embarrassment.

## Introduction

*"Morality, like art, means drawing a line someplace."*

-Oscar Wilde

I slammed the door of the car as I got in, angry and frustrated. I was angry about the conversations in class that day, frustrated that I was stuck in this place that upset me so much every day. I just wanted to find something that made me feel like I fit in, something to get excited about, something that would ease the endless feelings of homesickness. I hoped that driving around awhile would ease some of this intense tension.

I drove through the streets I was starting to recognize, determined to learn more about the strange city where I felt so displaced. Random music blasted on the radio, but I barely noticed it, only paying enough attention to switch stations once I realized music stopped and commercials started. Traffic was getting worse and worse as I drove, but I was determined not to just turn around and drive home.

Today needed to be the day for something. I didn't know how much longer I could take feeling like this, day after day, if I didn't find something soon to make me feel more at home.

I made turn after turn as I continued driving, moving into unknown area. I stopped at a light and realized that there was talking again. I moved to change the station again, but then I froze on the brink:

*Kane: Zach, do you know what this is?*

*Zach: No. I don't know what this is.*

*Kane: My name is Kane and I'm taping you for radio broadcast. My show tests cheaters to see if they are doing anything on the side. Kelly reached out to us to because she was concerned for a number of reasons, you were caught in a few lies and she was ah concerned.*

*Kelly: Are you screwing her?!<sup>1</sup>*

What? What is this show? I was immediately hooked. This show dealt with so many of the issues that I find most interesting about studying interpersonal communication, especially cheating. I intently listened to the rest of the show and as soon as it was over, I called my mom.

"Mom! Mom! You won't believe what I just heard! It was the craziest thing."

My mom responded with her general nonchalant attitude to my hyper excitement, "Hi Jill, how are you doing? What did you hear?"

"I'm fine, I guess, well, I could be better. Wait! No! I just heard the most awesome thing on the radio; I have to tell you about it."

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<sup>1</sup> A rendition of an actual *War of the Roses* segment to the best of my recollection.

"Okay, what was it?"

"There was this radio show. Radio show? Segment? Show? I don't know, whatever. It was awesome! I guess they called this guy; well, I'm not sure. I missed the beginning, but anyways. The radio people called this guy because his girlfriend thought he might be cheating on her. So they called him and he sent this other girl roses and his girlfriend started yelling at him for cheating on her and then he started yelling at her about how she has never been faithful and the DJ was getting in the middle and trying to sort it out and it was this crazy weird thing!"

"Wait, what? A guy sent roses to a girl on the radio and they were yelling at each other?"

"No! They were trying to trap this guy, because they thought he was cheating on his girlfriend. But then he started to say that she hadn't always been faithful and the DJ was trying to sort it all out to see who was at fault. And they kept yelling at each other and it was just really interesting. It was a disaster, but an awesome and fascinating one."<sup>2</sup>

\* \* \*

Social life is rich with examples of everyday ritual. In our society, it is possible to see many examples of rituals each day. These rituals perform social functions and reflect societal expectations, from the mundane to moral judgments, which reflect the tacit social order. In *Studies in Ethnomethodology*, Harold Garfinkel (1967) developed the field of ethnomethodology as an empirical

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<sup>2</sup> A recollected rendition of an actual phone conversation with my mother.

method of studying everyday actions that produce the social order. Each member of the culture is expected to maintain and follow the unsaid rules and keep these often unspoken moral constructs in place. Garfinkel is known for breach experiments in order to understand the tacit social order. In a breach experiment, the researcher violates a social norm, which makes social interaction problematic for deviating from the normal and expected. When a rule is broken by someone, people then step in to address the issue, often through public shaming and redress rituals. Social life is tacitly accounted for, which is seen through very mundane rule following. In terms of moral issues, accounts have to be offered after a breach, which is a part of the practical accomplishment of social order. This ritual is done in response to the breached rule, in order to restore the moral order of the situation. As Oscar Wilde said, "Morality, like art, means drawing a line someplace." The ritual and shaming ceremonies are done in order to draw a line as to what accounts for acceptable behavior and to punish unacceptable behavior in order to prevent future breaches.

The radio show *War of the Roses* is a syndicated segment that has different radio hosts and programs across the country. I will focus mostly on The Kane Show's *War of the Roses*, as this show is aired nationally and is the local show for Tampa, FL. I will also examine two alternate versions of the show; one that airs in Minneapolis, MN and one that airs in Los Angeles, CA. Each version of the show follows the same basic construction in order to perform the ritual.

The premise of the show is, as Kane says in the extract above, to “[test] cheaters to see if they are doing anything on the side.” That is, someone contacts the radio show through an online form to explain why she or he suspects the partner of cheating. At the start of the radio show, the person explains the situation and answers the DJ’s questions concerning their relationship. Once the DJ has decided the information presented justifies a call, he or an assistant host calls the suspected cheating partner, during which the caller is instructed to remain quiet.

In the phone call, the radio staff (the DJ or his assistant host) enact the ruse of calling from a flower shop and offer the partner free roses in order to test their product as a marketing campaign. The suspected cheater is instructed to provide a name and then a message for the card to accompany the flowers. The suspected cheater then provides a name other than the caller, accompanied by a romantic message, and the original caller then bursts into the call demanding answers.

In almost every show, it happens as described above; nevertheless, in one show I heard, the caller was the person named. However, the message that the caller’s boyfriend then gave on the card was “this is the last thing you will ever get from me” and in the ensuing drama of the ritual performance, he eventually admits that he has been cheating on her.

Throughout all of this, the DJ and his assistant host act as a moral arbiters and mediators in order to advance morality judgments about an activity defined

as “cheating” and to voice the perspective of the present, yet silent and imaginably compliant, listeners.

I examine *War of the Roses* as a ritual that reinforces the unsaid moral order. I view the radio texts as evidence of a media drama that embodies key elements of “degradation ceremonies” as described by Garfinkel. The process of exposing the presumably private indiscretions of infidelity and invoking the public moral judgment involves a change of status of the publically held identity of the transgressor. The sequence must involve convincing the individual that the objectively held facts of his behavior are known and in violation of public morality, and that his status has been changed to that of “cheater.” The steps of degradation involved are therefore discursively interesting. In addition, the embodied social ritual of shaming in these episodes reflects Goffman’s (1956, 1967, 1971) analysis of “embarrassment” as key to social organization. The colliding worlds of public and private, between individual performance and social convention reveal the mechanisms whereby social organization is objectified and maintained through specific acts of regulation of individual behaviors.

*War of the Roses* is ultimately a means of ritualistically shaming and redressing individuals whose actions are perceived as morally wrong. The analysis of the discourse examines the construction of morality within the radio program, especially as the moral order allows for the actions of public shaming and redress. In the chapter, I analyze how the work that is done in *War of the Roses* to reinforce the societal moral order.

As well, I analyze how the ritual drama is a scripted performance that occurs along gender lines. Specifically, I show how different discursive roles are assigned to different genders, with an expectation that the role will always be that gender, and additional accounts must be made for deviation from the gendered expectations. Additionally, the show is a speech event that creates and frames someone as a cheater, a label that continues to affect him/her after the fact. The newly labeled cheater can make counter-claims and argue against the new category in which he or she has been placed, yet these claims do not work. One way this is seen is when the cheater argues that the radio is an inappropriate place to be discussing this information, but the original moral breach made by this person by cheating outweighs that argument. As cheater, a speaker lacks the discursive resources to reframe his social status or to disengage from the ritual prior to experiencing the public shame and degradation that accompanies the ritual.

\* \* \*

This study expands upon current research on ritual as a form of talk in interaction, radio talk, and morality as an everyday accomplishment. This research is needed to better understand modern day rituals of morality and public shaming in everyday life. This thesis will analyze the work that is done in *War of the Roses* to reinforce the societal moral order.

Having described the radio show *War of the Roses*, I have introduced the research issues for this thesis in broad terms. Chapter One will expand upon

these research issues in a literature review. The literature will explore academic work on ritual, employing the scholarship of Erving Goffman, Victor Turner, Harold Garfinkel, and others. To expand upon the type of ritual work seen in *War of the Roses*, there will be a focus on the construction of morality, specifically as that involves rituals of redress and public shaming. The chapter will also survey literature on radio and media talk in order to develop a deeper understanding in how my research on *War of the Roses* fits within a broader academic perspective.

As Harvey Sacks (1992) noted, "from close looking at the world, you can find things that we couldn't, by imagination, assert were there." In the following chapter, Chapter Two, I will discuss the data that I will draw from the broader corpus of *War of the Roses* radio shows. The chapter will also review my chosen methods of discourse analysis, which is a qualitative approach to talk in interaction, and membership categorization analysis (MCA). Discourse analysis expands from the conversation analysis (CA) perspective to examine the micro work that language does while examining how the micro level reflects upon the larger scope of the macro issues of social order, such as differential access to power. MCA and CA both developed from an ethnomethodological perspective, although they developed largely independent of each other. Elizabeth Stokoe (2003) discusses how Sacks developed MCA "to explicate the rules people draw upon in the course of talking together and going about their everyday lives" (p. 321). MCA focuses around how categories are linked to particular actions and

the members of these categories “do descriptions, make claims, organize social relations, and other aspects of the micropolitics of everyday life.” (Baker 2000, p. 99). This chapter will clearly discuss the intended methodology on the data and how the analysis will be performed.

As analytical chapters, Chapters Three and Four analyze the discourse dynamics of *War of the Roses* as a ritual. Chapter Three examines the different roles within the radio show and the initial steps of the show. In this chapter, I analyze the gendered expectations of the ritual roles. Within the *War of the Roses*, there is an assumed script which the ritual follows. This performance happens along gender lines, which reflects cultural expectations. There are multiple roles within the radio show *War of the Roses* and each role has a certain gender assigned to it. It is possible to see expectations of how genders act and perform through close examination of the ritual. It is also possible to see what the unspoken expectations are when the role shifts, as extra work must be done in order to account for the change. The focus of this chapter is to show how morality is linked to gender categories. This chapter also analyzes the initial phases of the *War of the Roses* and examines how the ritual moves into what Turner defines as a liminal space.

In Chapter Four, I further examine the steps of the ritual. In both chapters, I look at how *War of the Roses* is a ritual that constructs morality. In order to do this, I examine the construction of morality within *War of the Roses*, especially as it involves factors of public shaming and redress. I also consider

how the DJ of the radio program acts as a moral arbiter within the ritual. *War of the Roses* is a scene for moral adjudication, which is largely done due to the role of the DJ as a moderator of the ritual. Also in this chapter, I analyze how claims of appropriateness are dealt with in terms of the public nature of radio, as well how these claims are dealt with by the arbiter. I also analyze how the elements of redress and public shaming create a status degradation ceremony.

In Chapter Five, the conclusion of my thesis, I highlight how modern day morality rituals are enacted in our culture. In the conclusion, I review the central arguments and concepts within the thesis.

## Chapter One

### A Literature Review

In studying the radio show *War of the Roses* as a modern day ritual of morality, involving public shaming and redress, I investigate how the social dynamic of ritual works. In this literature review, I focus on different intersecting sections as a framework for my analysis: Ritual interaction, morality, accounts and accounting, and radio talk. Generally speaking, a ritual follows a prescribed set of actions. While individual participants may change in particular rituals, a type of ritual creates parallel meanings. In speaking of *War of the Roses* as a performance of morality as defined by Goffman as a set of moral rules and norms that are conformed to within a culture and the accounts that are necessary to repair breaches to these rules. The ritual and the accounts it precludes itself reflects the morality norms within a society, as seen in the *War of the Roses*.

#### Ritual Interaction

Erving Goffman is known for examining face-to-face interaction as a reflection of social order and as interactional ritual. Goffman (1963) discusses accountability as a moral notion. Therefore behavior in public is social order, "the consequence of any set of moral norms that regulate the way in which persons pursue objectives" (p. 8). This is "the constant awareness, present,

past, and future of how others observe us" (Bartesaghi, 2005). The social order explains "why the individual acted as he did, how he could have acted, how he should have acted, and how in the future he out to act" (Goffman 1971, p. 99). The set of norms does not specify the objectives the participants are to seek, nor the pattern formed by and through the coordination or integration of these ends, but merely the modes of seeking them" (p. 8). From Goffman's perspective, the social order and a moral code are intrinsically related. Goffman observes that people are motivated to maintain the moral norms of the social order in order to protect their self-image.

In his book of essays, *Interactional Ritual*, Goffman (1967) looks at face-to-face interaction as it applies to a behavior order in social interaction. Goffman approaches human interaction from the perspective that all forms of interaction are performance, just as interaction is a type of ritual. Goffman argues that there is a behavioral order to how people interact. In the first essay, Goffman discusses face-work as the strategies done to maintain face as "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself" and "an image of self delineated in terms of approved social attributes" (p. 5). As Goffman argues, face is a social value, but it is one that can always be withdrawn, especially when one has acted against the unspoken rules of society.

The desire to save face is instrumental in examining how people act towards each other. The process by which people are able to save face is done cooperatively, even when it is done aggressively. "In aggressive interchanges

the winner not only succeeds in introducing information favorable to himself and unfavorable to others, but also demonstrates that as interactant he can handle himself better than his adversaries" (p. 25). Here, Goffman presents a notion of adversarial interaction and the result of such an interaction. The cooperative aspect of interaction is a way that the social order is maintained. This concept can easily be confused and mistaken to think that a cooperative interchange means a positive interaction. While this certainly can be true, not all interchanges are collaborative efforts, such is the case with face threats. Regardless, interaction occurs cooperatively as orderliness is necessary for power to occur. Everyone must participate; nonetheless, it is important to note that orderly does not mean that everyone is equal or that the interchange is symmetrical. Talk in interaction is inherently asymmetrical and the discourse reflects the positioning done by speakers.

The *War of the Roses* is one such example that shows aggressive interactional work in order to maintain social order. The radio program, once the deception of the show has been revealed, becomes an aggressive interaction where both the caller and his or her partner are intent upon showing that their face claims are more worthy. Ultimately, the DJ of the show, as a moral arbiter, is able to make judgments about the participant's face claims.

Goffman also looks at how "the ritual code itself requires a delicate balance" (p. 40). A person who doesn't care for saving face anymore "comes to be a real threat to society," which is where the performance of redress and

public shaming come in to eliminate the threat (p. 40). The social fabric of a culture is precious, so interaction is both cooperative and adversarial. Goffman expands upon Durkheim's work on positive and negative rites by studying deference and demeanor as an aspect of how interactional ritual is done.

Goffman also discusses rules as they affect interaction:

In all societies, rules of conduct tend to be organized into codes which guarantee that everyone acts appropriately and receives his due. In our society the code which governs ceremonial rules and substantive expressions comprises our law, morality, and ethics, while the code which governs ceremonial rules is incorporated in what we call etiquette. (p. 55)

Informal (ceremonial) and asymmetric rules are useful in considering *War of the Roses*, as these rules affect the unspoken morality code of our society.

Goffman (1956) also studied how embarrassment affected social organization. In looking at embarrassment, Goffman (1956) was interested in investigating who is made the target of embarrassment. He argues that embarrassment can be felt by all people in the interaction, not just one individual, which is why people do work in order avoid embarrassment in the interaction. He writes, "The pleasure or displeasure a social encounter affords an individual, and the affection or hostility he feels for the participants, can have more than one relation to his composure or lack of it" (p. 266). Goffman (1956) also discusses how positive and negative displays can affect how one is able to deal with embarrassment, "compliments, acclaim, and sudden reward may throw the recipient into a state of joyful confusion, while a heated quarrel can be provoked and sustained, although the individual feels composed and in full

command of himself." (p. 266) Within the radio show *War of the Roses*, participants might feel embarrassment, but are most likely more focused on saving face and making claims to justify their actions.

Goffman ties morality to various works on ritual and interaction. In looking at embarrassment, Goffman (1956) says that "to appear flustered, in our society at least, is considered evidence of weakness, inferiority, low status, moral guilt, defeat, and other unenviable attributes" (p. 266). Participants in the radio show who have been judged on a moral front tend to feel embarrassment from being redressed and shamed in public. Goffman (1956) also looks at how embarrassment relates to how people know they ought to have acted in certain situations but have not:

The expectations relevant to embarrassment are moral, but embarrassment does not arise from the breach of *any* moral expectation, for some infractions give rise to resolute moral indignation and no uneasiness at all. Rather we should look to those moral obligations which surround the individual in only one of his capacities, that of someone who carries on social encounters. The individual, of course, is obliged to remain composed, but this tells us that thing is going well, not why. And things go well or badly because of what is perceived about the social identities of those present. (p. 268)

From Goffman's perspective, it is important to understand the perception in order to fully grasp how people react to embarrassment and social judgments.

Different people react to feelings of embarrassment in a diverse manner; some people might have a strong physical reaction that displays embarrassment, some may remain completely composed, and others still may respond by trying to push that embarrassment back on another person within the interaction.

Examining how the participants orient towards one another as a result of the embarrassment reveals important information about the hierarchy within the ritual.

In studying interaction rituals, it is essential to understand how these rituals relate and affect the public order (as well as how a public setting affects the rituals.) Goffman (1971) argues that there is a constant structure to social interaction, where encounters are affected by rules. "There are rules for taking and terminating a turn at talking... there is an etiquette for initiating an encounter and bringing it to an end. Here, we can speak of an individual conducting himself properly or improperly, this time relative to encounters" (p. 3-4). In the radio show *War of the Roses*, looking at unspoken rules concerning encounters and talk will be particularly helpful in considering how participants follow societal rules. Goffman discusses how talk is dependent on social codes and rituals around politeness, etiquette and privacy and communication often carries levels of subtext.

In *Relations in Public*, Goffman (1971) argues that ritual is a supportive interchange; "a perfunctory, conventionalized act through which an individual portrays his respect and regard" for some object or concept of value (p. 62). Goffman argues that in our contemporary culture, the rituals that remain are interpersonal ones that act as supportive and remedial interchanges. Goffman also examines how rituals in public employ aspects of social control. "The individual has the option of adhering to the rules or concealing violation and if he

does neither, he will be plucked out of his situation and made to pay the consequence" (p. 105). Thus the radio program acts as a form of control, in order to make cheaters feel the consequences of their negative acts.

Talk is both dependent upon and constitutive of social codes and conventions. Talk has many levels of subtext and examining talk can provide vital information on understanding these unspoken social rules. Goffman (1981) uses ritual as a way of understanding allowable actions and behaviors. For this purpose, he constructs a simple and basic model of ritual for purposes of analysis:

1. An act is taken to carry implications regarding the character of the actor and his evaluation of his listeners, as well as reflecting on the relationship between him and them.
2. Potentially offensive acts can be remedied by the actor through accounts and apologies, but this remedial work must appear to be accepted as sufficient by the potentially offended party before the work can properly be terminated.
3. Offended parties are generally obliged to induce a remedy if none is otherwise forthcoming or in some other way show that an unacceptable state of affairs has been created, else, in addition to what has been conveyed to them, they can be seen as submissive regarding others' lapses in maintaining the ritual code. (p. 21)

Goffman sets up this ritual model as a very simple model, yet it is highly applicable in examining the dynamic I analyze in this work. In the first step, an act made by the speaker makes implications about that individual's character. Next, possibly offensive actions can be ameliorated with apologies, if the offended party views it as an acceptable account. Finally, if the offensive action

was not suitably addressed, then the offended party enacts some form of redress in order to repair the situation.

Another scholar whose work is important in understanding the ritual performances and their constitution reflection of cultural values is Victor Turner. In *The Ritual Process* (1969), Turner explores the ritual actions of other cultures as a way of understanding how ritual manifests itself in American culture.

Turner completed over two years of field work studying the Ndembu of northwestern Zambia, which is where he developed his perspective on ritual and its place in culture. In observing the Ndembu, he focused his attention on rites of passages, such as the male coming of age ritual, and conflict rituals. In his anthropological work, he studied social conflict and drama as a device to examine the cultural structure. Turner (1969, p. 7) argues that:

Rituals reveal values at their deepest level. Men express in ritual what moves them most, and since the form of expression is conventionalized and obligatory, it is the values of the group that are revealed. I see in the study of rituals the key to an understanding of the essential constitution of human society. (p. 7)

In studying ritual, it is possible to discern information about society, as the actions that occur within a ritual are a reflection upon that culture. I intend to argue that the *War of the Roses* radio program reveals cultural values and morals.

Turner (1969) sees ritual as existing within a liminal space, where activities take on new and special meanings outside the realm of everyday life. Turner describes liminality as follows "liminal entities are neither here nor there;

they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremony" (p. 95). A liminal space is one that exists on the threshold of everyday life. The interesting thing about the way that Turner discusses ritual as existing within a liminal space is that objects take on special meanings within the context of ritual, yet these meanings are still representative of items in everyday life. Turner argues that rituals and rites of passages lead to the development of interpersonal relationships and that this bonding is a root of societal values, meanings, and function.

In *The Anthropology of Performance*, Turner (1987) expands upon his earlier work on ritual and examines ritual as performance. In particular, Turner (1987) focuses on developing his idea of the ritual as social drama as "a sequence of social interactions of a conflictive, competitive, or agonistic type" (p. 33). Turner argues that the social drama is a cultural performance and ritual that can act as a framework for understanding contextualized behaviors, as the culture provides a space to allow for symbolic enactment.

Turner delineates the four different stages of a social drama as a breach, crisis, redress, and reintegration or schism. Social drama starts when a person causes a breach by breaking a rule, one that involves some level of maintenance for the group or society. Turner (1981) argues that the dramatic breach, which can be of social norm, law, custom, or etiquette, must happen within a public arena and can be seen as the "expression of a deeper division of interests and loyalties than appears on the surface" (p. 146). The next step of a social drama

is the crisis, which involves sides being taken for or against the rule breaker. The rule breaker must then deal with redressive action, which is the most reflexive phrase of the social drama. As Turner (1987) states, "the community, acting through its representatives, bends, even throws itself back upon itself, to measure what some of its members have done, and how they have conducted themselves with reference to its own standards" (p. 34). The redress stage can involve violence, but ultimately is focused on enacting formal or informal repairs for the initial breach. The final phase is when the repairs are judged to have worked or failed. If the repairs work, society reintegrates the rule breaker, but if the repairs are a failure, then the group falls apart and there is an irreparable schism between the groups.

Turner's work on social drama is very applicable to the radio show *War of the Roses*. Turner argues that social drama is a cultural performance, and as such, it provides valuable insight into an understanding of the culture. Turner (1987) discusses the cultural performance as a mirror, but one that is more of a funhouse carnival mirror than a simple bathroom mirror. He contends social dramas, as a means of cultural performance, are "magical mirrors of social reality: they exaggerate, invert, re-form, magnify, minimize, dis-color, and re-color" events (p. 42). Turner (1981) says that ritual acts are "prescribed formal behavior for occasions not given over to technological routine" and that social drama is an originating structure for many cultural performances (p. 155). The social drama provides a way for analysis to show deeper information about the

modern culture. The radio show *War of the Roses* acts as a social drama that provides insight into the unspoken societal rules and the moral ideal.

In "Conditions of Successful Degradation Ceremonies," Harold Garfinkel (1956) discusses moral indignation and the concept of redress as a status degradation ceremony, that is "any communicative work between persons, whereby the public identity of an actor is transformed into something looked on as lower in the local scheme of social types" (p. 420). He argues that this type of ceremony involves moral indignation, in that it can affect shame or guilt, but the paradigm that takes the ritual from feelings of embarrassment and shame to moral indignation is due to the public denouncement of the person. "Moral indignation serves to effect the ritual destruction of the person denounced. Unlike shame, which does not bind persons together, moral indignation may reinforce group solidarity" (p. 421). This aspect of the degradation ceremony is one that ties the different roles in the ritual together, against the rule breaker, who is being punished for their socially unacceptable action. Garfinkel argues that "the other person becomes in the eyes of his condemners literally a different and *new* person...He is not changed, he is reconstituted" (p. 421). In the radio show, the presumed cheater (once the ritual has confirmed him or her as a cheater) is degraded to a new, lower status person for the public listening and is transformed accordingly.

Garfinkel (1956) outlines eight steps for a successful degradation ceremony, which includes the denouncer (person or group denouncing),

perpetrator (person being denounced) and event (the thing being blamed on the perpetrator). 1) The ceremony must be removed from everyday actions into a liminal space; 2) The denouncers should show a preference for a type of socially preferred event over the event that occurred; 3) The ceremony must take place in public where the denouncer is publically known, just as the perpetrator is publicly known; 4) The denouncer should make the values and morals of the culture known in delivering the denouncement; 5) The denouncer must be able to speak in the name of the values and morals of that culture and should not involve personal interests in delivering the denouncement; 6) The denouncer must have the support of the public witnesses as one adherent to those values; 7) The denouncer and the witnesses should separate themselves from the perpetrator after the ceremony; and 8) The perpetrator must be made separate and no longer able to hold a legitimate place in the social order. The radio show *War of the Roses* acts as a social degradation ceremony in order to denounce a suspected cheater and the DJ, as the moral arbiter of the show and the denouncer, is able to deliver that pronouncement in a public arena.

## **Morality**

In order to understand how the *War of the Roses* radio program works not only as a ritual, but a ritual of morality that is enacted through talk, I will examine how morality is discursively constructed. Jörg Bergmann (1998) argues that there are two levels of morality in discourse: the moral order of interaction and the moral order in interaction. The second perspective “pursues how moral

concerns become relevant in and through the social organization of interaction” (p. 279). As Bergmann discusses, the relationship between morality and discourse in scholarly work is not a new one, but one that has existed for centuries. Bergman contends that “morality is such a common and intrinsic quality of everyday social interaction that it is usually invisible to us, like glasses that provide a sharp sight of the area beyond although they themselves remain unseen. When talking about other people it is hardly possible to avoid expressions that do not somehow or other carry moral meaning” (p. 280). Bergmann examines how morality in talk is a pervasive aspect of everyday life. Studying the moral accounts that are made in everyday talk provides insight into the valued morality of modern culture.

### **Accounts and Accounting**

Focusing on familial discourse and everyday interaction in order to shed light on how morality is enacted and transformed in interpersonal communication, Laura Sterponi (2003) connects morality, discourse, and accounts. She examines morality as a set of “general and decontextualized principles, which orient both individuals’ own conduct and the interpretations of others’ conduct” (p. 79). Sterponi argues that the accounts made by family members can provide insight into how morality is enacted. The moral accounts made reflect the moral order and how people position themselves as moral actors.

In their article "Accounts," Marvin B. Scott and Stanford M. Lyman (1968) define an account as "a linguistic device employed whenever an action is subjected to evaluative inquiry" and as "a statement made by a social actor to explain unanticipated or untoward behavior" (p. 46). They distinguish two types of accounts: excuses and justifications. Scott and Lyman (1968) define justifications as "accounts in which one accepts responsibility for the act in question, but denies the pejorative quality associated with it" (p. 47). Justifications are accounts that are made in an attempt to explain away potential negative aspects of an action, as the action was made for positive or moral reasons. Scott and Lyman (1968) define excuses as "accounts in which one admits that the act in question is bad, wrong, or inappropriate but denies full responsibility" (p. 47). Accounts are constantly made in discourse and can also appear as moral accounting. Moral accounting involves the same justifications and excuses, but ones that are made to show that the person is doing what they should be doing in accordance with the morals of the culture.

### **Radio talk**

Conversation analyst Ian Hutchby (1996) focuses on how arguments in British talk radio shows provide an account for power interaction. He argues that power is produced in talk based on how the participants orient to it. Conversation is a cooperative act, as previously discussed, and each participant plays a part in enacting this dynamic. Examining the talk in an interaction can show the participant orientation, which in turn shows a power dynamic. For

example, if a participant is allowed to interrupt others and take extended turns of talk without being interrupted, it can show that the others are orienting towards that speaker as a person with higher power within the social order.

Hutchby (1996) argues that “the very ways in which participants design their interaction can have the effect of placing them in a relationship where discourse strategies of greater or lesser power are differentially available to each of them” (p. 521). He shows that power can be seen as an ‘emergent feature’ in discourse as a result of how participants orient to one another. He is particularly interested in how the dialogue in talk radio conflicts can be asymmetrical. Hutchby points out that radio talk is an institutional frame, and there are verbal patterns and resources that are used in radio talk that are a part of the institutional setting.

One area that Hutchby is particularly interested in is examining the power dynamics and asymmetries in the positions of talk. While I am not interested in contributing to the continual conversation on power in the academy, I am interested in looking at the asymmetries of talk and find his work applicable and relevant in that aspect. Hutchby examines the power differences apparent between the positions of talk. While a radio show might have an agenda, this agenda is not fixed and the agenda is established through the interaction between the host and the caller. Hutchby (1996) recognizes, “The very fact that introducing an agenda is the caller’s prerogative on talk radio leads to a situation in which the argumentative initiative can rest with the host and the caller can

relatively easily be put on the defense" (p. 522). He says that this outcome is due to the sequential manner of arguments and institutional organization of talk radio. Because talk radio has the caller initiate the interaction with their position, the radio deejay has the initial opportunity to oppose the statement. This initial opposition stance gives the host a powerful resource within an argument.

"Going first means having to set your opinion on the line, whereas going second means being able to argue merely by challenging your opponent to expand on or account for his or her claims" (p. 523). Due to the positioning, the radio host merely has to undermine the caller's ability or standing to make claims.

However, the first and second speaker positions of talk are not a steadfast positioning. A caller may find himself or herself with the opportunity to move into the second position. This switch in positioning depends on whether or not the radio host releases their second position and expresses a new opinion. The caller then is able to challenge the host. The second position of talk can become a struggle in discourse if both the caller and the host are vying for the spot.

Hutchby (1996) also evaluates the area of agenda-setting, and defining the boundaries of a dispute in radio talk. As the beginning speaker, the caller's first role is to set the initial agenda as the first speaker. The radio host is then able to contest the caller and establish control of the agenda. One way he or she does this is by "selectively formulating the gist or upshot of the caller's remarks" (p. 525). While summarizing the previous speaker's talk is rare in conversation, it is a common aspect of institutional settings. This allows the host

to arrange the talk in the manner in which suits their own agenda. Hutchby's work on radio and discourse is useful in developing my own analysis on radio talk.

\* \* \*

In this chapter, I have discussed work on ritual, morality, and accounts in order to tie it to talk and radio. The *War of the Roses* is a cultural performance of morality and shaming. In this literature review, I have reviewed relevant literature on ritual, morality, discourse, and degradation. In the following chapters of this thesis, I will use these works in order to analyze the *War of the Roses* radio program as a ritual that enacts themes of gender, morality, and redress. While this radio program creates a liminal space, it does not exist within a vacuum and does in fact reflect cultural rules and norms that provide deeper information about the society. As a liminal space, this ritual is able to enact status degradation and a re-categorization of some participants' roles.

## Chapter Two

### Data and Methodology

In this thesis, I utilize data collected from the *War of the Roses* radio show. In this chapter, I will discuss my method of discourse analysis (DA), an inductive method that connects talk to interaction to a broader context of social life. I also use membership categorization analysis (MCA), which was developed from ethnomethodology. Discourse analysis involves closely reading and interpreting what talk is doing. Talk is a social action; talk accomplishes things that are consequential beyond the talk itself. Both discourse analysis, through conversation analysis (CA), and membership categorization analysis expand from ethnomethodology, which was developed by Harold Garfinkel. Discourse analysis goes beyond purely analyzing the transcript to make inferences about the social consequences of talk and examines the work that language does within a social context. This perspective allows the analyst to make interpretations about the social order and the consequentiality of talk beyond the transcript itself. Membership categorization analysis also expands from ethnomethodology.

#### **The *War of the Roses***

I collected the audio of eight different *War of the Roses* radio show segments in order to perform the analysis for this thesis. The radio data sets are in the public domain, as after the clip has been broadcast on the radio, it is then

uploaded to the websites of the different radio shows and available to listeners as a podcast.

In order to analyze the data, I transcribed the radio shows at an intermediate level of detail. (See Appendix A for an explanation of the symbols.) The transcription model in my research is a modified version of transcription notation established for CA by Sacks, Schlegoff & Jefferson (1974) in that it emphasizes how utterances work sequentially and in orderly fashion, therefore making it possible for the analyst to explicate how claims are sustained and contested. I choose to utilize an intermediate level of detail for my transcripts in order to include vocalizations, disfluencies, pauses, overlaps of talk, volume, and emphasis on words or parts of a word. I used this level of transcription notation as it will provide the necessary level of detail for my analysis of extracts of interaction from the *War of the Roses*. My goal with transcribing the data was to provide an accurate and authentic representation for the reader as to how the radio show itself sounds.

The audio clips for the three different versions of *War of the Roses* were available online, which made my work in collecting data very simple. I collected audio clips and randomly chose (by convenience) the specific shows to transcribe. There are three different versions of the *War of the Roses* radio show that I collected audio clips from. The first is The Kane Show's *War of the Roses*. The Kane Show plays on eight different stations across the country, including the local 93.3 FLZ Tampa station, as well as on XM radio. Potential

callers for this *War of the Roses* fill out a submission form on line with their name and contact information, his name and phone number, and the story and reasons that he or she wants to do a Roses on his or her partner. The Kane Show typically airs in the late afternoon and early evening and the *War of the Roses* segment plays during five o'clock rush hour. In the last year, The Kane Show has moved from doing one segment of *War of the Roses* a week to playing two a week. Five data sets were selected from this particular version of *War of the Roses*.

The next version of *War of the Roses* that I will analyze is The Dave Ryan Show's *War of the Roses*. The Dave Ryan Show plays in the Twin Cities area of Minnesota and airs in the morning. The Dave Ryan Show has moved from having two *War of the Roses* segments a week to playing five a week, one every week day. As with The Kane Show, potential callers can submit an online form, which provides each partner's names, age, and phone numbers. The registration form asks the respondent, "do you suspect that your man/woman might be cheating on you?" While it initially includes both genders in asking the respondent about cheating, at the end of the form, they ask for detailed information on the "reason to test your man." The form itself provides some interesting insight into the gendered aspect of the show and the assumption that females will be contacting them about their boyfriends and husbands. One data set was chosen from The Dave Ryan Show's *War of the Roses*.

The final version of *War of the Roses* is Ryan's Roses, which airs on the radio show On Air with Ryan Seacrest. While Ryan Seacrest has a radio show that plays in multiple cities, including on the same Tampa station where The Kane Show's *War of the Roses* segment plays, the Ryan's Roses segment is only played on the Los Angeles station. Potential callers for the Ryan's Roses segment can email the station with information in order to provide details on why they want to call their partner on the show. Two data sets were selected from Ryan's Roses for analysis.

The basic format of the ritual in the radio show *War of the Roses* is that the radio staff will set up a ruse to test a caller's partner to see if he or she is cheating. Before the program starts, a caller contacts the show (generally online) to justify why he or she wants to test his or her significant other. During the show, the caller publicly accounts for the DJ and the audience why he or she needs a *War of the Roses* performed. The DJ accepts the account as a justification, and performs the deception of offering the caller's partner free roses to the person of their choice. When the suspected cheater provides a name, generally not the name of the caller, then the caller bursts in to start the redress and shaming aspect of the ritual. The DJ and his assistant host make their own judgments and justifications to the accounts provided by the caller and the partner.

Though that is the basic format of the show, there are differences which occur from show to show in the set up and performances of the ritual. The ruse

to offer roses in The Kane Show's *War of the Roses* and in Ryan's Roses involves calling the suspected cheater to congratulate them for winning free roses from a flower shop as a part of a guerilla marketing campaign; whereas The Dave Ryan Show says that they are completing a customer satisfaction survey from their cell phone provider and roses are offered as a complimentary gift for completing the survey. At times, the ruse has nothing to do with offering roses and involves something specific to the situation described by caller about why he or she suspects his or her partner of cheating. In The Kane Show version of *The War of the Roses*, Kane is generally the person who makes the phone call to the partner. Kane only abstains from making the phone call when he is sick or if a specific situation without the ruse of roses calls for a female voice over a male voice. This stands in opposition to The Dave Ryan Show's version and Ryan's Roses, where the female assistant host makes the phone call, but with explicit instructions and guidance from the DJ.

Another difference between the different versions of *War of the Roses* is that The Dave Ryan Show creates a longer dialogue in discussing the reasons that the caller suspects his or her partner, which results in talking so much longer there is a mid-call commercial break. The Kane Show's version and Ryan's Roses generally start with the DJ introducing the show by explaining the information they received prior to the show, with the caller confirming that information. At times, Kane does create more of a dialogue with the caller, but it normally is done as a method of justification for doing a trap other than offering

roses. Regardless of the variations between the different versions of *War of the Roses*, each version still enacts the same patterns and performs the ritual. Within all of the versions, the moral order of contemporary culture is reinforced through public shaming and redress. In my analysis, I will show how the discourse performs these actions and enacts gendered expectations for the different roles within the ritual.

### **Discourse Analysis**

In establishing discourse analysis as my methodology for this thesis, it is important that I make it explicitly clear what I mean by this, as discourse is a term that has more than one meaning and crosses disciplinary boundaries. First, discourse is discussed as both theory (“big ‘D’” discourse), which includes theoretical and institutional narratives, and as methodology (“little ‘d’” discourse), which is how talk appears in interaction (Gee, 1999). Discourse analysis can also lead to confusion as some scholars see it as an umbrella term to also include conversational analysis.

I intend to utilize discourse analysis as communication scholars Tracy and Mirivel (2009) discuss it by “studying units of language larger than a single sentence or studying pragmatic uses of language rather than the syntactic, semantic, or phonological structures that distinguish discourse analysts from other linguists” (p. 154). The claims of conversational analysis emerge from the turn taking structure of talk and consider context its endogenous feature,

whereas discourse analysis is informed by placement of utterances, while also making an argument about the larger context in which utterances are developed.

By using discourse analysis, I will examine how talk is social action and a window for analyzing a broader set of social practices. Discourse is embodied and material; by examining talk practices, it is possible to see how people perform social life. Analyzing specific utterances of talk through discourse analysis is a way to understand how social life is socially constructed. My reason for using discourse analysis as my method is to “closely look” at talk and communication, to understand the creation of a social order that reflects ideals of morality. Discourse analysis borrows from conversation analysis and ethnomethodology, which was developed by Garfinkel. Ethnomethodology examines how the social world is done, which is an aspect that has continued into the method of discourse analysis.

### **Membership Categorization Analysis**

The other methodology that I will utilize in this thesis is membership categorization analysis (MCA). Harvey Sacks (1972) developed the concept of category work, which is the process of fitting people into membership categorization, or a specific social scheme, and was developed from ethnomethodological work. In his work, Sacks asks what goes with what, specifically what social categories are connected with what activities. In MCA, Sacks develops a method of analysis where the primary focus is understanding assumed social categories. The simple act of putting someone in a particular

category changes how others will behave around him or her. A membership category is a form of speech act, which is to say that one actually changes reality through talk and changes the status of social life. By placing someone in a category, one changes their social status and their entire social structure. I claim that discourse is an outlet for signifying membership categories and for understanding the social order.

In "On the Analyzability of Stories by Children," Sacks (1972) explains the phenomenon through the example of "The baby cried. The mommy picked it up." (p. 216). Listeners make inferences based off of the information that is available to them. Through those sentences, there is no way of knowing whether the mommy who picks up the baby is picking up her child or another's, but it is assumed that a mom is picking up her own child and that they are a part of the same family. These sentences show how categories do descriptions. Categories are smaller things which show the values attached to an idea or concept. In the example above, there are certain ideas attached to the category of mother, such as when her baby cries, she will pick it up, and if the mother fits within the category of 'good' mother, she will also comfort and provide for the baby.

Through membership categorization analysis, I am able to examine the values attached to different ideas and labels within *War of the Roses*. Sacks (1972) also discusses the concept of a membership categorization device (MCD). A membership categorization device is a membership category plus the rules of

application for that particular category; categories can be explicit or implicit. One example of a MCD is gender and within it, the categories of male and female. There are certain ideas and concepts that are tied to these categories, and each category contains its own expectations. Cultural meanings are embedded with description.

Following Sacks' work in MCA, Carolyn Baker expands upon how categories make up a culture. In *Locating culture in action: membership categorization in texts and talk*, Baker (2000) argues that culture is located inside of the actions of its participants. Culture is constantly renegotiated discursively and talk locks the categories into place. Baker discusses how membership categorization is accomplished in talk. One of the main points that Baker makes is that membership categorization is that it "addresses how people 'do' descriptions and how they recognize descriptions" (p. 100). People are involved and constrained by the membership categorizations that reflexively inhibit and contain. Baker uses the membership category device, which looks at categories and rules in application. A membership category device invokes a certain social order. This social order isn't pre-existing, but something that is constantly being worked and negotiated. A central purpose in Baker's work is to look at how category work in interaction is able to reveal information concerning power and positioning. Baker's theoretical perspective contributes to how I view discourse; I claim that talk locks a discourse and a category into place.

Due to how the *War of the Roses* program is staged, it is possible to consider the MCA scholarship done on interviews and make connections to radio talk. The interview is a unique situation that creates set categories for the roles of interviewer and interviewee. There is a parallel to the roles created within a radio show, especially a ritualized radio show such as *War of the Roses*. Both the interviewer and the respondent utilize membership categorization devices in the interview. Kathy Roulston (2001) describes the interview as “socially situated occasion in which the interviewer and respondent interactively produce descriptions and accounts” (p. 101). The descriptions and accounts that are produced within an interview are on the record and defining the categories. This type of discourse has the interviewer and interviewee very concerned with making the right claims and not making a mistake, because it is on the record. The interview is locking a discourse on how to interpret these categories within a social world. Baker (2000) also discusses interviews and says that the interview creates a site for the recreation of social order and reflects social beliefs. Through the interview, the interviewer and interviewee are engaging in social categories.

While looking at how the ritual of shaming and redress is enacted in radio talk, I am also interested in analyzing how the different roles of the participants reflected gendered expectations of the culture. I will examine whether gender is relevant to the interactional dynamic of the ritual. Also, in examining the participants' roles, I am also interested in how these roles create membership

categories, such as the DJ acting as a moral arbiter, and how a category can change through the interaction of the radio ritual, such as the caller's partner's status being degraded and relabeled as cheater. The main purpose of my research is to determine whether the talk and interaction involved in the *War of the Roses* radio show creates a morality ritual of social redress and public shaming and to analyze the process through which this work is accomplished.

## Chapter Three

### *War of the Roses* as a Cultural Performance

The central focus of my study of the radio show *War of the Roses* focuses around the following question in particular: How does the radio show perform a ritual and adjudicate morality? I intend to argue that *War of the Roses* is a ritual that constructs morality, involving aspects of public shaming and redress. In order to do this, I must first examine how the ritual itself is performed, informed by the work on ritual by Turner, Goffman, and Garfinkel, among others.

Victor Turner (1987) argues that the ritual of a social drama is a type of cultural performance. I intend to focus on the *War of the Roses* ritual as Turner outlines a social drama as an organizational tool for the analysis. As Turner says, "rituals, dramas, and other performative genres are often orchestrations of media, not expressions in a single medium" (p. 23). The cultural drama or performance is one that is subjective to the current mood and values of a culture. Social dramas can be reflective (Turner, 1987) and communicate the content of the culture. Turner (1987) outlines four phases of a social drama (breach, crisis, redress, and reintegration or schism), which all occur within the radio show *War of the Roses*. However, within *War of the Roses*, there is an initial set-up step that happens before the breach, leading to a total of five phases.

This chapter will focus on the initialization of the ritual and the entrance into a liminal space. All participants have their own roles that they play within the social drama. I will examine what these roles are in order to determine what the gendered expectation is for the participant roles. I then intend to look at the preliminary step, which is an important step within the *War of the Roses* radio program. The set-up step is the phase with which enacting the ritual is justified. If the ritual is not accounted for, then there is no acceptable reason in order to publicly shame the suspected cheater. With the accounting for the necessity of the morality ritual within the preliminary phase, the suspected cheater has no grounds to attempt to reject the ritual later in the program. This phase initializes the ritual and introduces the different participants and establishes gender expectations within the ritual. After examining the set-up of the ritual, I will examine how this step genders participants.

Next, I will examine the first phase of Turner's (1981, 1987) social drama, which is the breach phase. A social and moral rule is broken in the breach phase. In this step, the deception is initiated by the DJ, the suspected cheater names someone other than the original caller, and the caller reacts to the breach. Turner (1969) argues that ritual exists within a liminal space, which allows the activities within the ritual to take on new and special meaning outside the realm of everyday life. It is within the breach phase that the *War of the Roses* radio show crosses a threshold into a liminal space and moves away from the everyday. The same social and moral expectations exist within the liminal

space; however the ability to create new meaning and re-categorize a participant's status happens within this new space.

### **Gendered Expectations of the Players**

All versions of the *War of the Roses* radio show have a set cast of characters that make up the ritual interchange. I am interested in examining how each of these character roles has a certain gender expectation that is reflected in the space of the ritual. The basic roles within the *War of the Roses* radio program is the radio DJ, the assistant radio host, the original caller, and the suspected cheater. All of these roles have a place in every version and enactment of the *War of the Roses* ritual. Additional characters might come into play, such as an additional radio staff member or a secondary caller as support to the original caller, but the *War of the Roses* ritual requires at a minimum the previously listed characters.

Each of these characters has a predetermined expectation of the gender of the participant who will perform the role. This can be seen by looking at who acts as the character, as in the large majority of the *War of the Roses* radio shows, the characters are played by the same gender participant. Additionally, in looking at what these gender expectations for the roles are and how players are oriented to in the ritual interaction, interesting information can be ascertained as to how the culture orients towards different genders. In the *War of the Roses* program, the radio DJ is always played by a male participant, while the assistant radio host is always a female participant. Each of the radio shows

that do a *War of the Roses* segment are set up this way. I am interested in examining how the interaction of these two participants reflects social gender norms.

In the large majority of the *War of the Roses* programs, the person who contacts the show is a female participant and the suspected cheater is a male participant. The following excerpt is the introductory voiceover (V) that starts the *War of the Roses* segment on the Kane Show. This excerpt provides useful information on the gendered and heteronormative expectations of the *War of the Roses*.

#### Extract 1

- 1 V: Roses are red (.) violets are blue (.) when Kane calls your
- 2 man, he'd better choose you.

Extract 1 clearly outlines the radio show as a gendered activity. It explicitly sets the expectation as to what the gender of the caller will be. Within this excerpt, it is possible to see the expectation that a female will call in, suspecting her boyfriend or husband of cheating on her. This extract also provides an idea as to what the female caller's character will be in the show, which is a passive role. From these two lines, it can be seen that the caller is not going to be the active leader in this interaction, as that is Kane's role. The caller is a silent female, whose role is to wait and listen to see if her boyfriend or husband chooses her. The caller is expected to speak up and actively denounce

her partner if he chooses not to send her the follows, but her character is not meant to take too active of a role in the interaction.

This speaks to what the category of females is in the culture as a whole, as this ritual interaction is a reflection of the culture. As Turner (1969) states, "rituals reveal values at their deepest level" (p. 7). Within the ritual interaction of the *War of the Roses* radio show, cultural values and morals are exposed. Within society, there is an presumption of heteronormativity. The *War of the Roses* radio program fits in with this assumption, as most, if not all, radio shows feature a male and female pairing. The expectation that the original caller is a female who is suspicious about the activity of her boyfriend or husband provides interesting information on the culture, especially when considered with the role of the radio DJ. Beyond this, the interaction shows that the category of female is constructed to be a silent authority.

This introduction to the Kane Show's version of the *War of the Roses* remains the same even on the rare occasion that there is a male caller who is suspicious of his girlfriend or wife. This introduction also says something about what Kane's role as the DJ will be as the moral arbiter. He will be the active person who is making the phone call, but also as the person who makes the phone call, he will be the person guiding the interaction of the show. Beyond the information seen in this excerpt, the DJ, as the moral arbiter, is also the person who will be making the final judgments in the ritual. The *War of the Roses* radio show not only enacts a cultural performance as outlined by Turner

(1987), but also incorporates a status degradation ceremony as discussed by Garfinkel (1956). In the status degradation ceremony, the DJ is responsible for taking on the role of the denouncer and degrading the social status of the suspected cheater, known as the perpetrator in this ceremony type. In terms of a moral hierarchy within the ritual, the DJ holds the highest position and the most active role.

As Turner (1969) discusses, ritual work exposes the values and morals of a culture. Within the *War of the Roses*, the cultural expectations on genders are revealed. The female caller is a mostly passive voice and does not outright challenge her boyfriend or husband until it has been confirmed that he is in fact cheating on her by sending the romantic roses to another woman. The Kane Show version of *War of the Roses* takes it further by having the male radio DJ directly call and challenge the presumed cheater. In the other versions of the radio program, the female assistant host will call the suspected cheater. Regardless of who makes the initial phone call, the male radio DJ has the position to be the one who reveals to the presumed cheater that they are not a flower shop and that it has been a ruse for a radio show. This shows that it is culturally accepted for a male to challenge another male, but that there is a breach of expectations when the injured female party directly challenges her male partner, such as if she were to confront him privately at home. This reflects an idea within the culture for a female to need a male figure to step in and save her from a negative relationship. The woman does not feel that she is

able to resolve the situation on her own, which is seen from the fact that she has contacted the program for a resolution. Instead, by having the radio DJ set up the deception of the *War of the Roses*, the female is then an innocent party who has been wronged by her male partner.

Beyond the introduction clip, there are other instances in the *War of the Roses* that show a clear depiction of gendered expectations. One such occasion is the example of directions and how instructions are assigned within the ritual. The Ryan's Roses version of *War of the Roses* provides an example of the interaction when the female assistant host performs the call to the presumed cheater, rather than the male radio DJ, Ryan. While Ryan is not the person who is completing the call, once the information has been gained from the suspected cheater, he immediately enters the interaction. The radio employee who calls the suspected cheater is generally female and is given no opportunity to stray from the script, while Ryan, as the male radio DJ, is the character who ultimately confronts and denounces the suspected cheater. The following excerpt is from the Ryan's Roses version of the radio show. In this clip, Ryan (R) is the DJ, Ellen (E) is the assistant radio host, and Corinne (C) is the radio assistant. In this excerpt, Tiffany (T) has contacted the radio show because she is suspicious about her husband Andrew (A).

## Extract 2

- 1 R: Now (.5) be very quiet, Corinne is going to come in and she  
2 is going to uh u:m offer him uh some roses an::d (.5) the  
3 k:ey is to hear who he sends them to and the other key is to  
4 hear what he puts on the card (1) and at times (.) at times  
5 you may want to like burst out or sigh or scream or  
6 whatever but uh try not to so we can get all uh the detail  
7 first ok[ay?
- 8 T: [(sigh)) ok
- 9 R: So uh take a deep breath.
- 10 E: M:hm
- 11 T: ((chuckle)) Okay uh ok.
- 12 R: Everyone (.5) take a deep [breath.
- 13 E: [Alright ((sigh)
- 14 C: Uh:h ((breath)) ok.
- 15 R: Ok ok here we go here we go, alright Corrine?

By looking at Extract 2, we see how directions are gendered within the ritual. Ryan, as the male radio DJ, is giving explicit instructions to the three other participants, all female. One aspect of the DJ's role as the moral arbiter is to take charge and set the agenda. Hutchby (1996) discusses agenda setting as an aspect of radio talk, which is seen in this excerpt. The DJ is focusing on what he sees as important for the next part of the ritual and using that information in

order to give orders to the other participants. From this excerpt, it is possible to see how the participants orient towards the DJ as the director. Each of the participants listens to Ryan; they all follow his instructions and do what he tells them to do.

The directions in this excerpt make the rules and expectations of the phone call part of the *War of the Roses* ritual explicitly clear. It is possible to ascertain the importance of silence for the completion of the ritual. The majority of what Ryan discusses in lines 1-6 above is telling the other participants to stay quiet and reiterating the point. It also makes clear the importance of finding out not just a name from the suspected cheater, but also the message on the card. From this instruction, it can be inferred that the card information is needed to keep the suspected cheater from having a defense and a counter-claim later in the ritual. Also, if the female bursts in too quickly, it cannot be known if the suspected cheater's defense is a true account or it is a lie to protect himself.

In examining the ritual as a gendered activity, it is interesting to see how the directions create the expectation of gendered characters. As discussed, the DJ is the moral arbiter and is in charge of this particular interaction. In the excerpt above, the DJ emphasizes how crucial it is that all participants remain quiet throughout the entire phone call in order to get the necessary information from the suspected cheater. Each of the three female participants is familiar with the progression of the *War of the Roses* radio show. Two of these characters are a part of the radio show and are in every enactment of the Ryan's

Roses version of the *War of the Roses*. They are very much aware of the progression of the show and the need to stay quiet, especially as the woman Corrine is the one who actually calls the suspected cheater. The other participant is the caller, who has contacted the show specifically to find out information in the manner which the ritual uncovers it. They all know what needs to happen to obtain the necessary information in the phone call with the suspected cheater, yet Ryan feels the need to give them explicit instructions for the interaction.

This excerpt also depicts how “rituals reveal values” and provides insight into the cultural expectations of genders (Turner 1969, p. 7). In this excerpt, the male DJ gives explicit orders to the female participants of the ritual. From this, it can be seen that in the confines of the ritual, it is an acceptable act for a male to give orders to a female. The females in the ritual never give instructions or orders to the male participants, because that is not something that is supported within the interaction. It is however completely acceptable for the male DJ to give the female participants directions. The radio DJ is someone who sets the stage for the ritual and makes judgments about the character of participants, as well as someone who determines what instructions need to be provided for a successful ritual.

Also within the excerpt, it is possible to see how the instructions themselves reveal gender expectations. It is important to understand not only that the male character is able to give the female characters instructions, but to

examine what these directions say about the participating genders. As previously discussed, each of the female participants is familiar with the progression of the deceptive phone call in the ritual. Despite this prior knowledge, Ryan feels the need to outline the two key pieces of information that are gained from the phone call in lines 3-4. Ryan, despite the fact that each of these women is familiar with the ritual protocol, assumes that the women would not remember to keep quiet to get this information on their own. He also discusses the potential emotional reactions that they might spontaneously feel compelled with that would cause them to forget their need to stay silent in lines 4-5. This reflects a social belief that women are guided by their feelings and emotions over their minds. The DJ's emphasis on the need for the female participants to stay quiet despite these potential emotional reactions shows that he doesn't believe that they will be able to control their emotions. This reflects a cultural gendered idea that women are overly emotional and controlled by their feelings. The ritual reflects cultural gendered expectations about males and females and their roles and position within society.

### **The Set-up Stage of the Ritual**

Each version of the radio show *War of the Roses* starts with a set-up that ultimately acts as a justification for the deception of the phone call. The show *War of the Roses* functions because it is able to publicly shame and perform redress actions towards ritual members who have been proven to have committed morally corrupt actions. However, calling a stranger under false

pretenses is not an act that is honest or particularly morally sound. Ultimately the less than admirable moral action of the phone call ruse is excused, as the suspicions of the caller, which were established in the set-up, are confirmed during the breach phase of the ritual. In the set-up phase of the radio show, which happens before Turner's first stage of the breach stage, the caller discusses his or her suspicions with the DJ and the assistant host in order to justify the need for the *War of the Roses* phone call.

In every *War of the Roses* radio show, the caller is required to offer an account of justification. While these claims are made different ways due to the different DJs, the claim must be made, which is why I argue that this step is an important initial action in the establishment of the social drama. Turner (1987) argues that the ritual of a social drama acts as a cultural performance that provides a framework to understand contextualized behavior. Examining the radio show as a social drama provides a way to understand the larger context that *War of the Roses* plays within the culture. As Turner (1987) discusses a social drama, there are four key steps in the ritual. The *War of the Roses* radio show has elements of each of those four steps, however, there is a necessary prequel step in order to justify the need for the radio show to enact the ritual.

The necessity of this preliminary claim stems from the public nature of the radio program and the orchestrated elements of this ritual. This ritual is intentionally set up within a public sphere, which has the potential to create problematic elements. One aspect of the radio show is that it intentionally

creates a position for the DJ as a moral arbiter, yet if the DJ initiated a radio show intended to shame and humiliate without the caller first making a claim for the necessity of enacting the ensuing drama, then his position could be called into question later in the program. I will discuss the intricacies that evolve from the public nature of *War of the Roses* more fully at a later juncture of this piece. The most important aspect of the public nature of the radio show is that the ritual in *War of the Roses* must first start with a claim that justifies the rest of the program. The existence of this step justifies the potentially morally suspect actions of the rest of the show, which includes a deceptive phone call. If this step was overlooked, then later claims about inappropriateness and invasion of privacy would be met differently. This claim at the beginning of the show is especially crucial, because the caller explains why the suspicious activity is suspicious enough to warrant completing the rest of the ritual of the radio show.

In Extract 3 below, we see the set-up phase of *War of the Roses*, as well as providing an example of why this step is an essential prequel of the social drama. This particular transcript is drawn from one of The Kane Show's *War of the Roses* segments. In this segment, the caller, Alice (A), has uncovered that her boyfriend and the father of her child, Eddie (E), has been lying about having a Thursday night bowling league. In the set-up, the DJ, Kane (K), questions Alice on the details she provided in the online submission form. Through the questioning, the assistant host Sarah (S) provides her support.

Extract 3

- 1 K: So how did you figure out that he wasn't goin bowlin?
- 2 A: Well, I called the bowling center the other night, um we  
3 we're not married but we've been together [for about four years.
- 4 K: [oh you're not  
5 married.
- 6 A: No (1) but we've been together, we've been I mean, we have  
7 kid together.
- 8 S: Oh::h.
- 9 A: And, he's a great dad (.7) an:d um I was having some issues  
10 with trying to reach him at the bowling center and he wasn't  
11 there (.5) an:d not only was he not there but apparently  
12 there's not even a bow:ling league on Thursday nights, it  
13 wasn't like some fluke thing, like no:thing happens there on  
14 Thurs[day nights.
- 15 K: [and it's taken you a year to figure this out?
- 16 A: Well I (1) it's not like I I call the bowling alley every Thursday.  
17 (.5) I I why would I why would I [you know
- 18 K: [was he (.) did you call the  
19 ce[ll phone?
- 20 S: [well yeah he has his own ball, but I mean I would believe  
21 that I guess.

- 22 K: Does he have a cell phone?
- 23 A: He wasn't picking up the cell.
- 24 K: Oh and that's why you called the bowling alley.
- 25 A: Yeap.

The first thing that is striking about extract is the account being constructed over various interactional turns. In lines 2-3 and lines 9-14, Alice makes a claim in order to justify the need for the *War of the Roses* phone call. In every *War of the Roses* radio show, the caller is required to make a similar type of claim. While these claims are made different ways due to the different DJs, the claim must be made, which is why I argue that this step is an important initial action in the establishment of the social drama. Turner (1987) argues that the ritual of a social drama acts as a cultural performance that provides a framework to understand contextualized behavior. Examining the radio show as a social drama provides a way to understand the larger context that *War of the Roses* plays within the culture. As Turner (1987) discusses a social drama, there are four key steps in the ritual. The *War of the Roses* radio show has elements of each of those four steps; however, there is a necessary prequel step in order to justify the need for the radio show to enact the ritual.

Each different radio show treats this preliminary step a little differently and therefore demands a different level of detail and justification within the account. Above is an example of the account from the Kane Show. In the Kane Show's *War of the Roses*, Kane questions and tests the caller more than other

DJs. At this point of the show of the excerpt above, the caller Alice has already explained that she was suspicious about her partner Eddie's behavior because she found out he had been lying about a weekly bowling league. Kane first questions how she figured out that he was lying, and then when it is revealed that they are not married, as Kane assumed, her claim undergoes further questioning.

The interaction in this excerpt displays a negotiation and an authorization of accounts in interaction. Scott & Lyman (1968) define an account as a linguistic device utilized by a speaker to explain unexpected or unacceptable behavior. One of the account types that they analyze in their research is one that is made as a justification. A justification is an account "in which one accepts responsibility for the act in question, but denies the pejorative quality associated with it" (Scott & Lyman, 1968, p. 47). The justification neutralizes the negative implications of an action by making the claim that the need of the action has a larger positive value that outweighs the potential negative.

The main purpose in this particular interaction is for the caller to justify and account for her suspicions in a manner that validates her desire to test her partner. In this specific interaction, the caller Alice is expected to defend the misunderstanding that she is married to Eddie. Alice also is responsible for making a justification account as to why it is necessary to perform a *War of the Roses* segment, a claim that must overcome the negative implications of the public nature of the radio program. In lines 2-3, Alice clarifies that she and

Eddie are not married, which leads to overlapping speech and an interruption of her claim by Kane. Kane takes the floor from Alice with the statement “oh you’re not married” in lines 4-5. The utterance is particularly interesting as the emphasis on “not” creates an implication that marriage is the preferred status when contacting the show, as well as demands an account, without explicitly asking a question.

In demanding an account, Kane’s position as an arbiter in this particular radio show (and the DJ’s role as a moral arbiter in all radio shows of *War of the Roses*) is created and supported. This position is additionally supported by Alice’s response of providing an answer in line 6. After initially providing the simple of answer of “no” (no, they are not married), Alice stops talking, but when no one starts to speak, she ends the pause and continues her turn of talk with further answer and explanation to justify their relationship. The level of seriousness and commitment needs to be established, in anticipation of future breaches, as for example deception of the radio program itself, especially the violation of expectations of privacy, as well as the violation made by cheating in a relationship.

It is in this preliminary step that the membership categories begin to be defined and established. As Carolyn Baker (2000) notes, “membership categorization work is pervasive in the doing of descriptions, the making of claims, the organization of social relations, and other aspects of the micropolitics of everyday and institutional life” (p. 99). Within the *War of the Roses*, the

participants are constantly doing the work that is described by Baker, particularly making claims and descriptions. In this phase of the ritual interaction, it is especially important that each participant establishes their role within the interaction. In particular, it is necessary for the caller to establish himself or herself as a 'good' relational and romantic partner. Part of the DJ's role here is to question the caller enough to approve that the ritual is being enacted for the 'right' reasons. As Baker (2000) would say, in doing this preliminary questioning, the participants "lock discourses into place." Once the discourse has occurred, the interaction is open to critical examination.

As I previously mentioned, this initial preliminary step in the radio program starts to accomplish the work of producing the DJ's position as a moral arbiter. This role is one that is supported throughout the talk in each of the different *War of the Roses* radio shows. One way that this is accomplished in the interaction is the orientation of talk by the participants, specifically how participants orient to the DJ's words and actions in interaction. Goffman (1971) argues that ritual is a supportive interchange, and as such, it is an act where speakers show regard for each other, as well as valued objects and concepts (p. 62). In thinking of the interaction itself as a supportive interchange, it is possible to see how some participants are more or less supported than others. Observing these actions throughout the interaction reflect an inherent hierarchy in the asymmetry of the radio talk. This interaction displays the DJ's position as the moral arbiter in the radio show, as reflected by his higher position in talk, ability

to make judgment, and perform breaches in the interaction without being corrected. Ultimately, the DJ is able to make corrects and other actors in the ritual are not allowed to correct his actions.

It is possible to see the DJ's role as the moral arbiter in Extract 3, which is observed most interestingly through interruptions. Kane interrupts Alice three different times in the excerpt. I have already been discussed the first interruption: Alice clarifies that she is not married to Eddie, prompting the initial interruption and followed up by a claim from Alice that justifies the seriousness of her relationship with Eddie. The second interruption from Kane comes in line 15 and puts Alice on the defensive side of the interaction, which is seen through her flustered response in line 16. In this interruption, Kane's question emphasizes "year" and also is in itself an emphasis on the idea that it has taken such a substantial amount of time for her to find out that there is no bowling league. The third interruption happens during the response, and involves an additional interruption by Sarah, the assistant radio host.

The excerpt above provides interesting insight into the preliminary stage of the ritual. In order to further understand the radio DJ's role as the moral arbiter, I will examine a continuation of the interaction started in the previous excerpt. The excerpt below starts where the excerpt above ended. The interaction at the end of the previous excerpt is especially interesting and relevant in terms of interruptions and the creation of roles. In partial repeat of

Extract 3, it is possible to see how the DJ's position as the moral arbiter is created and supported through talk.

Extract 3 (Partial Repeat)

- 16 A: Well I (1) it's not like I I call the bowling alley every Thursday.  
17 (.5) I I why would I why would I [you know  
18 K: [was he (.) did you call the  
19 ce[ll phone?  
20 S: [well yeah he has his own ball, but I mean I would believe  
21 that I guess.  
22 K: Does he have a cell phone?  
23 A: He wasn't picking up the cell.

At this point of the exchange, Alice has been put on the defensive for not knowing that Eddie has been lying to her about the existence of a bowling league for a year (which the talk orients towards being a substantial amount of time.) From the constant repetition, which borders on stuttering, and her pauses, it is possible to see how flustered Alice is at this point. Kane interrupts Alice to ask about calling his cell phone, and Sarah interrupts Kane to accept Alice's account. As the DJ and moral arbiter, Kane is able to interject in others' speech and have the final morality judgment on issues. This right is seen in the previous excerpt. The reflection of how people orient in talk to others displays the hierarchy in this situation. Sarah makes a move by interrupting Kane, but her comment and interruption are ignored and overlooked. When Kane's

interruption is overlooked, he repeats his query and receives a response. The participants of this interaction orient their information towards the approval of Kane, and he is the one who is able to make judgment calls.

The social drama, as outlined by Turner (1987), serves the function of contextualizing and understanding discursive behavior. Turner delineates four steps of the ritual, however in the artifact of the radio show *War of the Roses*, there is a preliminary step that sets the stage for the next four steps. This step is a preliminary action before the steps of the social drama as discussed by Turner (1987) and can be called the pre-breach step. The *War of the Roses* is a ritual that involves moral condemnation, public shaming, and degradation of social identity. Without this step, there would be no higher ground for the moral arbiter (as played by the DJ) and the audience to stand on to be able to publicly shame the suspected cheater. The next four steps of the ritual depend on this initial account, which provides background information of the caller's suspicions. The pre-breach also establishes a way of viewing the caller's romantic relationship, specifically in terms the level of commitment and seriousness.

### **The Breach Phase**

The next step of the radio show *War of the Roses* is the breach phase. At this point of the interaction, the stage has been set for the ritual and background information has been provided. In the radio show *War of the Roses*, once the justification for the need to perform the ritual has been accepted, the DJ or an assistant host makes the phone call to the suspected cheater. This phone call is

specifically staged to cause a breach, which is the next phase of the ritual. The breach is an action, specifically the action of someone breaking a social rule, norm, law, or custom. Turner (1981) argues that the breach must happen within the public arena in order to involve the necessary level of maintenance. The repair can be seen in the following steps of the ritual. One of the lenses that Turner (1987) applies to analyzing ritual is the concept of liminality, which is to say that the ritual moves through a threshold and happens in a separated space from everyday life. The breach is where the rule-breaking action moves the ritual from the everyday into this liminal space.

The following excerpt shows the breach phase, which is the second step of the ritual of the *War of the Roses*. This particular excerpt is from the Ryan's Roses version of *War of the Roses*. The DJ in this version of *War of the Roses* is Ryan (R), and his assistant radio host is Ellen (E). At this point in the segment, Corinne (C), one of the radio assistants, is on the phone with Andrew (A). Andrew is the husband of the original caller Tiffany (T), who is suspicious because he forgot about Valentine's Day, which is something that he has not previously done in their eight years of marriage. Corinne has offered Andrew a dozen free roses as a marketing promotion for the special person in his life and Andrew just named Linda as the recipient of the romantic roses.

#### Extract 4

- 1 C: And what would you like to include on the ca:rd?
- 2 A: ((breath)) Um:::m (2) can you say uh:h always thinking of you  
3 (1.5) hope you're having a great da:y.
- 4 C: Oka:y.
- 5 A: Um:m a great day (1) um love Andrew.
- 6 C: Ok (.5) perfect.
- 7 R: ANDr:ew, it is Ryan Seacrest, you're on the radio with us right  
8 now and I uh happen to Tiffany, your wife of eight years, on  
9 the line and she would like to ask you some[thing].
- 10 T: [So WHO tha hell is  
11 LinDA?
- 12 R: And that's what she wanted to ask.
- 13 T: ANdrew?
- 14 A: Ye:a.
- 15 T: Who is you sending flowers to?  
16 (2)
- 17 A: This girl.

In Extract 4, we see an excellent example of a breach. First, it shows Andrew's action that is a breaking a social norm. The social and moral expectation in this situation is that when a husband, Andrew, is offered a chance to send roses to the special person in his life, he would choose to send those

flowers to his wife, Tiffany. However, as this is an example of a breach, Andrew chose to send the roses to Linda. An important aspect in considering the breach step is that it not only includes the moment of breaking the rule, but also the reaction to the rule-breaking. In order to know that a breach has in fact occurred, it is important for the public to see not only the broken rule, but also the response. The response reflects that some incorrect and wrong action has occurred.

In examining a breach, it is interesting to be able to observe the actual moment that the social expectation is breached. Andrew has named Linda as the recipient for a dozen roses and when Corinne asks him for a message for a card, he presents a message that confirms that his connection with Linda is a romantic one rather than platonic or business. The message that he delivers in lines 2-3 indicates a romantic interest, however, signing the card as he does in line 5 with "love" serves as a confirmation for his wife Tiffany, as well as the DJ Kane and the listening audience, that Andrew is having an affair with Linda.

In this excerpt, I find it interesting that Andrew pauses and emphasizes words throughout his two turns of talk. The pauses and word emphasis seem to indicate a level of nervousness, which has two possible interpretations. The first is that Andrew is thinking about Linda, a woman he cares for enough in order to choose to send roses to and to sign a card "Love Andrew." With this interpretation, the pauses are because Andrew is taking additional time to think to try to come up with the perfect message. The second potential interpretation

is that Andrew is considering the breach that he is enacting at this moment and is thinking of his wife Tiffany. The second interpretation seems unlikely, as if he was thinking of his wife, Andrew would have chosen to send the roses to her. The second interpretation seems especially unlikely when one knows the turns of talk previous to the excerpt, Corrine repeated Linda's name multiple times causing Andrew to repeat it back to her to clarify.

Another interesting thing about this excerpt is the manner in which Ryan and Tiffany reveal themselves. In the majority of the radio programs, once the suspected cheater has named someone other than the caller and provided a message that shows the relationship is or could be romantic in nature, the caller or the DJ then bursts in with a reaction. In this particular example, the DJ Ryan takes the initiative to explain to Andrew that he is on the radio before Tiffany can cut in. This causes Tiffany to interrupt Ryan in order to demand an explanation.

There is an interesting parallel between this excerpt and the previous one in terms of how an interruption is dealt with and oriented to in talk. The main person who is allowed to interrupt another is the DJ, who in this example is Ryan. However, in the above excerpt, Tiffany interrupts Ryan in order to demand answers. Tiffany might interrupt Ryan, but he immediately reinforces his statement. Ryan is doing the work to reinforce his standing as the person in charge by not allowing for interruptions, and reinforcing his ideas after an accidental interruption does happen. When the DJ is interrupted, he still has to have the last word. The aspect that I find most interesting about these few

turns of talk is the point that Ryan is trying to make is that Tiffany wants to know who the other woman is that Andrew is sending the roses to. Tiffany interrupts Ryan in order to demand answers, which supports the DJ's overall main point. However, because Tiffany doesn't wait until Ryan had finished his turn of talk, he feels the need to restate his point to emphasize his right to have the last word.

These turns of talk reveal who has certain speaking rights in this interactional ritual. As discussed, the DJ is in a position where he is not supposed to be interrupted. Another unspoken rule about the *War of the Roses* ritual becomes visible in this excerpt. Ryan spends three lines of talk giving Andrew information including they are on the radio and his wife Tiffany has been listening, yet he does not take the opportunity to ask who the other woman is, because he is not supposed to ask. The betrayed partner is the person who has the right to demand answers and ask who the other woman is. The DJ is not allowed to make this demand, but he is allowed to support the original caller in her demand. In line 10, when Tiffany interrupts Ryan, she asks who Linda is, and then again in line 14 she asks who he is sending flowers to. In the position of a betrayed wife, she is the person who is allowed to ask this question first. The DJ or assistant radio host is able to repeat her question if the partner is being evasive about answering, but it is her right as the betrayed party to be able to ask the question first.

The response to the breach in the excerpt shows further pauses and word emphasis. Tiffany repeats her question and puts emphasis on Andrew's name. There is a long pause before Andrew responds to Tiffany and even in giving a response; he doesn't provide any information initially. Andrew's lack of informative response and pauses, in addition to discovering that his wife Tiffany was listening to him the entire time, shows that he wants to avoid providing as much information as possible. It is clear from Andrew's discourse that he is embarrassed about this situation and the knowledge that Tiffany has been listening to him the entire time. As Goffman (1956) discusses, embarrassment can be caused by indignation and discomfiture. Andrew is flustering and avoiding speaking in an attempt to avoid further discomfort and embarrassment from the situation.

As previously stated, the majority of the *War of the Roses* segments involve the original caller coming in and revealing herself when her partner has named another woman as the recipient of the roses. Within the ritual of the *War of the Roses*, there is an expectation that the caller will burst in after the moment of a breach. In Extract 5 below shows an additional example of the breach phrase. This is a unique exchange because it does not fit within the normal ritual expectations, yet the lack of action clearly depicts what the expectations for the ritual interaction are.

This is an excerpt is from The Kane Show's version of the *War of the Roses* and is a continuation from the first example shown. Kane (K) is the DJ in

this show and is supported by his assistant host Sarah (S). As before, Alice (A) contacted the show because she found out that her partner, Eddie (E), has been lying about a weekly bowling league. At this point in the segment, Kane has called Eddie and offered him free roses, clarifying that they are romantic. Eddie has just named Megan as the recipient of the roses with an implicating message.

Extract 5

- 1 K: Seeing you once a week is not enough.
- 2 E: Yes, exactly.
- 3 K: To Megan?
- 4 E: Mh:m.
- 5 (2)
- 6 K: Can you hang on one second Eddie?
- 7 E: Sure.
- 8 (1.5)
- 9 K: Just a minute (.5) my computers running a little bit slow, hang
- 10 on just a moment.
- 11 E: Alright go ahead.
- 12 K: Hey Alice.
- 13 (2)
- 14 A: I don't know what to say. (1.5)

In this excerpt, the breach has occurred with Eddie naming Megan as the recipient of the roses. The message that he gives is especially damning when

one considers the backstory: Alice was suspicious about where Eddie would be once a week for a fake bowling league and Eddie tells Megan that once a week isn't enough. The obvious implication is that Eddie has spent once night a week with Megan. The pauses in excerpt reveal a lot in terms of the expectations of the ritual. Goffman (1971) discusses the ritual as a supportive interaction where the back and forth interchange work together. In the example of the *War of the Roses*, even though it is often a negative interchange and is in fact set up to be a negative interaction, people still work together and fit the social expectation that talk will go back and forth between individuals.

In this excerpt, the pauses reveal expectations about how the progression of the ritual will go. In line 5, there is a two second pause after Kane has confirmed both the name of the recipient of the roses as well as the card to go with them. Two seconds of silence on the radio is a substantial chunk of time, which is why Kane comes back to bid time. The next few turns of talk, Kane asks Eddie for more time, but also waiting for Alice to come in. Kane puts Eddie on hold and then speaks directly to Alice, which results in another two second pause. The pauses indicate Alice's inability to take her turn due to the situation that she has been presented with. She was clearly suspicious prior to this revelation, as she would not have contacted The Kane Show to perform a *War of the Roses* segment if she was not suspicious of the situation. However, upon having her suspicions confirmed, she is unable to speak and perform the expected reaction in the ritual.

The lack of action makes it even more clear what the expected action should have been. The pauses indicate the level of emotion that Alice is feeling in that moment. Her only response of "I don't know what to say" shows that the pain and hurt she is feeling by the betrayal have hindered her ability to respond. When the expected interaction of the ritual doesn't occur, it is possible to more clearly see what is missing. This leads to making a correction for the absent reaction. The next segment is a continuation of the talk seen in Extract 5.

Extract 6 (Continuation of Extract 5)

- 15 A: I can't effin believe it. (.5) You know the thing that makes this  
16 worse is that (.) that she's someone I know.
- 17 K: I don't understand, what do you mean you're with once or twice  
18 a week?
- 19 S: Yea.
- 20 A: Oh oh Megan's Megan's my fr- trainer (.5) she's my personal  
21 trainer.
- 22 S: ((gasp)) oh you're ki[dding].
- 23 K: [hold on, let me I'm going to conference  
24 you with Eddie because I want you to talk to him, ok Alice?  
25 (3) Alice?
- 26 A: ((gasp)) Like uh I don't even know what to say.
- 27 K: I uh I'll help you out with this. Hold on holdonholdon. (.5) Hey  
28 Eddie?

29 E: Yeah.  
30 K: I need to come clean with something, on the phone I have Alice  
31 (.5) who has heard your entire conversation, I don't work for a  
32 flower company, I work for a radio station (1) and uh we do  
33 something called War of the Roses where we test (.) cheaters  
34 to see if we offer them a free dozen roses who they'd send  
35 them to and (1) the correct answer should have been Alice.

As the continuation of Extract 5, the ritual expectations become even more visible in Extract 6. It is possible to see through the interaction what the expectations are for the response to the breach. The ritual expectation for the breach phase of the *War of the Roses* is that once the suspected cheater reveals a name other than caller, the caller will then reveal him or herself. This does not always occur; clearly, this did not occur in this particular example. When the rules of the ritual interaction are not followed, then a correction must be made in order to continue with the ritual. If Alice will not confront Eddie, then the ritual is at a standstill. As the arbiter, the DJ must use his position in the hierarchy in order to continue the ritual.

The most intriguing aspect of this excerpt is where the rules of the ritual interaction move from implicit to explicit. In the first section of the transcript, there are multiple significant pauses where Kane is waiting for Alice to take her expected turn of talk, which she does not do. In the next excerpt from the interaction, Kane makes the move to correct Alice's lack of action to get her to

complete the interaction as the ritual expects it. In lines 22-23, Kane says he wants Alice to talk and will connect her with Eddie. Kane is giving Alice instructions to speak and confront Eddie in order to complete this stage of the social drama. There is another elongated pause where Alice fails to take her turn of talk, indicated her discomfort in confronting Eddie's revelation. Alice's discomfort is causing interactional trouble within this phase of the ritual. Kane then takes his position as the arbiter in the *War of the Roses* to tell Alice that she needs to talk to him, and when that is met with further resistance, Kane tells Alice that he'll help and connects her before waiting for an agreement from her. This area of talk is particularly interesting, because the rules of this phase of the ritual become extremely clear. The DJ's role is to complete the ritual and will guide the caller through this action, even if the caller is too distraught to be able to do so.

The section of the excerpt where Kane brings Eddie back into the conversation is fairly interesting as well. As Roulston (2001) discusses in her work on interviews, the interview is an area of socially situated talk where the claims and descriptions are being made about the social order. While this show is not an interview, the cultural performance ritual of the *War of the Roses* acts similarly to the interview in that participants are working together within the frame of that talk in order to make claims about the social order and their position in it. For example, the claims that Alice has made in this interaction indicate that she is an innocent person who has been betrayed, both by the

father of her child and Megan, her friend and personal trainer. As the betrayed participant, she might have failed to do her job to respond to the breach, but her shock and pain are understood by both the radio personalities and the listening public. Sarah's response to Alice's statement that Megan is her personal trainer is immediate shock, shown by her gasp, and then disbelief as well. Alice's position as the betrayed female is solidified in this interaction.

This particular scene does additional work that creates membership categories through doing descriptions and making claims. When the DJ Kane brings Eddie back into the call and speaks to him in lines 29-34, Kane does some interesting work in terms of describing membership categories. In line 32, Kane defines the purpose of the *War of the Roses* radio program in saying that they "test cheaters." He follows this statement up with the comment to Eddie in lines 33-34 that the "correct answer should have been Alice." The phrases that Kane chooses to use here in his discourse create meaning that is situated within the culture. Hester and Eglin (1997) discuss how the categories, devices, and cultural resources are created in use, rather than pre-existing concepts. Through his discourse, Kane is generating the meaning of cheater, while at the same time applying that category label to Eddie. While there is a previously understood cultural knowledge of the category of cheater, the discourse here furthers the audience's knowledge of cheater. In the excerpt, Kane is extending and confirming the knowledge of cheater to include someone who sends roses to someone other than the call and someone who gives the wrong answer.

It is possible to see the development of elements of betrayal and crisis within the breach, which is the next step of the *War of the Roses* radio show. In the *War of the Roses*, the breach phase is staged through the phone call and the ruse of free roses. This ruse can be a different set up from the traditional roses offer for different situations that are described by callers. The overarching purpose for the phone call is to instigate the breach as the next step of the social drama. Turner (1981, 1987) defines the breach phase as the point where the ritual transitions into a liminal space, which is instigated through a rule-breaking action in the public arena. Within the discourse of the breach phase of the cultural performance, the interaction shows both the rule breaking action and the interactional response that orients to the broken rule.

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In this chapter, I have examined the beginning steps of the ritual interaction within the *War of the Roses* radio show. This chapter focused on staging elements of the ritual; that is to say, on the initialization of the ritual and beginning elements. The *War of the Roses* radio show acts as a morality ritual that performs a social drama. The act of the ritual exposes insight into the morals and values of a culture. Due to this, it is possible to ascertain what the gendered expectations are for the different roles within the ritual, as well as what these expectations say about the culture beyond the ritual space. Beyond looking at the roles held by the different participants within the *War of the Roses* radio show, I have looked at how the ritual itself organizes itself into different

phases. Each phase has elements of overlap; there is no specific moment where one step must always end and the next step must always begin.

I have looked at the preliminary set-up of the *War of the Roses*, as well as the breach phase, in this chapter. The initial set-up phase of the *War of the Roses* is a step that occurs before the four phases that Turner (1987) outlines as a part of the cultural performance. However, this step is an essential aspect of the *War of the Roses* radio program as it creates the need and reason for the rest of the morality ritual. Without this step, later counter-claims made in the ritual concerning the public nature of the radio program would be more acceptable and arguable, as this step serves as a justification for the public nature of the program. The first step that Turner (1987) outlines within the social drama is the breach phase. This phase is where the ritual moves through the threshold into a liminal space. The *War of the Roses* ritual occurs within a liminal space as the meaning that is made within the ritual is separated from everyday life, yet the meaning still transcends into the everyday upon the completion of the ritual. The radio show is itself an example of a liminal space. It encompasses everyday life while being a space that is detached and distinct from the everyday.

## Chapter Four

### Degradation, Redress, and Shame

This chapter will focus on how the ritual enacts elements of public shaming, redress, and social degradation. In this chapter, I focus on the later three steps that Turner (1987) outlines as a part of the social drama: crisis, redress and public shaming, and the schism or reintegration. It is in this chapter that the status of the suspected cheater and perpetrator changes is transformed to the new label of cheater. The perpetrator attempts to defend his or her status change, but this attempt is ultimately rejected through the ritual process.

The crisis phase of the morality ritual is when sides are taken for or against the rule breaker. The suspected cheater uses this phase of the morality ritual to use any means possible in order to attempt to seduce the other radio participants to take his or her side over siding with the original caller. The next phase is the stage of redress and public shaming. This step of the morality ritual is one that is highly connected with Garfinkel's (1956) status degradation ceremony. At this point of the ritual, the suspected cheater undergoes acts of redress and public shaming, while having his or her status degraded and re-labeled to cheater. Turner (1987) describes the final act of the social drama as the schism or reintegration phase. In the *War of the Roses* radio program, there is no reintegration between the cheater and the original caller. The radio DJ

uses his position as the moral arbiter in order to ensure that there is no reconciliation. Therefore, this step in the radio show is the schism, where the repair attempts fail, the final judgment is made, and the interchange reveals that the relationship between the caller and the presumed cheater has broken apart.

### **The State of Crisis**

The next stage of the social drama is the crisis, which involves sides being taken for or against the rule breaker. The *War of the Roses* is ritual that is done in a public arena, yet due to the constraints of a radio program, the public are silent listeners. In terms of choosing a side, the DJ and his assistant hosts take on the voice and opinions of the silent audience. Turner (1987) calls the crisis "contagious" and says that "when antagonisms become overt, ancient rancours, rivalries, and unresolved vendettas are revived" (p. 34). The crisis phase starts after the breach has occurred in the previous stage and the presumed cheater has named a recipient other than the original caller.

With the crisis step, both the caller and his or her partner know that they are in the public arena. The main way that the participants react to this information is that they will become extremely antagonistic towards each other. The knowledge that they are in a public forum leads to a performance of self and an attempt to tear the other person down in order to have other people choose his or her side. Both the caller and the suspected cheater (who has now been confirmed to have an involvement with someone else) will bring up anything from the past that they can in order to prove that they are the better person in

this scenario. The main goal of the crisis stage is for the participants to convince observers to pick their side and tearing the other participant down helps to accomplish this purpose.

The following excerpt is an example from The Kane Show's version of the *War of the Roses*. This particular segment does not follow the prescribed ruse format of offering free roses for the suspected cheater to give to the person of his or her choice. In this segment, the girlfriend Tara (T) uncovers that her boyfriend Aaron (A) has a secret apartment in Boston, and creates a fake Facebook account as a Bostonian woman, Stacy, to see how he would respond. After Tara has communicated with Aaron over Facebook as Stacy, Tara sends their correspondence to Kane (K) in order to publicly embarrass him. The setup for this *War of the Roses* segment is still focused on entrapping Aaron, the suspected cheater, even though it does not have the typical promotional roses. Sarah (S), an assistant deejay, helps set up the deception and made the phone call to Aaron while pretending to be Stacy. In this segment, Tara, Sarah, and Kane have already revealed to Aaron that he is not speaking privately with Stacy, but all of them have instead been recording his phone call for the radio this entire time. This excerpt provides an excellent example of the crisis stage and the work done by participants in order to entice listeners to choose their side.

## Extract 7

- 1 A: well uh well I got a nosy guy like yourself like seriously. (.) What  
2 kind of life do guys ((BEEP)) have huh?
- 3 K: Don't worry about me little guy, this is this is all you right now.  
4 Explain yourself.
- 5 T: Aaron, you have nothing that you can say because you know  
6 everything you did is so ((BEEP BEEP)) shady bull((BEEP)). I  
7 found I found your se:cret credit card, you've been lying to me  
8 about your stu:pid iPad, where it came from I found the credit  
9 card, I knew about the apartment in Boston, I set up a ((BEEP))  
10 Facebook page and you fell for it like a du:mbass bitch!
- 11 A: Why are you even judging me? Why am I the you know one on  
12 the hot seat right now? You do plenty of shady ((BEEP)).
- 13 T: Please. (.5) Like what?
- 14 A: Um:m, I don't know, I think recently you told me how you got a  
15 STD from a ((BEEP)) and I believed you.
- 16 K: What?
- 17 A: I didn't call out your ((BEEP)).
- 18 T: I I told you how I got it, I ((BEEP)) let Dawn use my ((BEEP))  
19 and obviously she had chlamidya and now I do.
- 20 S: Ha- what?
- 21 K: Wait, you let you friend use your thing?

22 T: I mean uh clearly I washed it, I put it in the dishwasher.  
23 K: Cause obviously you didn't sterilize it, so you didn't clean it off,  
24 so you get it back from your friend, and she gives it to you and  
25 you just start using going crazy and oh uh I forgot to wipe it  
26 off. C'mon. (1.5) Somebody's not telling us, both of y'all ain't  
27 telling the truth here.

Extract 7 shows how participants take any opportunity to use prior knowledge on other participants during the crisis phase in order to pull the listening audience to their side. At this point in the show, Aaron knows that he is on the radio and has been caught in the act of setting up a romantic weekend with another woman. Turner (1987) discusses the need of ritual participants to use any means necessary to entice listeners to stand by their side. Aaron has been caught in the act of trying to cheat, which, for obvious reasons, has turned the other participants against him. In lines 1-2, Aaron tries to turn his displeasure at being in this situation at the DJ. This attempt fails because the DJ holds the final judgment on all issues within the radio program. After being shut down by Kane and berated by Tara, Aaron then takes the opportunity to turn the tables on Tara by bringing up past actions. Kane's final declaration in line 27 shows that Aaron succeeded in his goal of making Tara an additional guilty party.

This excerpt depicts an interesting example of positioning and agenda setting. Hutchby (1996) focuses on positioning as a power play, but looking

beyond power to how the participants can change an agenda and position themselves in talk reveals insight into the ritual. As previously mentioned, Aaron tries to turn the situation against the DJ in lines 1-2. Kane immediately rebuffs his attempt. He is intentionally dismissive of Aaron's attempt, going as far as to call him "little man." Kane uses that insult in order to put Aaron in his place and make his own position within the ritual clear. The fact that Kane is able to say a phrase like that when establishing that Aaron owes them (Kane, Sarah, the radio listeners, Tara) an explanation is particularly telling. In this turn of talk, Kane is reinforcing his own position within the interaction. Kane is in the position of being the moral arbiter in the radio program. As a part of this role, he is in the station to be able to demand explanations and lower the position of other participants in the ritual.

In her next turn of talk in lines 5-10, Tara is assured of her ability to be able to insult Aaron. Her assurance is visible especially within line 10, where she calls Aaron a "dumbass bitch" after censuring him for his lies and deceptions. Up until this point of the radio program, Tara has been placed in the category of innocent and betrayed girlfriend. As the betrayed person in this ritual, it is both expected and encouraged for Tara to insult and shame Aaron.

However, Aaron uses his second turn of talk, in lines 11 to 12 in order to bring the position of Tara down. Tara rebuffs his first attempt, but Aaron continues to try to ruin her higher position in order to bring the other participants to his side. Aaron successfully accomplishes this goal by bringing up

a time that he believed her when she told him that she got an STD from a sex toy, not from a sexual encounter with another individual. In making this statement, Aaron effectively brings Tara down to his level, but also is able to construct himself as a trusting boyfriend. Aaron also positions himself as better than Tara, because they both might have done something dishonest, but he didn't take that as an opportunity to publicly embarrass her. It is possible to see that Aaron was successful in accomplishing his goal of lowering Tara from two different aspects of the excerpt. The first can be seen from how Tara orients to Aaron's talk. In the beginning of the excerpt, Tara is clearly angry, but also speaks confidently and is assured of her right to be angry in this situation. After Aaron mentions the STD, Tara starts to flounder and starts to repeat words and use fillers such as 'uh' and loses the confidence she had while speaking earlier. Tara is unable to give an acceptable account to counter-act Aaron's claim. The comparison of her discourse before and after Aaron's position shows that she isn't the completely innocent party that she has previously presented herself to be. The second can be seen in looking at Kane's response to the interaction at the end of the excerpt. Kane berates Tara and makes it clear that he finds her account to be completely unbelievable.

In examining this excerpt, it is possible to see through the interaction that this crisis stage has effectively changed the position and categorization of the original caller. This is only one example of a crisis stage. It is important to note that in most *War of the Roses* radio shows, the crisis stage does not result in a

new categorization of the participants in the ritual. The suspected cheater will attempt to turn the listeners against the original caller in an effort to show that he or she isn't as bad in comparison, but such attempts are not generally successful. Regardless of its success, the purpose of the crisis stage is for the participants to do the discursive work to attempt to pull listeners and other participants to their side.

Within the ritual of the *War of the Roses* there is a certain cohesiveness and pattern to the entire interaction. However, the different steps within the ritual of the social drama do not always develop in the exact same way and there are differences that happen with the actual phase, especially with in the crisis phase. As previously discussed, the suspected cheater might direct accusations at the DJ and listening audience, while insulting and attacking the original caller. This move is something that can either work as the suspected cheater hoped, which turns the DJ and audience against the caller and alters his or her position in the interaction, or it can fail, which moves the position of the suspected cheater even lower. The crisis stage can also involve the suspected cheater rejecting the discursive category of cheater and offering counter-claims, such as making the claim that the public radio is not the appropriate place to have this conversation.

The suspected cheater can use counter-claims within the crisis phase to try to shift judgment away from him, which is seen in Extract 8. This particular excerpt is from the Ryan's Roses version of *War of the Roses*. Miriam (M) has

contacted Ryan (R), who is the DJ in this show, about her husband Rob (H). Ryan has Ellen (E) as his assistant host in this interaction. Miriam and Rob have been married for fifteen years and she is currently suspicious because Rob is a taxi driver who has been bringing home less money and has been disappearing longer in the evening. At this point in the interaction, Rob has named Erin, not Mirim, as the recipient of the roses.

Extract 8

- 1 H: This is entrapment is what this is (.) okay.
- 2 M: This is entrapment? You're you're saying that there is something  
3 wrong with you? What what are you crazy?
- 4 H: Well I uh well why did bah why did Max tell you? That just that  
5 is not fa[ir.
- 6 R: [Rob Rob, who cares why Max said you, are you 4  
7 cheating on your wife?
- 8 H: No! I uh I [um
- 9 M: [tell me the truth!
- 10 H: I just want to know why Max told her about [this.
- 11 R: [Nonono Rob, you  
12 have one sho:t to redeem yourself. Are you che:ating on your  
13 wife of fifteen years?
- 14 H: Well huh I I I don't I don't want to even dignify that [with an
- 15 M: [Oh come



absolved of some of the moral judgment from the show. These claims do work as both a resistance to the ritual and also a resistance to the categorization of cheater.

The previous excerpt shows how the suspected cheater makes the counter-claim to malign the set up and purpose of the radio show. In examining how these claims are dealt with as an interaction, it is possible to gain deeper understanding about how the ritual works. In the first line of this transcript, Rob calls the radio show entrapment and tries to denigrate the show style in order to improve his position. Rob's claim of entrapment is immediately met by Miriam, with the response that there is something wrong with him and asking him if he is crazy. Rob tries to say that this situation is unfair, but his claim is again rejected. As a response to a demand for an explanation, Rob says that he won't "dignify that question." In using that language, Rob is giving the question the label of undignified, as well as extending that word to the radio show as a whole. In this excerpt, Rob does work to make the claim that the *War of the Roses* radio show should be categorized as entrapment, undignified, and inappropriate. These claims are counteracted and not given credence within the program.

The interruptions in this excerpt are very interesting and provide information about the social order. There are many interruptions in this excerpt, far more than there generally are in a short amount of conversation, and yet these interruptions are very telling about the interactional work being done here.

The constant interruptions show how positioning is being done through the interaction and also show how categories are being created and supported.

In this excerpt, Ryan interrupts Rob two times, in line 6 and line 11, and Miriam interrupts Rob three separate times, in line 9, line 15, and line 18. The first interruption is in line 6, when Ryan interrupts Rob as he is explaining that this radio program is unfair to redirect the interaction towards the purpose of getting answers and asks if Rob has been cheating. By successfully interrupting Rob and not allowing Rob the opportunity to continue with his claim in that instance, Ryan has effectively shut down Rob's claim of unfairness. Later, Rob is trying to place the blame for this situation on a friend of his for telling Miriam, but Ryan once again interrupts him (in line 11). This interruption is once again shut down Rob's excuse and to demands for Rob to answer whether or not he is cheating on Miriam. From these interruptions, it is possible to see how the talk is re-directed from Ryan's talk and how Rob's claims are dismissed. In this excerpt, it is possible to see how Ryan making meaning with his role as the moral arbiter. As the moral arbiter, Ryan is able to interrupt people, especially the cheater, in the interaction. Ryan's position allows for him to demand answers and ask questions that the participants clearly do not wish to answer. As the DJ, Ryan is also able to tell the participants when they have, or don't have, the opportunity to redeem themselves.

In Extract 8, Rob is not able to change his position or remove the new label of cheater. Once the moral category of cheater has been assigned to Rob,

it disallows him from claiming any rights to claim that the radio is an inappropriate site and trying to redirect the conversation to a private forum. His strategy of disagreeing with the public nature of being deceived on the radio show does not work to improve his position.

Another thing that should be examined within Extract 8 is how the assistant host Ellen contributes to the discourse. Through this entire interaction, Ellen's only turn of talk is to say "It's Erin" in line 23. Generally speaking, the role of the assistant host involves minimal interaction, as her voice is not needed, which is seen by this extract. In this particular interaction, the assistant host Ellen has gotten so caught up in clarifying that the woman named by Rob was a woman named Erin, not Ellen, for the roses. Miriam continues to repeat the name Ellen, which has caused Ellen's main focus to shift into distancing herself from Erin and not on supporting the DJ in this interaction. However, it is important to Ellen to distance herself from the role of "the other woman" in order to maintain her own position within the moral order.

This phase of the crisis is a multi-faceted stage of the social drama. In this section of the ritual interaction, participants are most concerned with demoralizing other participants. In this phase, there is some overlap with other stages, especially the next phase of redress and public shaming. This overlap is due to the manner in which the suspected cheater and original caller work towards gaining the other participants to join his or her side. The barbs launched to try to accomplish the goal of the crisis phase are embarrassing for

the participants; however the true elements of public shaming and redressive action begin in the next section of the ritual.

### **Status Degradation as Redress and Public Shaming**

The next phase of the social drama is the stage of redress. This stage is where the public shaming and morality judgments come to the forefront. As Turner (1987) argues, the rule breaker must be dealt redressive action and the community, through representatives, measures the action of its members in reference to social standards. In the *War of the Roses* radio program, this phase is a central part of the program and the aspects of shaming and redress are used for public entertainment. This is not the first instance of public shaming as entertainment; there is a long history of redress actions as a public spectacle. The stocks, still on display in historical museums and locations, are one such example of public shaming: Upon being found guilty of breaking a rule or law, the guilty would be placed in public stocks, subject to whatever embarrassment could be inflicted upon them by the observing public. With the redress, the ultimate focus of the phase is to bring forth repairs. The repairs are tied in with the acts of redress as enduring the public shame and spectacle as a result of wrongdoing is a part of making amends for breaking a social rule.

It is in this phase of the ritual that the connection between the cultural performance and social drama, as theorized by Victor Turner, and the status degradation ceremony, as discussed by Harold Garfinkel. The radio show *War of the Roses* acts as a social degradation ceremony in order to denounce a

suspected cheater and the DJ, as the moral arbiter of the show and the denouncer, is able to deliver that pronouncement in a public arena.

The process of exposing the presumably private indiscretions of infidelity and invoking the public moral judgment involves a change of status of the publicly held identity of the transgressor. The sequence should involve the step of convincing the individual that the objectively held facts of his behavior are known and in violation of public expectations of morality, thus changing his status to that of "cheater." In addition, the embodied social ritual of shaming and the phase of redress discussed in Turner's (1981, 1987) scholarship, in connection with Garfinkel's (1956) concept of the degradation ceremony, reflects Goffman's (1956, 1967, 1971) analysis of "embarrassment." The colliding worlds of public and private, between individual performance and social convention reveal the mechanisms whereby social organization is objectified and maintained through specific acts of regulation of individual behaviors.

In the excerpt below from The Kane Show's *War of the Roses*, we see a depiction of how the public shaming and redress phase of the social drama (Turner 1987) with the status degradation ceremony (Garfinkel 1956) intersect. This particular show follows the traditional *War of the Roses* format in that the DJ Kane (K) offered the suspected cheater Aaron (H) free roses to send to his romantic interest. Kane's assistant host is Sarah (S). However, this show is unusual in that there are two women who have contacted Kane to participate in *War of the Roses*. Aaron's wife is Jessica (J), who has was understanding when

Aaron told her that his cousin needed a place to stay and opened her home to her. Aaron's "cousin" is the second woman, Amanda (A), who actually is not related to Aaron, but is his girlfriend who moved into Jessica and Aaron's house. The three people (Aaron, Jessica, and Amanda) have all been living under the same roof, except now Amanda has admitted to Jessica that she is in fact Aaron's girlfriend and not his cousin. Jessica and Amanda are calling together to see who Aaron will send the roses to and to publicly shame and embarrass him. When offered the roses, Aaron choose to send them to a third woman, Ashley. At this point of the program, Aaron is aware that both Jessica and Amanda have been listening and that they are on the radio, and is trying to defend his actions by saying "it just happened."

Extract 9

- 1 K: You moved (.5) Aaron YOU MOVED [ANOTHER girl  
2 A: [Is that why you took me  
3 on a shopping spree to Victoria Secret?  
4 K: Aaron, you moved another girl into your own home with your  
5 wife. (.2) How does that accidentally just happen?  
6 A: I uh  
7 J: That's pretty pre[mediated Aaron.  
8 H: [It was a stupid thing to do. (.) It was a  
9 ridiculously stupid thing to do but I (.) listen (.) like [it just  
10 BEEP happened.

11 J: [it's not  
12 just stupid Aaron, it's just wrong.  
13 S: You slipped and fell, is that what you're saying Aaron?  
14 H: I just I haven't felt everythings been amazing between us lately,  
15 so I don't know, I BEEP just had like.  
16 A: Then why would you tell me you're going to leave her ass?  
17 H: I (.) listen (.) I'm being bom:barded by two pissed off women  
18 without being able to say [anything.  
19 K: [No. Go ahead. (.) We're going to  
20 give you a chance to speak, go ahead go head make your claim  
21 here on why this is ok. (.5) Go.  
22 H: I was (.5) feeling like my relationship with my wife was  
23 completely static, I didn't know what was happening, I met  
24 Amanda she uh she didn't have any pla[ce to live.  
25 K: [ha that's my violin hah  
26 A: Oh shut the BEEP up (.) that's not good enough for this  
27 conversation.  
28 H: Uh well thank you.  
29 A: You deserve it [asBEEP.  
30 J: [just so you know.  
31 H: What? What did I do to deserve it?

This excerpt represents the redress and public shaming phase of the ritual. In this excerpt, Aaron is trying to defend himself by morally accounting for and making a counter-claim that these things that have happened are not his fault. This excerpt shows how the redress and public shaming can be done discursively. Turner (1987) discusses how the phase of redress tends to be the most reflexive stage in the ritual, especially as the liminal space of the ritual creates a space for the process of "self-scrutiny" (p. 34). Generally speaking, the redress phase within a social drama is meant to publicly shame and embarrass a participant, in a way which would then cause that person to reconsider and evaluate his or her past actions. However, within the radio show *War of the Roses*, there is no space for the suspected cheater to reflect upon his or her actions, because that individual tends to be so focused on placing the blame on the original caller or on the radio show. As such, this phase in the radio show tends to display the public shaming and redress, without a focus on reflection. This excerpt also serves as an excellent example of Garfinkel's (1956) status degradation ceremony. There is a strong connection between successfully completing the degradation ceremony and the redress phase within the *War of the Roses* radio program. It is in this stage of the ritual where the final judgment is placed upon the suspected cheater and his or her status is degraded and lessened by the new label of cheater.

Through a careful examination of Aaron's talk, it is possible to see how Aaron attempts to morally account for his actions in an attempt to escape the

shaming and degradation of the ritual. While Aaron tries to excuse his actions in this way, the other participants of the ritual will not allow him to escape moral judgment. In line 9, Aaron pauses before and after imploring the others to listen. In that act, Aaron is making sure that his point gets across and is trying to emphasize that he needs to defend himself. He feels the need to account for his actions and to show that they aren't as bad as he is currently being judged for. In line 16, Aaron once again emphasizes the word "listen" in an attempt to get his point across. Aaron tries to blame his inability to explain his actions by saying that he's been "bombarded by two pissed off women" and misses an opportunity to reflexively consider his actions and learn from the redress that is occurring.

Before examining how Aaron morally accounts for his less than admirable actions, Kane's role as the moral arbiter in the ritual should be reexamined. As the moral arbiter, Kane is in the position to give participants permission to speak, make judgments on the actions of others, and proclaim a participant as a cheater. As the mediator, the DJ is setting the agenda for the ritual and guides the interaction. In line 18-20, Kane chooses to give Aaron the opportunity to defend himself. Throughout the interaction, Aaron has been demanding for the others to listen to him and give him an opportunity to speak. Despite this, it is only when Kane gives Aaron permission to make a claim in order to justify his actions that Aaron is given a real opportunity to speak. As the moral arbiter, Kane gets to decide who gets to speak and whose claims are valid and

conversely, whose claims are invalid and insufficient. Throughout the interaction, the different participants orient towards the DJ, which is a result of his position in the ritual, but also supports the continuation of that role.

As previously stated, the redress stage of the ritual also parallels with the degradation ceremony. Garfinkel (1956) outlines two main roles within a successful degradation ceremony, the "denouncer," who performs the denunciation, and the "perpetrator," who is the party to be denounced (p. 422). As the moral arbiter, Kane also is placed in the position of being the denouncer. As the suspected/confirmed cheater in this particular *War of the Roses*, Aaron is the perpetrator. Garfinkel (1956) discusses how the event of denouncement involves a preference for a type of event over the type of event that occurred. In the *War of the Roses* radio program, the preferred event type is for the suspected cheater to send roses to the original caller. However, in the excerpt above and most radio programs, the perpetrator chooses another woman and confirms the caller's suspicions. Through the process of the degradation ceremony, the perpetrator is publicly denounced by the denouncer, played by the DJ, who is aided by his assistant radio host and the original caller. In the previous excerpt, it is possible to see how the DJ acts as a moral arbiter, as well as how the role of moral arbiter relates to the role of denouncer.

After receiving Kane's permission, Aaron gets to make his claim (lines 21-23.) His account for his past actions is offered in the passive voice, as if to say that these things that have happened are not his fault. He didn't know that

these things were happening because he wasn't the one making these things happen. His relationship with his wife was unchanging and Amanda needed a place to live. In the moral ritual of *War of the Roses*, he has been cast into the role of the cheater. Yet, by accounting for himself in this way, he is recasting himself from the description of cheater to the role of a hero. As Carolyn Baker (2004) discusses, membership categorization is accomplished in talk. One of the main points that Baker makes is that membership categorization is that it "addresses how people 'do' descriptions and how they recognize descriptions." People recognize and identify with membership categorizations, which invoke a certain social order.

At this point in the ritual and degradation ceremony, Aaron is trying to reject the new category of cheater. Aaron realizes that he has been labeled as an immoral player in this social drama and wants to re-label himself in order to escape the lowering position of the degradation ceremony. If he is not the cheater, but a powerless person in a marriage that is unchanging, he is not a bad person. If he is not a bad person, but is also able to rescue a girl who had no place to go and needed help, then he is actually the hero of this situation. Aaron tries to reject the judgment of the ritual, yet is not successful in that goal because the person who is able to make judgments in the ritual is the DJ Kane. This is seen as Kane immediately rejects his claim in line 24 by laughing at him and dismissing him. Amanda then speaks up and supports Kane's rejection of

the account and says that his explanation isn't good enough for this conversation.

This conversation happens on the record and the meaning made within the ritual transcends the liminal space. The social degradation that occurs within the ritual is a label that stays with the cheater beyond the space of the ritual. Each person is intent on making the right claims, but the only people who can be right are the ones who have been judged within the ritual to be morally favorable. Aaron cannot be right in this situation and he cannot defend himself. His actions of cheating not just on Jessica with Amanda, but also on both of them with a 3<sup>rd</sup> woman has caused him to be placed in the role of immoral cheater. It doesn't matter how Aaron chooses to make his claims and reject the judgment; ultimately, Aaron cannot justify himself in a way that allows him to leave that position.

The phase of redress is the stage of the ritual in which elements of public shaming are enacted. The ritual of the *War of the Roses* occurs within a public space, which is a necessary aspect of the social drama and the status degradation ceremony. Within a public space, the information is solidified as being on the record and integrated into social life. As Garfinkel (1956) discusses, the status degradation ceremony requires a public arena, as this allows for the completion of the ceremony. In a public space, the change of status for the perpetrator becomes socially accepted. If the ritual occurred within a private

space, no one would know that the perpetrator's status has been degraded from the ceremony.

Additionally, embarrassment is an important outcome from the acts of redress and public shaming. The embarrassment is meant to serve a higher moral purpose, as the socially accepted thought tends to be that if one has been shamed and embarrassed by their unacceptable actions, then that individual will have learned about the social and moral expectations for their actions and will have learned not to make such mistakes again. Within the redress stage of the *War of the Roses* ritual, the interaction shows how the perpetrator's status is dishonored and re-categorized as a cheater.

### **The Schism and Final Separation**

The final ritual stage in the radio show *War of the Roses* is the schism or reintegration phase. Turner (1987) names this phase the schism or reintegration and discusses this phase as the site where the repairs from the stage of redress either succeed and the group reintegrates or the repairs fail and the group breaks apart. This phase is where the final judgment is made about the actions of the suspected (or confirmed) cheater in the *War of the Roses*. In the radio show, the schism phase is generally the final moments of the show where the relationship is judged to have been irreparably damaged from the situation and the couple breaks apart. In this stage, the DJ generally makes some sort of judgment about the actions of the cheater. The DJ, from his position as moral

arbiter, also calls upon the original caller to clarify that she or he will not put up with such behavior, which solidifies the separation aspect of the schism.

Turner (1987) defines the schism stage as the final phase of the social drama is when the repairs are judged to have worked or failed. If the repairs work, society reintegrates the rule breaker, but if the repairs are a failure, then the group falls apart and there is an irreparable schism between the two participants in the relationship. Presumably, this means that this stage will end with an irreparable schism between the two participants. The general social rule is that once someone knows that his or her partner is cheating, that person will not accept such unacceptable behavior and leave the person. This expectation is reflected within the ritual itself, as seen in the schism phase.

The schism is enacted through interaction within the ritual, as shown by the following extract. This particular excerpt is from the Dave Ryan Show's version of *War of the Roses*. Dave (D) is the DJ in this version of the show and is assisted by his assistant host Lena (L). Jackie (J) has contacted Dave because she is suspicious about her boyfriend Terry (T) lately. She specifically cites an incidence that happened on New Year's Day, when Terry told her that he had to go pick something up from Best Buy and was gone for four hours, and came back with nothing. He told her that all of the Best Buys were closed and spent the time driving around going from store to store. When Lena called Terry, he chose to send the roses to Carla, who is his ex-girlfriend and part of the reason that Jackie was suspicious.

### Extract 10

- 1 T: Can I have can I have someone that uh have someone who  
2 doesn't bitch and uh yell at me all the time?
- 3 J: You know what apparently you've been with Carla this whole  
4 time and apparently you never even stopped seeing her so (.)  
5 u:h.
- 6 D: Ok.
- 7 L: Alright.
- 8 D: Okay well uh I think I think you know no matter what Terry  
9 says here Jackie, if you're done, yo:u're done and I think that  
10 this is a relationship that I'm not even going to try to talk you  
11 guys into working [it out.
- 12 L: [God no.
- 13 D: It doesn't sound like (.5) number one you don't have a lot of  
14 time invested in it, number two if he's seeing Carla and you  
15 know that you are because you sent the roses ta to Carla and  
16 said you sorry you couldn't be with her on New Years. (.) The  
17 time disappeared at Best Buy and now Jackie's done? (1) I uh  
18 we're not even going to try to talk you into working things out.

In Extract 10, the schism mostly occurs by means of the DJ as the moral arbiter. Jackie and Terry, as seen from their first two turns of talk, are too overly focused with interactional work that happens in earlier phases to continue

the ritual. They are stuck on the blaming aspect of the crisis stage and the shaming aspects of the redress stage. Dave accomplishes interesting interactional work in the above excerpt in order to complete the necessary final phase of the ritual and to finish the show as a part of his role as the moral arbiter.

In the initial turn of talk in this excerpt, Terry is trying to defend himself for cheating on Jackie. He makes his counter-claim in a passive way, in an attempt to keep the focus off of him. Jackie's response is to reiterate the point that Terry has been seeing Carla this time. At the same time, their attacks on each other are particularly interesting to me. The interesting aspect of these two turns of talk is that neither one seems to be able to focus on delivering particularly shameful or hurtful barbs to the other, and seem to be floundering just to think these two insults.

Previously in the show, they were much more harsh and angry with each other, yet at this point, they seem to have run out of steam, but seem unable to let go of the chance to try to hurt one another. Terry is repeating himself and says "uh" multiple times because he doesn't really know what to say. Jackie starts to build steam about Terry seeing Carla, but pauses towards the end of her talk and seems unable to keep fighting. As the agenda setter in the radio show, Dave steps in when he does because he can see from the way Jackie and Terry are talking at the beginning of the excerpt that they will continue to argue with each other just because they can. This excerpt shows the necessity of

having the DJ as the director through the interaction. Without his input and guidance, the interaction quickly deteriorates.

From the excerpt above, further information can be gained by examining what it means to be the moral arbiter in this ritual. The DJ, as the moral arbiter, has the highest position within the ritual. In line 9, Dave says "I'm not even going to try to talk you guys into working it out," which is a sentiment he repeats in lines 16-17. This statement implies that in his role, Dave could help them work it out if their relationship was worth saving. This remark is especially telling in terms of understanding what it means to be the moral arbiter. This shows that the DJ is charged with not only denouncing the perpetrator and publically shaming him or her in order to degrade the status and change his or her membership category, but also with making the final decision for the continuation of the participants' relationship.

The interruption in line 12 above shows the supporting role held by the assistant host. Lena interrupts Dave when he is saying that Jackie and Terry's relationship isn't worth working out. Generally speaking, an interruption is a negative breach within an interaction. In this particularly instance, the interruption made by the assistant host is working collaboratively with the DJ. Lena's response serves as an immediately negative gut reaction to the idea that Jackie and Terry would try to work things out and stay together. As the overarching point that Dave is trying to argue for is that the participants should break up, Lena is only helping Dave to argue that overall purpose.

The final phase of the *War of the Roses* ritual is the schism phase, which is where the repairs enacted are judged to have failed. In this phase, it is possible to ascertain more information about the role of the DJ as the moral arbiter. The final judgment of these failed repairs is made by the DJ. The DJ confirms with the original caller that she or he will not put up with staying in a relationship with the person who cheated. The interaction in the schism phase reveals how the culture views cheating. Once the perpetrator's status has been degraded and re-categorized as a cheater, the other participants publicly separate from that participant.

\* \* \*

In this chapter, I have examined the final three of the four phases of the social drama. These steps are the crisis stage, the redress and public shaming phase, and the final schism. Through the interaction and process of these three stages of the ritual in *War of the Roses* radio show, the status of the cheater is distorted and reduced to that of cheater. Baker (2000) discusses how membership categories are linked to particular actions and that within a category, people do descriptions and make claims. The perpetrator's actions are what caused the re-categorization into cheater, which is a label that will stick with the participant beyond the liminal space of the radio show. While the cheater might try to defend himself against the status degradation, this attempt fails through the ritual process. As the moral arbiter in ritual, the DJ ultimately

judges that the moral breach made by the cheater is one too large to be repaired within the ritual.

## Chapter Five

### Conclusion

The objective of my thesis was to interpret how the *War of the Roses* radio show acts as a modern day morality ritual of degradation and redress. As a ritual, it upholds the moral order as an aspect of the social order and involves themes of moral condemnation, lessening of social identity, and public embarrassment. The morality ritual itself occurs within a liminal space that creates a new meaning, especially in terms of altering the status of the cheater. In this thesis, I offer an empirical examination of ritual through the analysis of *War of the Roses*.

In my first chapter, I demonstrated how understandings of ritual, morality, discourse, public shaming, liminal spaces, and radio talk are addressed by the *War of the Roses* radio show. The knowledge gained from intersecting these topics is done in interaction. This understanding reflects the larger social order outside of the ritual.

In the second chapter, I described the different *War of the Roses* data sets that I used excerpts of within the analysis portion of the thesis, as well as to gain a broader understanding of how the moral ritual itself works from show to show. In this chapter I also outlined my methodology of discourse analysis (DA)

and membership categorization analysis (MCA), which both developed from ethnomethodology.

In the following chapters, I examined the radio show itself enacts a ritual of morality and redress, while analyzing the gendered expectations of these roles. My discussion of the different roles within the ritual and the assumptions of gender for those roles reflect cultural and social norms. By examining the roles assigned to each gender and how these characters participate interactionally within the ritual divulges much information about the moral values within the culture and society.

The basic premise of the *War of the Roses* radio program involves a caller, generally female, who suspects his or her partner, generally male, of cheating. Once the radio DJ, a male participant, and assistant radio, a female participant, have approved the claim made by the caller, the DJ performs a phone call to confirm whether or not the suspected cheater is in fact being unfaithful within the relationship. The ritual order of the radio show involves exposing the cheater's social breach to a public audience and then confronting him or her with their infidelity. The purpose of the confrontation is to publicly shame and redress the cheater for their immoral and unacceptable social behavior, while degrading their status within the society.

I have shown how the ritual of the *War of the Roses* radio program reinforces the moral order as tacit knowledge (Polanyi 1967). One way that it accomplishes this is through the DJ's position as a moral arbiter within the

interaction. As the moral arbiter in the interactional ritual, the DJ is able to advance moral judgments about cheating and to provide a voice to the perspective of the unheard listeners. In this way, the public medium stands in for the collective judgment of the observers that is presumed in traditional public shame. Additionally, I have examined how the radio show itself is a site of moral adjudication. Within the ritual, the perpetrator or cheater is guilty of a moral breach, and as such, they must be shamed and dishonored for the creation of an infraction within the social order.

One aspect of the DJ's position as the moral arbiter is that he voices the final say as to which claims and accounts are accepted and which are rejected. This shows the DJ's role as an authority figure, which is an important aspect of his role within the ritual. The War of the Roses ritual serves as a site of moral adjudication, and within such a ritual, an authority is necessary in order to make decisions and judgments about the rules and rule suspension.

Understanding how this ritual works as a site of moral adjudication as well as how it enacts public shaming and degradation is essential to understanding the moral values of a culture. The ritual's gendered roles also show how gender plays into everyday life and reflects what the society's gender norms are. The radio show is accomplished as a part of a collaborative interaction of the ritual elements. The public and private frames of self and social evaluation are revealed in these encounters and provide some inroads into assessing moral discourse and development in our contemporary society.

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Public shaming and redress rituals have a long history in our society, and have expanded their impact with modern media. There are similar episodes of public shaming that has become increasingly accessible through the media, especially in the transgression of relationship and marriage infidelity. From various talk show formats involving such confrontations, to public exposure of athletes and politicians, to a television show *Cheaters*, the core elements of this kind of surveillance and embarrassment over infidelity may be approaching a discrete social ritual.

One reason for this proliferation may be the normative status of marital infidelity among the public in contemporary society. That is, we tend to regard relations such as marriage as exclusively “private” and not a reflection of a social member’s publically held and judged character. This standing holds firm until a member of the private relationship has betrayed the exalted marital status. At the time that infidelity has caused the marital trust to be broken, some form of punishment must happen, which is where *War of the Roses* comes in to protect the status of marital fidelity.

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The *War of the Roses* radio show depicts a morality ritual with elements of status degradation and redress. Performing the analysis of the *War of the Roses* radio show has led me to more questions for future research and analysis. The ritual itself reflects the social order, yet it also raises questions about the

values upheld by the culture. The ritual itself works to shame and degrade a participant, but why is our society so interested in rituals of degradation and shaming? The *War of the Roses* is just one example of a morality ritual, incorporating elements of public shame and social status degradation.

There is a double standard within the show, which is that it lies and deceives the suspected cheater in order to catch the lies and action of cheating, yet what makes these acts of lying and deception acceptable? The deception within the ritual seems acceptable by the listeners and by those who enact the deception, yet the cheater constantly fights against this deception. Why does the act of cheating prior to the ritual make every argument from that participant invalid? Once the category of cheater has been applied, that person is dismissed not just within the ritual, but through social interaction beyond the limits of the ritual. Additionally, why is our society so focused on upholding the ideal of relationships? The social ideal of a relationship is seen in the need to punish and degrade cheaters so that they, among the listening public, will learn the moral lesson that cheating is unacceptable. My analysis of the ritual shows that there is a social desire for relationships, but it does not explain why there is that preference within our society.

I opened this thesis with a quote from Oscar Wilde "Morality, like art, means drawing a line someplace." In understanding the morality ritual at play within the *War of the Roses* radio show, we are able to see where the line is drawn. This line separates the cultural ideal of right and wrong. Within the

script of the ritual, some participants are always on the side of right and some are always on the side of wrong, which is accomplished through the interactional work of the show. Once the implications and understanding of what is right and what is wrong within a society is shown with in the ritual, the audience is then able to privately make their own judgments on their own experiences.

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## Appendix A: Transcription Notation

The basic transcript is numbered by line and each speaker is shown by the letter assigned to him or her, as seen below.

- 1     A:     Speaker A is talking  
2     B:     Speaker B talks next.

Within the turns of talk, there are multiple symbols and notations that show differences within the speech.

- (.)           A slightly noticeable pause in speech  
(.2), (.5)    Timed pauses, to the nearest tenth of a second  
°word°        Words between the degree signs are quiet  
((sniff))     Transcriber's effort to represent something difficult or impossible to represent phonetically  
wo:rd         Colons show that the speaker has stretched the sound  
word         Underlined sounds are louder  
WORD         Capital sounds are louder and more emphasized than underlined  
wo-           A dash shows a sharp cut-off of a sound

