

Rather than giving a list of the specific parts that a cartoon should have, Chad provides a relatively contentless list. Of the four kinds of parts he named, only one is specific: "scary parts." "Good parts" is not specific; all parts of a work should be good. "This things" is a kind of filler (also a speech error), and "everything else" is a filler which sums up. Yet the effect of Chad's comment is clear: Cartoons should include a variety of types of scenes. The meaning of the statement lies not in the meaning of the words, but in the patterned rhythm: the listing intonation.

The intonational pattern of a speaker's utterance also provides a resource for the participation and play of others. This was seen in (13), where David fit the word "bed" into the rhythm of my mock chant. Throughout the dinner table conversation, Steve, the host, engaged in self-mockery by simultaneously displaying and parodying hosting behavior – in Goffman's (1974) terms, "guying" so as to perform the behavior and distance himself from it at the same time. (The model for his parody, according to Steve, was his grandmother.) Picking up on Steve's pattern, I urged Peter to stop carving the turkey and start eating by saying, "Sit, sit." David immediately played on this repetitive pattern by saying, "No, carve, carve."

The reduplication of "Sit, sit" signifies intensity ("Sit immediately," or "I insist that you sit"). By contrast, the reduplication in "Carve, carve" signifies repeated aspect: "Keep carving," or "Carve away." Thus David used a repetition of my rhythmic pattern to echo but also to transform the meaning of the pattern: By repeating, he used it as a resource for his own creativity.

Repetition also shows repetitive aspect in an explanation by Chad of a certain method of learning. In a discussion of learning theories, he described the behavior of a learner by saying, "and you miss and you miss and you miss and you miss and you miss." The repetition communicates iconically, "You repeatedly miss."

A final example of listing intonation, and also an exact repetition for repeated aspect, comes from my study of modern Greek conversational stories told by women about being molested (see Appendix I for the background to this corpus of stories). The speaker is telling a group of women about an experience in which a man threw her down and tried to rape her. She dramatizes what she said to him:

- (21) 1 Ton evriza, "Dhen dreprese, palianthrope?"
 2 Toupa, toupa, toupa ekei . . .
 3 "Satyre, yero, aidhestate, saliarì,"
 4 Toupa, toupa, toupa.
 1 I cursed him, "Aren't you ashamed, scoundrel?"
 2 I-told-him, I-told-him, I-told-him there . . .

- 3 "Satyr, (dirty) old man, repulsive (creature), slobberer,"
 4 I-told-him, I-told-him, I-told-him.

In line 3, the four epithets with which the speaker addresses her attacker seem to represent a longer list of names that she called him. Furthermore, the two sets of triple "toupa" (tupa) have the rhythmic effect of machine-gun fire. (The staccato effect of the plosive stops in /t/ and /p/ is hardly communicated by the English paraphrase, "I-told-him.") It gives the impression that she kept yelling at the man, emitting a stream of abuse.

Bounding episodes

Episodes within a larger conversation are often bounded by repetitions at the beginning, which operate as a kind of theme-setting, and at the end, forming a kind of coda. This is not surprising, since openings and closings are often the most ritualized parts of any discourse. In (22), a short duet between Peter and me, repetition both launches and terminates an episode of a discussion of how, upon first getting divorced, one wants to date many people (Peter and I were both divorced, he very recently and I long since); but then:

- (22) 1 DEBORAH Then you get bored.
 2 PETER We'll, I think I got bored.
 3 [Deborah laughs]
 4 Well I-I mean basically what I feel is
 5 what I really LIKE . . . is people.
 6 And getting to know them really well.
 7 And you just CAN'T get to know
 8 . . . TEN people REALLY WELL.
 9 You can't do it.
 9 DEBORAH Yeah right.
 10 You have to-- there's no-
 11 Yeah there's no time.
 12 PETER [There's not time.
 13 DEBORAH Yeah . . . it's true.

Lines 1–2 set the theme and launch the episode when Peter transforms my statement from line 1 ("Then you get bored") into line 2 ("We'll, I think I got bored.") His comeback is amusing (note my laughter) partly because of its rhythm: He draws out "well" and then utters "I think I got bored" in a quick, sardonic manner. The humor derives from the fact that it is a repetition, the quickness of his utterance conveying, iconically, that the boredom I predicted he would eventually experience has already, quickly, overtaken him.

In lines 3–8, Peter explains his statement in line 2. His argument is then structured by a series of self-repetitions, as each utterance picks up a word

or phrase from a previous one. This is best illustrated by reproducing the transcript with repeated words circled and linked:

- 3 Well I-I mean basically (what) I feel is
 - 4 (what) I really like . . . is people
 - 5 And (getting to know) them (really) well.
 - 6 And (you just CAN'T) get to know
 - 7 . . . TEN people (REALLY) WELL.
 - 8 (You can't) do it.
-

Though repetition is pervasive in this middle section of the episode, it is not as monolithic as the repetition in which I join Peter to provide the episode's closing boundary. In lines 9-13, Peter and I wove each other's words together into a coda comparable to that of a musical composition, through the picking up and repeating of "Yeah," "there's no(t)," and "time."

The preceding discussion demonstrates some of the functions of repetition in conversation. The functions illustrated are not exhaustive, but they give a sense of the kind of work repeating does.

The range of repetition in a segment of conversation

Thus far I have demonstrated different types and functions of repetition by reference to a large number of short conversational excerpts. Furthermore I have concentrated on the repetition of phrases and clauses, including the repetition of rhythmic patterns thereby created. To see how a variety of levels of repetition work together to create involvement, in the next section I show a range of types of repetition in a single short segment from the Thanksgiving conversation.

First I present the segment, a short interchange on the topic of eating, as I had originally transcribed it, and invite readers to examine it for instances of repetition:

- (23) CHAD I go out a lot.
 DEBORAH I go out and eat.
 PETER You go out? The trouble with ME is if I don't prepare and eat well, I eat a LOT . . . Because it's not satisfying. And so if I'm just eating like cheese and crackers, I'll just STUFF myself on cheese and crackers. But if I fix myself something nice, I don't have to eat that much.
 DEBORAH Oh yeah?
 PETER I've noticed that, yeah.
 DEBORAH Hmm . . . Well then it works, then it's a good idea.

PETER It's a good idea in terms of eating, it's not a good idea in terms of time.

To facilitate identification of repetition, I later laid the segment out in lines and moved bits of the lines around. I present the same segment in that form below:

- 1 CHAD I go out a lot.
- 2 DEBORAH I go out and eat.
- 3 PETER You go out?
- 4 The trouble with ME is
- 5 if I don't prepare
- 6 and eat well,
- 7 I eat a LOT . . .
- 8 Because it's not satisfying.
- 9 And so if I'm just eating like cheese and crackers,
- 10 I'll just STUFF myself on cheese and crackers.
- 11 But if I fix myself something nice,
- 12 I don't have to eat that much.
- 13 DEBORAH Oh yeah?
- 14 PETER I've noticed that, yeah.
- 15 DEBORAH Hmm . . .
- 16 Well then it works,
- 17 then it's a good idea.
- 18 PETER It's a good idea in terms of eating,
- 19 it's not a good idea in terms of time.

Verse structure

The fertile field of ethnopoetics has identified "poetic" structure in American Indian narrative (Tedlock 1972) and, more recently, conversation (Woodbury 1985). Hymes (1981), working in this tradition, calls attention to verse structure created by patterns of repetition and variation, which he sees as having been neglected for the more readily salient line structure. In this segment, I initially saw only the patterns of lines: phrases and clauses bounded by intonational contours and verbal particles which Chafe (1986) shows characterize all spoken discourse. Hymes (p.c.) pointed out that the segment has a verse structure as well. The segment can be seen as having three verses, separated by line spaces in the transcript, which are strikingly similar in structure to the pattern seen in (22), also a duet between Peter and me. Lines 1-3 of the current example constitute an opening, and lines 15-19 a closing or coda. As in (22), these bounding sections are characterized by the most striking repetition. The center verse constitutes the meat of the interchange, like the filling in a sandwich, made up of an if/then proposition that Peter creates and elaborates (i.e. If I don't

take the time to prepare good food, I eat a lot; if I do prepare good food, I eat less).

Lexical repetition

Perhaps the first thing one notices about this segment is the repetition of the word "eat." The best way to represent visually the cohesive function of these (and other) repetitions is to highlight them on the transcript itself. Therefore I present the segment again, with the highlighting of the repetition under discussion superimposed on it:

- 1 CHAD I go out a lot.
 2 DEBORAH I go out and eat.
 3 PETER You go out?
 4 The trouble with me is
 5 if I don't prepare
 6 and eat well,
 7 I eat a lot....
 8 Because it's not satisfying.
 9 And so if I'm just eating like cheese and crackers,
 10 I'll just STUFF myself on cheese and crackers.
 11 But if I fix myself something nice,
 12 I don't have to eat that much.
 13 DEBORAH Oh yeah?
 14 PETER I've noticed that, yeah.
 15 DEBORAH Hmm...
 16 Well then it works,
 17 then it's a good idea.
 18 PETER It's a good idea in terms of eating,
 19 it's not a good idea in terms of time.

A number of other repetitions are quickly perceived when the transcript is studied briefly. First is the repetition of the two-word verb "go out" found in the triplet uttered by all three speakers in the opening verse:

- 1 CHAD I go out a lot.
 2 DEBORAH I go out and eat.
 3 PETER You go out?

In addition to setting the topic of talk, eating, these lines establish a sense of rapport among the three speakers by their echoes of each other's use of the phrase "go out."

In the middle verse, a solo by Peter, there is a highly noticeable repetition of the phrase "cheese and crackers" as well as of the words "just," "myself," and "yeah":

- 9 And so if I'm just eating like cheese and crackers,
 10 I'll just STUFF myself on cheese and crackers.
 11 But if I fix myself something nice,
 12 I don't have to eat that much.
 13 DEBORAH Oh yeah?
 14 PETER I've noticed that, yeah.

When Peter utters "cheese and crackers" for the second time (line 10), he does so more quickly than the first, and his intonation remains steady and low across the phrase. The effect of this intonation is to mark the self-reference to his earlier utterance of the same phrase.

The meanings of the two instances of "just" are somewhat different. In the first instance, line 9 "And so if I'm just eating like cheese and crackers," "just" is a mitigator, meaning "only": "if I'm eating only cheese and crackers." But in the second instance, line 10, "I'll just STUFF myself on cheese and crackers," it is an intensifier: "I'll absolutely stuff myself with cheese and crackers." This difference in the meanings of the repeated word "just" underlines the significance of its repetition. In other words, he didn't just (!) repeat the word because he meant the same thing. It also illustrates again that repetition is a resource by which the same word or phrase can be used in a different way.

When Peter says line 14, "I've noticed that, yeah," his "yeah" repeats mine in the preceding line, ratifying my listener response to his talk and giving a sense of coda to that verse of the segment. Like the first three lines, the last four are highly repetitive:

- 15 DEBORAH Hmm...
 16 Well then it works,
 17 then it's a good idea.
 18 PETER It's a good idea in terms of eating,
 19 it's not a good idea in terms of time.

The words and phrases "then," "it's a good idea," and "in terms of," which make up the bulk of this part of the discourse, are all repeated. The repetition of these words serves to highlight the words that are not repeated: "eating" and "time," the key points of contrast. They are highlighted by their newness in contrast to the sameness of the repeated words.

Another example of repetition involves items somewhat farther from each other which nonetheless seem to cohere through their rhyming:

- I have drawn the connection between lines 8 and 19 as a broken rather than a solid line because it strikes me that the argument to be made for the repetition of "it's not" is a bit weaker than that to be made for the repetition of "a lot." This is both because the lines in which "it's not" appears are further apart, and also because "it's not" is a structure occasioned by grammatical conventions for negation in English. Nonetheless, there are other grammatically correct ways to effect negation, such as "it isn't." The choice of "it's not" rather than other alternatives echoes the earlier use of "a lot."
- Another kind of patterning which is also closely linked to the grammar of the language is that of pronouns and discourse markers:

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- Although these function words are likely or even required to occur frequently in any English discourse, nonetheless their frequent occurrence plays a part in giving the discourse its characteristic shape and sound. In this sense, their repetition plays a significant role in establishing the shared universe of discourse created by conversational interaction in that language. As Becker (1984b: 435) demonstrates for Javanese textbuilding strategies, "This kind of non-rational homology is one of the things that binds a culture." Such conventionalized figures both grow out of and contribute to the textual and poetic aesthetic of a language and culture. Perceiving and using them is part of what makes an individual a member of the culture.

In this way, the idea that Peter expresses is a response to what Chad and I said, at the same time that the form of his response – its repetition – is a ratification of our preceding contributions. Ongoing discourse is thus woven of the threads of prior talk. When fishing for words, speakers cast a net in the immediately surrounding waters of conversation.

Here the choice of “fix myself” seems to be occasioned by the pattern of the preceding “stuff myself.” This becomes even more compelling when the choice of “fix myself” is considered in contrast to the use of “prepare” in lines 5–6: “If I don’t prepare and eat well.” The unmarked case, one might surmise, would have been for Peter to repeat the same word he used to introduce the idea: “prepare.”

An example of repetition of sounds in this segment is the repetition of initial /v/ in line 19:

- 19 it's not a good idea in terms of time.

Repetition of medial vowels was seen in the "lot/not" pattern discussed above. It is also seen in the repetition of the vowels in "just," "stuff," and "much".

- 9 And so if I'm just eating like cheese and crackers,
 10 I'll just ~~stir~~ myself on cheese and crackers.
 11 But if I ~~fix~~ myself something nice,
 12 I don't have to eat that much.

One wonders whether the vowel sound /ʌ/ in "trouble" (line 4, "The trouble with me is") should also be included in this constellation. In order to know how much attention to pay to such patterns of sound, it might help to know if it is statistically significant or random for vowel sounds to recur in such close proximity. In the absence of such evidence, however, it can nonetheless be observed that repetition of sounds contributes to the musical effect of the discourse. One need only listen to a language with recurrent vowel or consonant sounds not used in one's own language, to experience the impressions they make—for example, for Americans, the recurrent nasals in Portuguese, pharyngeals in Arabic, or velar fricatives in Hebrew.

Repetition as rapport

The end of the segment under analysis provides an example of how the form of the discourse can serve to create rapport and ratify an interlocutor's contribution. In lines 18 and 19, Peter disagrees with my comment that taking time to prepare food is a good idea, but he does so by casting his disagreement in the paradigm of my utterance:

- 15 DEBORAH Hmmmm . . .
 16 Well then it works,
 17 then it's a good idea.
 18 PETER It's a good idea in terms of eating,
 19 it's not a good idea in terms of time.

Thus the form of the discourse, repetition, sends a metanessage of rapport by ratifying my contribution, even as its message disagrees with what I said.

Individual and cultural differences

I believe it is by means of such metanessages of rapport that apparently contentious conversational styles may be based on highly affiliative motives, as found in what I call the high-involvement style of the New York Jewish speakers in my original study of the Thanksgiving conversation (Tannen 1984), of whom Peter is one, and the Philadelphia Jewish speakers among whom Schiffin (1984) observed "Jewish argument as sociability."

I believe it is not coincidental that this style is characterized by much repetition, as Schiffin's examples demonstrate (though her own interests in the examples lie elsewhere). It is found as well in the repetition of formulas to create rapport while disagreeing in the highly ritualized modern Greek verbal art of "mantinades" as described by Herzfeld (1985).

This raises the question of the extent to which frequency of repetition is culturally variable. My research documents the pervasiveness of repetition for conversation in modern Greek and in several varieties of American English. Conversations recorded by my students indicate that all conversations exhibit some, but some exhibit a lot. The conversation of adolescents is particularly rich in repetition, not only among Americans but also, according to Nordberg (1985), among Swedes. I expect, however, that degree and type of repetition differ with cultural and individual style.

Since repetition of sentences and ideas is a means of keeping talk going in interaction, the relative frequency of this type of repetition should be correlated with the cultural value placed on the presence of talk in interaction. This is supported by the relative infrequency of repetition as well as formulaic expressions as reported by Scollon (p.c.) among Athabaskan Indians, who place relative positive value on silence in interaction (Scollon 1985). In striking contrast are the talk-valuing cultures of East European Jewish-Americans mentioned above, and of Black Americans (Erickson 1984), among those who have been observed to use a lot of syntactic repetition.

Becker 1984b suggests that the repeating strategies which he describes in a wayang drama are characteristic of a Javanese aesthetic of density. Moreover, he observes repeating strategies in other Southeast Asian cultures, including characteristic pathologies: A common way of displaying madness in Java is echolalia (p.c.). Another practice that Becker (1984c:109) describes fits this pattern as well. When East Javanese audiences enjoy a lecture, they repeat phrases which they appreciate to their neighbors (a practice reminiscent of what I have described in American conversation as "savoring repetition"). At least one American guest lecturer was unnerved by the buzz of voices in the audience, mistaking the show of appreciation for lack of attention. This misunderstanding results from divergent, culturally patterned strategies of repetition.

The most extensive analysis of repetition as a culturally and linguistically favored strategy is found in the work of Johnstone on modern Arabic prose (Koch 1983a,b, Johnstone 1987b). Johnstone (1987a) argues that the grammatical structure of Arabic makes repetition strategies especially available to Arabic speakers.

Although no scholar, so far as I know, has focused exclusively or intensively on repeating strategies in Black American rhetorical style, analyses

of Black American discourse indicate that it makes use of self- and allo-repetition in characteristic ways. Erickson (1984) finds in a conversation among Black American adolescents the allo-repetition of call/response that typifies audience participation in Black worship (a response pattern described by Heath 1983 as well).¹⁹ Self-repetition is also found in Black English conversation. For example, Hansell and Ajiroutu (1982:92) note, in discourse among a white researcher, a black assistant, and two black teenagers recorded by John Gumperz, one of the teenagers adopts a "public address" style similar to that used by black preachers and politicians.²⁰ Although the authors are concerned with other aspects of this discourse, the transcript shows that it includes both exact repetition ("Now you know I'm right about it/you know I'm right about it") and parallelism built on the construction "X is a dog".²⁰

- (24) Now they make it look like Wallace is a dog
and Nixon is the next dog
and Humphrey is
well... [laughter] you know
a little bit higher than the other two dogs...
[laughter] but he's still a dog. (91)

Cultural patterns do not prescribe the form that a speaker's discourse will take but provide a range from which individuals choose strategies that they habitually use in expressing their individual styles. In examples from the Thanksgiving dinner conversation, preliminary impressions suggest that Steve often repeated his own words, as in (6) "I never took that seriously" and (17) "I don't want to hear about it". Peter frequently shadowed others' utterances, as seen also in (6) "I never could take it seriously" and (18) "In the Bronx", and will be seen in (34). Chad frequently used relatively contentless listing intonation, as in (19), "come in and run in" and (20), "scary parts, good parts, this things, and everything else". And I frequently immediately paraphrase myself, as in (23), "Then it works, then it's a good idea." Documenting individual and cultural repeating strategies, like other aspects of individual and cultural styles, remains a relatively unexplored and promising area of research.

Other genres

It is a premise of this study that literary (in the sense of artfully developed) genres elaborate and manipulate strategies that are spontaneous in conversation. Having demonstrated that repetition is pervasive and functional in conversation, I now turn briefly to examples of nonconversational discourse types to show that they use repetition strategies such as those observed in conversation. As mentioned at the outset, Johnstone (1987)

notes that formal or ritualized discourse is often particularly rich in repetition. In this section I give brief examples of three formal discourse types: public speaking, oratory, and drama, to show that they make artful use of the same repetitive strategies that I have shown in conversation.

Public speaking

The following excerpt is from an address given by John Fanselow, an unusually gifted public speaker, at the 1983 Georgetown University Round Table on Languages and Linguistics. In his "paper" (which was actually an extemporaneously composed but nonetheless polished and fluent talk), Fanselow was explaining what he calls "the tape recording syndrome": the pattern of behavior by which teachers who are ostensibly attempting to record their classes for analysis and self-evaluation keep turning up without having made the recording, blaming their failure on one or another tape recorder malfunction.²¹

- (25) The point is, I think,
(I've done this in many countries incidentally
even Japan, where, you know, electronics is no problem.)
Same syndrome.
Same syndrome.
Both with American teachers,
and teachers from other lands.
I think we're fearful of looking.
I think we're fearful of looking.
I think teachers are fearful of looking,
and we're fearful of looking.

The repetition that characterizes this excerpt is set in relief by contrast with the same comment as it appears in Fanselow's (1983:171) written version of his paper:

- (26) One reason I think many teachers fail to tape for a long time is that they are fearful of listening to themselves. And, I think that a central reason why we who prepare teachers avoid evaluations is that we, like those we prepare, are fearful of listening and looking as well. The tape recording syndrome is widespread.

There is parallelism in the written version, too, but it is less rigid. Furthermore, the "fearful of looking" construction appears twice in the written version, compared to four times in the spoken one.

Contrasting the printed version makes clear some of the functions of repetition in the spoken version. The point that "The tape recording syndrome is widespread," which is lexicalized in the written version (i.e. conveyed by external evaluation), is conveyed in the spoken version by internal evaluation accomplished by repetition:

Same syndrome.
Same syndrome.

The repetition of the phrase "same syndrome" implies that the syndrome is widespread; repetition, in other words, is working to communicate repeated aspect. Similarly, the exact repetition:

I think we're fearful of looking.
I think we're fearful of looking.

gives the impression that many people are "fearful of looking."

The observation that teacher trainers are "like those we prepare" in being fearful is also lexicalized in the written version but implied in the spoken version by parallelism:

I think TEACHERS are fearful of looking.
and WE 're fearful of looking.

Placing "teachers" and "we" in the same paradigmatic slot in the same syntactic string, implies that the two groups are in the same semantic class and foregrounds their similarity. In this instance, emphatic stress is placed on "teachers" and "we" to bring this contrast into focus.

Oratory

Oratory is a kind of public oral poetry. In her analysis of oral poetry, Finnegan (1977:90) stresses the importance of repetition to a definition of poetry:

The most marked feature of poetry is surely repetition. Forms and genres are recognised because they are repeated. The collocations of line or stanza or refrain are based on their repeated recurrence; metre, rhythm or stylistic features like alliteration or parallelism are also based on repeated patterns of sound, syntax or meaning. In its widest sense, repetition is part of all poetry. This is the general background against which the prosodic and other features of oral poetry must be seen.

The Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. was a master of poetic oratory. Consider, for example, the most famous of his speeches, delivered at a March on Washington on August 23, 1963, which is known by one of its recurring phrases.²²

King's speech begins eloquently but prosaically compared to the rhythmic and rhetorical crescendo that it builds to. The rhetorical crescendo begins, toward the end, with a series of repeated phrases of the type that Davis (1985) describes as "the narrative formulaic unit" of the "performed African-American sermon."²³ The first such formulaic unit is the one that has come to be regarded as the "title" of the address: "I Have a Dream":

(27) I say to you today, my friends,
even though we face
the difficulties of today and tomorrow,
I still have a dream.

It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up
and live out the true meaning of its creed:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident
that all men are created equal."

I have a dream that one day
on the red hills of Georgia
the sons of former slaves
and the sons of former slave-owners
will be able to sit down together
at the table of brotherhood.

The phrase "I have a dream" is repeated six more times, introducing four more expansions that described hoped-for equality in image-rich and sound-rich language.

Especially interesting are pairs of parallel constructions embedded within the repetitions of the formula:

(28) I have a dream
that my four little children
will one day live in a nation
where they will not be judged
by the color of their skin
but by the content of their character.
I have a dream today.

The substitution of character for skin color as the basis by which people will be judged is made effective by the parallel syntactic constructions and similarity in initial consonants: the /k/ sound of "color," "content," and "character."

The last section of this speech reverberates with another quotation and repetition. King recites the words of the American patriotic song that ends, "From every mountain-side, let freedom ring." The last line of this song then becomes another repeated formula:

(29) And if America is to be a great nation,
this must become true.
So let freedom ring
from the prodigious hill tops of New Hampshire.
Let freedom ring
from the mighty mountains of New York.
Let freedom ring
from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania.
Let freedom ring

from the snowcapped Rockies of Colorado.
Let freedom ring
 from the curvaceous slopes of California.
 But not only that.
 Let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia.
 Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee.
 Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi.
 "From every mountainside,
let freedom ring."

King repeats and elaborates on the lines from the song. The repetition of "Let freedom ring," tolling like a bell, is interspersed with parallel references to mountains and hills by a variety of names in a range of states.

The repetitions of "Let freedom ring" are separated into two groups. Each syntactic string in the first group of five is characterized by the pattern:

from the X (adjective) Y (noun naming a hill or mountain) of Z (state name).

Individual strings are made more coherent by sound repetitions:

from the prodigious hill tops of New Hampshire.
 from the mighty mountains of New York.
 from the curvaceous slopes of California.

Having swept across the United States from New England (New Hampshire), across the Northeast (Pennsylvania), the West (Colorado), to the Western coast (California), King moves, with the phrase "but more than that," to the second group of three parallel constructions and to the Southern part of the United States (Georgia, Tennessee, and Mississippi), where he concentrated his nonviolent organizing efforts toward desegregation and voting rights. King thus encompassed the entire country with a list that names a few of its states.

The speech ends with a triple repetition of a third clause, this one repeated from what he identifies as "the old Negro spiritual":

- (30) Free at last!
Free at last!
 Thank God almighty,
 we are free at last!

The speeches of the Reverend Jesse Jackson make use of similar linguistic strategies: repetition of sounds, words, and clauses, echoing of well-known quotations and phrases (including those of King), surprising juxtapositions and reversals, and parallel constructions. The concluding chapter of this book contains a close analysis of these and other involvement strategies in Jackson's 1988 speech to the Democratic National Convention. For the present, I note simply that repetition works both to communicate ideas and to move audiences in oratorical discourse.

Literary discourse: drama

In comparing a dinner table conversation with a play written about it, Glen Merzer's *Taking comfort* (see Appendix I for explanation), I examined instances of sound and word repetition in 10,000 word segments of each. Repetition of word-initial sounds is twice as frequent in the play, whereas word or phrase repetition is twice as frequent in the conversation. This is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. *Repetition in 10,000-word segments of conversation and drama*

	Conversation	Drama
Sound	48	91
Word or longer	575	229

To illustrate, I present a short segment from the play, rearranged in intonation units. The speaker is a woman named Nancy who is about to see Larry, her former lover, after a long separation.

- (31) 1 When I talk to myself,
 2 I talk to Larry.
 3 We have terrific fights in my head
 4 that he always wins.
 5 Now he'll be speaking for himself.
 6 I wonder if he'll do as well.

The repetition in lines 1 and 2 sets up a syntagmatic paradigm to highlight the relationship between "myself" and "Larry" – the identity that Nancy feels between herself and the man she lived with and loved for many years. But in line 5 ("Now he'll be speaking for himself"), the verb "talk" changes to "speak." Line 5 invokes the common expression "speak for oneself." This enhances the significance of varying the verb.

This type of variation seems to be felt as necessary when discourse is written, to avoid the impression of monotony (A similar finding is reported by Chafe 1985.) When repetition of words is found in drama, it seems to be deliberate, intended to play up and play on the repetition of exact words which characterizes conversation. Pinter is a master of this. Consider, for example, this segment from his play, *The birthday party*:²⁴

- (32) STANLEY Meg. Do you know what?
 MEG What?
 STANLEY Have you heard the latest?
 MEG No.
 STANLEY I'll bet you have.

- MEG I haven't.
 STANLEY Shall I tell you?
 MEG What latest?
 STANLEY You haven't heard it?
 MEG No.
 STANLEY (advancing). They're coming today.
 MEG Who?
 STANLEY They're coming in a van.
 MEG Who?
 STANLEY And do you know what they've got in that van?
 MEG What?
 STANLEY They've got a wheelbarrow in that van.
 MEG (breathlessly). They haven't.
 STANLEY Oh yes they have.
 MEG You're a liar.
 STANLEY (advancing upon her). A big wheelbarrow. And when the van stops they wheel it out, and they wheel it up the garden path, and then they knock at the front door.
 MEG They don't.
 STANLEY They're looking for someone.
 MEG They're not.
 STANLEY They're looking for someone. A certain person.
 MEG (hoarsely). No, they're not!
 STANLEY Shall I tell you who they're looking for?
 MEG No!
 STANLEY You don't want me to tell you?
 MEG You're a liar!
- (pp. 23-4)

By repeating words and phrases, Pinter plays on the effect of repetition in ordinary conversation, highlighting its absurdity and using it to create a sense of ominousness and threat.

The automaticity of repetition

The discussion and analysis so far have been intended to demonstrate that repetition is a fundamental, pervasive, and infinitely useful linguistic strategy. At the outset I also claimed that it can be automatic. I would like now to support that claim and then explain why I believe it is important.

Neurolinguistic research demonstrates the automaticity of certain kinds of language production. Whitaker (1982) describes aphasic patients who suffered complete destruction of the language-producing areas of the brain and consequently lost their spontaneous language-producing capacity. Nevertheless, they retained the ability to repeat exactly; to shadow (i.e. repeat with a split-second delay); and to repeat with simple transformations, such as changes in tense, person, and sentence type. They were able to

do this because this type of language production is performed in a different part of the brain: a part devoted to automatic functioning. Whitaker's examples of automatic language production by brain-damaged aphasic patients are strikingly similar to repetitions and variations found in samples of ordinary conversation. Obviously, there is a crucial difference between the use of repeating strategies by aphasics and nonaphasics in that the former are limited to such automatic language production, whereas the latter use repetition in addition to and in conjunction with deliberate language production. Nonetheless, the research on aphasics provides evidence of the automaticity of these repeating strategies. (Research on language comprehension demonstrates that prepatterned speech is also processed more efficiently by the brain. See, for example, Gibbs 1980, 1986; Gibbs and Gonzales 1985; Van Lancker 1987.)

Whitaker's (1982) survey of neurolinguistic research shows that repeating, varying, and shadowing prior utterances can be automatic language capacities. I have presented examples of these phenomena in conversation; it remains to show evidence of their automaticity. Is it coincidental that these types of language production can be automatic and are pervasive in conversation, or are they pervasive because they can be automatic? Bolinger (1961:381) observes: "How much actual invention . . . really occurs in speech we shall know only when we have the means to discover how much originality there is in utterance." If it can be shown that repetition in conversation is evidence of automaticity, rather than of "originality" in utterance, then this study may contribute in a modest way to answering Bolinger's question.

Shadowing

The type of repetition in conversation that is most demonstrably automatic is shadowing: repeating what is being heard with a split-second delay. A number of segments previously cited include this phenomenon, for instance from (6):

- 10 STEVE I never . . . took that seriously
 11 PETER I never could take it seriously.
 5 STEVE In the Bronx.
 6 PETER In the Bronx.

Peter began to utter line 11 a split-second after Steve began line 10 and spoke along with him. In other words, Peter shadowed Steve. He also did so in (17):

Shadowing occurs frequently in the transcripts studied. For example, Chad shadowed Steve, the host, when Steve offered the guests a choice of

port or brandy after dinner. (Talk about the dinner, its food and rituals, interspersed the conversation.)

- (33) 1 DAVID I don't know what... uh... port tastes like.
 2 STEVE Port is very sweet. Port is very rich. →
 3 CHAD Port is very sweet. Very rich. →
 4 STEVE Syrupy red wine.
 5 CHAD And brandy's very alcoholic.

Chad's line 3 ("Port is very sweet. Very rich,") repeats, with slight variation (deletion of the second "Port is"), Steve's self-repetition (with variation) in line 2 ("Port is very sweet. Port is very rich."). Chad began saying line 3 before Steve began the second part of line 2, in which he says that port is "very rich"; yet Chad repeated that part of Steve's utterance as well. This indicates that Chad was shadowing Steve: repeating what he heard, as he heard it, with a split-second delay.

(34) is a segment of talk which I have previously analyzed in detail (Tannen 1983b, 1984) to demonstrate that overlapping talk can be cooperative and rapport-building rather than interruptive. I cite the segment here to demonstrate that the overlap and consequent metamessage of rapport are accomplished, in large part, by repetition, and furthermore that at least some of that repetition is automatic.

In this segment, Steve is identifying a building in New York City that was significant to him in his childhood:

- (34) 1 STEVE Remember where W I N S used to be?
 2 DEBORAH No. Then they built a big huge skyscraper there?
 3 STEVE No. Where was that.
 4 DEBORAH Right where Central Park West met Broadway.
 5 STEVE That building shaped like that. [shows with hands]
 6 Did I give you too much? [serving turkey]
 7 PETER By Columbus Circle?.. That-Columbus Circle?
 8 DEBORAH Right on Columbus Circle.
 9 STEVE Here's Columbus Circle,
 10 here's Central Park West,
 11 Now it's the Huntington Hartford Museum.
 12 That's the Huntington Hartford, right?
 13 PETER Nuhnuhno.
 14 STEVE Here's Central Park West,
 15 Yeah.
 16 DEBORAH here's Broadway.
 17 STEVE We're going North, this way?
 18 uhuh
 19 DEBORAH And here's this building here.
 20 STEVE The Huntington Hartford is on the South side.
 21 On the other- across.
 22 DEBORAH

- 23 Yeah, right!right!right!right.
 24 And now that's a new building with a: there was
 25 STEVE And there was... and
 26 uh-STORES here,
 27 and the upper-second floor was W I N S.
 28 Oh:
 29 DEBORAH And we listened to: Now it's a round place
 30 STEVE with a: movie theater.
 31 DEBORAH Now-there's a round- No.
 32 STEVE The next... next block is
 33 but... but... THIS is a huge skyscraper →
 34 oh
 35 DEBORAH right there.
 36 STEVE Oh yeah
 37 DEBORAH

This segment exhibits numerous instances of self- and allo-repetition.²⁵ I will focus only on two that provide evidence for automaticity. First consider lines 12 and 13:

- 12 DEBORAH Now it's the Huntington Hartford Museum.
 13 PETER That's the Huntington Hartford, right?

In line 13, Peter said roughly the same thing that I said in line 12, even though Peter began to say line 13 before I had gotten very far into line 12. One might surmise that Peter said the same thing because he simply happened to think of the same thing to say, a split second after I thought of it. When one considers, however, that Steve's response in line 14 "nuhnuhno" (a triple "no") indicates that Peter and I were both wrong, it seems unlikely that we both happened to make exactly the same mistake about the building Steve had in mind.

The evidence for the automaticity of Peter's shadowing is even stronger when supplemented by playback. When I replayed this segment for Peter, he commented that he did not really know the areas that were being discussed because he had not lived in New York City as an adult, as Steve and I had. It is clear, then, that he decided to say something before he knew just what he would say, trusting that he would find what to say, ready-made, in what I said. This strategy would have worked perfectly if I had been right: what I said. It would have appeared that we both knew the location Steve had in mind. Even as things turned out, the strategy worked well. Everyone present had the impression that Peter was a full participant in the interaction: no one noticed anything odd, or suspected that Peter did not know what was being talked about. It was the dual strategy of repetition and overlap, i.e. shadowing, given the appropriateness of its use among these speakers, that made it possible for Peter to participate successfully. Significantly, the three

conversants who were not speakers of a high-involvement style could not take part, even though Sally had lived in New York for years and Chad had just returned from a visit there. (Indeed, this segment began as an inter-change with Chad about his trip to New York.) I am suggesting that it is the automaticity of such strategies that enables speakers to take part, relatively effortlessly, in conversations with just those others with whom they share conversational style.

Further evidence of the automaticity of repetition is found in lines 30–31 and 32:

- 30–31 DEBORAH Now it's a round place with a: movie theatre.
32 STEVE Now-there's a round- No.
33 The next . . . next block is

In 30–31, I offered a description of the place that Steve was trying to identify. In line 32 Steve began to repeat what I had said as ratification of my listenership ("Now-there's a round-"). But as he spoke he realized that what I (and consequently he) had said did not match the image he had in his mind. He then cut short his repetition ("No") and explained that the building I (we) were naming is on "the next block." This is evidence that the repetition in line 32 did not grow out of his mental image of the setting he was describing, but rather was an automatic repetition of my prior words, subject to subsequent checking as he spoke.

These examples provide evidence for the automaticity of allo-repetition. The automaticity of self-repetition is evidenced in the way the same words are subsequently spoken. (35) consists of a number of lines taken from a segment in which Chad voiced the opinion that sign language seems more iconic than spoken language. (This is a frequent observation by non-signers, that irritates speakers and proponents of ASL.) In countering this view, David, a sign language interpreter, described a hypothetical situation in which "a speaking person is talking about what happened," and he explained that the speaker gets "an image of what happened." After a brief description of a hypothetical image, David continued:

- (35) 1 DAVID When you speak
2 you use words to . . . to recreate that image
3 in the other person's mind.
4 CHAD Right.
5 DAVID And in sign language,
6 you use SIGNS to recreate the image.

In line 2, the intonation on "recreate that image" rises and falls. In the repetition of the same phrase in line 6, David's pitch rises on "signs" but remains monotonically low and constant throughout "to recreate the image." This intonation signals given information and the impression that the phrase in

its second occurrence is uttered automatically. Its meaning does not have to be worked out anew on subsequent reference, but is carried over ready-made.

A similar example was seen in (5):

- 4 DEBORAH or Westerners tend to uh: . . .
5 think of the body and the soul
6 as two different things.
7 CHAD Right.
8 DEBORAH because there's no word
9 that expresses body and soul together.
10 CHAD Right.
Body and soul together.

When I uttered "body and soul together" in line 9, I ran the words together, with monotonic intonation, in contrast to the word by word articulation of the words "body" and "soul" in lines 5 and 6 ("the body and the soul as two different things").

Finally, in (23), the phrase "cheese and crackers" was uttered very differently in its first and second appearances:

- 9 And so if I'm just eating like cheese and crackers.
10 I'll just STUFF myself on cheese and crackers.

In line 9 the phrase had standard statement intonation, with pitch low on "cheese" and higher on "crackers." In contrast, when the phrase was repeated in line 10, it was spoken much more quickly, with steady low pitch, indicating that the phrase was now "given" and therefore could be rushed through. Moreover, in both these examples, the effect of the way the second occurrences were spoken was to make them sound automatized the second time. In the words of Pawley (1986), the entire phrase became lexicalized, that is, it behaved like a word, an indivisible unit.

The drive to imitate

In an essay about "Tics," Oliver Sacks (1987) gives an account of Gilles de la Tourette's syndrome, "a syndrome of multiple convulsive tics." In Sacks's description, this syndrome can take the form of the drive to imitate and repeat gone haywire. By representing an extreme form of the drive, however, it provides evidence for the existence of such a drive.

Sacks quotes extensively from a 1907 account by a ticqueur called O.:

I have always been conscious of a predilection for *imitation*. A curious gesture or bizarre attitude affected by anyone was the immediate signal for an attempt on my part at its reproduction, and is still. Similarly with words or phrases, pronunciations or intonation. I was quick to mimic any peculiarity.

When I was thirteen years old I remember seeing a man with a droll grimace of eyes and mouth, and from that moment I gave myself no respite until I could imitate it accurately. (38)

O's drive to imitate was not confined to imitation of others; it was an expression of a general urge to repeat, including the drive to imitate himself.

One day as I was moving my head I felt a "crack" in my neck, and forthwith concluded that I had dislocated something. It was my concern, thereafter, to twist my head in a thousand different ways, and with ever-increasing violence, until at length the rediscovery of the sensation afforded me a genuine sense of satisfaction, speedily clouded by the fear of having done myself some harm. (38)

Thus the ticqueur's characteristic compulsive motions can be understood as the urge to re-experience a particular sensation.

Elsewhere, Sacks (1986:117-18) gives an account of a contemporary Tourette whom he chanced to observe on a New York City street displaying the same pattern of behavior, intensified, now seen from the outside:

My eye was caught by a grey-haired woman in her sixties, who was apparently the centre of a most amazing disturbance, though what was happening, what was so disturbing, was not at first clear to me. . . .

As I drew closer I saw what was happening. *She was imitating the passers-by* – if "imitation" is not too pallid, too passive, a word. Should we say, rather, that she was caricaturing everyone she passed? Within a second, a split-second, she "had" them all.

Sacks ([1973] 1983) also describes a similar compulsion to repeat words and actions in patients suffering from post-encephalitic Parkinsonism (a disease that slows them down or freezes them, as previously noted) when they are "sped up" by the drug L-DOPA.

Why do humans experience a drive to imitate – a drive that is intensified and sent haywire by the bizarre neurological maladies described by Sacks?²⁶ Freud observed, in a line that Kavin (1972:1) uses as the epigraph to a book on repetition in literature and film, "Repetition, the re-experiencing of something identical, is clearly in itself a source of pleasure." In a related observation, Norrick (1985:22), citing Mieder (1978), notes that "newspaper headlines are often modelled on proverbs and proverbial phrases in order to attract attention and arouse emotional interest." This is obviously true, and yet surprising. Wouldn't common sense suggest that what is prepatterned, fixed, and repetitious should be boring rather than attention-getting, bland rather than emotional? Why is emotion associated with fixity? Perhaps partly because of the pleasure associated with the familiar, the repetitious.

What purpose could be served by the drive to imitate and repeat? None other, I think, than the fundamental human purpose of learning. Becker (1984a:138) proposes a

kind of grammar, based on a different perspective on language, one involving time and memory; or, in terms of contextual relations, a set of prior texts that one accumulates throughout one's lifetime, from simple social exchanges to long, semi-memorized recitations. One learns these texts in action, by repetitions and corrections, starting with the simplest utterances of a baby. One learns to reshape these texts to new context, by imitation and by trial and error. . . . The different ways one shapes a prior text to a new environment make up the grammar of a language. Grammar is context-shaping (Bateson 1979:17) and context shaping is a skill we acquire over a lifetime.

That imitation and repetition are ways of learning is supported by the extensive findings of imitation and repetition in children's talk.

The drive to imitate is crucial in artistic creativity as well. Sacks (1987:41) cites Nietzsche's ([1888] 1968:428) argument that artists experience:

The compulsion to imitate: an extreme irritability through which a given example becomes contagious – a state is divined on the basis of signs, and immediately enacted – An image, rising up within, immediately turns into a movement of the limbs. . . .

Indeed, when I described to writer friends Sacks's account of Touretters' compulsions to imitate observed behavior, they were overcome with an awkward guilt and self-consciousness: They (like me) recognized the impulse in themselves. Actors also find art in an impulse to imitate, if Albert Finney is typical: "As a lad, I always liked watching how people walked and acted," he recalls. "I used to imitate people" (Dreifus 1987:56).

In observing that the prepatterned that characterizes idioms is not restricted to utterly fixed expressions, Bolinger (1976:7) asks, "may there not be a degree of unfreedom in every syntactic combination that is not random?" The word "unfreedom" suggests one reason that many may resist the view of language as imitative and repetitious, that is, relatively more prepatterned and less novel than previously thought. Sacks (1987:39) describes an aspect of the experience of Tourette's as an "existential conflict between automatism and autonomy (or, as Luria put it, between an 'It' and an 'I')." In this framework, seeing language as relatively imitative or prepatterned rather than freely generated seems to push us toward automatism rather than autonomy – make each of us more "it" and less "I." But a view of language as relatively prepatterned does not have to be seen this way. Rather, we may see it as making of us more interactional "I's."

We are dealing with a delicate balance between the individual and the social, the fixed and the free, the ordered and the chaotic: polarities that are of central concern to Friedrich (1986). According to Friedrich, the individual imagination manipulates, interprets, rearranges, and synthesizes – based on familiar, recognizable elements. The elements can be manipulated, interpreted, rearranged, and synthesized precisely because they are

familiar and fixed. In the numerous examples presented in this chapter, speakers repeated parts of prior talk not as mindless mimics but to create new meanings.

Paradoxically, it is the *individual* imagination that makes possible the *shared* understanding of language. Linguistic prepatterning is a means by which speakers create worlds that listeners can recreate in their own imaginations, recognizing the outlines of the prepatterning. Through prepatterning, the individual speaks through the group, and the group speaks through the individual.

The examples I have given suggest that much repetition in conversation is automatic. Just as canonical formulaic expressions have been shown to be processed by automatic brain function, I suggest that speakers repeat, rephrase, and echo (or shadow) others' words in conversation without stopping to think, but rather as an automatic and spontaneous way of participating in conversation. Another book by Oliver Sacks (1984) dramatizes the paradoxical necessity of automaticity for freedom. Following a severe accidental injury, Sacks's leg was surgically repaired. But despite his surgeon's insistence that he was completely healed, he had no proprioception (that is, self-perception) of his leg: He had no sense of its being a part of him, of its even being there, or of ever having been there. Consequently, he walked as if he had no knee.

Sacks's knee did not "return," spiritually, conceptually, and pragmatically, until he was tricked into using it automatically. Caught off guard by being shoved into a pool, he automatically began to swim. When he stepped out of the pool, he walked normally for the first time following his accident. What he had not been able to accomplish with all his conscious efforts had occurred without effort, by automaticity and spontaneity. Sacks eloquently emphasizes the necessity of automatic, spontaneous use for one to sense one's body as part of one's self. The more spontaneous and automatic one's behavior, the more strongly one feels a sense of self. In other words, automaticity is essential to a sense of "I" rather than antithetical to it.

Conclusion

The view of repetition I am proposing echoes Jakobson's view of parallelism in poetry (1966:428-9):

any word or clause when entering into a poem built on pervasive parallelism is, under the constraint of this system, immediately incorporated into the tenacious array of cohesive grammatical forms and semantic values. The metaphorical image of "orphan lines" is a contrivance of a detached onlooker to whom the verbal art of continuous correspondences remains aesthetically alien. Orphan lines in poetry of pervasive parallels are a contradiction in terms, since whatever the status of a line,

all its structure and functions are indissolubly interlaced with the near and distant verbal environment, and the task of linguistic analysis is to disclose the levels of this coaction. When seen from the inside of the parallelistic system, the supposed orphanhood, like any other componential status, turns into a network of multifarious compelling affinities.

If one accepts that at least some (and probably all) of conversation is also a system of pervasive parallelism – though not necessarily rigid in the same way as poetry – then Jakobson's observations apply as well to conversation. Utterances do not occur in isolation. They echo each other in a "tenacious array of cohesive grammatical forms and semantic values," and intertwine in a "network of multifarious compelling affinities." One cannot therefore understand the full meaning of any conversational utterance without considering its relation to other utterances – both synchronically, in its discourse environment, and diachronically, in prior text.

I have presented examples of repetition in ordinary conversation to illustrate its pervasiveness, and some of its forms and functions. I have suggested that repetition in conversation can be relatively automatic, and that its automaticity contributes to its functions in production, comprehension, connection, and interaction. These dimensions operate simultaneously to create coherence in discourse and interpersonal involvement in interaction. Repetition is a resource by which conversationalists together create a discourse, a relationship, and a world. It is the central linguistic meaning-making strategy, a limitless resource for individual creativity and interpersonal involvement.