

fainting, nausea, and the like seen in the American workplace. Will the model developed in the book hold up in these and other cultures? Or might these other cultures give us new hints for different models? How interesting it would have been to have a cultural anthropologist give an analysis of the meaning of MPI in these other cultures!

It is clear that this book has much to recommend it. The papers by McGrath, Boruch, Schmitt and Fitzgerald (the last on statistical analysis of aggregate data), and Singer (on political and other matters) are worth the price of admission in alerting the researcher to the subtle difficulties of work in this field. Moreover, the book is a fascinating portrait of social psychologists struggling to make sense out of a phenomenon all the more important because of its economic and social consequences. Indeed, it is impressive to see that current social psychological thinking can supply a mostly satisfying account of MPI in the work setting. If I were teaching a course on "how social psychologists go about their job," I'd assign this book. Finally, the book performs a valuable service, perhaps by indirection, in showing how much more powerful it might be to exploit the resources of allied disciplines, such as cultural anthropology, political sociology, and social history in interdisciplinary understanding of MPI. I eagerly await *that* book.

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Language in the Legal Process

Linguistic Evidence. Language, Power, and Strategy in the Courtroom. WILLIAM M. O'BARR. Academic Press, New York, 1982. xvi, 192 pp. \$23.50. Studies on Law and Social Control.

William O'Barr's book is a concise, lucid summary of a series of studies of language and communication in the courtroom conducted by O'Barr and his colleagues at Duke University. Publication of the book, and of several others in recent years (*1*), establishes the empirical study of language and communication in the legal process as an important endeavor of both academic interest and real-world significance. For those who are familiar with the various articles previously published by the O'Barr team, the book will provide little new informa-

tion, though it will be handy to have the results of the research summarized in one volume. The clear, simple style of the book will make it accessible not only to social scientists but also to members of the legal profession and to the intelligent lay reader.

O'Barr, an anthropologist, headed an interdisciplinary team consisting of two social psychologists, a graduate student in both law and anthropology, a law professor, and a linguist. The research was designed to examine some of the ways in which how something is said, rather than what is said, matters in the courtroom. The effects on judgments of courtroom testimony of four sets of factors were studied: "powerful" versus "powerless" speech, hypercorrect versus formal speech, narrative versus fragmented testimony, and simultaneous speech by witnesses and lawyers. The research combined ethnographic analysis of trials tape-recorded in a North Carolina courtroom and controlled experiment. Informed by the ethnographic work, the researchers created experimental variations of a given portion of testimony, keeping the content—the "facts"—the same and changing aspects of style or form.

The book is divided into seven chapters. After laying out some of the reasons why a consideration of form in language is important (chapter 1) and examining some of the distinctive features of both written and spoken legal language (chapter 2), the author provides an overview of assumptions lawyers make about how language and communication work in the courtroom (chapter 3). The main point of chapter 3 is that these assumptions, for example that too many qualifications of an answer have a bad effect on the decision-maker, whether judge or jury, are really hypotheses that ought to be put to empirical test. Chapter 4 explains the research methods used and the rationale for using them and shows how the research questions derive from current work in sociolinguistics, social psychology, and social anthropology. Chapters 5 and 6 are devoted to the presentation of findings. The book concludes with a discussion of implications for both law and social science of the results of these studies.

The heart of the book is chapter 5, which summarizes the results of four sets of experiments designed to test the effects of the four sets of linguistic factors outlined above. The most striking results are those obtained on the effects of "powerful" versus "powerless" speech styles on judgments of the credibility or

intelligence of a witness. Consider two ways in which a witness might answer the question "What is the first thing you remember after the accident?"

I guess I remember coming in to the Duke Emergency, and I thought I was at the police station because it seemed like there were so many policemen around.

I remember coming in to the Duke Emergency, and I thought I was at the police station, because there were so many policemen around.

The content—the "fact"—is the same, but the form is different. In their ethnographic work O'Barr and his associates found that the former, hedging style is not unique to women, as some had previously thought (see, for example, 2). Using experimental recordings of testimony in the "powerful" and "powerless" styles, the O'Barr team demonstrated that both a woman and a man speaking in the powerless mode are judged less credible, less truthful, less competent, less intelligent, and less trustworthy than a person of the same sex speaking in the powerful mode. This implies that a person telling the truth but speaking in a powerless style may actually be judged to be less credible than a person who is lying but does not hedge and qualify his or her answers.

As for the effects of narrative versus fragmented (short-answer) testimony, the results are highly equivocal. The author's interpretation of them is, by his own admission, highly speculative and, in this reviewer's opinion, is too convoluted to be convincing (or is it that his hedges have reduced the credibility of his interpretation?). The researchers focused primarily on how narrative versus fragmented testimony affects subjects' and jurors' attributions of what a lawyer thinks of a witness, rather than on how the type of testimony affects judgments of the witness, as is the case with the experiments on "powerful" versus "powerless" speech and hypercorrect versus formal speech. Differences emerge between the judgments of subjects with and without legal training, but what these differences mean is by no means clear.

By not using judgments of the witness as the dependent variable in all four sets of studies, the authors have lost an opportunity to assess the relative importance of each of the four sets of linguistic factors in determining how a witness is perceived. A comparison of the results of the first and third studies suggests, however, that powerful style is probably more important than formality.

Recognizing the potential importance of their findings on speech style for the position of women in society, O'Barr and Atkins prepared a version of the study of powerful versus powerless speech for a feminist audience (3). In both that paper and the report of the results in chapter 5 of the book, the researchers are unable systematically to compare men and women using the same style. The powerless version of the testimony used with the female witness could not be used with the male witness because it was perceived as too much of a caricature to be acceptable as male speech. Thus, the powerless version used with males was a "watered-down" variant of the female version. The results hint that women are probably judged more negatively than men regardless of style.

In a replication and expansion of this study in Israel, a student and I have found that even when a woman witness speaks in precisely the same powerful style of Hebrew as a man, she is judged less credible than the man. Moreover, women judged a woman even more harshly than did men. It seems, then, that women are at a serious disadvantage in the courtroom, especially if the judge or jurors are also women (4).

Chapter 6 debates whether the presentational style of the witness can be controlled. It combines a report of an experiment concerning whether the effects of speech style can be neutralized (it seems that they cannot), a general discussion of the meanings of silence versus talk in the courtroom, and a close look at the management of silence and talk in questions and answers. I find it forced to call the presence or absence of talk a matter of style, of linguistic form.

O'Barr's findings have captured the interest of trial lawyers eager for tips on how to win cases. The main tip to come out of this research is: coach witnesses to avoid the powerless style. (And by extension the tip emerging from our Jerusalem study is, sadly: avoid using women as witnesses, if possible.) It is no small irony that the knowledge resulting from this research that identifies sources of injustice in the adversary system may be used to further the amount of injustice in trials. As with other resources that make for differential doling out of justice, access to these findings will not be evenly distributed among members of the legal profession or the lay public.

Despite the limitations of the research, O'Barr and his colleagues have made a first-rate contribution to law and social science, as well as to sociolinguistics.

They have managed to say something important about law, though studying language, and to say something important about language, by studying an aspect of law. Their work provides a fresh approach to the criticism of the adversary system of justice.

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References and Notes

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Studying the Unique

Life Histories and Psychobiography. Explorations in Theory and Method. WILLIAM MCKINLEY RUNYAN. Oxford University Press, New York, 1982. xiv, 288 pp. \$19.95.

In the 1940's Gordon Allport, Robert White, Henry Murray, and many others pointed toward the study of individual lives as a central focus for academic psychology. In the last 30 years, academic psychologists have withdrawn from this field and left it to biographers, the occasional psychoanalyst, and, in the last decade, pop psychologists. The present book, by an author who has spent his academic career examining the value of qualitative, narrative, and introspective methods for the study of lives and draws on wide and catholic reading, does much to make the investigation of individual life history respectable once more for academicians.

Runyan introduces us to the issue by considering the problems that arise from alternative accounts of life history. As an example, he sets forth 13 reasons that have been proposed to explain why Van Gogh cut off his ear. He then examines the structure of biographical narrative, pointing out the narrowness and other weaknesses of considering the life course in purely developmental, stage-dependent terms. The life course is an evolving sequence of interactions of person and situation and behavior. To con-

sider the single variable of the person is too narrow. Runyan closes with a consideration of the pros and cons of various life study methods.

Runyan acknowledges that biography has poor internal validity; a life can always be explained in another way. Biography has poor external validity, for an individual life is always unique and does not permit generalization. In the study of human life histories, there can be no experimental manipulation, little chance to test hypotheses, and no capacity to control for accident and luck. Runyan reminds us that retrospection and introspection are inevitably seductive and misleading. The biographer's prejudices and misplaced precision become magnified by sustained involvement with individual characters.

On the other hand, Runyan points out the power of life study. First, the study of real lives has a face validity that no rat psychologist working in a laboratory can ever hope to achieve. Runyan cites the extraordinary example of two clinicians studying a life who agreed better in predicting the individual's response than they did with each other. Second, redundancy (as with the many reported instances of Lincoln's mercy) lends both power and validity. Third, in the study of an individual life one achieves a richness that cross-sectional study can never achieve. The power of the case example, the opportunity for bringing both poetry and metaphor to bear on psychological truth, is enhanced by the life history method. Fourth, Runyan points out that subjective reality can hardly be deemed unreality. Finally, biography is the only way in which we can study persons with uncommon dimensions, such as presidents and heroes.

Runyan, if he does not show us, at least tells us how lives should be scientifically studied. Clearly, halo effects must be controlled and the conceptual framework of the biographer acknowledged. The purpose for which the data are selected must be admitted. Does the biographer wish to describe illness, leadership, virtue, continuity, or some other quality? Runyan points out the dangers in interpretation that arise from errors in original texts and from cultural biases.

The one important life history method not mentioned by Runyan is Adolf Meyer's life chart. What the physiologist calls the kymograph for the guinea pig ilium and what Skinner has called the cumulative record, both for pigeons pecking and for his own autobiography, allow individual behavior over time to be visually comprehended. The life chart