Resistance and Oppression as a Self-Contained Opposite: An Organizational Communication Analysis of One Man’s Story of Sexual Harassment

ROBIN PATRIC CLAIR

This analysis of discourse displays the interplay between resistance and domination using one man’s description of sexual harassment and his attempts at redress. The interpretation of this tense situation illustrates the complexity of discursive practices which result in unexpected outcomes. These outcomes, at times, appear to be in direct opposition to the intention of the discursive practice. They are described as self-contained opposites. The analysis begins by addressing an article detailing one man’s story of sexual harassment which was published in a local newspaper. The analysis is then extended through interviews with the harassed man. The interpretive analysis reveals how the articulation of resistance becomes oppressive and the articulation of oppression offers resistance. The self-contained opposite of resistance/oppression reflects a hegemonic moment. The impact of the micro-level discursive practices are discussed in terms of their relation to the macro-level gender structuring of organizations.

Not comprehending, they hear like the deaf. The saying is their witness: absent while present.

Heraclitus

A recent call for organizational communication researchers to investigate the complex and contradictory aspects of organizational life (Deetz, 1992; Dervin, 1993; Grossberg, 1987; Mumby, 1993) provides the impetus for the present study. Focusing on the intersection of organizational communication, sexuality, and domination, this analysis addresses how resistance and oppression act as a self-contained opposite which contributes to hegemony. Specifically, the present study investigates how one man’s story of sexual harassment reveals the gender structuring of organizations through discursive practices and how these practices contribute to resistance/oppression. Examining how discursive practices perpetuate the gender structuring of organizations,

ROBIN PATRIC CLAIR (Ph.D., Kent State University, 1990) is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Communication, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN 47907. The author would like to thank Darla Williams, Diane Grimes and Monya Emery for conversations illuminating the critical importance of race in any and all discussions of power and domination as well as Ed Schiappa and the WJC reviewers and editor for their advice.
especially through sexual harassment, can shed light on how oppression is maintained or resisted.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND THE GENDERING OF ORGANIZATIONS


Although women are more frequently victimized and more vulnerable to the economic repercussions of sexual harassment, men are also targets of sexual harassment. As Daly (1973) maintains, patriarchy is deeply embedded within our social structure. Both men and women produce and reproduce the existing social order. Men may perpetuate the system through acts of harassment against others, through their silence or failure to support victims, or by accepting their own victimage. Women may perpetuate the current system by hegemonically accepting an inferior role in society, one that condones abuse. Women have been known to abandon other victims (Clair, 1993b; Our Stories, 1992; Taylor & Conrad, 1992) and on rare occasions have been positioned as the harassers. Thus, people perpetuate oppression through their own participation in the system. This hegemonic complicity is achieved through communicative actions (Clair, 1993a; Cockburn, 1991; Ferguson, 1984; Strine, 1992; Taylor & Conrad, 1992; Weedon, 1987; Wood, 1992).

Although sexual harassment is a serious problem in its own right, it can also be perceived as a symptom of another problem, the gendering of organizations (Hearn, Sheppard, Tancred-Sheriff, & Burrell, 1989). Although most organizations attempt to present a gender neutral image (Ferguson, 1984; Mumby & Putnam, 1992; Pringle, 1989), no organization is free from sexual politics (e.g., see Cockburn, 1991; Collinson & Collinson, 1989; Daly, 1973; DiTomaso, 1989; Parkin, 1989). The gender structuring of organizations typically results in women receiving lower pay, lower status positions (Epstein, 1988; Kanter, 1977), less prestigious positions (Coser, 1981), and positions considered adjunct in authority (Tancred-Sheriff, 1989).

Gender structuring is a social construction, which is subject to economic and historical contextual factors (Burrell & Hearn, 1989).
Gendering, then can be understood as a discursive creation that has historically promoted a sexist and oppressive society. As such, an investigation of the role that discursive practices play in the ironic and hegemonic aspects of oppression and resistance may provide some useful insights.

**DISCURSIVE PRACTICES AND HEGEMONY**

Relying on Ferguson’s (1984) work, *discursive practices* can be defined as “the characteristic ways of speaking and writing that both constitute and reflect our experiences” (p. 6). These practices may include acts, as well. Deetz (1992) draws from the work of Foucault to explain that *discursive fields* exist contributing to an overall *enunciation* or an *articulation* of social relations. Specifically, “a discursive field consists of alternative ways of structuring the world and organizing social practice” (Deetz, 1992, p. 263). In other words, there exist numerous choices with regard to how we talk, act, and react to our everyday experiences. How we choose to format our discourse reflects and creates social reality. A discursive formation is selected from the alternatives, not always apparent, which both develops and is developed around certain notions of social reality. These discursive formations may in turn limit one’s ability to see other discursive alternatives (Deetz, 1992; Laclau & Mouffe, 1985; Weedon, 1987). Discursive formations can become dominant, coexistent, or marginalized.

For example and with respect to sexual harassment, Clair (1993a) provides illustrations of how women talk about their reactions to situations of sexual harassment. One female nurse reported that a male doctor “came up to me a couple of days ago and said he gets turned on by pregnant women [the respondent was pregnant at the time]. I told him I felt sorry for him. . . . It was really an injustice to his wife” (p. 130). This woman has selected a discursive format in which she retells the story and describes her response to sexual harassment. She has selected a personalizing framework or format. In other words, although the woman could have discussed how this was an injustice to all women, or all pregnant women she does not. Instead she enacts a personalizing discourse and one that claims the injustice has been perpetrated upon, not herself, but the man’s wife. Thus, she has chosen a discursive formation from a wide variety of discourses (see Clair, 1993a for other discursive frames or formats used by victims of sexual harassment).

Discursive practices that perpetuate the status quo in terms of the oppression of marginalized groups, especially women, have been countered by some individuals and actively supported by others (Clair, 1993a). Often subjugated groups are complicit in their own domination (see Clair, 1993a; Cockburn, 1991). Gramsci (1971) explains this process of *hegemony* as active participation on the part of the subjugated group to accept the dominant group’s interests. As Mouffe (1981) suggests,
hegemony is achieved through "the ability of one class to articulate the interests of other social groups to its own" (p. 183).

In the previous example of the nurse who told the doctor that his remarks were an injustice to his wife, we see that the nurse frames the harassment as a personal and moral issue rather than a public and political issue. By doing this, the woman may on the one hand protect herself from further abusive comments, but she also perpetuates the image of sexual harassment as a personal concern rather than an injustice to all women. Thus, she has allowed the dominant interests (i.e., keeping harassment sequestered to the personal domain) to prevail.

Foucault (1977/1979) explains these complex discursive relations of force in the following way:

this power is not exercised simply as an obligation or a prohibition on those "who do not have it"; it invests them, is transmitted by them and through them; it exerts pressure upon them just as they themselves in their struggle against it, resist the grip it has on them. (Foucault, 1977/1979, p. 27)

Thus, discursive practices and formations are inextricably linked with the complex matter of hegemony. At times, subjugated individuals actively participate in the discursive practices that sustain and intensify their own oppression.

Acts of resistance, like someone struggling in quicksand, often times perpetuate the current oppression. With respect to sexual harassment, it is possible that forms of resistance are oppressive and that forms of oppression are articulations of resistance (Clair, 1993b). The current investigation addresses the following premise: Do discursive situations, where resistance and oppression are self-contained, articulate a hegemonic condition that perpetuates the status quo?² Dervin (1993) calls for communication researchers to investigate "where hegemony and resistance meet" (p. 52). This study illustrates a discursive meeting of resistance and oppression.

The theoretical premise that opposites are self-contained can be traced to the ancient Greek writings of Heraclitus (see Kahn, 1979; Lloyd, 1966; Marcovich, 1967; Schiappa, 1991). Although Heraclitean thought offers a base for understanding self-contained opposites,³ the theoretical and practical implications of this insight were left largely unexplored until postmodern writers resurrected the premise.

employed by shop workers are actually means of manufacturing consent in an exploitive system. "Alternatives [to capitalism] are eliminated or cast as utopian" (Buroway, 1979, p. 93). This generates a consent to capitalist choices that produces "an unrealistically static image of society" (Buroway, 1979, p. 94).

In short, the following interpretive analysis is guided by the notion that quasi-forms of resistance and oppression merge into a self-contained opposite which is expressed through discursive practices. These quasi-forms of resistance/oppression create, perpetuate, and sustain current organizational order.

The following analysis of one man's story of sexual harassment represents a tentative step toward understanding resistance/oppression as a discursive practice. The analysis is centered on the coexistence of opposites in unity (i.e., oppression as resistance and resistance as oppression) with emphasis placed upon how the micro-level practices are constituted and reinforced in macro-level power relations.

ONE MAN'S STORY

The following account provides a brief background about the published story of one man's encounter with sexual harassment, an explanation of the procedures used in order to procure additional information about the story, a summary of the published story, and an abridged description of the interviews conducted. These preliminary reports are followed by a critical interpretation of resistance/oppression using the concept of self-contained opposites as a guiding theoretical premise.

The rationale to explore a case study of one man's account of sexual harassment via his own published text including follow up interviews rests on two notions. First, it is not the intention of this article to prove the truth or falsity of the man's story, rather, it is to illustrate a set of discursive moves in a complex and tense situation which gives way to unexpected outcomes. Second, the case study approach is especially beneficial for understanding macro-level social constructions because the "micro is viewed as an expression of the macro, the particular an expression of the general" (Buroway, 1991, p. 272). The approach used here follows Buroway's (1991) premise "that micro and macro are discrete and causally related levels of reality and that generalizations can be derived from the comparison of particular social situations" (pp. 273–274).

Of particular interest is that the following story represents the rarest form of sexual harassment with respect to gender and role (i.e., women believed to be sexually harassing a man). It thus represents the most extreme case of micro-relations, yet as the interpretive case method promises even the most molecular of situations can provide significant information "about society as a whole" (Buroway, 1991, p. 281). The
following background information sets the stage for an interpretive analysis of resistance/oppression as a self-contained opposite.

Background and Procedures

"Men suffer, too: A story of sexual harassment" was published in a local newspaper, April 1992. Michael Gray, the author of the article, recounts his experiences of sexual harassment at a midwestern medical facility. Although the text itself is worthy of deconstruction, a serious concern exists in the fact that the story could have been mediated by the editor of the newspaper. Therefore, Michael was contacted and an interview was requested by the researcher, several subsequent interviews followed. The interviews were not tape recorded but copious notes were taken, nor was anonymity offered. These conditions were more than acceptable to Michael as he informed the researcher that he sent his story to the Chicago Tribune, Indianapolis Star, New York Times, Wall Street Journal, and Washington Post. He was questioned concerning payment for his story from any of the newspapers. Michael said that his intention was not to gain money. The story was submitted in the form of a "letter to the editor," giving the newspaper all rights to publish without his approval or remuneration (see appendix A for a complete copy of the published article). In short, he received no payment.

The semi-structured interview lasted over two hours. Prior to the interview, a schedule of approximately 21 questions was developed based upon a reading of the published story which dealt with his experience at the medical facility (see appendix B). Michael freely volunteered information beyond what was asked. At the end of the interview, the researcher promised to send Michael the completed analysis based upon the published article.

Summary of the Published Story

The published article, Men suffer, too: A story of sexual harassment (abbreviated as MST), describes Michael’s work orientation at the medical facility. He claims that everything he learned in school became "superfluous" (MST). He claims that his co-workers continually rejected his efforts to be enthusiastic about his work. Specifically, Michael wrote that they told him "that doesn’t need to be done," or "I want to do that later" (MST). Michael recalls being faced with an "inquisition" (MST) by his peers, all of whom were female nurses or nursing assistants. Michael describes how he was assaulted in the following conversation as he sat at the lunch table with his colleagues:

They demanded to know if I was a virgin, if I had ever had oral sex, if I had ever been with a black woman, and so on. I found this line of questioning inappropriate, since it had nothing to do with our work responsibilities. I asked that the subject be dropped. Eventually it was, when the women decided to get up and do some work.

In the published article, Michael notes that he reported this incident to the head nurse (a male), who told Michael to "get used to such things
because they happen all the time in such situations” (MST). Michael’s published article continues to tell the reader that he felt he had “no choice” (MST) but to accept his superior’s definition of this reality. Nevertheless, Michael reports being fired from his job following his first evaluation. According to the published article, although Michael filed a suit with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), he never felt satisfied by the outcome. He suggests that his frustration was further compounded by more information he learned from a former co-worker. The published article continues, following Michael’s termination, a former co-worker at the medical facility encountered Michael “at a local restaurant” (MST). According to the informant, the head nurse told the staff at an impromptu floor meeting that Michael was schizophrenic.

In the published article, Michael writes that he “added this information to my initial charge with the EEOC” (MST). However, according to Michael, the EEOC seemed to feel this information was irrelevant. The published article continues to report that the female nursing assistants had sexually harassed Michael, but after being counseled not to do it again sexual harassment stopped. According to Michael’s newspaper article, the EEOC ruled that his termination was due to “poor work performance” (MST) regardless of whether he was “affected by the hostile environment” (MST).

As Michael explains in the article, he felt frustrated by the way the EEOC handled the case, but discovered that neither lawyers nor the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) were interested in pursuing his allegations of defamation. Michael describes his frustration in the following way: “All I expected were my human and civil rights. What I received was inhuman” (MST).

The published account of Michael Gray’s experience at the medical facility is intriguing on several counts. First, it provides a story of a man who is sexually harassed, a rare occurrence, or at least an occurrence rarely reported. The sexual harassment of men has been consistently neglected in scholarly literature even though approximately 15% of men report encountering some form of sexual harassment (Cammaert, 1985; Gutek, 1985; Gutek & Cohen, 1987; USMPB, 1981, 1988). The published story indicates that Michael chose to report the sexual harassment, not only to the head nurse, but also to the EEOC. The disparity between individuals who experience sexual harassment and those who file formal charges with the EEOC is quite distinct. Formal complaints filed with the EEOC are much lower than reports of sexual harassment provided to researchers; women’s formal complaints have been estimated at between zero percent (Cammaert, 1985; Ukens, 1991) and five percent (Tangri, Burt, & Johnson, 1982). The general dearth of formal complaints might lead one to suspect that this is a genuine account, albeit a rare scenario, or the published story is fiction (see Hyde, 1993). After reading the article, the researcher was inclined to believe that it was
based on actual events for several reasons. First, Michael acknowledged ownership of the article by signing his name rather than supplying the tag ‘anonymous author.’ Second, the description of the sexual harassment does not fit the stereotypical male fantasy of an unwanted seduction scenario; rather, it fits with the more commonly reported descriptions of sexual harassment that act to embarrass and isolate the victim. Third, the responses that Michael reports receiving from the head nurse are similar to those reported by female victims of sexual harassment (Clair, 1993a; MacKinnon, 1979). Although the story seemed an accurate account of Michael’s perception of the experience, editorial liberties may have been taken with the published article. For these reasons, an interview was requested.

Description of the Interview

Michael Gray agreed to meet the researcher for lunch and discuss both the published account of his experiences as well as offer more detail about his experience with sexual harassment. Several telephone interviews were conducted with Michael following an initial meeting to gain more detail and verify information. The additional information gathered from follow-up discussions is included within the following description of Michael’s interview.

During this interview, Michael was asked what he felt “prompted the nurses to act in a sexually harassing manner” toward him. Michael suggested that his gender “had a lot to do with it.” Secondly, he claimed that the nurses seemed “curious” about his “sexual preferences.” He was asked to elaborate upon the sexual harassment incident (see item 5, Appendix B).

Michael again noted the incident where the assistant nurses questioned him about his sex life, while the supervisor (a female nurse) looked on. Referring to when the women asked if he was a virgin, Michael said: “I told them I wasn’t a virgin. Then I started wondering what was going on here. I was laughing, too, nervously, trying to get out of it.” In addition to being asked if he was a virgin, whether he had ever had oral sex, and whether he had ever slept with a black woman, questions that are all reported in Michael’s published article, the nurses also asked him: “Have you ever had sex with another man? Have you ever given head? I think it was meant to entertain them. It didn’t entertain me.” These questions were not reported in Michael’s published account. Yet, they may play a critical role in understanding the discursive tensions that are at work here.

Michael explained that sexual harassment was common in the medical field. It is Michael’s opinion that nurses, especially female nurses, encounter a great deal of sexual harassment. Michael reported that there were numerous occasions when assistant nurses were sexually harassed by the patients. The most common experience for the
assistant nurses is male patients grabbing the nurses’ breasts. Michael explained that the female nursing assistants: “accepted what was done to them in order to get through. They turned it into a game.” According to Michael, this even happened to him once.

Flirting was especially tolerated “because it seemed to pacify the patients” said Michael, making them easier to handle. Supervisors not only seemed to condone such handling, but encouraged it, from Michael’s view. Furthermore, Michael felt that his supervisor engaged in sexual orientated discrimination as well. For example, Michael related that one elderly female patient often requested certain nurses give her a back rub or bathe her. The shift supervisor (female) thought the patient might be a lesbian and makes jokes about her to other staff members.

Michael’s comment reflects his own subjective awareness of harassment occurring both in regard to gender as well as sexual orientation. He informed the researcher that these certain things were not discussed in the published article, nor did he feel that his sexual orientation was of anyone’s concern. He filed a complaint concerning the sexual harassment, and reiterated “I was sexually harassed.”

Frustrated by the working conditions with the assistant nurses, and his shift supervisor, Michael told the researcher that he reported the sexual harassment to his head nurse. According to Michael, the head nurse, who is hierarchically positioned above the shift supervisor, also encouraged tolerance of sexual harassment. He told Michael to “make up stories” that would satisfy the curiosity of the nurses. He suggested that Michael could “lie” to them to “cajole” them. Michael explained that he thought the supervisor was telling him “not to react to it so strongly.” Michael seemed dissatisfied with this advice since he pursued his case further by contacting the EEOC.

Inquiring further as to why the nurses would harass Michael, he was asked if he knew whether the female assistant nurses harassed any other male assistant nurses. There were no other male nurses or male assistant nurses on his floor during his shift. It was his opinion that turnover of male assistant nurses, in general, is high. Michael did not assume any relationship, he merely observed this point. For whatever reasons, Michael did not speculate further about the turnover. Rather, he returned to our discussion of why the female nursing assistants may have harassed him. He summarized what he thought provoked the nurses into harassing him. In short, Michael said: “They were protective of what they did.” When Michael was asked exactly what he meant by this, he answered:

An old girl type network. Instead of boys, they happen to be girls. And you had to pass the muster. . . . I was the only man on that shift. I don’t know what a man would do to gain entrance to the inner circle. And they didn’t like me. And I think they didn’t like me because they were afraid I would be smart enough to catch onto what they were doing and snitch.
Michael was asked to clarify what things he might catch on to. He answered:

They would take naps and [pause]. And, oh, [pause] they would cut corners where ever they could [his voice changes indicating that he is mimicking the assistant nurses as he says] Well, we’re third shift and we can get away with what others, on other shifts, can’t.

Michael’s answer indicates, that in his opinion, two reasons were at the heart of the nurses being “protective of what they did.” The assistant nurses are protective of the female monopoly they have on the third shift and they are protective of the work style they have developed. The first notion (i.e., a female dominated work group will pressure a male to leave) has received little attention by researchers. However, the second proposition (i.e., work group norms are protected fiercely by the group) has a rich history of scholarly exploration beginning as early as the 1920s with the Hawthorne studies (Roethlisberger & Dickson, 1939) and continuing through to the work of Buroway (1979). Early studies investigated work norms from a managerial perspective by asking why workers do not work harder (Mayo, 1947). Challenges to the managerial approach claimed that it was manipulative (Carey, 1967; Franke & Kaul, 1978; Redding, 1979). Buroway’s analyses suggest that work group norms restricting quota outputs are part of a sophisticated “game” of resistance and oppression which should lead scholars to ask why do workers work as hard as they do.

Buroway (1979) suggests that “one cannot both play the game and at the same time question the rules” (p. 81). In Michael’s case, two interconnected games are played. They are the politics of production relations and the politics of gender relations. A new worker to the group who represents both a challenge to the female solidarity as well as the work norm may encounter hostility from coworkers, which could result in frustration.

Michael described the most frustrating aspect of the experience in the following way:

No one in any official capacity, well no one actually came out and said that what happened to me was wrong. I was wronged. I hadn’t particularly done anything wrong. It was not especially my fault. I did try to be a good employee, I guess.

The equivocality of the statement, “I did try to be a good employee, I guess” can be explained primarily by denotative confusion (i.e., a ‘good employee’ by whose definition). Michael may equivocate about whether he was a good employee or not based upon conflicting perspectives of what constitutes a good employee. If he accepts a definition rooted in class resistance, then he was a good employee when he tried to do work for the other assistant nurses or when he covered for them while they were napping. Yet, these efforts were not rewarded. In fact, Michael states that he is met with responses such as “that doesn’t need to be done” or “I want to do that later” (MST). These responses indicate that Michael may have been surpassing the work quota norms.
Even if Michael had maintained the work norm, his "good employee" status may be questionable considering that he reports engaging in an argument with a coworker. Michael stated that he argued with one of his fellow assistant nurses. He made an abrasive comment, which he claims was said in a "half kidding manner." Furthermore, he claims that several nurses were participating in this style of conversation and that he thought it was part of the organizational culture. Nevertheless, this episode suggests that Michael does make mistakes. The rationalization of his own shortcomings as part of the organizational culture could be applied to the sexual harassment he received. In other words, the nurses could claim that they were merely enacting the generally accepted organizational culture or that they were merely "hazing" Michael as a new employee.

Michael does not view the incident as "hazing." Nor does he feel that he has been treated fairly by the organizational members, management, or society. Michael's feelings became clearer when he explained how writing the article brought a sense of closure for him:

The culmination of the experience. It was cathartic... All the humiliation... To put it in one concise piece did a lot for me personally... a degree of emotion with the facts fairly clear... This should be the last thing I do before I put it into the past... I do it for myself, do myself justice, if no one else would.

The point here is not to determine the judicial guilt or innocence of the assistant nurses or of Michael. Nor is the point to seek justice for Michael who feels that "no one else would." Instead the point is to illustrate the discursive tensions surrounding this claim of sexual harassment.

OPPRESSION/\RESISTANCE: A CRITICAL INTERPRETATION

The following passages provide a critical interpretation of the discursive practices surrounding Michael's experience. The interpretation is guided by the premise that oppression and resistance constitute a self-contained opposite which reflects the complex aspects of hegemony. Specifically, the micro-level discursive practices of oppression and resistance are explored in order to demonstrate their connection with macro-level structures.

Oppressive Resistance

Discursive acts, representing both oppression and resistance, are apparent in Michael's story of sexual harassment. The most obvious is that the female assistant nurses "resist the infiltration of men into a field that they dominate and in which these men often rise to high level administrative posts" (see Clair, 1993b, p. 38). In Michael's story, the highest authority figure mentioned within the organization is the head nurse, who is male. The resistance of the female nursing assistants is rooted in the idea that women must protect an inferior status within a
patriarchal institution, as Michael notes, "they were protective of what they did." Expressing a complex form of hegemony (see Clair, 1993b), the nurses oppress the symbol of the oppressor to maintain their own oppression. Women, such as nurses, have suffered the indignities of sexual harassment, lower pay, fewer promotions, and less respect in the medical hierarchy (Fottler, 1984; Gans, 1984; Williams, 1989). Nevertheless, many female nurses support the recruitment of males into nursing (Fottler, 1984; Gans, 1984; Snavely & Fairhurst, 1984). Possible explanations for this support include: One, that males nurses hold a higher status position in society due to their gender encountering less resistance; two, that women nurses enact a more nurturing role toward male nurses who represent a minority group among female nurses (Snavely & Fairhurst, 1984); three, that males will bring more prestige to the occupation and with it higher salaries for all nurses. Jezek, associate dean of nursing at the University of Miami explains:

The situation in nursing is a reflection of gender relations within our society as a whole ... To say collectively female nurses resent men in nursing is inaccurate, but there are individual nurses who, based on their experiences have some resentment. (Quoted in Boyd, 1993, sec. 6 p. 1)

In this particular case as it is reported by Michael, the nurses resist Michael's entrance into the nursing field by sexually harassing him. This is a tactic commonly employed to keep nurses in their inferior position within the medical hierarchy and typically implemented in male dominated fields (Cockburn, 1991; Ferguson, 1984; Gutek, 1985; "Our Stories," 1992). In essence, the nurses oppress Michael in order to resist further oppression. Yet, as further analysis shows, by oppressing Michael the assistant nurses reify the current system of privilege. Thus, oppression and resistance exist simultaneously, touching each other in tension, articulating a hegemonic moment. Furthermore, the nurses, like the bank-wiring workers of the Hawthorne studies, establish their own work norms, possibly as a form of resistance to managerially established work norms which are enacted on the first and second shifts. Michael's story suggests that he represents a challenge to this resistance. Thus, the assistant nurses must resist/\ oppress Michael in order to maintain their current form of resistance.

In Resistance Lies Domination

There is much evidence to support the fact that female nurses are clearly sexually harassed by male doctors and administrators (Clair, 1993a; Parkin, 1989; Williams, 1989). Michael's story suggests that female nurses are also sexually harassed by the patients. Ironically, the nurses tolerate this behavior because as Michael noted, "it seemed to pacify the patients." Once again resistance and oppression co-exist. In this case, the assistant nurses are led to believe that they must oppose the notion of resistance itself in order to control the patients. They are expected to succumb to their own degradation in order to dominate
others. The message seems to be that they should ignore harassment but use it to control others. The self-contained opposite of resistance and oppression surfaces as an articulation of hegemony; the nurses seem to be expected to tolerate sexual harassment from the patients in order to control the patients. By doing so the nursing assistants actively participate in the domination of the patients as well as their own domination. The interests being served here seem complex. Although the assistant nurses may be able to control the patients through the strategy of tolerance, the strategy of tolerance defines the nurses as individuals who actively subject themselves to oppressive conditions. Thus, the story appears to suggest that assistant nurses are being used as adjunct labor which maintains the status quo and serves the interests of organizational management (Tancred-Sheriff, 1989).

Similarly, Michael reported that he was counseled to “lie” about his sex life when he is harassed by the female nursing assistants. From his point of view, he is expected to appease them in order to promote the current system. In other words, the head nurse promotes a form of resistance for Michael to enact, one that appears to discourage meta-communication. Like the nurses, he is told to resist the temptation to resist. As Deetz (1992) has noted, the suppression of conflict in organizations allows the dominant group to maintain the current system. The self-contained opposite in this instance is intended to promote hegemony (i.e., Michael believes that by accepting his own domination he will be supporting the system). Based upon Michael’s story those guiding the system fail to acknowledge that the system itself is rooted in privilege for some and oppression for others.

Deception would present him with a sense of control, but that form of control at best would be a quasi form of empowerment. There are two reasons this is true. First, Michael’s deceptive actions would be equivalent to that of the nurses who tolerate “flirting” and having their breasts grabbed in order to control the patients. Michael is expected to accept his degradation in order to survive the system. Secondly, it was not Michael who conceived of the lie as a form of resistance. Subsequently, to lie would further disempower him in the sense that he would be enacting a form of resistance that is supplied to him by an authority figure and one that he is probably expected to comply with although it is not his choice to engage with the assistant nurses on either a dimension of deception or honesty. He believes the questions themselves are inappropriate. However, should he choose the avenue supplied by the head nurse he would be complying with a male in a position of authority, a fate not as submissive as complying with female assistant nurses based upon notions of both organizational hierarchy as well as general male privilege in society; yet, Michael is reluctant to choose either course of action.

In this situation Michael’s discursive alternatives seem limited, if not a double-bind (see Bateson, 1972; Watzlawick, Beavin, & Jackson, 1967;
Wood & Conrad, 1983). Neither choice allows Michael to step out of the paradox and both choices illustrate the complex nature of resistance/ \oppression. If Michael tells the truth to the nurses, they have succeeded in invading his personal life, making public what he preferred remain private. Thus, his resistance through truth sediments his oppression. If he lies to the assistant nurses, he allows the harassment to exist and possibly persist. Although he may feel that he has successfully fooled them, he would fail to resist the discursive act of harassment that initiated the need for such a lie. Suggesting Michael lie is similar to asking him to play a game “in order to get through” as female assistant nurses do when the patients harass them as described in Michael’s story.

Buroway (1979) suggests that supervisors and managers participate in the game-playing and thus permit a certain amount of resistance to exist. Game-playing, according to Buroway “first, obscures the relations of production in response to which the game is originally constructed; second, game-playing generates consent to the social relations in production that define the rules of the game” (p. 82). When the head nurse suggests that Michael lie to the nurses, he is, in essence, telling Michael not to challenge the game. He even offers him a means of handling the situation that will protect the established game-playing (i.e., the social relations of work).

Establishing frames around sexual harassment that make it seem trivial or game-like is not uncommon (Clair, 1993a; Daly, 1973; Duncan, Smeltzer, & Leap, 1990; Gutek, 1985; MacKinnon, 1979). Accepting sexual harassment as a game or sport where the prey and predator articulate complex shifting relations of domination and oppression represent a hegemonic condition that fails to counter the patriarchal system. Furthermore, making a game of sexual harassment entangles patriarchy with capitalist production, thus complicating the issues of coercion and hegemony.

**Resistance/\Oppression: The Game Goes On**

Michael, however, refuses to frame the harassment in a game-like way. Instead, Michael challenges the system by filing a complaint with the EEOC. The EEOC representative, according to Michael, would rather take the issue of his work abilities to court than the “fact” that he was sexually harassed. Michael continually resisted this option. He believes that what happened to him was sexual harassment. According to Michael, everyone agrees (e.g., “no one even attempted to deny it” MST). However, his case is mysteriously transferred to an out-of-state investigator. Although Michael could call collect to his representative in order to continue his case, he found it cumbersome. The representative wanted him to change his complaint. He repeatedly asked Michael to prove that he “was not a substandard employee.” Michael said, “he didn’t seem to understand my position.” Eventually, Michael gave up
when repeated efforts to entice the EEOC, the state ACLU, and private attorneys into taking his case failed.

Michael’s ordeal, like that of most female victims of sexual harassment, is depicted as a bureaucratic nightmare. Bureaucratic discourse surrounding the proposed solutions to sexual harassment often leaves victims of harassment feeling victimized twice over as they are regulated into a patriarchal discourse (Clair, 1993c).

Although Michael’s story carries similarities to those stories of other victims of sexual harassment, it is also unique in several ways which may complicate his relations with the EEOC. The general purpose of the EEOC is to provide an equal opportunity for individuals to enter and achieve progress or promotion within capitalist organizations. As Buroway (1979) suggests, both unions and government agencies must be strong enough to command respect and allegiance from workers, but not so strong that they would challenge the current labor process.

Michael represents an anomaly to the capitalist system. Women or other marginalized members of society who attempt entrance into largely white, male dominated arenas are at least professing a desire to play within the capitalist system. They are seeking equal opportunity to participate in the current ‘games’ of production. Michael’s entrance into a largely female dominated field of low status and low pay challenges both the internal and external labor market. In other words, he not only challenges the internal system which generally hires women, but he also challenges the external system which expects white males to seek higher paying, higher status jobs.

The EEOC is faced, in a manner of speaking, with a conflict of interests. It is not the charge of the EEOC to protect the interests of white males; thus Michael, in order to be supported by the EEOC must supply a marginalized status. For example, if Michael claimed that his age or a disability provoked the assistant nurses to treat him as they did, then the EEOC could pursue the case without jeopardizing their own relationship with capitalist structures and practices. Michael is neither of sufficient age to argue age discrimination nor does he have a disability. The EEOC offers him an angle that would maintain the capitalist status quo; fired without just cause. Like the head nurse, the EEOC representative offers Michael a means to resist. Again it is not the solution that Michael seeks. Therefore, this form of resistance is once again a quasi-form of resistance.

Michael’s story depicts himself as both antagonist to working class solidarity as well as to a form of female solidarity. Thus, he seems to represent a challenge to socio-political relations (i.e., patriarchy) and to production relations (i.e., he does not attempt to get ahead in a capitalist system). Subsequently, the EEOC seems reluctant to represent his case as sexual harassment. In addition, the nurses center their resistance to
Michael around social relations (i.e., the issues of race and sexual orientation) since they seem to have consented to production relations.

**Sexual Orientation and Race Discrimination**

Both sexual orientation and race play a role in the experiences Michael retells. Although Buroway (1979) purports that social relations have little impact upon production relations (i.e., black or white, male or female, workers participate in limited forms of resistance and similar forms of 'making out'), both social relations and labor relations are grounded in principles of privilege. Buroway (1979) reports that his findings with regard to the relationship between social and production relations are “very tentative conclusions, based on flimsy data” (p. 156). Yet, he notes that these findings do converge with earlier findings which suggest that social relations have little impact upon production.

Buroway's (1985) later work provides an overview of production and social relations as founded in patriarchy, which he claims gave way to paternalism, and eventually developed into monopoly capitalism. A thorough review of this claim is beyond the scope of the current project. Furthermore, it is beyond the scope of this project to determine whether patriarchy supports capitalism or whether capitalism supports patriarchy, or both. However, a partial interpretation is offered of the relationship between social and production relations. The analysis is limited to how the social relations of race, gender, and sexual orientation, as defined by patriarchy, are discursively practiced by the assistant nurses. These practices illustrate a complex relationship between resistance and oppression, which ultimately protect patriarchy within a capitalist context.

Although the racial implication is important in and of itself (West, 1993), in Michael's story the racial aspect is entangled with sexual orientation, also an issue in its own right (Hall, 1989). According to Michael's story, after the nurses questioned his status as a virgin or not, they demanded to know if he had ever slept with a black woman. The nurses are not curious about just any woman, but a black woman.

Michael was asked why he thought the nurses inquired about sleeping with a black woman. He explained that in a "conservative" area inter-racial sexual relationships are frowned upon. Yet, he said he was not sure why they had used a racial image to harass him. Michael admitted that this is the question that silenced him. He did not know how to answer the nurses.

Possibly the assistant nurses were testing his 'manhood,' noting that the nurses' first comment addresses his male sexual identity (i.e., is he a virgin?). Because Michael's answer assures the nurses that he is not a virgin, the test of heterosexual masculinity escalates to the second question (i.e., has he ever slept with a black woman?). Society has created several stereotypes of black females, some of these stereotypes
are related to white male heterosexuality. One specifically describes the "black female as wild sexual [and] savage" (hooks, 1992, p. 67). The image has generated an increased competitive search on the part of white males to get "a bit of the other" (hooks, 1992 p. 23). To sexually possess a black female has become a disgusting game of white male supremacy (hooks, 1992). Michael may not be a virgin, but the question now raised by the assistant nurses' is whether Michael is "man enough" to have slept with a black woman.

Although Michael may have been trapped by the paradox of inter-racial relations and masculine identity he was unable to voice what was happening to him. If he were to reply "no" to the question of having slept with a black woman, he would have faltered in his heterosexual prowess (i.e., the great white male who has failed to conquer the most sexual and savage of creatures). If, on the other hand, Michael answers "yes" he is placing himself into a precarious inter-racial situation.

Michael's silence is followed by a barrage of questions about whether Michael has slept with men or given them "head." The nurses, according to Michael, were desperate to label him, to define him, and to categorize him. They were angry that he refused to answer.

The nurses, according to Michael's story, seemed overly preoccupied with Michael's sexual orientation, wondering if he has "had sex with another man." The nurses seem intent on being able to categorize Michael's sexual preferences and orientation or to harass him by attacking his "masculinity" as defined by heterosexuality. In either case, this form of harassment reifies gender distinctions and the inferiority of feminine attributes. By harassing Michael in this way, the nurses are contributing once again to their own inferior status within a patriarchal/heterosexual system. They seem to place heterosexual women in a more privileged position than homosexual or bisexual men. The reason that a patriarchal society places low status on homosexual men is because they are perceived as being similar to women, thus these men are placed in an inferior category (Daly, 1973). Supporting a system of privilege that is grounded in the male heterosexual narrative only reifies the status quo. When heterosexual women privilege themselves above gays and lesbians they are participating in a subtle form of hegemony (Clair, 1993b). That is to say, the nurses actively participate in promoting the concept of privilege (see Gramsci, 1971 for a reference to hegemony through privilege). Participating in an ironic and hegemonic practice, the female nurses sediment patriarchal definitions of themselves, women as inferior.

Race, gender, and sexual orientation are the focus of the assistant nurses' interrogation of Michael. According to Michael's story, the assistant nurses question Michael's status as a virgin, rely on racial stereotypes of black women, and ask pointed questions about Michael's sexual orientation. In doing so, the assistant nurses express resistance to
Michael entering their work circle; yet, concomitantly the nurses engage in discursive practices that reinforce their own oppression. They seem to accept the notion that some people are privileged over others, especially in terms of race, gender, and sexual orientation.

CONCLUSION

Michael’s experience, like any “experience is at once always already an interpretation and something that needs to be interpreted. What counts as experience is neither self-evident nor straightforward: it is always contested, and always therefore political” (Scott, 1991, p. 797). The present interpretation of Michael’s experience relies on the theoretical premise that opposites are self-contained. Self-contained opposites exposed in this analysis directly exemplify Heraclitus’ notion of coincidentia oppositorum (i.e., opposites coincide). Furthermore, they reflect the complex nature of oppression and resistance that Foucault has perceived in society and explicated in his writings. Opposition becomes resistance when the female nurses oppress Michael through sexual harassment in order to resist being infiltrated by a male. Resistance becomes oppression when the nurses accept sexual harassment from the patients in order to dominate them. Furthermore, the female nurses contribute to their own oppression through their reliance on and use of sexual orientation to taunt Michael.

Michael’s resistance to sexual harassment extends from micro-level interventions to federal and state agencies. Michael is offered strategies of resistance by the head nurse, but recognizes that oppression is embedded in these quasi-forms of resistance. The head nurse suggests that Michael appease the nurses and accept his oppression as a “normal” state of affairs. These discursive practices are common in scenes of sexual harassment (Clair, 1993a; Gutek, 1985; MacKinnon, 1979). As Michael invokes the help of the EEOC his efforts are undermined by bureaucratic discourse that supports rather than rejects oppression (Ferguson, 1984). According to Buroway (1979, 1985), the state, both directly and indirectly, supports the current mode of production. Michael’s complaint to the EEOC challenges the current capitalist system. Challenging the capitalist system is not the charge of the EEOC. Thus, Michael resists macro-level opportunities for quasi-resistance, too. Foucault explains that the micro-level discursive practices are entangled with macro-level discursive formations of domination. As Foucault (1977/1979) suggests, “these [hegemonic] relations go right down into the depths of society” (p. 27).

The nurses support a system of patriarchal privilege by invoking strategies of harassment that are grounded in gender, race, and sexual orientation discrimination. Although attempting to set forth a sense of superiority for themselves, the nurses unwittingly advance principles that discursively define their own subjectivity as well as other marginal-
ized members of society as inferior, creating discursive moments that contribute to the hegemonic imposition by supporting a gender structuring of organization.

The limitations of this study are similar to those found in many other studies of sexual harassment. Clair (1993a) suggests that "methodological procedures focusing on recall of sexual harassment" (p. 132) may raise concerns over the respondents ability to clearly recall the events without "distortion" (p. 132). Nor does an interview approach address the "temporal character of how respondents came to understand their experience" (Clair, 1993a, p. 132). In addition, this analysis relies on a story as depicted by one participant, Michael Gray. Future studies might seek out situations more conducive to obtaining several viewpoints of the events. Furthermore, this analysis addresses a rare occurrence (i.e., women believed to be sexually harassing men), and is not intended to be generalizable; rather it is intended to open dialogue about issues that are often silenced.

The implications of this study for future work in organizational communication theory are threefold. First, the results of this study suggest that the gender structuring of organizations is a communicative phenomenon. Specifically, in this case, the discursive exchanges between organizational members reinforce organizational structure. This finding contributes to the growing number of studies that suggest that organizational structure has been reified when in essence, it is a discursive creation (Deetz, 1992; Giddens, 1979; Mumby, 1987, 1988). Second, the findings from this study support complex renderings of power as opposed to reductionistic views that suggest power can be described in dualistic terms. By accepting a decentered view of power, researchers acknowledge that the notions of victim and victimizer exist in a complicated tension. Third, this study addresses the discursive practices that allow us to see how "communicating is where the micro becomes the macro, the macro the micro ... where hegemony and resistance meet" (Dervin, 1993, p. 52). Based upon this knowledge future studies will be able to develop richer conceptualizations of hegemony and coercion than what is currently provided.

In addition, future studies in organizational communication may address the specific discursive framing devices invoked during communicative exchanges of a hegemonic nature (see Clair, 1993a). For example, Michael Gray's story suggests that he was labeled a schizophrenic. This particular framing device may be similar, yet more extreme, to devices used by men to justify or rationalize the sexual harassment of women. In Clair's study, some women were told they "misunderstood" the actions or intentions of the harasser. This supposed inability on the part of the victim to correctly define reality is similar to what Michael experienced (i.e., schizophrenics are supposedly unable to define reality).

Furthermore, future studies may re-conceptualize resistance\ oppression as a discursive exchange process, one that allows for
quasi-forms of both resistance and oppression. By using the term “quasi-forms” to describe aspects of resistance and oppression, rather than “pseudo-forms” this research suggests that no “true” or “false” discursive forms of resistance/oppression exist rather there are a variety of discursive forms of resistance/oppression. Thus, some forms of resistance are not necessarily more “real” than others; rather, some forms of resistance may support oppression more than others and some forms of oppression may be articulations of resistance. Further research is needed to unravel the nature of these different discursive forms of resistance/oppression.

The study of oppression/resistance is not restricted to analyses of women’s lives, although studies in this area can assist in illuminating resistance/oppression. In addition, resistance/oppression has been investigated in terms of race, class, and occupation through ethnographic methodology. These works can heuristically inform each other; thus, contributing to an organizational communication theory of discourse and resistance/oppression.

One man’s story may be an everyday encounter within organizational life, which seems hardly worthy of critical acknowledgement; yet, it describes discursive practices that create and reflect the intensity and complexity of power relations. As Weedon (1987) points out “it is only by looking at a discourse in operation, in a specific historical context, that it is possible to see whose interests it serves at a particular moment” (p. 111). Foucault (1977/1979) summarizes the situation in the following way:

The overthrow of these ‘micro-powers’ does not, then, obey the law of all or nothing; it is not acquired once and for all by a new control of the apparatuses nor by a new functioning or a destruction of the institutions; on the other hand, none of its localized episodes may be inscribed in history except by the effects that it induces on the entire network in which it is caught up. (p. 27)

The current study inscribed a localized episode of domination into history by presenting one man’s story of sexual harassment. This undertaking illustrated the complexity of discursive practices surrounding and supporting the self-contained opposite of resistance/oppression. Further research endeavors are needed to clarify the complex relationship of resistance/oppression and communication. Answering this challenge may provide greater insight concerning the gender structuring of organizations and the organizing of society into a gender oppressive system. The present interpretation of one man’s story of sexual harassment grants a mere glimpse into what needs to be investigated and what can be revealed about how the organizing of sexuality is achieved and maintained through discursive practices.

ENDNOTES

1. During the fiscal year of 1993, the EEOC registered 11,908 sexual harassment complaints. Of these complaints 9% were brought by males. The EEOC tracks the gender
of the complaining party, but not the accused. Therefore, the figure of 9\% includes men who are charging both or either males or females as the harasser(s). This information was gathered during an interview that I conducted with Michael Widomski, information specialist of the EEOC, Office of Communications and Legislative Affairs, Washington D.C. July 20, 1994.

2. See Willis, 1977 for a discussion of the hegemonic moment with respect to the oppressive socialization of working class lads; see McRobbie, 1981 for a feminist critique of Willis' work.

3. Marcovich (1967) presents a table of successive and simultaneous opposites as well as their reasons for unity based upon the fragments of Heraclitus' work.


5. Michael Gray is a pseudonym. In addition, the title of the newspaper article has also been altered.

6. Although the author/respondent originally agreed to public disclosure, following the two successive interviews he requested that confidentiality be maintained.

7. See Strine, 1992 for an application of this concept to the sexual harassment of females.

8. See Fraser (1989) for a discussion of the four works concerning client resistance. Specifically, Fraser suggests that these examples of resistance range from "the individual, cultural, and informal to the collective, political, and formally organized" (p. 177). The works referred to include, but are not limited to those written by, Fox Piven & Cloward (1971, 1979), Rains (1971), and Stack (1974). Other works written by Crow Dog with Erdoes (1990), the Personal Narratives Group (1989), and Trethewey (1992) also provide descriptions and or discussions of women's resistance and oppression.

9. See Buroway (1979), Buroway, et al., (1991), and Willis (1977) for discussions of resistance and oppression from class, race and/or gender orientations.

REFERENCES


Castaneda, C. J. (1992, August 3). Tailhook investigation 'no help' Women go public, may file suit. USA Today, p. 3A.
Resistance and Oppression as a Self-Contained Opposite


Coser, R. L. (1981). Where have all the women gone? Like the sediment of a good wine, they have sunk to the bottom. In C. F. Epstein, & R. L. Coser (Eds.), Access to power (pp. 18–36). London: George Allen and Unwin.


Resistance and Oppression as a Self-Contained Opposite


APPENDIX A

Men Suffer, Too: A Story of Sexual Harassment by Michael Gray

Sexual harassment is finally being talked about everywhere today, thanks to a few well-publicized cases. Even though some of the talk is derisive, this could be the best chance I’ll get to tell my story. It may seem an unusual twist to an already complex subject. It may just be that I’m the first to speak up about it.
In November of 1989 I began employment at a medical facility in the area [city where I live]. I was one of quite a number of male nursing assistants employed there. After a month-long orientation, professionally conducted and seemingly helpful, I went to work on my assigned floor, where all I learned in orientation became superfluous. There were many times when I volunteered for duties on the floor but was effectively stopped from doing my job by my co-workers. They rejected my enthusiasm by saying, "That doesn't need to be done," or, "I want to do that later." I often worked alone for the first three hours of our third-shift work day so that my co-workers could sleep in a lounge (something they were not supposed to do). I thought I was being a willing worker and a nice guy.

Within weeks, an incident occurred that told me something was going on and that it was aimed in my direction.

I was sitting at a table with my fellow nursing assistants, all female, when I suddenly became the object of an inquisition. They demanded to know if I was a virgin, if I had ever had oral sex, if I had ever been with a black woman, and so on. I found this line of questioning inappropriate, since it had nothing to do with our work responsibilities. I asked that the subject be dropped. Eventually it was, when the women decided to get up and do some work.

I am no goodie-two-shoes prude. It is important for all of us to maintain a sense of humor. However, this sort of hostile baiting is in no way humorous, especially from co-workers of the opposite sex who have more seniority.

I reported this incident to the head nurse (also a man) on the floor soon afterward. Our shift supervisor was present at the time it occurred, but said nothing; she even seemed amused by it. The head nurse indicated that I should get used to such things, because they happen all the time in such institutions. I accepted this because I felt I had no choice.

After the first of the year, I was summoned to a meeting with several administrative officers of the facility, given my first job evaluation and summarily fired. I was in shock. The things said about me were nearly all exaggerations. Some had no basis in fact at all.

I was offered the opportunity to quit. I preferred being fired. This would give me the opportunity to fight for my unemployment benefits. I did so, and to my amazement, I won. It was ruled that the distrustful working relationship was not particularly my fault and that I was often not communicated with properly. I then filed a charge of sexual harassment with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

About two weeks later, the most astonishing thing about this entire incident came to light for me, almost by accident. I was having lunch in a
local restaurant when I spotted someone I knew and worked with briefly at the facility. The individual walked over and sat down beside me.

"I told myself that if I ever saw you again, I would tell you what they did to you," began the story I was finally told. This person revealed to me that while I was still employed at the facility, the head nurse came in on a night I was off-duty and held a floor meeting with all my co-workers. He passed out copies of magazine articles about schizophrenia and multiple personality. He stated that I fit the descriptions to a T, and indicated that he wanted input on just what to do with me.

The very idea of such a slanderous, amateur diagnosis from an unqualified person is enough to take one's breath away. But from a trusted health-care professional? And to deliberately publicize it! My work environment needed no additional poisoning. I added this information to my initial charge with the E.E.O.C.

In my case, the harassment was so inescapably obvious that no one even attempted to deny it. However, the Commission ruled that my co-workers were counseled about their abusive behavior and the harassment stopped at that time; ignoring the vicious and retaliatory floor meeting in which I was labeled for the rest of my life. The Commission ruled that poor work performance was the reason for dismissal, even though I and my work were affected by the hostile environment.

The most frightening aspect of this story is the fact that the administration of the facility probably knew all along what was happening to me and allowed it to continue, virtually approving of it as some sort of practical business measure. It is truly difficult to sue the State of [in which I reside] or a facility that accepts state funds. Most attorneys shy away from defamation suits because they are not profitable, even though it's plain to see I've been wronged. The state demands that actual damage or loss, usually monetary, be incurred before reparations are in order. In essence, it seems the state is saying that if you don't have a fortune, a business, or a stellar reputation to lose, you don't have anything to lose. Not even the state ACLU would express interest in my case.

My character was assassinated. I couldn't work for over a year. I still have fears about jumping into the job market in this area. I feel I'm left with little to look forward to and entirely too much to explain. All I expected were my human and civil rights. What I received was inhuman. Worst of all, my relationships with women were damaged and clouded in ways too deep to speak of.

My tax dollars and yours are sometimes used to support the health care industry. I think portions of it are out of control. We should consider what might happen to [the state's] precious business climate should the rest of the world discover how backward this state is. Perhaps that's an asset in someone's eyes. There's nothing like an easily exploited work force in these times.
I have awfully little faith left in state and federal agencies, especially the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Can you blame me? It almost sounds as though some of our bureaucrats are too busy harassing and intimidating others to investigate charges of harassment and intimidation.

APPENDIX B

1. Was your story edited (minor or major revisions)?
2. What was your title at work?
3. Have you stayed in the medical field?
4. What are your future plans?
5. Could you detail the harassment experience? For example, what do you think prompted the nurses to act in a sexually harassing manner toward you? How many women harassed you? Were there any other incidents of sexual harassment, other than what you mentioned in your article?
6. Do you know if they, the female nurses, did this to any other men or women?
7. In your story you say that you reported this to the head nurse who was a man and that you found out later that he had concocted stories about your being a schizophrenic, but first he told you to get used to it that these things happen all the time. Can you recall if these were his exact words and if he gave you any other advice about the situation (good or bad)? Why do think the head nurse made up these stories about you? What purpose would it serve?
8. What prompted you to report this to the EEOC? Did you receive encouragement from friends, relatives, or your coworkers?
9. Would you describe your visit to the EEOC? Would describe their follow up on the matter?
10. Did you ever witness the females nurses being harassed, perhaps by doctors?
11. Did anyone suggest in any way that you may have misunderstood the intentions or the behavior of the nurses who harassed you?
12. Did anyone suggest that you drop the matter for the sake of the organization or morale or any other reason?
13. You said the head nurse told you to get used to it because “it happens all the time.” Did anyone else suggest this to you?
14. Did anyone make a joke or trivialize what you were experiencing?
15. Did you actually label it as harassment at the time of the occurrence?
16. How did other people suggest you handle the situation? Did anyone suggest that this should be handled at the personal level?
17. How did you respond to the nurses comments at first? Did you ever tell these nurses that you had a girlfriend whether you do or not, just to get them to stop? Did you ignore their comments at first? You
said that you asked that the subject be dropped, can you remember exactly how you asked them?

18. What was the most frustrating aspect of this whole experience for you?

19. What would you tell other men or women who find themselves in similar situations?

20. How has this experience with sexual harassment affected your life?

21. Would you tell me about writing the article which appeared in the newspaper?