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**Fantasy or Fiction? An Evaluation of the Linguistic
Representation of Sex Work in Contemporary Cinema and
Television.**

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Abstract: The overall aim of this investigation is to evaluate the accuracy of language use within contemporary cinema, more specifically, how language use represents the sex work industry in the film *For a Good Time, Call...* (2012) and any other relevant depictions. The dialogue of the film is analysed in comparison to Hall's study of the language of fantasy making (1995), observing whether the use of gender and sexuality marked language she describes is mirrored. With language so often shaping and constraining the discourse of gender and sexuality, this study also assesses the degree of responsibility cinema holds when handling complex topics such as sex work, particularly within the comedy genre. Despite similarities between phonological tokens, it is proposed that the chosen film does not accurately reflect the fantasy maker's language use described in Hall (1995), and instead maximises the comedic potential of sex and taboo (Zhou 2010: 7). Furthermore, it appears that the phonological parallels between the fantasy makers in Hall (1995) and the actors in *For a Good Time, Call...* (2012) could be a result of our pre-conditioned knowledge that certain phonological combinations are associated with particular social groups (Eckert 2010, Zimman 2017), supporting the theory that phonological variation carries a higher degree of social meaning (Eckert and Labov 2017).

Keywords: Sex work, sociolinguistics, television and cinema, gender, sexuality, pitch, breathiness, speech style, expletives, euphemism, dysphemism.

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1. Introduction

In the pilot episode of *Secret Diary of a Call Girl* (2007), London escort Belle states ‘Escort, hooker, prostitute, whore. I don’t mind what you call me. That’s just semantics’ (0h1m39s), perfectly summarising some of the various lexical tokens used to condition our perceptions of the sex work industry throughout the decades. With the sex work industry so easily constrained by the language that surrounds it, it could be debated that any medium that chooses to explore the topic contributes to shaping our perceptions, and therefore holds some degree of linguistic responsibility. For that reason, this study intends to evaluate, from a linguistic perspective, the cinematic representation of the fantasy making industry within the 2012 comedy ‘*For a Good Time, Call...*’. Primarily based upon the findings of Hall (1995), who discovered that fantasy makers use gender marked language features to construct perceived feminine personas and ultimately exploit societal perceptions of gender and sexuality for financial gain, this investigation aims to evaluate to what extent this careful linguistic strategy is accurately represented by the media industry. In particular, to what degree a comedy film, with a presumed primary focus of humour, will use language to authentically depict the methods of fantasy making outlined in Hall (1995). Many would argue that despite a primary goal of entertainment, producers have a duty of authenticity when choosing to capture groups as underrepresented or stigmatised as sex workers, and debatably should provide what Young-Scholten believes to be a ‘social service’ (2005: 14) by reducing misconceptions related to language use. Furthermore, since cinema can so often act as a microcosm for pre-existing societal perceptions, the language used in the portrayal of fantasy makers might provide valuable insight into opinions around sex work more generally and how they fit into the wider discourse of gender and sexuality in the twenty-first century.

To begin this investigation, Section 2 will outline the background of both sex work and modern cinema, describing how technological development and recent digitalisation has pushed the sex work industry further into public view, arguably making the topic more relevant for cinematic exploration. Section 3 will analyse the pre-existing literature that has

informed this study, outlining not only the seminal study (Hall 1995), but any other relevant sociolinguistic investigations concerning the stylistic variation and gender marked language Hall observes (1995). It also reviews any other examples of the academic analysis of cinema from both linguistic and sociological perspectives, in order to provide a framework for the analysis. Following this, Section 4 will describe the methodology for this study, one that closely follows the qualitative approach of Hall (1995) in order to make the results of this investigation more directly comparable to hers. Section 5 will then provide the results and discussion, evaluating the ‘cinematic integrity’ (Young-Scholten 2005: 14) and linguistic accuracy of the chosen film and a secondary depiction. For clarity, Section 5 has been divided into three sections: Section 5.1. will describe the phonological analysis, Section 5.2. will examine the lexis and discourse, and Section 5.3. will compare these in relation to theories of stylistic variation, evaluating whether the phonological accuracies are a result of research, or a more internalised understanding of phonological meaning from the actors. Finally, Section 6 will conclude this study, arguing that despite phonological similarities between Hall (1995) and *For a Good Time, Call...* (2012), the inaccuracy of the lexis and discourse within the film does misrepresent the language of fantasy making and as a result detracts from the careful linguistic strategy observed in Hall (1995). Furthermore, Section 6 will also examine how the performance and manipulation of certain stylistic phonological features, observed in both Hall (1995) and the film, could be a result of a pre-existing or learned knowledge of their meaning (Eckert 2010), a theory that might require further investigation in both natural and performative speech.

2. Background: Sex Work, Cinema and Sex-Positivity

Sex work occurs in many different ways and has had a very lengthy history, with different branches ranging from prostitution to pornography or erotic dancing. For many, the association of female oppression with sex-work is maintained within today’s society, with the continuing belief that ‘sex work is a quintessential expression of patriarchal gender relations’ (Weitzer 2009: 214). However, many others believe that these stigmatisations of oppression and criminality are not the case, but rather that in many cases, sex work is empowering and allows for ‘mutual gain to both parties – just as in other economic transactions’ (Weitzer 2009: 215), whilst providing a sense of occupational freedom that other jobs may not permit (Weitzer 2009: 215). One branch of sex work, popularised in the early 1980’s, was telephone

sex work, or fantasy lines (Hall 1995: 183). With many businesses appearing to capitalise off the rapid developments of telephone technology (Hall 1995: 189) and the opportunities it presented; sex work appeared to be no exception. Anonymous fantasy phone-calls, where callers could exchange in sexualised conversations with strangers, arguably provided ‘a more personal, involved and creative relationship between seller and consumer’ (Hall 1995: 189) than the pornographic images found in magazines (Hall 1995: 189). It is unsurprising, therefore, that sociolinguistic research, such as the seminal study of this investigation (Hall 1995), eventually turned its gaze to fantasy lines and their ability to successfully substitute the primarily physical act of sex with conversation alone. Today, sex work appears to have evolved alongside technological developments once more. For example, OnlyFans, a social media platform ‘launched in 2016’ (Ryan 2019: 120) has ‘revolutionis[ed] digital sex work by creating easy access and payment for those who want to broadcast sexual content’ (Ryan 2019: 120). Other modern mediums of sex work include the Amazon Wish List, where ‘a list of consumer items [...] can be purchased anonymously by a benefactor’ (Ryan 2019: 120) in exchange for sexual content. It seems that like many entrepreneurs, sex workers have found opportunities to maximise on technology, and that no matter how our world changes, the monetisation of sex continues to exist in society and evolves accordingly. It might even be argued that the recent digitalisation of sex work has pushed the subject further into the mainstream, due to the wide accessibility of the internet and social media, creating the potential for more exploration of the industry in popular culture mediums such as cinema.

Cinema, a popular means of reflecting and challenging political climates, has, in some ways, embraced “sex positivity”, an ideology that Ivanski and Kohut believe ‘promotes [...] being open-minded, non-judgemental and respectful of personal sexual autonomy, when there is consent’ (2017 :216). With expressions of female sexuality and the enjoyment of sexual experience explored on screen today, there is reason to argue that sex and cinema has also evolved over the years, however, this idea is largely overshadowed by what appears to be the continuation of idealised depictions and underrepresentation. For example, despite an increase of the representation of LGBTQ+ in television and cinema, some believe it continues to be ‘governed by heteronormativity’ (Dhaenens 2013: 304). Sex work is also presented in cinema as what Tasker believes to be archetypal, with the prostitute appearing stereotypically in ‘her various incarnations’ (1998: 3) either ‘romanticised or situated as abject’ (Tasker 1998: 3). Therefore, with cinema providing a presently limited reference of sex work (most recognisable being those such as *Pretty Woman* (1990), where the protagonist sex worker is

saved from her seemingly unfulfilling career by the love of a rich man), it might be interesting to analyse whether the language use in these films also misrepresents the industry. When language so easily has the power to easily reinforce sex-negativity (Glickman 2003), many would argue it is the responsibility of screen writers to create dialogue that explores sex work both accurately and informatively.

3. Literature Review

Hall's observations and analysis of contemporary sex-workers (1995) acts as the seminal study for this investigation. Through a primarily qualitative approach, Hall dissects the language use of 12 American 'fantasy-line' workers, discovering a calculated linguistic strategy that each worker applies in order to construct a desirably feminine persona (Hall 1995). With consideration for previous studies of marked female language, such as Lakoff (1973), Hall notes that in the context of sex work, gender marked variables can be manipulated to form an arguably subordinate female persona in order to align with 'the frame of male pornographic discourse' (Hall 1995: 195). She believes, however, that the creation of a submissive character does not leave the sex workers themselves at a disadvantage, but rather that their linguistic superiority (1995: 205) places them in a position of power as they sell a degrading stereotype of femininity (and often race) 'back to the culture at large for a high price' (Hall 1995: 208). This investigation will compare the real-life observations of Hall to modern cinematic representations of the sex work industry, in order to examine whether said representations are an accurate reflection of real-life fantasy makers, who 'wonder if it really is women's language' (Hall 1995: 206) or rather 'repeating what it is that the men want to hear and want to believe that woman actually like and think' (Hall 1996:206).

As previously stated, prior studies on gender and language have highlighted language features that deemed markers of femininity. It is important to note that throughout this study, the phrase "gender marked language" will be used in relation to any features that are in some way associated with gender, or in other words, suggested markers of gender. Examples of such language in academic research include Lakoff's analysis of female speech, which proposes examples such as tag question formations, politeness, and the avoidance of expletives (1973). In her work, Lakoff suggests that variables such as these are a reflection of women's marginality in society and that in early life 'the acquisition of this speech style

will later be an excuse to others to keep [women] in a demeaning position, to refuse to take [them] seriously as a human being' (1973:47). Whilst the work of Lakoff has been critiqued by sociolinguists throughout the years and believed 'to affirm sexist notions' (Hall 1995: 184), marked features such as the ones she outlines are often useful when conducting a sociological analysis of speech, as seen in Hall (1995), who observes the conscious adoption of said "women's speech" for financial gain (Hall 1995). It is for this reason that this study will analyse some variables of Lakoff's "women's speech" in the dialogue of the chosen film and television examples. Other observations of gendered speech variables, again with focus on those seen as markedly 'female', will also help to guide the analysis of this investigation. For example, McConnell-Ginet who believes 'our speech not only reflects our place in culture and society, but also helps to create [it]' (1978: 542), studied patterns of intonation and pitch amongst speakers of American English to evaluate the ways in which phonetic variation can 'underscore [...] gender identification' (1978: 542) in particular contexts. To this end, her reportedly female marked variables such as higher and more varied pitch and emotionally expressive intonation, will be analysed in the chosen dialogues for this study (McConnell-Ginet 1978). Furthermore, the observations made in McConnell-Ginet (1978) were reported in Hall's study, who stated that the fantasy makers alluded to using such phonetic features in their phone calls to create the ultimate feminine phonology (1995: 200).

Recently, the exploration of stylistic variation, particularly phonological, has been of interest to sociolinguists. For example, Eckert's analysis of affect, sound symbolism and variation, proposes the learnability of certain linguistic styles from youth, arguing how certain variables, carrying widely recognisable social meaning, are learned to be adopted by speakers (2010). To this end, it might be of value to observe to what end cinema, one of the most common frames of reference for most people surrounding sex work, upholds or even provides social meaning to particular phonological variables. Eckert, however, does outline the subjective nature of analysing and distinguishing such tokens for quantitative analysis (2010: 79). Further to this, in Zimman's research into gender and voice he suggests that gender marked voices are formed by 'stylistic bricolage' (2017: 339), or in other words that the combining of phonological features, that can also be recombined, are used to create varying social meaning (2017). With actors creating meaning by combining certain linguistic features in their performances, it will be interesting to see if their supposed 'stylistic bricolage' (Zimman 2017: 339) of a fantasy maker's voice is comparable to the features combined

successfully by those within Hall (1995), and if so, what has led them to associate said features with the sex work industry.

In terms of the linguistic analysis of cinema, examples evaluating sex worker specific language in film and television were limited. Tasker (1998) provides insight into the cinematic representations sex workers, as she notes that ‘the prostitute, unlike the *femme fatale*, has not particularly preoccupied feminist film criticism’ (Tasker 1998: 5). Her argumentation centres around the idea that the sex worker is central to ‘the cinematic articulation of gendered identities in relation to constructions of independence, self-reliance and sexuality’ (Tasker 1998: 5) and that cinema can sometimes perpetuate negative ideas of criminality, promiscuity or deception in their sex worker characters (Tasker 1998: 93). However, Tasker’s focus, whilst informative of the archetypal depictions of sex workers within cinema, is not linguistic. Alternatively, some studies of the accuracy of language features in cinema, such as Young-Scholten’s analysis of interlanguage in *The Terminal* (2004) have been conducted (Young-Scholten 2005). In her investigation, Young-Scholten’s intentions are to ‘deal with language as represented *by* the media rather than *in* the media’ (2005: 1), as she compares the accuracy of the protagonist’s early and intermediate second language acquisition to real-life L2 learners (2005). To conduct her investigation, she analyses various tokens of dialogue throughout *The Terminal* (2004) against frameworks of second language acquisition to evaluate how accurately the protagonist acquires L2 English (Young-Scholten 2005). The purpose of her investigation is not only to explore the accuracy of Hollywood when on a ‘mission to entertain rather than inform’ (2005: 2), but also how emphasis on accuracy can ensure a director ‘succeeds in presenting the issue as complex as it is’ (2005: 1). For the purposes of this study, these intentions are also highly applicable, especially when cinema chooses to portray a group who are often grossly misrepresented and stereotyped, and therefore will shape the intentions of this research. Young-Scholten also compares her primary focus of *The Terminal* to another film, *Love Actually* (2003), which she describes as generally inaccurate (2005). This study will focus on the dialogue of one film primarily, *For A Good Time: Call...* (2012), as the plot centres around the life of two phone-sex workers in New York City and therefore is more comparable to the data taken from Hall’s study (1995). However, as in Young-Scholten (2005), the examples of sex worker language in this film will also be compared to another secondary example of television centralised around a sex worker, *Secret Diary of a Call Girl* (2007), in order to draw more general conclusions about their representation by the media as a whole.

The central themes of this study also contribute to wider issues of language and sexuality, as well as language and gender. In their over-arching analysis of language in relation to sex, Cameron and Kulick explore how ‘sexual experience, like any other human experience, is communicated and made meaningful by codes and conventions of signification’ (2003: 15). Subsequently, it might be fruitful to analyse *why* the language applied by fantasy makers in both Hall’s study and *For a Good Time Call* (2012) is deemed meaningful by the society that invests in it, as well as to what extent language influences or even determines society’s acceptance of sex work and expressions of sexuality. From Cameron and Kulick (2003) ideas of feminism, heterosexuality, and language that aids in blueprinting society’s ideal woman will be considered in relation to the data collected in both this investigation and Hall’s (1995), exploring why the language use of cinema might contribute to upholding certain perceptions about sex and sex work. Additionally, in an analysis of gender and language, Eckert and McConnell-Ginet highlight the relationship between language and social change, stating that ‘the gender order and linguistic conventions exercise a profound constraint on our thoughts and actions, predisposing us to patterns set down over generations’ (2003: 54). To this end, this investigation might observe whether the language depicted within cinema, a widely accessible resource, upholds generational gender conventions or challenges them, and what this could mean for the perceptions of an industry so directly influenced by the gender order.

4. Methodology

The primary aim of this investigation is to evaluate the linguistic representation of sex work in contemporary cinema by attempting to answer the following research questions:

1. Is the language of fantasy making described in Hall (1995) accurately reflected in the cinematic depiction of fantasy making, *For a Good Time, Call...* (2012)?
2. Will a comedy film, with a primary intent of amusing viewers, authentically portray sex work through language?
3. How does the language used within the film relate to the wider discourse surrounding gender, sexuality, and the sex work industry?

To achieve this, this investigation will closely follow the observational-style methodology found in Hall's original 1995 study of fantasy-makers in America to make the data from the chosen film more comparable with her findings. The following section will outline the methods used to select, transcribe, and analyse the language used in *For a Good Time, Call...* (2012) alongside any other appropriate examples of sex worker representation in contemporary cinema and television.

In Hall's investigation, 11 women and 1 man were interviewed with regards to their profession as fantasy makers on a line marketed to heterosexual males in San Francisco (1995). The data consisted of pre-recorded telephone messages, transcribed for analysis, as well direct opinions and observations taken from interviews with the fantasy makers that were also transcribed (Hall 1995). To this end, her investigation was more qualitative in nature, with Hall drawing a lot of anecdotal insight on language perception and use from the workers themselves (1995). This investigation will also be mainly qualitative, comparing the transcribed dialogue of the film with the findings of Hall (1995) in a similarly observational manner. However, there is also a somewhat quantitative perspective applied when discussing how frequently the chosen variables occur throughout the film.

Firstly, various film and television examples depicting sex-workers were viewed, in order to find one that was most comparable with Hall's study. The film *For a Good Time, Call...* (2012) was chosen due to the fact it featured two telephone fantasy makers who lived in America. Further to this, the genre of the film was comedy, which provides arguably a more intriguing comparison when we consider to what degree writers will focus on integrity within a genre designed to amuse above all else. One other depiction was also chosen for secondary comparison: the pilot episode of *Secret Diary of a Call Girl* (2007), in order to provide comment on the representation of sex workers within television and cinema beyond fantasy making. The decision to use another example was influenced by Young-Scholten (2005), whose analysis of the accuracy of inter-language in one blockbuster film was compared to another film, in order to highlight inconsistencies between representations by the media industry. Young-Scholten found that her focal film, *The Terminal* was highly accurate in its depiction of second-language acquisition (2004), whereas her secondary analysis of *Love Actually* (2003) featured much more inaccuracy (2005). To this end, it might be interesting to see whether either of the two chosen depictions are more accurate in their portrayal of fantasy maker language use than the other. Following this selection, dialogue from *For a Good*

Time, Call (2012), where the protagonists were partaking in telephone sex-work, was transcribed according to the relatively simple transcription methods used by Hall (1995), to allow for easier comparison. For example, as in Hall (1995), vocal quality and style is indicated with parentheses, pauses are highlighted with punctuation, and the use of the IPA is not included given the qualitative nature of her investigation. The decision was also made to omit the dialogue of the callers in *For a Good Time, Call...* (2012) and only transcribe the sex workers, in order to steer the focus towards their language use and avoid any unnecessary or distracting dialogue. It is important to remember that this study, like Hall's (1995) focuses on the language of the fantasy makers themselves, and their voices, not the language of the clients. On the other hand, the client's dialogue in *Secret Diary of a Call Girl* (2007) was included in the transcription, as it provided important context for the discourse of the exchange.

These transcripts were then analysed for notable linguistic features, separated into two categories: phonology, and lexis and discourse. The phonological variables were taken directly from Hall's study (1995) and include: accent, breathiness and intonation. The lexical and discourse variables were taken from a combination of Hall's observations and transcriptions (1995) and other relevant studies of the female marked language. They include: descriptive lexis such as colour discrimination, expletives and taboo language, and euphemism and dysphemism. All of these variables, analysed by Hall (1995) and others, are suggested to be in some way gender marked, including those drawn from the work of Lakoff, who suggested that there is such a thing as "female speech" (1973). It should also be noted that all phonological variables are collected auditorily, due to time limitations.

Following the critical analysis of the aforementioned variables, this investigation will evaluate the representation of sex workers within the film and whether the language used by protagonists Katie and Lauren can be regarded as an accurate reflection, or if producers are prioritising comedic value. The entirety of this investigation will be, as in Hall's (1995), viewed from a feminist and sex-positive perspective, in order to acknowledge the value of accurate representation in encouraging viewer understanding, despite the goal of providing entertainment.

5. Results and Discussion

The following section explores the notable linguistic features within the transcribed telephone exchanges in the focal film, *For a Good Time, Call...* (2012), as well as the secondary comparison series, *Secret Diary of a Call Girl* (2007). They will be analysed in comparison to the various gender marked variables explored in Hall's study (1995), and others, and evaluated in terms of how the use (or lack of use) of said variables represent the sex work industry. The data is separated into three sections: phonology, lexis and discourse, and a final section comparing the two.

5.1. Phonology in *For a Good Time, Call...* (2012)

In her study, Hall (1995) makes various observations regarding the different phonological ingredients for successful fantasy making. Highlighting vocal qualities such as breathiness and varying intonation in her own transcriptions (1995: 192) and analysing comments made by the fantasy makers such as how 'so much of it is the way you say things, more than what you're actually saying' (Hall 1995: 200), Hall (1995) examines how the phonology of fantasy making is as important as the lexical content in creating persona. This notion is unsurprising when we acknowledge that all other senses are deprived during the interaction, however the techniques applied by the fantasy makers provide an interesting perspective of supposedly gender marked language use. This section aims to analyse such features, and whether they occur in the film *For a Good Time, Call...* (2012), exploring both the accuracy of language use and the portrayal of the sex workers through phonology.

Firstly, it is interesting to note that the workers in Hall's study make regular reference to a "sexy voice", however aside from the few phonological variants discussed within this section, do not really expand on what this is (1995). Descriptions include, 'that funny [...], sort of inviting tone of voice' (Hall 1995: 200) or the need to sound like you are enjoying yourself too (Hall 1995: 202), but do not provide much insight into the phonological features that this voice entails. In a study by Eckert into the phonology of preadolescent girls, it was found that the two girls studied backed /o/ and /ay/ to express varying negative feelings in the context of schoolgirl dramas (2010). She argues that 'children learn very young to notice differences in linguistic style, as well as to associate with them differences among the people who exhibit them and the ways in which they do so' (2010: 72), and so suggests that linguistic style is

embedded into society and learned from youth (Eckert 2010). To this end, could it be argued that in describing a “sexy voice”, the fantasy makers in Hall’s study (1995) are engaging in a learned linguistic style, for which phonological variables are predetermined by society. As argued by Eckert, ‘emotional makeup is not independent of one’s place in the social order[,] [a]spects of our affective expression are learned as well’ (2010: 79), something that is perhaps commodified by the fantasy makers as they project submissive characters, positioned as socially lesser than the men who call them (Hall 1995). To this end, it could be said that the actors such as those in *For a Good Time, Call...* (2012) are also projecting a predetermined linguistic style in the film, and more generally, any other films they act in. However, to quantify such a theory is a difficult notion for many reasons, including complications like ‘interpreting mood and categorizing tokens’ (Eckert 2010: 79), which Eckert argues can be subjective (2010: 79). Despite the intangible nature of the comments surrounding “sexy voice”, which could be explored in further work, there are three phonological variables that Hall does specifically highlight: accent, breathiness and intonation (1995), all of which are explored in the following.

One phonological technique applied by the workers in Hall’s study, is the use of accent and dialect features (1995: 203). The use of various features ‘hegemonically associated with particular ethnic groups’ (1995: 203) would likely be deemed offensive by those they portray, yet are described by Hall as successful due to a ‘middle-class white male caller’s ability to recognise the fantasy frame’ (1995: 204). This aspect of fantasy making is not explored in the film *For a Good Time, Call...* (2012), probably due to the fact that it is of a comedy genre and would not want to stray into offensive territory.

Intonation refers to ‘the ensemble of pitch variations in the course of an utterance’ (Hart *et al.* 1990: 10), where the fundamental frequency of a voice, or how high-pitched it sounds, is determined by the rate of vibration of the vocal cords (McConnel-Ginet 1978: 548). From an anatomical perspective, larger vocal cords, such as those found more commonly in men, vibrate slower and produce lower-pitched sounds than that of a woman or child (McConnel-Ginet 1978: 548). This observation, however, is only surface level and it is the patterns of pitch, or intonation, that McConnel-Ginet believes to ‘underscore the gender identification of participants in certain contexts of communication’ (1978:542) more stylistically. In her examination of female intonation, she observes that woman’s intonation displays ‘wider range of pitches, more frequent and rapid shifts in pitch, and more frequent ending with

nonfalling terminal' (1978: 555), which Hall states is alluded to by her interviewees who describe an application of a 'feminine, lilting quality' (1995:200) and 'loping tone of voice' (1995: 200). It seems that generally, intonation can be seen as an indicator of perceived femininity, one of the many important linguistic features that Hall believes is applied by fantasy makers to construct a highly stereotyped feminine persona (1995: 200). Furthermore, Pan also iterates that 'women's changeable tone can express their rich emotions and sounds more gentle and affectionate' (2011:1015), which suggests that the female intonation patterns described by McConnel-Ginet (1978) could result in the construction of a more emotive persona. To this end, it could be argued that in using these patterns, fantasy makers are bridging a gap where telephone sexual experiences could be easily emotionless, perhaps to ensure the connection is more personal for the caller and therefore more enjoyable.

Varying intonational patterns are audible in the telephone sex conversations of *For a Good Time, Call...* (2012), however they can easily be observed as highly exaggerated:

- (1) **Katie:** ((grunting)) voh ((gasp)) yeah^, i'm your slave uh. i love being your slave.
 ((breathing heavily)) ((breathy voice)) yeah - put me in your cage. ^i wanna.^i wanna go in the cage. ((distressed)) ^wait. ^wait it's dark in here - i don't - i don't wanna be in here anymore. i don't wanna be in here anymore. ((breathing increasing)) yeah, your your dick looks so big and it's looking at me ((louder)) let me out - i'm scared. ^i'm s^cared – uh - please let me out - m uh - please let me uh - let me out - i^ i^ i^ wanna

[Extract 1: *For a Good Time, Call...* (2012) transcription - 0h19m50s]

Extract 1 transcribes one of the earlier examples of fantasy telephone calls within the film, where only Katie's side of the exchange can be heard by viewers. Katie uses varying intonation within this scene and others (e.g., Extract 2) that is resonant of what both McConnel-Ginet (1978) and Hall (1995) describe in their own observations: rapidly rising and falling pitch (sudden heightening indicated by (^) and lowering by (v)) and an extremely wide ranging pitch. Her intonation appears to mimic the physical act of sex for the caller, 'dynamic, moving from high-pitched, gasping expressions of pleasure to low pitched' (Hall

1995: 193) in a way that is similar to real fantasy makers, with the exception that Katie tends to use sudden pitch heightening, with less examples of sudden lowering pitch. However, the intonation used by Katie might be regarded by a listener as highly exaggerated. With the higher pitches of her voice often sounding quite abrasive and over the top, the character contradicts the advice of fantasy maker “Andy”, who notes it is better to be softer in voice ‘because you’re basically in their ear’ (Hall 1995: 202). On the other hand, it may be argued that the cinema medium provides viewers with something the customers of those in Hall’s study (1995) do not receive, visual stimulus. When combining a visual of Katie with such heightened phonological features, the persona she constructs may seem more exaggerated as there is a potential over stimulation. Furthermore, Katie’s intonation, from observation, does not transmit the rich emotion and gentle affection suggested in Pan (2011: 1015), perhaps to not detract from the primary aim of the film – comedic value.

In Podevsa’s study of falsetto frequency in an individual speaker, he found that voice quality and phonation type hold value as stylistic variables in sociolinguistics (2007: 497). He believes that such features can be increased by speakers dependant on context, in this case by a gay medical student, who Podevsa believes uses the feature in comfortable and familiar settings to ‘perform expressiveness and by extension a diva persona’ (2007: 482). However, Podevsa urges that he ‘is not claiming that [the individual] is in fact performing gayness’ (2007: 494). A similar phonation feature outlined in Hall’s transcriptions of pre-recorded fantasies is that of ‘breathy voice’ (1995: 195), however unlike in Podevsa (2007), Hall (1995) views the gender marked language of the fantasy makers as performative for financial purposes.

According to Hejná *et al* ‘breathiness can be described as a voice of soft quality’ (2020: 2), that ‘involves a periodic vibration of the vocal folds and, at the same time, and abducted state of the glottis’ (Hejná *et al* 2020: 2). This feature of vocal quality is applied by the fantasy makers in Hall (1995), and also by Katie and Lauren in *For a Good Time, Call...* (2012):

(2) **Katie:** ((breathy voice)) u:::hh. i love that smell. mm can i lick it.

[CALLER]

((hoarse voice)) ^oo, so good it's so good ^uh ((gasp)) ((breathy voice)) √i want to get on my hands and knees and reverse into that big cock.

[Extract 2: *For a Good Time, Call...* (2012) transcription - 0h28m22s]

(3) **Katie:** √uh. √oh hi. ((giggles)) ((gasps)) ((breathy voice)) it's nice to see you. do you ever wonder why you're alone in the tub. it's so lonely when you're in the tub alone isn't it.

Lauren: ((breathy voice)) you don't have to be so lonely anymore. if you have one of these. you can just. give me a call.

[Extract 3: *For a Good Time, Call...* (2012) transcription - 1h07m23s]

As indicated in Extracts 2 and 3, Katie and Lauren use breathiness in a similar way to the fantasy makers in Hall's study (1995), to create what seems to be, in this case, a sexualised persona. Breathiness is a voice quality often stereotyped with sexiness, for which 'anecdotal evidence [can be] found in the British English term "bedroom voice"' (Gussenhoven 2016: 427). This suggests that both the real-life fantasy makers and the fictional representations are maximising on a stereotype to create a pornographic tone, where a visual link is absent (Hall 1995: 195). According to Henton and Bladon, the anatomical association between this particular vocal quality and sexiness is the connection between breathiness and arousal (1985: 226). They state that when sex hormones are released, the whole body becomes lubricated, including the larynx which may 'inhibit the vocal folds to adduct fully, resulting in insufficient phonation and producing breathy voice' (1985: 226). However, they also argue that the use of breathy voice does not say that a woman is actually aroused, but that she could perhaps be imitating arousal (1985: 226), and that if 'a woman can manage to *sound* as though she is sexually aroused, she may be regarded as more desirable' (1985: 226). This perspective provides valuable insight into what Hall describes as fantasy makers selling a positively reinforced linguistic feature 'back to the culture at large for a high price' (1995: 208), and how all linguistic choices are made tactically, to create what society recognises as the ultimate sexualised persona (Hall 1995). This projection of arousal is perfectly alluded to in the pilot episode of *Secret Diary of a Call Girl* (2007), when protagonist Belle states "convince them that you're wet and you're halfway there" (0h4m34s), suggesting a

researched understanding of the performative methods of sex workers by the writers. This understanding is perhaps further evidenced in Belle's own use of breathiness, indicated by Extract 5, whilst constructing a 'role-play' style fantasy for her client. However, as this breathy voice occurs during a sex scene rather than a telephone call, the phonation feature is perhaps not so easily categorised as performative since it might also be interpreted as the actor performing Belle's genuine arousal.

In the film *For a Good Time, Call...* (2012), on the other hand, whilst this phonation feature can be identified, it might be argued that it is used farcically and with little acknowledgement of the careful strategy applied by sex workers to maximise on a stereotype. In an investigation by Batstone and Tuomi studying perceptions of female voices, they found that contrary to initial predictions, 'the stereotyped association of lowness and breathiness with sexiness was not found' (1981: 111) which might suggest that the sexual appeal of breathiness is enforced by pornographic discourse rather than actual attraction or desires. In addition, it may also be interpreted as breathiness only being perceived as sexy in particular contexts. In the film, Katie and Lauren's use of breathy voice appears comedic and arguably not sexy, whereas in Hall's study it is used by fantasy makers to create a sexy narrative (1995), suggesting that it may only be recognised as sexy in contexts of genuine sexual experience. It could also be said that the two characters in the film, using breathiness overtly and with such high frequency, play out this stereotype for the amusement of viewers rather than the persuasion of callers, which perhaps undermines the intelligence of the fantasy makers that Hall (1995) outlines in her study. Generally, this appears to be the case for the phonology used throughout the entirety of the film. On one hand, this perceived exaggeration of phonological variables could be a result of the previously mentioned over stimulation, with vocal features appearing more over the top when accompanied with the visual aid that a caller of a fantasy line would not usually experience. On the other hand, this could be an unfortunate example of cinema shelving the integrity of the film for comedic reasons, thus not providing the sex workers with recognition for what Hall (1995) argues is very carefully crafted conversation. That being said, the phonological variables within the film do appear to reflect those described in Hall's study (1995) to some degree.

5.2. Lexis and Discourse in *For a Good Time, Call...* (2012)

In a setting where visual stimulus is absent, the lexical choices and discourse pragmatics used by fantasy makers are vital in the creation of a mental image for callers. In a world where the objectification of women is almost the norm and ‘the learned automatic response to objectify women has become culturally ingrained’ (Kellie et al 2019: 1), it is interesting that a form of sex work devoid of the physical presence of a woman had become so successful. Hall (1995) argues that this is a result of carefully strategised language use that maximises on idealisations of femininity, providing the caller with mental imagery of the “perfect woman” where one is physically unavailable. In her study, Hall observes the use of gender marked language in pre-recorded phone messages (195: 192-196), as well as allusions to what Lakoff describes as woman’s language (1973) in the interviews with individual fantasy makers (1995: 196-207). This section aims to investigate if this use of gender marked lexis and discourse is reflected within the film *For a Good Time, Call...* (2012) and whether it accurately represents the highly intelligent language techniques used by those in Hall (1995).

One interviewee in Hall’s study, known as Rachel, describes that ‘to be a really good fantasy maker, you’ve got to have big tits in your voice’ (1995: 199), and that to do so she uses ‘very feminine’ (1995: 199) language. In describing this language further, Hall discovered that Rachel often uses soft words, and ‘nonbasic colo[u]r terms such as *peach*, *apricot* and even *charcoal*’ (1995:200), something which Hall (1995: 200) recognises as one of Lakoff’s marked traits of female speech (1973: 41). According to Lakoff, women are more precise in discriminating between colours (1973: 49), something which has been supported further by Mylonas *et al*, who in an investigation of gender difference in colour naming found that ‘females demonstrated [...] more elaborate colour vocabulary’ (2014: 1) and ‘named colours faster than men’ (2014: 1). Whilst colour discrimination is not exactly present in the fantasy phone calls of *For a Good Time, Call...* (2012), underwear is described specifically as both ‘leopard print’ and ‘lace’, indicated in the below transcript:

(4) **Katie:** hi. i’m Kitty and i’m here with my friend.

Lauren: hello. i’m Catty.

[CALLER]

Lauren: i've heard you've been a bad boy and i'm here to save you.

[CALLER]

Katie: well Catty is wearing a a lace nighty and i'm caressing her with my tongue.

[CALLER]

Lauren: my nipples.

[CALLER]

Lauren and Katie: ((moaning and kissing noises))

Katie: uh. Catty is. uh she's such a good kisser.

Lauren: mmm

Katie: her lips are so luscious and wet.

[CALLER]

Lauren: oh they're so cute. I mean uh, they're. well they're leopard print. there is an animal up her tight sexy ass.

Katie: ((animal growl))

[CALLER]

Lauren: she's not wearing any panties. do you like that?

[Extract 4: *For a Good Time, Call...* (2012) transcription - 0h41m34s]

To some extent, the lexical choices made by Katie and Lauren in Extract 3 are reflective of the female marked language in Hall's study, with interviewee Rachel also using words such as 'lace' to construct her feminine image (1995: 200), however it is generally limited within the film as a whole. Out of all of the transcribed phone calls, this scene is the only one where Katie or Lauren use any language to describe how they look, let alone using the gender marked lexis found in Hall (1995). On one hand, the use of gender marked descriptive lexis is arguably paramount in a fantasy maker's attempt to bridge the gap between audio and visual for a caller, which is why, in a film about fantasy makers, one might expect to see such language use. On the other hand, the medium of cinema does provide a visual stimulus that

the real-life fantasy maker's do not, as the audience can see both Katie and Lauren during their interactions with clients. To this end, the writers perhaps thought it less relevant for the characters to spend time describing their appearance as a fantasy maker would, when this limited time could be used to write scripted phone calls containing more comedic content.

Another lexical variable deemed as gender marked by Lakoff is that of the use of expletives (1973). She argues that 'the 'stronger' expletives are reserved for men' (1973: 50) and that women generally will avoid harsher expletives despite the progression that women's use of taboo language is becoming more accepted (1973: 50). Whilst explicit or taboo language is not directly explored by Hall, her given transcriptions show little indication of its use in fantasy making (1995). To this end, it might be inferred that in their projection of femininity, fantasy makers avoid such language that may potentially be perceived as more masculine to a caller. However, it should be noted that fantasy makers would likely adopt such explicit language if requested by the client, since each fantasy would be catered to them personally (Hall 1995). Avoidance of expletives, to some degree, may be perceived as a form of politeness, with politeness features often becoming what Mills describes as 'markers of [female] subordination' (2003: 203). In Hall's study (1995), subordination is frequently explored when describing the submissive personalities adopted by fantasy makers, however, as suggested in both Hall (1995) and Mills (2003), such subordination is not always genuine, with polite and submissive language used to achieve goals, in this case financial gain.

Contrastingly, in *For a Good Time, Call...* (2012), expletives do occur in Katie and Lauren's phone conversations. For example, in Figure 2, "that big cock" or Figure 1, "your dick looks so big", Katie uses explicit language in her exchanges, particularly with reference to genitalia. There is also a scene depicting Katie training Lauren for fantasy making, in which she highlights various explicit nouns to use such as such as "asshole" or "snatch" (0h39m17s), as well as other non-transcribed instances of expletives in the context of fantasy making throughout the film as a whole. This use of explicit language is arguably an inaccurate representation of fantasy makers such as those in Hall's study (1995), who frequently create stories based around meekness and innocence. The film appears to assume that successful fantasy making revolves around highly explicit content, which Hall states is not the case (1995), but rather that the creation of a believable and realistic persona through language is key. As stated by Zhou, 'in certain contexts, humorous effect can be reached by mentioning something which is normally forbidden' (2010: 7) such as taboo or explicit

language, which can arguably be seen here in a film where the writing seems to prioritise comedic impact over the accurate depiction of sex work.

Throughout history, with politeness features commonly associated with femininity (Hysi 2011: 380), it was deemed a trait of women to ‘create words and euphemistic expressions’ (Hysi 2011: 380) to avoid coarse or impolite topics. The use of euphemism, or ‘the semantic or formal process by which the taboo is stripped of its most explicit or obscene overtones’ (Fernández 2008: 96), is arguably used by the fantasy makers in Hall’s study (1995) to some degree. For example, it appears that in instructions given from fantasy line services, workers are advised against initiating the sexual content themselves (Hall 1995: 191), perhaps suggesting that fantasy makers have no tendency to use overtly explicit language, or at least to begin with, in their calls. Additionally, in one pre-recorded message transcribed by Hall (1995) depicting a college student infatuated with her dominant and intellectually superior professor, euphemism is used to imply sex, such as ‘his voice gets deep inside me where it counts’ (Hall 1995: 193). The professor’s voice, in this scenario, is arguably an example of a euphemistic style that implies the sex act of penetration without directly discussing it (Hall 1995: 193-194). Considering some ‘find it difficult to discuss sexuality [...] and sex talk is avoided because it is likely to cause anxiety’ (Jay and Janschewitz 2008: 272), one reason for the use of euphemism in fantasy making could be to make callers, perhaps already experiencing anxiety due to the nature of the call, at ease, and therefore more likely to stay on the line or call again. It could also be inferred that the use of euphemism draws upon the potential desirability of mystery or innocence.

Despite this, euphemism does not appear to be used by the protagonists in *For a Good Time, Call...* (2012). In their phone interactions, Katie speaks overtly about sex and often uses dysphemism, where ‘the most pejorative traits of the taboo are highlighted with an offensive aim’ (Fernández 2008: 96). For instance, in Extract 2, Katie describes that she “wants to get onto her hands and knees and reverse into that big cock”, or Extract 3, where she states, “your dick looks so big and its looking at me”. The word *cock*, an old metaphor that ‘refers to a taboo body part in a colloquial register’ (Fernández 2008: 100) has developed negative connotations over time and seems to be used here as a dysphemism to incite humorous reactions. Whilst language such as this might be used by the fantasy makers in Hall’s study (1995) for certain phone calls, as each is catered to the desires of the individual caller, it could also be assumed that the use of dysphemism in *For a Good Time, Call..* (2012) draws

upon the assumption that all fantasy calls are of a directly explicit nature, and again appears detract to from the worker's intricate use of 'storytelling techniques' (Hall 1995: 205). It seems, once more, the writers of the script appear to overlook accurate linguistic representation in order to maximise on the comedic impact of taboo language or subjects (Zhou 2010: 7) for the entertainment of their audiences.

Alternatively, if we consider the following interaction from the pilot episode of *Secret Diary of a Call Girl* (2007) indicated by Figure 5, the dialogue possibly provides a more accurate representation of euphemism in the construction of fantasy:

(5) **Belle:** tell me something you fantasise about

Client: what do you mean.

Belle: √something that turns you on

Client: this

Belle: where are we doing this. ((whispered)) where would you like to fuck me.

Client: oh outside

Belle: are we in an alleyway. in a dirty alley.

Client: um okay

Belle: on a beach.

Client: um

Belle: in a field.

Client: on a farm

Belle: oh fields on the farm. ((breathy voice)) I'm a country girl. you're a farmer. or a stable boy that's seduced me.

Client: ((groans)) can you see the stables.

Belle: ((breathy)) yeah course I can.

Client: can you smell the horses.

Belle: I can smell the horses. they're making noises in the stalls they're getting very excited. horses have giant cocks don't they.

Client: oh yes yes they do.

Belle: ((breathy)) maybe you should take me to the stable.

Client: I dinna fuck the horse.

Belle: no no we didn't even get close. its too big.

Client: what's it doing.

Belle: the horse. ^stallion. it's out of control. it's far too big. ((breathing heavily)) sounds like it's gonna break the stall door.

Client: they're powerful horses.

Belle: very. powerful. horse.

[Extract 5: *Secret Diary of a Call Girl*. (Episode 1: 2007) transcription - 0h05m06s]

Whilst it should be acknowledged that here protagonist Belle also uses an example of explicit language in conversation with her client, she does appear to mimic the story telling methods of the fantasy makers with more accuracy. For example, in Extract 5, the phrase “the horse. stallion. it's out of control. it's far too big. sounds like it's gonna break the stall door” uses figurative language to infer sex, embedded within the client's country-girl fantasy. Here, Belle euphemistically uses the horse to perhaps imply large genitalia or an untameable beast, which is similar to how the aforementioned fantasy maker in Hall's investigation uses the professor's voice as a metaphor for penetration (1995: 193). It is also interesting to note that typically the 'sex-as-horse-riding metaphor [...] implies that the woman is referred to as the horse' (Fernández 2008: 104) and portrays the man in a 'position of control and dominance over the female sexual partner' (Fernández 2008: 104), however in this fantasy the metaphor appears to be inverted, with Belle as the horse rider. This is perhaps an allusion, therefore, to the idea that despite fulfilling the fantasies of men, these sex workers are predominantly the ones in power, as explored by Hall who believes that sex workers capitalise on a pre-existing

perception of gender relationships usually found in pornographic discourse (Hall 1995: 195). This defensibly higher degree of accuracy is potentially a result of writer empathy, since the script of *Secret Diary of a Call Girl* (2007) is based on the popular memoirs of a real London escort (Pidd 2009) and draws directly from her own experiences in the industry. However, to compare the interaction in Extract 5 with the language in Hall (1995) is not without limitation, since to presume that escorting and fantasy making are directly comparable might be considered presumptuous.

Overall, the lexical and discourse choices made by the writers of *For a Good Time, Call...* (2012) generally do not reflect the gender marked language used by the real-life makers in Hall's study (1995) and could even be described as divergent from them. For example, variables of euphemism are low in frequency, yet dysphemism is used regularly, and a use of expletives not observed by Hall (1995) is also used repeatedly within the dialogue. As discussed in both this section and the phonology aspect of this study, the primary aim of the film's dialogue appears to be comedic impact, in this case drawing mainly on the comedic potential of taboo (Zhou 2010: 7) or overtly sexualised lexis and discourse.

5.3 Lexical and pragmatic divergence vs phonological parallels

From a linguistic perspective, it might be interesting to question why the phonology in *For a Good Time, Call...* (2012), despite its exaggerated nature, accurately mirrors the phonology described in Hall (1995), when the lexis and discourse appears to be generally inaccurate. Since the lexis and discourse could even be perceived as divergent from authentic fantasy maker language (Hall 1995), a lack of research might be assumed, reinforcing the assumption that the writers showed little concern for linguistic accuracy when producing comedy. However, the same cannot be said for the phonology, with Hall's observed variables (1995) such as intonation and breathiness appearing consistently throughout the film. With sociolinguists such as Eckert and Labov often urging the importance of phonology, stating that 'phonological variables are most readily adapted to convey social meaning by their frequency, flexibility and freedom from referential functions' (Eckert and Labov 2017: 467), it could be argued that the reason for this contrast is not a result of research into the phonology of fantasy making, but rather that the examined phonological features carry such strong social meaning already they require less understanding from the actors. For example, Eckert's aforementioned analysis of stylistic variation amongst preadolescent girls examines

that from youth we are conditioned to understand how certain phonological features are related to certain social meanings and can even be associated with the different groups of people who use them (2010). By adopting what appears to be a similar voice, widely recognised as “sexy”, both the actors in the film and the fantasy makers in Hall (1995) provide insight into how certain phonological features can be embedded pre-existing social meaning. Furthermore, both the fantasy makers and actors combine multiple stylistic features to achieve similar voice styles in what Zimman might call a ‘stylistic bricolage’ (2017: 339). According to Zimman, a voice can be socially underscored by ‘a cluster of features that take on meaning only in context with one another’ (2017: 339) and can be recombined accordingly to change said meaning. To this end, the parallels between the voice adopted by fantasy makers (Hall 1995) and the actors in *For a Good Time, Call...* (2012) perhaps indicate that phonological meaning does not lie within individual tokens but with the recognisable combination of tokens, as well as that authentic portrayals of phonology are more easily replicable than lexis and discourse due to their flexible nature.

6. Conclusions

Despite the contextual comparability of the chosen film, the lexis and discourse within *For a Good Time, Call...* (2012) does not reflect the gender marked language used by the real-life fantasy makers described in Hall (1995) and could even be viewed as diverging from it. For example, where the fantasy makers in Hall (1995) may use euphemism to construct fantasy, the protagonists in *For a Good Time, Call...* (1995) use dysphemism, and where the real-life fantasy makers indicated no tendency for expletives (Hall 1995), the dialogue of *For a Good Time, Call...* (2012) showed a higher frequency of taboo or explicit language. There is also limited indication of the feminine descriptive lexis outlined in Hall (1995), such as ‘nonbasic colour terms’ (Hall 1995: 200). As a result, it could be viewed that the writers of *For a Good Time, Call...* (2012) are shelving cinematic integrity to prioritise their primary goal of humour, maximising on what Zhou describes as the comedic potential of taboo (2010: 7) rather than the construction of an idealised feminine persona. In addition, this divergence from Hall’s (1995) lexis and discourse observations could be seen as constructing what Lakoff (1973) might describe as a debatably more masculine persona, perhaps inverting audience expectations in order to shock or incite humour. On the other hand, the phonology within *For a Good Time, Call* (2012) does reflect the phonological features observed by Hall (1995), however they are heightened to an extent that arguably pushes the actors beyond

performing femininity and into performing parody. As previously argued, over stimulation, due to the visual element of cinema, might be responsible for a perceived exaggeration of phonological variables such as varying intonation and breathiness, as real fantasy makers would apply such stylistic techniques to account for the absence of a physical image (Hall 1995). However, a more likely reason could be that again the producers of the film are projecting a stereotype, that fantasy making is always overtly sexual, when Hall (1995) notes that in a fantasy maker's construction of femininity, this is not always the case. The finding of Batstone and Tuomi, that the phonation feature of breathiness is not actually perceived as sexy despite initial predictions (1981: 111), might suggest that these phonological variables are in fact sexualised due to pornographic stereotypes and that their use in the film serves the purpose of creating a recognisable parody as opposed to authentically replicating the fantasy making process.

By contrast, the comparison source *Secret Diary of a Call Girl* (2007), does appear to reflect the gender marked linguistic variables outlined in Hall (1995) more accurately. In the chosen scene, protagonist Belle shows an ability to construct a fantasy based upon the desires of her client, using similar techniques of euphemism and breathiness to those explored in Hall (1995), without the exaggeration observed within *For a Good Time, Call...* (2012).

Contextually, *Secret Diary of a Call Girl* (2007) is based upon the memoirs of a real London escort (Pidd 2009) and therefore is arguably better informed about the sex work industry than *For a Good Time, Call...* (2012) a film written in part by a comedy actress who plays a leading role (Cooke 2012). Nevertheless, since *Secret Diary of a Call Girl* (2007) was used solely for the comparative purposes and not as the primary focus of this investigation, further transcriptions of alternative scenes would be necessary before making generalisations.

Furthermore, as previously addressed, to consider the two branches of sex work, escorting and fantasy making, as directly comparable is presumptuous.

Additionally, it was also indicated that the difference in degrees of accuracy between the phonological tokens and the lexical and discourse elements could provide evidence for the theory that phonological variables are more equipped to carry social meaning (Eckert and Labov 2017). With the phonological features appearing generally accurate, in spite of their over exaggeration, and the lexical and discourse tokens appearing to diverge from those described in Hall (1995), it could be suggested that this contrast is a result of a pre-existing knowledge of phonological meaning rather than evidence of research by the producers or

actors. It appears that the actors, and the fantasy makers in Hall (1995) share an arguably preconditioned understanding of which phonological variables denote sexuality and have applied them accordingly to portray recognisable personas. Due to this, further research into phonology in cinema, and how actors might use ‘stylistic bricolage’ (Zimman 2017: 339) to combine stylistic features and create meaning, might provide understanding into why certain phonological combinations come to represent certain groups. With acting being a more self-aware or conscious performance of stylistic variation than that explored in natural conversation (e.g., Podevsa 2007), it might be possible to ask actors ‘to provide metalinguistic commentary on the meaning of linguistic features’ (Podevsa 2007: 490). However, according to Eckert, the analysis of stylistic variation can often be subjective (2010: 79) and the quantification of combined phonological features would potentially be more difficult to quantify than individual tokens.

It is also important to note that, as discussed, quantifying stylistic variables is a difficult process, for which there is a finite number of studies to provide a framework for. The perception that *For a Good Time, Call...* (2012) is parodying the phonology found within Hall’s study (1995) by heightening the features with high frequency, is determined from solely an auditory perspective, and may appear less exaggerated to another listener. A possible solution to this could be that for phonological variables such as intonation, future studies involving a more technical analysis of stylistic variation, such as the one conducted by McConnell-Ginet (1978) into formant frequencies, might make the findings more reliable. However, the lack of similarities between the lexis and discourse tokens from Hall’s study (1995) and the chosen film could be seen as highlighting the linguistic misrepresentation of sex work more concretely, indicating less regard for linguistic accuracy from the producers. There is also limitation in the available data, since throughout the film there were only four telephone interactions transcribed due to the fact that any others were too brief or interrupted. Further to this, there appeared to be no other examples of cinema surrounding fantasy making for comparison. To this end, whilst the representation (or misrepresentation) of fantasy making can generally be evaluated within *For a Good Time, Call...* (2012), the representation of fantasy making in cinema more generally could not be so easily addressed.

Overall, it appears that the dialogue within *For a Good Time, Call...* (2012) does not accurately reflect the gender marked language observed by Hall in her study of fantasy lines (1995) and instead maximises on the comedic potential that sex or taboo provides (Zhou

2010: 7). On one hand, it could be argued that both the real-life fantasy makers (Hall 1995) and the lead actors in the film are performing stylistic variables to achieve certain goals, for which both cases might evidence the performative nature of language. In other words, the fantasy makers achieve a goal of desirability by aligning their language use with the gender inequality enforced in pornographic discourse (Hall 1995: 195), whereas the actors achieve their goal of comedy by exaggerating recognisable stylistic variables and performing lexis and discourse features that will shock or amuse. However, Young-Scholten (2005) urges the importance of linguistic accuracy in breaking the misconceptions that surround complex topics, which, when we understand how greatly language can constrain the gender discourse (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2003) or perceptions of '[s]exuality and sexual behaviour' (Cameron and Kulick 2003: 43), perhaps places a greater responsibility upon producers and writers that goes beyond creating a successful comedy. For this reason, whilst perhaps light-hearted in its intent to entertain, the proposed linguistic inaccuracies in the film *For a Good Time, Call...* (2012) could be seen as irresponsible, since they appear to detract from the linguistic superiority held by fantasy makers (Hall 1995: 205) and do not educate viewers on the true intelligence of their methods. To this end, as the industry evolves and changes, it can only be hoped that future cinematic representations of sex work will also evolve, placing more importance on linguistic integrity as a means of changing and shaping perceptions.

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