

“I’m just a rock star/I’m just a guy”

Gender and Interactional Non-Compliance in Lady Gaga/Jo
Calderone’s Public Persona(e)

IGALA 11

June 2021

Queen Mary University of London

Mary-Caitlyn Valentinsson, PhD

Appalachian State University

North Carolina, USA

valentinssonm@appstate.edu

mcvalentinsson.com



@DrMCV

Slides:

tinyurl.com/MCVIGALAslides

Paper:

tinyurl.com/MCVIGALAtext

Lady Gaga // Jo Calderone



Carter 2018
Dilling-Hansen 2015
Esposito 2017
Ferris 2004
Halberstam 2012
Rossolatos 2014
Sorice 2013
Valentinsson 2018



▶ Lady Gaga // Jo Calderone



“How can we remodel the model? In a culture that attempts to quantify beauty with a visual paradigm and almost mathematical standard, how can we fuck with the malleable minds of onlookers and shift the world’s perspective on what’s beautiful? I asked myself this question. And the answer? Drag.”
(Lady Gaga in Interview with V Magazine #74, Winter 2011)

Interactional Non-Compliance

- Rhetorical/discursive moves that disrupt listener expectations of preference organization given a particular discursive genre and speaking figure including:
 - Interruption (Zimmerman and West 1975) and uptake of/reaction to interruption
 - FTAs (Brown and Levinson 1978)
 - Contiguous dispreferred responses (Sacks 1987)
 - Use of taboo language/references to taboo topics



Slides:

tinyurl.com/MCVIGALAslides

**Paper (full transcript in
Appendix):**

tinyurl.com/MCVIGALAtext

Video:

tinyurl.com/CalderoneInterview

Interruption and Positive Face-Threat

5) MP2: hey Jo: it's [unintelligible name] from AOL music I wanted to know after: you:-- #00:00:33-0#

6) JC: it's fuckin bright in here #00:00:33-7#

7) MP2: [laughter] after you to:ld Britney Spears about your: fantasies about her is there any chance that

8) you guys might be getting together? #00:00:41-4#

23) JC: (.) and uh (.) I'm from new jersey (.) my family's from uh palermo sicily (.) and i'm uh: (.) not a

24) singer (.) or a (.) mo:del or an actor or anything I'm just uh I'm a guy #00:01:39-5#

25) MP9: a guido! #00:01:39-5#

26) JC: no i'm not a fuckin guido what do you what do you fuck you don't like italians? the fuck's the

27) matter with you? i'm just a guy you know (.) and uh (.) i just wanted to show my girl how much i love

28) her that's all #00:01:56-5#

Dispreferred responses

- 1) MP1: are you able to: express (.) yourself more as Jo tonight are you able to sort of convey the
- 2) message of gaga just wondering: uh: #00:00:09-8#
- 3) JC: well she's just really fuckin pissed at me right now (.) and uh she said fuck you if you (.) really love
- 4) me you'll go (.) instead of me and you'll get in that spotlight (.) so I did #00:00:25-3#

- 18) MP8: hi uh [unintelligible name] (.) [unintelligible name repeated] from USA today #00:01:12-2#
- 19) JC: yeah-- #00:01:13-5#
- 20) MP8:--uh who is Jo: and how long will Jo be with us #00:01:17-3#
- 21) JC: (.) I'm gonna be here about five more minutes #00:01:19-8#
- 22) MPs: [laughter] #00:01:20-8#
- 23) JC: (.) and uh (.) I'm from new jersey (.) my family's from uh palermo sicily (.) and i'm uh: (.) not a
- 24) singer (.) or a (.) mo:del or an actor or anything I'm just uh I'm a guy #00:01:39-5#

Taboo language and topics



5) MP2: hey Jo: it's [unintelligible name] from AOL music I wanted to know after: you:-- #00:00:33-0#

6) JC: it's fuckin bright in here #00:00:33-7#

7) MP2: [laughter] after you to:ld Britney Spears about your: fantasies about her is there any chance that

8) you guys might be getting together? #00:00:41-4#

9) JC: [chuckles] I don't--well maybe if she wants me you know (.) she's fuckin hot (.) i don't know you

10) know as--gaga's my girl but you know Britney's fuckin you know she's (.) she's fuckin Britney Spears

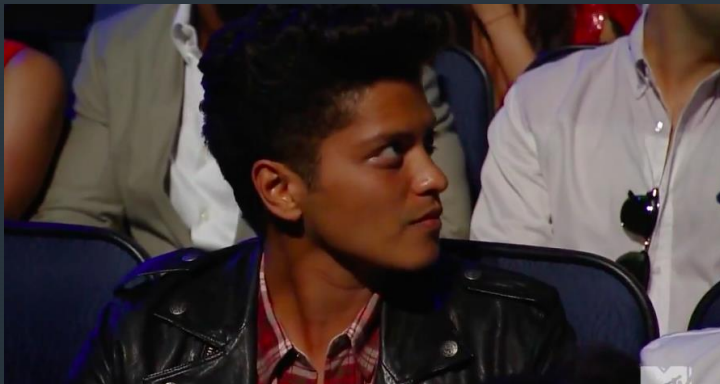
11) (.) didn't you jerk off to Britney when you were a kid #00:01:06-3#

Legitimizing the “rock star” and the “guy”

20 LG: cause they love sexual strong women who speak their mind (.)
21 you see if I was a guy (.) and I was sitting with a cigarette in my hand
22 grabbing my crotch and talking about how hh. I make music cause I
23 love fast cars and fucking girls (.) you'd call me a rock star (.) but when I
24 do it in my music and in my videos (.) because I'm a female (.) because I
25 make pop music (.) you are judgmental (.) and you say that it is uh um hh.
26 distracting (.) I'm just a rock star

(Valentinsson 2018, 733)

20) MP8:--uh who is Jo: and how long will Jo be with us #00:01:17-3#
21) JC: (.) I'm gonna be here about five more minutes #00:01:19-8#
22) MPs: [laughter] #00:01:20-8#
23) JC: (.) and uh (.) I'm from new jersey (.) my family's from uh palermo sicily (.) and i'm uh: (.) not a
24) singer (.) or a (.) mo:del or an actor or anything I'm just uh I'm a guy #00:01:39-5#
25) MP9: a guido! #00:01:39-5#
26) JC: no i'm not a fuckin guido what do you what do you fuck you don't like italians? the fuck's the
27) matter with you? i'm just a guy you know (.) and uh (.) i just wanted to show my girl how much i love
28) her that's all #00:01:56-5#
29) MP10: thank you



HOME > ARTICLE

Lady Gaga's night as Jo Calderone: Was it too much?

By **Kyle Anderson** | Updated August 29, 2011 at 06:02 PM EDT

After the performance, comedian Kevin Hart took the stage and called Gaga's routine "a little weird."

Lady Gaga as Jo Calderone: Brilliant or Creepy?

Lady Gaga's getup for MTV's VMAs raised eyebrows and questions.

By **SHEILA MARIKAR**

August 29, 2011, 12:13 PM • 3 min read



Thank you!

Selected References

- Brown, Penelope and Stephen Levinson. 1978. Universals in language usage: politeness phenomena. In Esther Goody (ed.), Questions and politeness: strategies in social interaction. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 56-89.
- Carter, John Durbin Neal. 2013. Going Gaga: Pop Fandom as Online Community of Practice. MA Thesis: University of Kentucky.
- Dilling-Hansen, Lise. 2015. Affective fan experiences of Lady Gaga. Transformative Works and Cultures 20. doi: <https://doi.org/10.3983/twc.2015.0662>
- Halberstam, J. Jack. 2012. Gaga Feminism: Sex, Gender, and the End of Normal. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Rossolatos, George. 2015. Lady Gaga as (dis)simulacrum of monstrosity. *Celebrity Studies* 6(2): 231-246.
- Sacks, Harvey. 1987. On the preferences for agreement and contiguity in sequences in conversation. In Graham Button and John R. E. Lee (eds.), *Talk in Social Organisation*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters. 54-69.
- Sorice, Adam. 2013. Écriture féminine and the female language of Lady Gaga. *Groundings* 6: 100-110.
- Valentinsson, Mary-Caitlyn. 2018. Stance and the construction of authentic celebrity persona. *Language in Society* 47(5): 715-740.
- Zimmerman, Don H. and Candace West. 1975. Sex roles, interruptions and silences in conversation. In Barrie Thorne and Nancy Henley (eds.), *Language and Sex: Difference and Dominance*. Rowley, Massachusetts: Newbury House. 105-129.



Mary-Caitlyn Valentinsson, PhD

Appalachian State University

North Carolina, USA

valentinssonm@appstate.edu

mcvalentinsson.com

 @DrMCV

Slides:

tinyurl.com/MCVIGALAslides

Paper:

tinyurl.com/MCVIGALAtext