18 Beginnings in the telephone

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I come to the theme of this volume – "Mobile communication, private talk, public performance" – as a student of conversation and other forms of talk-in-interaction. The sort of work my colleagues and I do is focused on the "stuff" of quotidian interaction, as encountered in naturally occurring settings, as captured by modern recording devices which allow repeated examination of particular specimens, and thereby facilitate our overcoming the relentless blinders of familiarity which can keep us from seeing what is really going on, and how it gets to be that way. That is how I came some years ago to take as an analytic target talk on the telephone – the ordinary, fixed, wired telephone; it is that analytic experience which is my credential for this volume, and is the basis for what is offered in what follows.

The title of this volume – "Perpetual Contact" – reminds me of a similar-sounding phrase introduced some years ago – "a continuing state of incipient talk" (Schegloff and Sacks, 1973). The phrase referred to certain interactional circumstances (and a form of overall structural organization of conversation) in which the parties' co-presence is shaped by contingencies independent of the character of their talk. Familiar venues in which one finds continuing states of incipient talk are members of a family or other living arrangement sitting together in a common room; members of a car pool en route to or from their destination; seatmates on an airplane or train; and the like. Unlike many other conversational circumstances, gaps of silence at topic or sequence boundaries are *not* taken to occasion the launching of the closing of the conversation. The parties are taken to be together for the duration, a duration set by contingencies and constraints other than those of the talk – such as arrival at a destination, or the setting being their "home base."

In a continuing state of incipient talk, a stretch of talk structured by topic or by some course of action can come to a close and have silence set in, silence that can be allowed to grow into a lapse – one that can

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last a very long time, conversationally speaking. The lapse is one in which talk can break out again at any moment (hence "*continuing* state of *incipient* talk") with no "hello"s to start it, just as there are no "bye bye"s to end the talk before the lapse.

It may serve as a kind of reality check on the novelty of the topic of the volume to recall that continuing states of incipient talk have been with us humans for a very long time. They have *not* been limited to interaction with kinfolk or intimate acquaintances either, although those have probably predominated. But the seatmates on an airplane, the co-riders on the airport shuttle, etc., surely give evidence that this is not criterial.

Clearly, the "perpetual contact" of this volume's *raison d'être* is quite different from a continuing state of incipient talk, not least of all in that each spate of talk requires the launching of a new conversation, a *new making* of contact. In fact, I mean to spend some time on just that *differentia specifica*. What is perpetual here is not contact itself but the possibility of *making* it, through the variety of devices that occupy the spotlight – pagers, car phones, mobile phones, cell phones, and who knows what else.

The air is full of anecdotes about the impact of these devices on our social life – some of a public health character (like the effect on traffic safety of talking on cell phones while driving), some concerning their effect on interaction. These anecdotes can merit serious attention – some for the access they may give to the symbolic value they have for the networks in which they circulate, others for the ways in which they epitomize their protagonists' understanding of the social worlds they inhabit. Let me mention only one.

In a paper several years ago about a famous confrontation between then Vice President Bush and news correspondent Dan Rather (Schegloff, 1988/89, 1992), I made the point that the "interview" from which this confrontation emerged was not only a matter of the contextual definition of the genre supplied by the network studio, the camera and the professional personas of the participants; it was at bottom a matter of the parties' orientation to the talk and the practices they employed to co-construct the talk.[1] And some of the anecdotes we hear about mobile communication devices may be understood to document the same point, only not for institutional contexts but for so-called "private" ones.

Consider, for example, the following anecdote, reported to me by an old friend from graduate school days, among the smartest people I have known, now an attorney in New York. She is on the train home to Long Island from Manhattan. A young woman is talking on the cell phone, apparently to her boyfriend, with whom she is in something of a crisis.

[1] When those practices changed, the occasion stopped being an "interview," though the context remained unchanged.

Her voice projects in far-from-dulcet tones. Most of the passengers take up a physical and postural stance of busying themselves with other foci of attention (their reading matter, the scene passing by the train's windows, etc.), busy doing "not overhearing this conversation" (as students or other visitors to one's office may do if the phone rings while they are there, carefully examining your bookcase from a distance, or their fingernails). Except for one passenger. And when the protagonist of this tale has her eyes intersect this fellow-passenger's gaze, she calls out in outraged protest, "Do you mind?! This is a private conversation!"

Now nothing in the setting would support the conventional understanding of this assertion. There are many people around in this public space in a railroad passenger car. She is talking quite loudly. None of the contextual features we associate with privacy are present. And yet it is not that she is just being shameless. She is almost literally in two places at the same time – and the railroad car is only one of them. The other place that she is is "on the telephone." And she may well understand that to be a private place; after all, commercial and governmental agencies explicitly alert one to the possibility that, for quality control purposes, someone other than the caller and the service representative may listen in on the conversation that has been placed to the agency. That is taken to be an intrusion on privacy that callers may legitimately assume is theirs. And *this* young woman is talking to her *boyfriend*, about intimate matters, in the usual conversational manner – except for the argumentative mode, and this also, perhaps *especially*, makes it a private conversation. What is different here is that the portability of the phone has transported all of this into a full railroad car in New York, a place full of overhearers pretending not to hear, a pretense with which she collaborates in a *folie à deux* multiplied by a very large factor indeed.

But this intersection of worlds, this transportation of one social setting into the middle of another from which it remains disengaged, did not start with cell phones. I recall, for example, years earlier, being startled by the increasing numbers of people in public places – on campus, in buses or at the airport, on sidewalks – who appeared to be marching almost literally to a different drummer; whose body tonus and body idiom, as Erving Goffman used to call them (1963), stood in sharp contrast to those of others in the setting. The pace and shape of their movements, the character of their demeanor, was calibrated not to the environment which we shared, but to one to which I had no access. They were, in an important sense, not there at all.

At first I thought these folks were drunk or stoned or in a schizophrenic break with local reality. Only gradually did I learn to look for the telltale

wire leading from belt to head, to look through the longish hair to spot the round black circles covering their ears. They were some place else than I was – in an auditory environment pulsating with sounds I could not hear but which dominated their consciousness and seemed to have taken command of their muscle control. In recent years, the effect has lessened, in large measure, I think, because people listening to their Walkman or portable CD player are more resistant to yielding up their bodies to the discipline of the music.

But in substantial ways those talking on a cell phone are quite like these marchers to a different drummer. To paraphrase Gertrude Stein, they are not in the same "there" as the rest of us are; there are two "theres" there. In the occurrences I will be concerned with, both "theres" are occasions of talk-in-interaction, which is what I know something about.

First of all, how do I come to be represented here, in this volume? I must confess at the outset that I do not now, nor have I ever, owned a mobile phone, a cell phone, a pager or any other mobile or perpetual accessibility device. Nor have I had the opportunity to examine data on the use of such devices. So it is not by virtue of any expertise on the new wave of communication devices that I am represented here. I suspect that my involvement has to do with my having wandered by accident into an engagement with an *ancestor* of these devices, the telephone – an earlier way of persons being made accessible to one another directly in real time without being "co-present" in the sense of being within earshot or voice-reach (depending on whether you take the speaker's or the hearer's point of view). And I do mean "wandered by accident"; it had never entered my mind to study the telephone as an object of inquiry. Let me fill you in on how came to do so, for it has a bearing on other of the themes that I will be touching on.

In the mid-1960s, building on an exposure to the work of Erving Goffman on interaction (1963 and 1967 *inter alia*) and that of Harold Garfinkel on ethnomethodology (1967), my friend and colleague Harvey Sacks and I were exploring ways of working at the confluence of those sets of interests, although we were not explicitly thinking about it in those terms. Sacks came upon a set of tape recordings of telephone calls to a suicide prevention center, where he was a scholar in residence. I came upon a body of telephone calls to the police in the aftermath of a major disaster and a comparable body of calls on "normal watches." Several features of these materials quickly became apparent and extremely attractive.

First, they were naturalistic data of an extraordinary kind. They embodied a record of what had transpired in the natural course of events in an ordinary setting of the society. By "natural" and "ordinary," here,

I mean only that the events on the tape were not the product of scholarly or scientific intervention in the world to engender the occurrence of the events; and that they were the sorts of events for which the setting was the proper home. And the form in which the events had been captured and made available for repeatable inspection was free of the sorts of scholarly and scientific intervention that involve memory and recollection to create field notes, paraphrase, description, analysis, coding, reporting by lay observers in what we call "interviews," and the like. Indeed, even the processes of tape recording, which attenuate the sound signal being preserved, were of comparatively little moment given the signal attenuation already introduced by the technology of telephony. It seemed that this was as good as naturalistic data on live interaction among humans were going to get.

Second, and even better, in those days when there were substantial limitations of technology and cost on gathering the visually accessible data of interaction – limitations barely imaginable in today's world – these telephone materials appealed on other grounds as well. For studying copresent interaction with sound recording alone risked missing embodied resources for interaction (gesture, posture, facial expression, physically implemented ongoing activities, and the like), which we knew the interactants wove into both the production and the interpretation of conduct, but which we as analysts would have no access to. With the telephone data, the participants did not have access to one another's bodies *either*, and this disparity was no longer an issue.

So we did not ignore the telephonic nature of the data; we appreciated it and embraced it. But, having harvested these benefits, we got on with it, and went to work on the interaction being prosecuted through these materials, not the telephonic medium in which they were being conducted. Until there was reason to do otherwise.

The work I had undertaken to pursue – an ethnomethodological theme appropriate to that time – concerned the relationship between vernacular and technical discourse, between lay input and professional organizational response. Specifically, I was interested in how the police transformed or reconciled the common-sense terms in which citizen callers report their troubles and request police intervention, on the one hand, with the legal and organizational terms – that is, the technical terms – by reference to which decisions to "send a car" had to be made, on the other. Accordingly, I began by looking at, and listening to, the citizen callers' utterances in which they start to do their business, that is, in which they either report their circumstances, or articulate their requests, or both. It was not long, however, before I found that those utterances appeared to

be sensitive in various ways to the talk that had immediately preceded them; and that *that* talk in turn was contingently related to the talk that preceded *it*, and so on, in the familiar process that close students of interaction may be tempted to call "a barely finite regress."[2] Each utterance bore the marks of orientation to its prior, and each prior utterance posed the task of providing some analytic characterization of *it*, so as to have some sense of how it constrained the talk that had followed it.

And so I came to what appeared to be the limit of this regress – the first bit of talk in these telephone calls, which generally took the form, "Police Desk," or "Police Desk, can I help you?" But as I tried to register some basic observations about this highly recurrent first utterance in these exchanges – who said them, what they were doing, how did that person come to be saying them and to be doing the action or actions they were implementing – it became obvious that, although these were the first utterances, they were not the first *contributions* to these conversations. These utterances were themselves *responses*. Responses to what? Well, to some signal that had served to secure their speakers' attention.

And so I found myself dealing with little sequences, I called them "summons/answer sequences," one of whose recurrent deployments served to mobilize the attention and the aligned recipiency (Goodwin, 1979, 1980, 1981) of their target as a way of launching an episode of interaction. Like calling out, "Hey Jim?" and having Jim redirect his gaze at me or say "What?" Or like knocking on the door and having someone say "Come in." Or like tapping someone on the shoulder and having them turn around or look up. In other words, these sequences – or, rather, this sequence *type* – were hardly specific to calls to the police, nor were they specific to the telephone. The sequence type was endemic to interaction, for deployment under certain contingencies, to do actions associated with those contingencies.

But in my data the first part of this little sequence took the form of the ringing of the telephone, a ringing that had been made to happen by someone at a considerable distance, doing various things mechanical and electrical that made just this phone start ringing. And, with that, I found myself having to think what else might be special about this particular class of interactional contexts, in which the parties were not directly accessible to one another. I found myself studying the telephone – or rather studying interaction in ways that accepted the relevance to the conduct of the interaction of the fact that it was being conducted over

[2] For work that addresses the actual work done between police and citizen callers, see Whalen and Zimmerman (1987, 1990, 1992); Zimmerman (1984, 1992).

the telephone, because the participants' conduct was oriented to this being a conversation on the telephone. They were doing "talking on the telephone." It was an aspect of these specimens of conversation.

I must say that that is where my interest in the telephone has always remained. And one central theme of this chapter comes to the fore here. It is that studies of new technological developments will frequently be best pursued not for the technology as itself the interest of the first order, but rather for the technology as a device through which are refracted other phenomena, a proxy for interests that are more analytical in character. Such an orientation will require of investigators that they have a clear notion of the more general processes or domains of phenomena they study, and what analytic status the new technology or its products has within that universe. The technology, of course, changes – often before the publication comes out. To avoid premature antiquarianism, one needs to have captured the way in which that technology embodied the value of some variable with greater staying power, however transiently; and the consequence of that value of the variable is the payoff for understanding that analytic domain. My analytic domain was interaction, and talk-in-interaction in particular. The telephone affected talk prosecuted through it and gave me a special kind of access to the organization of talk thereby. The domains of interest to other students of the telephone – and now the cell phone – are surely different; but I believe it may be worthwhile to think about the form my point here takes for any investigator's work.

So what was the relevance to the conduct of the interaction of the fact that it was being done over the telephone? Let me take up just a few things about summons/answer sequences and about interactional openings, which turned out at the time to be affected by certain features of the telephonic medium of interaction.

One of the first things I noticed was the contrast between the ways in which summonses were issued in co-present and telephonic interaction respectively, and the ways in which they were answered in co-present interaction and on the phone. Noticing this was facilitated by the difference in the way they are answered on the phone in domestic contexts and in institutional or work ones (Schegloff, 1970b). The initial simple observation about "Police Desk" is that it is a kind of self-identification, whereas "Hello" is not. (Of course, in some other cultural contexts, domestic phones are also answered with a form of self-identification – Houtkoop-Steenstra, 1991; Lindström, 1994 – but for now let us stick with the American practice.)

And that prompted a next observation: that there is an asymmetry of information between the caller and answerer about who the other is, or is likely to be. A caller knows at least who the target of the calling was

meant to be – what number was intendedly dialed and whose number, as we conventionally say, it is; which is to say, who are the possible or likely answerers of it. The person reaching out to a ringing phone, on the other hand, did not ordinarily have such information – except for special circumstances, like the one in which my wife's Aunt Ida could know that the phone ringing in her kitchen on Tuesday evening at 7:00 pm was her dutiful daughter, checking in.[3] And this is in large measure because the summons has taken the form of a standardized mechanical ring; there is no summoner's voice to be detected and recognized as familiar or not, as male or female, etc., and no format to the summons that might indicate the relationship the summoner claimed – as stranger or intimate, for example, by virtue of an "excuse me" or a calling out of a first name.

But the structure of summons/answer sequences entailed an interactional consequence ironically at odds with this distribution of interactional knowledge: the answerer – the *less* informed party – was in the position of talking *first*. And the alternative forms of answering differed precisely with respect to this feature. In the work or institutional context, answerers addressed themselves to this identity issue and confirmed what the caller ought already to have supposed. Often enough the caller's identity was of little concern, and did not involve the caller being recognized. In the domestic context, on the other hand, the answerer did *not* speak to this issue in responding to the ring, except insofar as the "hello" they said provided a voice sample that the knowing caller could recognize or not. Indeed, in such so-called "personal" or "private" or "domestic" calls, who the parties were, and who they were to each other, was the very next order of business after establishing contact – one dense with interactional issues, with jockeying for position, with claims on one another's recognition to underwrite ratification or revision of the terms of the relationship, and so on. I cannot here take up these themes in any detail, except to recall

[3] Or, to cite an actually recorded exchange of this sort, one in which the connection between anticipation of who the caller is and the choice of response term is made explicit:

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Marsha and Gina:    Cooking Dinner
         Marsha:    Hello
           Gina:    Hi
                    (0.2)
         Marsha:--> I almost said hi
                    (0.4)
           Gina:    hi?
         Marsha:--> yeah I felt I figured it was you [ yeah        ]
           Gina:                                     [oh it is me: ]
         Marsha:    'sept I'm in da middle of coo:ken dinner
           Gina:    oh I was just about to start < I just called to
                    tellya that I wasn't going be able to ta:lk to you
         Marsha:    OH=
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that there appeared to be a preference to be recognized – whether caller or answerer – over having to identify oneself, a preference that could lead not only to elaborate, nuanced exchanges to allow such recognition to occur, but to cheating as well, that is, claiming recognition when none had in fact occurred, as in the following opening (taken from Schegloff, 1979; p. 43):

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1 Alice:  Hello
2 Robin:  Hi:
3 Alice:  Hi:
4         (0.3)
5 Alice:  Oh Hi Robin
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Alice's re-greeting at line 5 – marked with the "change-of-state" token "Oh" (Heritage, 1984) – betrays the pretense of her previous claimed recognition at line 3.

The detailing of these phenomena came, of course, not from studying the telephone but from studying the talk – how it was organized, what actions the parties were accomplishing, and by what practices they were implemented, following the data wherever they led in an unmotivated way – all the while keeping in the back of one's mind that this was on the telephone, because that would have been, and demonstrably *was*, a matter of continuing orientation for the participants, and therefore shaped and constrained what the participants did, how they did it, and what needed specially to be managed differently by virtue of its being on the telephone. Of course this *did* render a view of the telephone – the telephone as practice-d object – a view embodied and reflected in the interactional practices of talk fashioned to be implemented on it.

Eventually this work issued in an account of a more or less canonical form to which conversational openings on the telephone seemed to be oriented (Schegloff, 1968, 1979, 1986). This account has prompted a small cascade of further work comparing American telephone conversation openings with those elsewhere: for example, France (Godard, 1977), the Netherlands (Houtkoop-Steenstra, 1991), Lebanon (Hopper and Koleilat-Doany, 1989), Sweden (Lindström, 1994), Taiwan (Hopper and Chen, 1996), Germany (Berens, 1980), Greece (Sifianou, 1989), Japan (Park, forthcoming), Korea (Park, forthcoming).

This body of work does take on the appearance of a kind of comparative study of telephony and its impact on interaction, as well as the more commonly emphasized theme – the telephone conversation opening as a kind of Rorschach test for national culture. But, as I have recently argued elsewhere (Schegloff, forthcoming), this seems to me to miss the point. What should most matter about these studies of telephone conversation openings is their providing an analytic resource for understanding what

happens *subsequently* in these conversations. For things of moment can and do occur in openings, sometimes by their omission, and these affect what happens later in the interaction. In order to understand that later trajectory, one needs tools for the analysis of the openings, including what may have failed to occur there, and that requires empirically grounded accounts of what canonically *does* occur there. The point, then, of having accounts of telephone openings in France or Japan is not in the first instance to juxtapose them to telephone openings in America, but to empower the analysis of the subsequent trajectory of telephone conversations in those cultural contexts. Again the point of these studies is not conversation on the telephone per se, and not the telephone as a comparative diagnostic tool for culture, but the telephone as another tool for the analysis of talk-in-interaction, as especially constituted in this technologically shaped context.

It is striking to see how the technological developments of recent years have borne out the interactional analyses of *those* years. The development in recent years of such new wrinkles as "Caller ID" reflects directly the commercial exploitation of aspects of conversational openings revealed in those early analyses. The development of "Caller ID blocking" allows us to see that *callers* have exploited the asymmetries of knowledge and wish to preserve them, as *answerers* have suffered them and welcome the possibility of neutralizing them. We conversation analysts like to ground our claims by reference to the orientations of the parties, but never has such grounding been carried through in this commercial arena and on this scale! That the technologists set out to make this feasible, and that they – and we – were right that it would matter to the users, is a different kind of encouragement than we have had before. The importance people attach to Caller ID and its neutralization reflects not only the structure of conversational openings and the special form it takes on the telephone, but the whole rest of the organizational practices that make talk-in-interaction the activity it is – most notably that, once someone has gotten you into a conversation, you may find it problematic to get out, and so wish to regulate the getting in before it goes too far.

I should add, however, that we have no studies that I am aware of that tell us what the consequences of Caller ID have been for the actual conduct of talk on the telephone, and their openings in particular. In principle, Caller ID could change the asymmetries of information noted about past telephone interaction by making it possible for the recipient to know something before lifting the receiver. But exactly *what* the answerer knows may be unclear, not only to researchers but to the parties themselves. The answerer may know whose phone is calling, but not who is using it at the moment; and the caller may not know what the answerer knows. So what do these openings sound like? Is there a caller recognition sequence? Are

these openings made to sound the same as in the past so as to mask that Caller ID is in use? Do they succeed? And are there consequences for the trajectory of the talk that go beyond the squaring away in the opening?

One upshot of the preceding discussion is that setting conversation in the context of the telephone intersects various of its practices and organizations of practice in ways that are not wholly anticipatable. Perhaps it might have been anticipated that removing visual access from participants otherwise accustomed to it would have an impact on the use of demonstratives such as "this" and "that," but not that it would engender a wrinkle in how getting-to-know-who-the-other-is gets accomplished. Here is *another* wrinkle, drawing on features of early work of mine that are rather less well known (Schegloff, 1970a, published for the first time in Appendix B in this volume). The target of these observations remains the summons/answer sequence, but another facet of its operation.

In ordinary, visually accessible, co-present interaction, the circumstances for doing a summons and responding to it appear to include a set of assessments that underwrite its relevance and its appropriateness. Ordinarily a summons is done only "for cause," and ordinarily it is understood to have been done "for cause." Because it is understood to serve to mobilize its addressee's attention and provide for the addressee's alignment as a recipient, its use is warranted only when the attention and aligned recipiency of the target are in question, or appear to be impaired or attenuated – typically by involvement in some competing activity or activities. As the summons serves to make relevant for its addressee a reallocation of attention and involvement, the respective claims of the currently ongoing activity or activities, on the one hand, and the ones heralded and projected by the summons, on the other hand, can be an issue.

It is in this light that we can appreciate that a summons not only launches a course of action, but is the *culmination* of one. That is, a prospective summoner can be understood to have assessed the relative claims of the current activities of the prospective target of a summons and the activity on whose behalf the summons is being done. The assessment can go to the issue of relative priority or gravity, of relative temporal duration (a "quick question" being so formulated for the rights thereby accrued for doing it interruptively), and of the waxing and waning and boundary placement of the current activity (as in waiting until some segment of it appears to be over before undertaking to intervene with the summons). One who issues a summons thereby claims that the incipient activity for which the summons serves as a wedge has passed a test that somehow combines these aspects, and that the timing has been carefully assessed and designed as well (interrupting in the middle vs. having visibly held off until a sub-boundary or temporary hiatus).

And the summoned party regularly takes the issuance of the summons to testify to the *outcome* of such assessments on the summoner's part. This is critical because of the power of the summons; ordinarily it makes answering the summons the priority next thing for the addressee to do, and that means – if the summons has been done for cause – the at least temporary interruption or abandonment of whatever addressee involvement was in progress that prompted the summons. Addressees of summonses can tolerate letting their ongoing activities be subject to this kind of interruption as long as they can rely on its being initiated only under constraints, only after passing some sort of priority assessment. And so they do. If they judge the assessments to be error prone, for example because an onlooker could not know how serious the current matter is, or how delicate the moment at which it has arrived, they can hold up their hand and hold the summoner off or wave them off. Otherwise, assured that the summons has been done after judicious balancing of priorities, temporal demands, etc., they respond to it promptly. The most familiar resistance to doing so comes when the summoner can *not* be trusted to have done the priority assessment, or to have the savvy to have done it right – most notably the care-giver's unresponsiveness to the summonses of children, in the form of "Mommy, mommy, mommy, etc." These observations pertain to co-present interaction. With the introduction of the telephone, problems – or *other* problems – surface.

Anyone whose sensitive conversation has been interrupted by the phone's ring, who has waited patiently in a service line only to find themselves displaced by the phone's ring when their turn for service has finally arrived, will have experienced the problem of the absence of the priority analysis. For the demand of the summons for response "next" is insistent, and most phone "owners" respond to it. A variety of solutions have been developed or adapted to dealing with it.

The constraints on summoning that I have referred to by the terms "for cause" and "priority and temporal analysis" are, of course, like much of the infrastructure of talk-in-interaction, largely tacit and not ordinarily accessible to what Giddens (1984) has called "discursive consciousness." They become accessible mostly in the breach, whether the breach is artificially induced, as in *Candid Camera* or Garfinkel's (1967) classic demonstrations, or naturally, as in the case of not-yet-competent children. But another way they surface is when technology provides for transforming the capacity for interaction and, with it, its settings and their fit to interaction's infrastructure.

With the introduction of the telephone, the capacity to summon another to interaction was disengaged from spatial proximity and was relocated to the spatial proximity of a legitimately usable telephone

instrument. But, although the telephone instrument made the voices accessible, it did not permit the visual access to the other in *advance* of initiating interaction that allowed a potential caller to assess the appropriateness of undertaking to initiate a conversation *then*. Persons in interaction thereby became vulnerable to promiscuous intervention in their activities, including their co-present interactions, where by "promiscuous" I mean only intervention not subject to – or subjected to – otherwise appropriate constraints, and not hearable as having met those constraints.

There were various solutions to the consequent problems, some of them adaptations of other resources, designed for other problems. Secretaries were one such adaptation in institutional settings; the boss could be freed from such promiscuous intervention in his (and I use the pronoun advisedly) activities by interposing a secretary to answer his phone and assume that vulnerability herself. Then screening calls via the answering machine became another serendipitous resource for this problem in domestic environments. Neither resource, to be sure, had this as its primary job. In any case, the devices we are concerned with have bypassed these solutions.

It may be worthwhile to discriminate briefly among different mobile communication devices and to explore the different ways in which they affect conversation. If I understand how they work correctly, pagers make known the presence of someone's interest in initiating conversation, but do not themselves initiate the contact. Their intervention in the interaction that they intersect may be only momentary, involving the signal that announces their activation, a signal that may be accessible to all parties to the co-present interaction, who may then defer to it and its owner's need to check the source of the signal, or may *not* do so. Even this interruption may be avoided by making the signal take the form of a silent vibration – clearly an effort to minimize disruption of ongoing local activities and interaction. Most important, the recipient of the signal can in some instances then carry through a version of the priority and duration analysis that summoners otherwise do before doing a summons, and can then decide whether or not to intervene in the co-present interaction in order to respond to the pager, and how to time that intervention relative to the trajectory of the co-present interaction. So the pager poses several issues for its owner: to look to see the source or not (and this may be different if it is registered by sound hearable to others or by vibration, not accessible to others); to move to respond or not, and if so, when? At the next "break" in the talk? Interruptively of what's going on at that moment? Interruptively of the topic? Of the sequence? Of the turn at talk?

Mobile phones and cell phones intersect an ongoing interaction differently. Their owners can either turn them off, or tolerate the insistent ringing of an unanswered phone, or respond and find themselves immediately

in a conversation, rather than with a decision as to whether to get into one, and therefore in principle answerable to two sets of interactional others at the same time.

Can we not therefore anticipate at least the following two sorts of issues for pursuit in both inquiry and policy? First, how should we understand cell phone use: is it like any other phone use, or do the new technological affordances modify the terms under which such conversations are initiated and conducted? And, second, how should we understand the effects, if any, on co-present interaction and its settings of their vulnerability to unmeasured intrusion by cell-phone-initiated conversation – if that is indeed what develops.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that there are issues to be pursued under both headings. For example, with respect to the former, it is readily observable that callers to cell phones ask answerers – often just after contact is established – "Where are you?" This is a question that has in the past not been unusual when asked "the other way around" by call recipients to callers. On some occasions, the query reflected on ongoing orientation to an activity-in-progress; for example, the caller might have been on the way to the answerer's place, from a greater or lesser distance, and the question sought to track the caller's progress or ascertain the cause of a delay in arrival. On other occasions, the question was occasioned by some aspect of the conversation. For example, in a telephone conversation between two young women recorded by one of them in the late 1960s, the recipient inquired at one point, "You home?"

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 1 Ava:  YOU HO:ME?
 2               (0.4)
 3 Bee:  No,
 4 Ava:  Oh I didn't think so.
 5 Bee:  nNo,
 6               (0.9)
 7 Bee:  You are, hhnhh [hnhh! hhh
 8 Ava:                 [Y'sounded too fa[r a- ]
 9 Bee:                                  [Ri:gh]t? hh =
10 Ava:  = Yeh. =
11 Bee:  = See? hI-I'm doin'something right t'ay finally, [hh
12 Ava:                                                   [Mm
13 Bee:  I finally said something right. (0.2) You are home.
14       hmfff
15 Ava:  Yeh- I believe so. [Physically anyway.
16 Bee:                     [°°hhm hhh
17 Bee:  Yea-a-h.°Not mentall (h)y (h) though (hh)
18 Ava:  °No, khhhh!
```

Here, almost certainly, the inquiry was prompted by the attenuated acoustic signal caused by the recording process at Bee's end of the connection, which in those days caused a marked weakening of the signal. Ava, whose home was apparently not far from Bee's, would have registered a volume which sounded "far away," and this could prompt a query such as "You home?" What is even more striking, however, is the exchange at lines 7–18. Throughout this conversation, these two young women – apparently friends since childhood – have been continuously not meshing. When Bee says (at line 7) "You are [at home]," this is virtually guaranteed to be correct, for Bee has called Ava at home and reached her. For this interaction, what is so striking is that Ava finds a way to call even this "given" into doubt (at line 15); for our topic, what is so striking is that the issue of a call recipient's location is now routinely open to serious question by the caller – and this is the "Where are you?" question so often anecdotally reported about cell phone contacts.

But anecdotes are not enough. In coming to terms with these preoccupations for inquiry and policy, it will be critical that work be grounded in real data. Although this chapter was not based on cell phone data, it *was* based on what we have learned from real data on the telephone and co-present interaction. And the study of such data – recorded data drawn from media and settings with which we were already acquainted from practical experience – has regularly yielded observations and findings contrary to what might have been plausibly supposed from ordinary common-sense experience, and, more important, observations and findings that made salient matters we did not even know enough to have suppositions about. It remains to be seen what is to be learned from comparable recorded data on the use of the new media of perpetual contact.

For the many who appeal to other sorts of data to ground their inquiries, let me just suggest again the long-term payoffs of setting new technological inventions in the proper context, an analytically conceived context. For they are like naturalistic versions of experimental stimuli: given precise analytic characterizations of the field into which they are introduced, their effect can be revelatory. Examined as objects in their own right, they may yield only noise.

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