

# Body Torque\*

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CONVERSATION analysis is concerned with understanding the structures and practices of conversation—the setting that to my mind constitutes the primordial site of sociality and social life on the one hand, and, on the other, the fundamental natural environment or ecological niche of language. Although this area of inquiry has claimedly been of interest to a considerable array of traditional disciplines in the social and human sciences—anthropology, communications, ethology, linguistics and applied linguistics, philosophy, psychology, and sociology, it has so far proved to be somewhat peripheral to all of them, and central to none. It seems unlikely to me that this is because the subject matter—conversation, talk-in-interaction more generally, and interaction more generally still—is peripheral; perhaps then it is because this subject is meant someday to constitute a field of its own. In the meantime, its practitioners and “fellow travelers” seem often drawn—or called upon—to bring the field’s resources to bear upon topics germane to the various disciplines I have mentioned, and others as well, including practical applications such as emergency response calls, computer-assisted or mediated

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work settings, second-language teaching and learning, therapeutic assessment and intervention in neurologically based disability—wherever the thematic thread of some potential phenomenon of talk-in-interaction leads. And what follows has something of this flavor.

Prompted originally by an art historian's description of the posture of a protagonist in a well known painting by Titian, the line of inquiry on which I am reporting here explores a type of postural configuration best described as "body torque"—by which I mean, roughly, divergent orientations of the body sectors above and below the neck and waist, respectively. A sketch of various possible features of body torque is followed by an exploration of these features as displayed in episodes of ordinary interaction, and their relevance for understanding classical paintings meant to depict quite *extraordinary* episodes of interaction.<sup>1</sup> Among the features of body torque that will be of interest are, first, its capacity to project postural instability and types of potential resolutions of this instability; second, its capacity to display engagement with multiple courses of action and interactional involvements, and differential ranking of those courses of action and involvements; third, some possible dispositions of conduct in this domain, such as one to "minimize torque"; and, fourth, the constraints and affordances that body torque, by virtue of these features, can bring to the character of the activities in which the body's deployer is engaged.

For technical work on conversation and other forms of talk-in-interaction, body torque is of interest for the ways in which it can impinge on the conduct of the participants and shape the way they interactively produce the talk. One example of such a relationship (to be explored in Section 5 below) concerns the way in which body torque in one or more of the parties to a conversation may serve to constrain the extendability of action or topic-based sequences, leading the parties to curtail a certain direction of talk and be "grudging" in contributing to it while it is still in progress, and providing for sequence expansion upon resolution of the

body torque. If body torque can induce such effects in conversation, then its deployment by participants at particular moments, or its redeployment, may properly be understood as an orderly component of the organization by which certain trajectories of talk are methodically achieved by the participants. This element of posture should, then, be understood to shape actively the talk that occurs with it, as well as being an adaptation to that talk, or a mirror of its structure.

The latter emphasis—on spatial patterning as an *effect* of interaction—has been central to the work of Adam Kendon (1977, 1990), whose pioneering contributions to this area of inquiry I wish to acknowledge, for they inform my own work and that of others who study these matters. Concerned as he has been with describing the most basic deployment of bodies in interaction, Kendon has focused on what seems most to shape these positionings—for example, how the sustaining of a state of talk affects the spatial configuration of the participants, as in the following passage from his basic paper on the positional configuration of persons in interaction:

An exact limit to this space [the o-space] is hard to establish. However, if p [the generic actor in Kendon's terminology] rotates his head so that a line projected from the midline of his face forms an angle of more than thirty degrees from the midline of his lower body, p may be said to be facing out of his transactional segment. It is not uncommon for someone to look out of his transactional segment in this way—for example when someone looks over his shoulder. *Such head orientations are rarely continued for long, however. Any sustained looking in such a direction is usually associated with a re-orientation of the lower body*, so that the direction of the transactional segment again coincides with the direction in which the face is oriented . . . As a rule, in sustained conversations, the face address system falls within the . . . o-space. Under some circumstances, however, peo-

ple may orient their faces toward one another and sustain an utterance exchange without sustaining an o-space. *Again, this rarely lasts long and if the conversation is sustained, the participants are highly likely to bring their bodies into an F-formation* (1990, p. 212; emphasis supplied).

The emphasized sentences here embody this focus of Kendon's work on the orientation of bodies and their posture: the sustaining of some activity—looking away, talking to one another—has consequences for the deployment of the body's posture and for the disposition of postured bodies relative to one another in local space. Both in contrast and in complementarity, my own concerns focus not only on how the talk shapes the disposition of the bodies, but also on how the disposition of the bodies and the deployment of their parts in posture can serve to shape the course of the talk itself.

In this respect, I am exploring in a rather coarser way the matters dealt with in finer detail, and with more finely grained elements of bodily deployment, by Charles Goodwin in Chapter 3 of his illuminating book *Conversational Organization*, which he introduces (1981, p. 95) as being concerned with "some of the ways in which different structures of orientation are organized, how participants move from one of the alternatives open to them to another, and the consequences that such displays have for the organization of their talk." <sup>2</sup>

And now back to the beginning.

### *1. Body Torque Depicted*

Unlike the usual course of conversation-analytic inquiry, which begins with observations made on the raw audio or video record of the interaction itself, my interest in the phenomenon I am calling body torque was originally piqued by a passage in a review essay in the *New York Review of Books* in 1977.

Reviewing Hugh Trevor-Roper's book *Princes and Artists: Patronage and Ideology of Four Habsburg Courts 1517–1633*, the art historian/critic Francis Haskell found occasion to illustrate the errors to which he thought the book was prone by reference to Titian's painting *Venus with the Organ Player* (also known as *Venus Listening to Music*). Haskell describes the painting as follows: "a young man turns away from the organ on which his hands still rest and gazes, with grave and dignified satisfaction, at the sexual parts of a naked Venus who reclines on a couch behind him" (1977, p. 6). There are several orders of question that this passage raised for me: 1) What is someone doing in *describing* a picture (or scene) in this way?<sup>3</sup> 2) What is someone doing in *painting* a scene, in composing it for painting, in this way? 3) What is someone doing in *sitting* in this way?

The first of these questions is potentially sociological, potentially ethno-methodological, potentially discourse analytic, in the continental sense of that term; it concerns ways of formulating settings, and the actions done by such formulations. The second question is art critical or art historical in character. The third directly concerns the organization of interaction and of conduct within it.

First, Haskell's description: he follows his description of the painting by citing Trevor-Roper's assertion that the organ player has the features of Philip II of Spain, and he remarks, "Were this true it would be distinctly odd for such a defender of 'ancient austerity' (it would, in fact, be distinctly odd for any prince, let alone a Spanish prince; at any time, let alone in the sixteenth century) to have himself—or allow himself to be—painted *in such a compromising situation*" (pp. 6–8; emphasis supplied).

So, what Haskell wants from his description of the painting is a rendering of the scene in the painting as "a compromising situation," and we can understand by reference to that project the specific formulation of such features of the painting as "gazes" . . . "at the sexual parts" . . . "of a naked Venus" . . . "who reclines on a couch."

But another element of Haskell's description has no *prima facie* bearing on his depicting "a compromising situation," namely, the clause "turns away from the organ on which his hands still rest." What is Haskell doing by including that element in his description? Indeed, what grounds would someone have for sitting this way? What might someone be *doing* by sitting this way? What might others—the Venus (*in* the picture), an onlooker of the scene, the painter, the viewers of the painter's painting (for example, Haskell)—what might they *see* in someone's sitting this way? It is the representation of *that*, of course, that may have been Titian's grounds for painting it that way—for composing it that way for his painting (and Haskell's for including it in his description).

It is for this postural configuration, or rather the class of postural configurations of which this is one instance, that we are using the term *body torque*, and it is this class of postures that we will examine in three episodes of ordinary interaction in Sections 3 through 5 below. We will return at the end to Titian's painting, to explore how the understanding of its composition (and, in particular, its understanding by an authoritative art historical interpreter) is informed by the import of body torque in ordinary episodes of interaction. But first, because we have begun with it, and because we will return to it later, it would be good to have a look at the painting that Haskell was describing, or at least at a photographic representation of it (see Figure 1).

I hope it will be apparent why I am calling the postural configuration involved body torque, and how that phenomenon implicates observations concerning the organization of social interaction.

## 2. *Body Torque Explicated*

By *body torque* I mean (as remarked earlier) different or diverging orientations of the body segments above and below two major points of articulation—the waist and the neck. In fact, more than

divergences around points of articulation may be involved. For example, the trunk may not only be oriented differently than the legs at one end of the body and the head at the other; it may itself be twisted, thereby contributing its own measure to the overall body torque (as can be seen in Titian's painting in Figure 1). And, although they are often hard to see (by "observers"), the *eyes* may also participate in composing or heightening displayed body torque, when, for example, instead of being centered in their sockets, they are moved to the corners of the sockets toward which other body parts are torqued.<sup>4</sup> It seems clear that not all such divergent orientations should be understood as torque; for example, a twenty-degree deflection of the head or face from "straight ahead" position may not be understood usefully in this way. But at some point, a swivelling or twisting of the upper trunk relative to the planted position of the legs (or of the buttocks, if sitting), or a sharply craned neck or angled face relative to the trunk and shoulders, can constitute—can be taken by interactional coparticipants as an instance of—body torque.

An initial observation about body torque is that it can project *instability*. That is, some postures and positions *project* change,



FIGURE 1.

whereas others do not; some are stable and others are unstable. The stable postures *do* of course change, but their current combination of body-part orientations does not *project* change, and does not project a particular candidate change, or class of candidate changes. On the other hand, "unstable postures" may in fact *not* change in the short term, but nonetheless *project* postural shifts, and *particular* shifts at that. For example, a head sharply angled to the side relative to a homogeneously aligned trunk and lower body is "in torque" and may project instability. The instability would be resolved—the torque would be released—by a posture shift that would bring the head and trunk into convergent alignment.

Such torque and instability can be resolved, and can be *projected* as resolvable, by changing the "lesser/upper" orientation, by changing the "greater/lower" orientation, or by changing both. Here the notion of "home position" (Kendon, 1980; Sacks and Schegloff, 1975) is useful—the position from which some limb or physical movement departed, and the return to which marks a possible ending to a spate or unit of activity. In general, it appears that lower segments of the body provide baseline home positions for upper segments: lower body orientation provided by leg plant (or buttocks plant, if seated) sets the home orientation for the trunk; and trunk orientation provides a home orientation for the head or face (see Kendon, 1990, pp. 248–49). But, as we will see (in the second empirical episode to be examined), upper body orientations that are discrepant with lower body orientations can nonetheless be stabilized even while, and *even though*, in torque. For example, a body part in torque can be stabilized at least for the short term by being established as a temporary "home position," as when a head that is turned sharply to the left while the body underneath it is oriented more or less straight ahead is treated as a home position by being rested on a hand and an arm, which is planted by its elbow on the table.

In noting that torque and instability can be resolved, and can be projected to be resolved, by shifting any of the divergent body



segments, I do not mean to make them out to be equivalent. The "direction" of resolution of projected instability is stronger for lesser or higher body parts being realigned to greater or lower ones than vice versa. Or, put differently, the more strongly projected resolution is for a *return to home position* than it is for a *recasting of home position* by realigning the lower body parts (a recasting that can involve taking up a different place in the physical setting altogether, which provides for different alignment to relevant objects in the setting).

An example: a 75 degree head turn to the side, whether to look at an interlocutor or at an environmental event, can put the body into torque. When this is followed by the body turning in the same direction as the head was pointed, the occurrence is readily seeable as resolution of an instability. But it is easy for us to normalize a turn of the head to the side and a return as "just part of talking," and not to appreciate that it can have involved a move into torque, an instability that *could have been* resolved in other, "grosser" ways.

In these last observations, I have been meaning to sketch some of the structural alternatives from which actual body moves may be selected, so as to see such moves as methodic practices, as ways of *doing* something. For example, we should see the "head return" as other than automatic, but as possibly reflecting a "decision" to resolve the torque in that fashion rather than by major reorientation of the body toward an interlocutor or environmental event. For most persons, such movements are below the level of ordinary awareness; only a stiff neck or a sprained back may bring their omnipresence in the ordinary activities of daily life sharply into awareness. But they are part of the warp and weft of our moment-to-moment life in the company of our fellow humans, and their presence and deployment there is not inconsequential in the public order and private interaction that it helps to constitute.

The common treatment of body torque as an unstable body deployment suggests an underlying bodily praxis oriented to minimizing torque when possible. This shows up, for example, in an

observable tendency to *reduce* torque even when not resolving it, for example, by the “creeping” of body parts toward lesser torque, even when the involvements that have occasioned the torque do not allow it to be released or resolved outright.

The mention of such “involvements” brings me to another general observation. One common basis for body torque is involvement in more than one activity or course-of-action. Indeed, what body torque may most generally convey or claim on behalf of its bearer is precisely involvement in, and articulation or management of, more than one course-of-action or activity at the same time. The several “divergent” body segments are used, and are understood, to display orientations to several courses-of-action (ongoing or incipient) to which the person is oriented.

Body torque can, apparently, display some “ranking” of the activities implicated by the several components of body orientation as well. For example, it can display one of these activities being “inserted” into, or interruptive of, another—the one implicated (or oriented to) by the upper/lesser body part being inserted into, or managed within the framework of, the activity implicated by the lower/greater body part. A resolution of torque by returning an upper/lesser part to home position reaffirms this ranking of the activities. A resolution of torque by reorienting the *lower/greater* body part thus can display an “at-least-for-now” *reranking* among several ongoing activities, or a “reordering of priorities” (see again Kendon, 1990, p. 249). Some of the terms that Erving Goffman introduced years ago in his book *Behavior in Public Places* (1963) appear especially apt here—pairs such as “main and side involvements” (p. 43) or “dominant and subordinate involvements” (p. 44), although neither of these contrasts quite captures the various rankings that body torque can display.

It is when a party to talk-in-interaction faces an interlocutor while in torque, while lower parts of the body are oriented elsewhere, and no torque resolution is undertaken by bringing the lower body into alignment with the face, it is then that constraints can be found to be imposed on the conduct of the talk—for

example, toward its minimization; correspondingly, resolution of torque by bringing the lower parts into alignment with the upper, or neutralization of torque by establishing it as a home position, can display readiness to expand the talk then in progress.<sup>5</sup>

But before going any further, we would do well to reengage the bits of conduct that I have been describing in vacuo to some naturally occurring instances of interaction in which they have been in the first instance observed.

### *3. Body Torque Enacted: The Posture in Its Interactional Context*

In this section we examine a brief stretch of interaction taken from an academically based work setting. The examination of this episode is meant 1) to display a real life exemplar of body torque to add to the painted rendition from Titian that has until now been our sole "empirical" referent; 2) to examine one realization of the relation of posture—and body torque in particular—to the state of the interaction, as a display of a participant's understanding of the state of the interaction and alignment to it; and 3) to track this reflexive relationship between posture and state of the interaction through one round of transformations—a positioning for work, a turn toward a differently focused interaction, and a return to the home position.<sup>6</sup>

In Figures 2 and 3, a tutoring session is about to begin, but several rounds of "preliminaries" come up in talk between the tutorial pair and the research personnel who have arranged the session so that they may study the interaction in the session.<sup>7</sup> Grace and Emily have responded to an advertisement, soliciting participants for a study of tutoring—Emily as a physics tutor (on the left in Figure 2), and Grace as *needing* tutoring in physics (on the right in Figure 2). As the tape begins, the manager of the taping session—Marjorie—is completing the arrangements before leaving the two of them to do the tutoring session; she is just off camera to the right (that is, Grace's left). The two "subjects" are talking



FIGURE 2.

with her about the video set up (lines 1–7 in Extract 1, pages 548–49) and the sense it conveys of a laboratory setting, about being “captives” in the situation (lines 8–17), and about amenities such as the availability and location of a bathroom (lines 18–29). The incipient and current courses-of-conversational interaction—the tutoring interaction itself and the preliminaries respectively—provide alternative participation frameworks (Goffman, 1963, 1981; C. Goodwin, 1981, 1996; M. H. Goodwin, 1990; C. Goodwin and M. H. Goodwin, 1992) and alternative possible body configurations for the participants, and one of the participants—the tutee, Grace—is caught in the middle. The tutor Emily is to her right; the “experimenter” with whom the two of them, qua “subjects,” are discussing the preliminaries is to her left. (Notational conventions used in the transcripts are explained in the Appendix; I urge the reader not to read *around* the data extracts.)

As the episode begins, Grace has taken up a body orientation squared up to the table, with her hands and arms planted on it. This is an orientation to the work task, as she displays symbolically by first (literally) rolling up her sleeves, and then loudly dropping her arms on the table; a moment later she reaches for a book and moves it toward her, into "working position."

Grace is literally in the middle of several exchanges between Emily and Marjorie. Although the body position that she has assumed by reference to the "business" of the tutoring session has her "naturally" oriented toward Emily, as the talk alternates between Emily and Marjorie (with only a few interpolations by Grace herself), Grace does look to Marjorie several times—especially at lines 09–10 and at lines 22–24. When she does so, she keeps her main body orientation to the table and to the tutoring session which is the dominant or official involvement of the occasion (Goffman, 1963, p. 44), and her orientation to Marjorie is done by assuming a posture of considerable body torque. Figure 2 shows the first of these looks to Marjorie; this is at lines 9–10.

Note first the products of the earlier actions described in the preceding paragraphs: Grace is seated squared up to the table, her hands and arms resting on the table, the workbook drawn in front of her, her pencil in relaxed writing configuration. Then note the configuration that composes the body torque: the torso and shoulders are slightly rotated away from the table (and almost certainly from the direction of the buttocks in the chair) toward Marjorie; the head is somewhat more than 90 degrees to the left from forward position, and the eyes are in the left corners of their sockets. Each next body layer up from the buttocks on which she is planted is torqued more sharply to the left. This configuration of elements is even more strongly marked (especially the turn of the head) in another turn into body torque in Figure 3; this is at lines 22–24.

Bear in mind the alternative physical deployments of body parts—and furniture—by which the same visual orientation to Marjorie could be achieved: eyes centered in their sockets, but

## Extract 1. Fox: Physics Tutoring, 1-2 (simplified transcript)

- 01 Emily: I'll do my best to ignore this whole system  
 02 ha [ha ha  
 03 Grace: [ha [ha ha  
 04 Marjorie: [Yeah, good idea [ ( )?  
 05 Emily: [( telling just sort  
 06 of) weird looking.  
 07 Grace: 'hh ha ha [ha  
 08 Marjorie: [We're going to just lo:ck you in here  
 09 Emily: Okay, hh ha ha  
 10 Marjorie: so you can't go away.  
 11 Emily: so we can't go away?  
 12 Grace: Oh: ng:  
 13 Marjorie: No, you c- actually can, you can open the door.  
 14 Grace: ha [ha ha  
 15 Emily: [ha ha I was just going to say I don't know  
 16 about [that  
 17 Marjorie: [ha ha ha  
 18 Emily: Is there a bathroom? in case we have to go to the  
 19 bathr[oom?  
 20 Marjorie: [Yeah, there [is, not on this floor but uh,  
 21 Grace: [Yeah.

22 Marjorie: one floor up.  
23 Emily: Ok[ay.  
24 Marjorie: [If you can find it.  
25 Emily: Okay.  
26 Grace: I know: where it is, I took psychology last  
27 se[mester.  
28 Marjorie: [ha ha  
29 Emily: [Okay.  
30 (4.4)  
31 Marjorie: Okay, enjoy yourself[ves.  
32 Emily: [Did you want to turn this on?  
33 It's on?  
34 Marjorie: Uh I- think I did.  
35 Grace: Yeah. [It is.  
36 Emily: [Okay.  
37 (1.0)  
38 Emily: [Okay.  
39 Grace: [It's moving, anyway.  
40 Emily: So what are you doing?  
41 Grace: Uh[m  
42 Emily: [You're taking physics.  
43 Grace: taking physics three oh two:....

with greater twist in the shoulders and trunk (perhaps more like the young man in the Titian painting); or eyes centered in their sockets, but turning to straddle the chair diagonally, or even to sit crosswise on it while it remains oriented to the table; or turning the chair around so that it faces Marjorie, with the entire body seated squarely on it, in front-on position with eyes centered in their sockets; and so on. Out of these and many alternative deployments to achieve "looking at Marjorie," and over successive occasions of turning, Grace deploys herself in body torque. Note especially that throughout each episode of torque, and at the greatest extension of torque (as reflected, for example, in the eye displacement in their sockets), Grace's arms *remain planted in the forward-facing body position* that was established for "doing tutoring."

It is worth making explicit that such highly torqued postures not only get resolved by adjustment of one directional component or the other, but that, while they are present, they literally



FIGURE 3.



embody a tension that informs the conduct of the moment, and project alternative courses that the conduct of the moment can take, and with it the course that the interaction can take. Particularly relevant here is the tie between the “predeparture” character of Marjorie’s exchanges with Emily, on the one hand, and Grace’s failure to reposition herself in Marjorie’s direction on the other. That is, Grace’s sustaining a body-torque posture rather than turning more fully (and stably) toward Marjorie, and each time resolving the torque by realigning her head with her torso, rather than shifting her torso or her chair toward Marjorie, display an orientation to the “lesser-ness”—here, the projected transience—of this interactional engagement. And by displaying that stance, she contributes to its realization. The particular sequences worked through here—one on the “weirdness” of the room’s appearance and its air of threat surrounding the body torque at lines 08 and 10 (presumably the imprisoned “laboratory-ness” conveyed by the multiple cameras), and the other on the whereabouts of the rest room that is treated as hard to find, which is the occasion for the body torque at lines 20–26 (Figure 3)—each could be extended by further talk, and a repositioning by Grace could display an orientation to that possibility and thereby an encouragement of it. Grace’s postural configuration displays a stance toward the interaction in progress at that moment and the (tutorial) one that is to follow—the latter as her basic involvement in the setting, the former as lesser (because transient, though the posture does not register “transience” in particular). Grace’s postural configuration gets its “transparent” sense from its embeddedness in the actual activities that it is mediating, whose relative standing it literally embodies. (This would be even more apparent were it possible to make available to the reader the real time video representation of the episode. By contrast, the static—and “decontexted”—image in Titian’s painting remains opaque, and requires scholarly “interpretation” for its explication, as we will see at the end of the paper.)

Grace intermittently shifts her orientation from either Emily or Marjorie to a direction roughly midpoint between the two of them. It is to this position that her upper body "creeps" or gradually recedes after maximum extensions of torque (for example, at line 10). It is to this position that she turns to acknowledge talk by Marjorie (as for example at line 13) without making the full turn into torque that she otherwise employs to align herself properly as a recipient of Marjorie's talk (Goodwin, 1980, 1981). By contrast, it gets seen as *non-torque*, but clearly still oriented away from Emily, and away from the tutorial interaction that she awaits, as the continuing orientation of her underlying posture displays.

Finally, let me just report (again without showing) that Grace marks the onset of the main tutorial activity itself (at lines 40–41) by releasing her torqued posture toward its underlying orientation, and setting her head in her left hand, its arm planted in front of her while leaning into the table, thereby establishing a home position for the tutorial activity oriented to Emily.

In summary, then, I have meant to display several real life exemplars of body torque and the implication in it of body parts from the buttocks and torso to the eyes in their sockets, and to register first, the orientation to the official involvement displayed by Grace's underlying postural orientation; second, the excursion from that basic interactional commitment represented by her turning only the upper parts of her body toward Marjorie, thereby moving into torque; and third, Grace's recurrent relaxation of torque by returning the upper body toward the orientation of the lower, *rather* than by an adjustment of the latter (by shifting the position of the chair, for example). She thereby sustains the tutoring activity itself as the underlying interactional commitment, and treats Marjorie's talk as an "insert" into it (even though it has not yet actually begun).

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#### 4. *Body Torque Enacted: Managing Priorities*

The setting for the next episode of interaction to be examined is an airport operations room.<sup>8</sup> In this episode, a worker manages a conversation with coworkers while at the same time displaying an ongoing involvement with his work station, and displays his management and control of the imperatives of his job precisely by the extension of talk in the face of work tasks publicly awaiting his action. This episode is from a multifocus work setting in which body deployment is by definition, and by work organization, configured differently than the single, mutual, or convergent body orientations most common in human interaction; if anything, rather than being "face-to-face," it is "back-to-back," with most of the workers positioned around the perimeter of the room, facing outward toward the technical equipment that mediates their work efforts (Figure 4).

Examination of this episode is meant 1) to furnish an additional exemplar of the deployment of body torque in real-world circumstances in which there are alternative activities competing for a worker's involvement; 2) to allow us to track the dynamic interrelationship between changes in the competing demands of the situation and the postural configuration of the participants; and 3) to specify the way in which changes in the work demands as registered in unanticipated ways in the postural alignments of the participants affects the conduct of the talk in that setting. If the preceding section focused primarily on the postural configuration, with its relation to the interaction only roughly formulated, this one brings the structure of the situation more to the foreground, with posture serving to index its shifting alignments of involvement.

The central character for our purposes is Mark, who can be seen at the lower right corner of Figures 4-11. In the division of labor in this operations room, he is in charge (among other things) of baggage, and its loading and unloading from airplanes.

He is engaged for most of this episode in conversation with Brian, who is just to his left, and just off-camera. They are joined at the end of the episode by Al, who is not visible at its start, but comes in on his rolling office chair (Figure 6); he is the supervisor of work in the operations room during this shift.<sup>9</sup>

At the start of Extract 2, Mark and Brian appear to be setting off on a new topical sequence, even though it clearly has grown out of prior talk. The talk is concerned, roughly, with the treatment of carry-on bags as they are transferred from the large aircraft that fly the major airline routes to the smaller planes flown on feeder lines, into whose available space they do not fit as carry-ons, and, in particular, whether their weight is included in the computation of the overall weight of the plane's load.



**FIGURE 4.**

Extract 2. 9.11.03AA:Ops1, 14:14:10-15:45:24 (simplified transcript)

- 01 Brian: Sherry's workin' on it. We're gonna have a full airplane.  
02 't's booked to twenty two [( 'r something )  
03 Dave: ((on telephone)) [Okay let me get out my starter.  
04 I'll look it up and I'll call you right back.  
05 Brian: So::,  
06 Mark: (yeah we're gonna) work something out down there with uh:  
07 (told y') I was down there talkin to her earlier. "hhh Put  
08 those uh: late check. They're gonna late check bags now uh::  
09 at (pea:[ks]),  
10 Brian: [I know.  
11 Mark: And they're not ( ' ) including those in their bag counts.  
12 Brian: Oh they're no:t?  
13 Mark: No, and-  
14 (1.2)  
15 Mark: Theoretically,  
16 Brian: [Are they including them as carry ons though?  
17 Mark: Yeah.  
18 (0.5)  
19 Brian: Okay.  
20 (1.0)  
21 Brian: Cuz they're- they're usually checking things that people  
22 would carry on a normal fli:ght but would not fit in this

- 23 [air (hull)  
 24 Mark: [Right.  
 25 Mark: They're allowin two- two uh: small ba:gs, carryin on em,  
 26 (0.5) plus something like five pounds or le:ss, (1.0)  
 27 small size that would fit underneath the seat.  
 28 Brian: Yea[h.  
 29 Mark: [(But-) (like-) A lotta these people come off these  
 30 transfer flights,  
 31 (0.5)  
 32 Jackie: Piece of cake.  
 33 Mark: Comin off a- a je:t, [that's gotta [bigger sea:t,=  
 34 Brian: [Yeah, [ [Piece of cake.  
 35 Dave: [Piece of cake.  
 36 Mark: ='n they've got- somethin they carried on there that won't  
 37 fit on [the Eagle,  
 38 Al: [This from Long Beach?  
 39 Dave: (Yeap.)  
 40 Mark: So they've gotta check that i:n, and they're puttin  
 41 [ t h r o u g h a n e w u h : [( ) s::  
 42 Jackie: [Four sixty's on the ground Ma:rk, [  
 43 Brian: [Yeah.  
 44 Al: Four sixty's i:n.  
 45 Mark: Sk:uh: [Gate cac- gate checks on em and uh:,

46 Brian: [Gate check in.  
47 Mark: She says that--  
48 Brian: (How does it)  
49 Mark: Robin has told em to not tuh:: (1.0) [count em as baggage,  
50 Brian: [Oh really,  
51 Mark: So I told him we'd better get together  
52 [with the pilots on tha:t.  
53 Brian: [Well do we count-  
54 Brian: Do we count carry-ons?  
55 Mark: Four sixty on the ground for gate [uh: nineteen.  
56 Al: [No:, it's only in terms  
57 of your passenger weight.  
58 (0.6)  
59 Brian: It is?  
60 Al: Yes. That's why it's- Robin's not counting it. It's ( )  
61 your passenger weight.  
62 Mark: Yeah but theoret- you're gettin nineteen (.) piece of  
63 carry-on if you get a full flight. (0.5) And you have to  
64 take something off for everybody, and put it- in the front  
65 or rear uh:  
66 Al: In the:: In the passenger weight. (') they're- they're  
67 anticipating those two carry ons.

As Brian starts the talk at lines 01–02, Mark is in in his work-oriented home position: trunk and shoulders squared up to the table, arms lying on the table, head inclined forward toward work on the table in front of him. As Mark begins to respond at lines 06–07, he turns his head to the left to look toward Brian, but the rest of his body remains as before; his talk, then, is done from body torque (Figure 5).

In the middle of this utterance, at line 07 (at the in-breath marked by the “hhh”), where he abandons one line he was taking and starts another (about “late-checking bags”), he withdraws from torque as well, his head realigning with the rest of his body.

Then, as he begins (at line 08) to express the view that forms the core of the “line” he is taking in this sequence, Mark not only turns back toward Brian, thereby potentially making *that* the home-position orientation for his head and face (the position from which he has departed and to which he returns), but he



FIGURE 5.



plants an elbow on the table and establishes that posture, with that head orientation (Figure 6), as a home position for the activity "conversation with Brian."<sup>10</sup> Note that this is a home position that is in torque with the continuing alignment of his trunk and shoulders to the work station in front of him. He thereby posturally embodies an orientation to the work site as his "dominant" involvement, with the talk with Brian a "subordinate" involvement (Goffman, 1963, p. 44) inserted into that continuing orientation, but now embodied as a "stable" commitment.

Here then we have body torque stabilized as a postural configuration, at least for the short run.<sup>11</sup> With its stabilization, Mark displays some commitment to continue the talk. We can see him in this dually committed position from line 08. Twice Mark turns his head away momentarily from Brian in the direction of his work station, at lines 29–30 and again at lines 40–41, both times



FIGURE 6.

returning to face Brian, confirming that as home position for his facial orientation, and renewing the dual alignment that his posture embodies.

Then, at line 42, Jackie calls out her announcement that “Four sixty’s on the ground Mark.” Recall that this makes relevant one of Mark’s job responsibilities, namely, alerting the baggage handling crew at the arrival gate to be ready to unload the plane. The effect of this announcement is immediately registered in the alignments of the interaction we have been examining.

Just after the end of Jackie’s announcement, 1) Mark’s head leaves Brian and turns toward his work station (Figure 7); this is followed directly by 2) his right elbow starting to move, breaking out of the home position that it, and he, had established vis-a-vis Brian, so that 3) within less than a second after Jackie’s announcement, Mark is out of his previously stabilized home position, and out of body torque (Figure 8).



FIGURE 7.



FIGURE 8.

A moment later, 4) Mark is turning back to Brian, and by less than two seconds after the announcement of his work task (Figure 9) Mark is back in torque, and still talking to Brian, but no longer in a stabilized home position (note his elbow is no longer planted on the table), so that the body torque's full import is no longer qualified or neutralized; these are lines 45–51.

What is so striking, then, is that the consequence of Jackie's announcement with its task implications for Mark<sup>12</sup> is *not a cessation of the competing activity—his conversation—but a change in the stance being displayed toward the different activities, specifically a destabilization of the posture from which the conversation was being done.* Mark does continue talking to Brian, although at lines 41 and 45 we can see and hear hitches or “disfluencies” intruding on the otherwise smooth production of his talk. Still, although his activities here are “impacted” by the discipline of the workplace, he



FIGURE 9.

presses the trajectory of his talk to conclusion, past grammatical points at which his turn could otherwise be complete (for example, at lines 45, “gate checks on them,” and at 49, “not to count them as baggage”). But now, without his elbow planted, his body position is not an established home position; it no longer has that as a stabilizing qualification to the instability of the body torque. The talk with Brian no longer has the displayed stable commitment to its continuation that it had before. Each next increment of talk is “achieved” in the face of an imminent ending of the talk in favor of the competing work activity, associated with the underlying postural orientation.

And indeed, at line 52 Mark comes to a possible completion of his talk, and at the same time his head orientation starts a return to his work station. This leaves Brian, who is initiating a question (at lines 53–54), talking to no aligned recipient as Mark leans into his microphone to pass on instructions to the baggage handlers (Figure 10).<sup>13</sup>



FIGURE 10.

Al, the supervisor, however, now joins in, having wheeled his chair into close proximity to the conversation at just about the time that Jackie made her announcement (line 42), and having displayed visible interest in their conversation (by looking over to it) at the 1.0 second pause in line 49.<sup>14</sup> We cannot here track the course of the ensuing developments other than to note that Al's intervention (at lines 56–57 and 60–61) articulates the counter to Mark's complaint, and that Mark repositions himself after discharging his work task, turning by stages back to the (now three-person) conversation to respond to Al (lines 62–65) and be responded to in return (lines 66–67). First Mark turns his head and gaze back to Brian and Al, ending in a torqued position with his torso still aligned to his work space in front of him; then he plants an elbow in his new, torqued orientation; finally he rests his head on the newly planted arm to establish his new postural deployment—and its embodied interactional involvement—as a stable-for-now home position (Figure 11).<sup>15</sup>



FIGURE 11.

In the postural choreography of this ordinary employee in a work setting, we can see a fine-tuned gauge, displaying different analyses of, and allocations of involvement to, different elements of his work environment; how quickly and delicately this postural configuration is responsive to events and changes in that work environment; and how these reorientations both represent responses to the interactional initiatives of coparticipants, and serve as themselves interactionally environmental initiatives and constraints on the conduct of those in conversation with him. The shifting alignments represented in this stretch of interaction are managed step by step: withdrawal of commitment to the conversation in which Mark is engaged is first heralded by a return of his posture to unqualified body torque (lines 45–51); and that unstable postural configuration is, in turn, resolved by returning his upper body parts to alignment with the commitment displayed by his torso as he cuts short his participation in the conversation. Then, on completion of his task performance, Mark displays his return to the

conversation and his commitment to participation in its expansion by stabilizing the body torque posture that he reassumes in a new home position, represented by an arm plant to the table.

In the next section, we examine another interactional episode, drawn from a different type of setting, to explore in a bit more detail the bearing of body torque on limiting the expansion of a spate of talk and of the resolution of body torque on the release of that expansion.

### *5. Body Torque Enacted: Constraining and Releasing Talk*

Clearly, body torque and the various values it can assume are not distinctive to conversation; it can display involvement in a great range of activities, and a prioritizing of those involvements, even when conversation is not one of them.<sup>16</sup> Although a body always will be in some postural configuration, its interactional significance emerges only when the conditions for interaction are present, typically when persons are in one another's presence, subject to the contingencies of mutual monitoring (Goffman, 1963, pp. 13–30), although in these increasingly technologically informed times, the second of these elements can be disengagable from the first.

A body in torque can be taken to display a set of involvements or activities and a relative ranking or prioritizing among them; one or more of those activities may be conversation or some other form of talk-in-interaction, and this paper's treatment of naturally occurring interaction will conclude by examining one way in which the conduct of conversation can be seen to be shaped by the postural deployment of its participants, and, in particular, the stance that this postural deployment may convey about the place of that conversation in the array of activities in which the participants are at that moment involved.

The general point here is this: high body torque of a conversational participant whose facial orientation is torqued toward the

conversation can serve to constrain its expansiveness, whereas resolution of body torque in the direction of the conversation—that is, by reorienting lower body parts in the direction of the head and face, thereby reprioritizing the several current involvements—can remove such a constraint and “release” the talk for greater expansion. Here I will focus on explicating this point by reference to one of the key units of organization in talk-in-interaction, the “sequence,” and I begin by a brief, highly concentrated overview of some of the main organizational features of sequences to supply the reader with the key analytic resources necessary for the ensuing discussion (see Schegloff, 1990, 1995 for more extended accounts).

Although the organization of stretches of talk can be structured in various ways by the participants who coconstruct it, the most common sequence structure by far is built on an elementary unit of sequence construction that has been termed an “adjacency pair” (Sacks, 1992, II, pp. 521–69; Schegloff and Sacks, 1973). In its basic, minimal form this unit is composed of two turns at talk (a “pair”), one after the other (“adjacent”), each produced by a different speaker, with characteristically different valences: one having an initiating force, making some response relevant next—questions are prototypical for a “first pair part” (or “*F*”); the other having a reactive character that has them grasped as responsive to the *F*—(dis)agreement, acceptance, rejection, answers, and so on are exemplary of such a “second pair part” (or “*S*”). Of course, not just any *S* properly follows any *F*; a greeting *F* makes a return greeting *S* relevant next; a question *F* makes an answer *S* relevant next; an invitation *F* makes an accepting or a declining *S* (among others) relevant next; but the force of an invitation *F* is not satisfied by a return greeting *S*. So the parts of an adjacency pair are “type-related,” they are differentially combinable to compose distinct sequence types.

A sequence can be composed of nothing more than an *F* followed by a type-fitted *S*, and this is the basic minimal form of sequence. But this little structure is expansible at each of its pos-



sible positions. It can be expanded before its *F*—by a variety of expansion types that are recognized as “leading up to something”; these are “preexpansions.” It can be expanded after its *F* but before its *S*—these are “insertion expansions,” as when a question needs to be clarified before it can be answered (among many other types of insertion expansion). It can be expanded after its *S*—a “postexpansion,” as when a questioner finds the answer problematic and requests clarification or asserts a disagreement (among many types of postexpansion). These expansions are (with very few exceptions) themselves constructed from adjacency pairs, and the implied recursiveness does in fact occur (that is, the expansion pairs themselves get expanded), although only to a limited degree. The consequence is that very long stretches of talk can be fashioned on the underlying armature of a single adjacency pair. The adjacency pair that gets expanded we can call “the base pair”; and the others we can call “presequences,” “insertion sequences,” and “postexpansion sequences,” respectively, depending on where they occur relative to the base pair. There is a shape and a texture, then, to these very long stretches of talk, and a parsability into the component units out of which the participants have constructed the talk. These are, after all, the *parties’* units; they recognize where they are in such “sequences-in-progress;” it is they who implement the next developments of the sequence.

There is, obviously, a great deal more that can be said about this central form of organization in talk, one of the generic organizations in talk-in-interaction, that is, forms of organization that will be present whenever conversation (or virtually any form of talk-in-interaction) is in progress.<sup>17</sup> For present purposes, we need to make explicit one additional point. Because an *F* makes a responsive *S* relevant next, or else it will be officially “missing” and constitute an interactional event in its own right,<sup>18</sup> a sequence is not possibly complete after an *F*. By the same token, sequences *can* be possibly complete after an *S* (this does not mean that they will be or must be, but they *can* be), although some form of postexpan-

sion is common, including perhaps the most common, which is a single additional turn that serves to register or accept the *S*, and align with the possibility that the sequence is thereby complete. These we can call "sequence closing thirds" (*SCT*). The relevance of these points is this: as a second pair part (an *S*) or a sequence closing third (*SCT*) is hearably coming to an end, the possible end of the sequence is foreshadowed as imminent as well. This will figure in the interactional trajectory through which the episode to be examined next develops.

In the next transcript segment, I have marked in the left margin just a bit of an indication of these units using the terms and abbreviations introduced in the preceding paragraphs: *F* for a first pair part, with a subscript to identify its sequence; *S* for a second pair part, with a subscript to identify which *F* it is responsive to; *SCT* for a sequence-closing third, with a subscript to indicate which *F+S* pair it is a potential closure for. I have *not* tried to indicate the relative positioning of these sequences in structural terms—which is the base pair, which a preexpansion, and so on. Although that does figure in the course of action being prosecuted here, we can do without it for our interest in the way in which posture, and body torque in particular, figures in the talk: where it occurs, and how it contributes to the way in which the parties shape it. And I have not marked utterances whose fit to the structure of the sequence does not make it critical, or whose annotation would require further explanatory text tangential to our interest in this material.

In this episode, three young women have been "putting themselves together" in their sorority house (apparently in preparation for "going out"); the sound track is often obscured by the sound of a hair dryer close to the equipment. Marge and Jane are standing in front of the mirror that covers the wall above the sinks, and Jill, having apparently finished her toilette, is just leaving the bathroom at the point at which

the extract segment begins (lines 01–07). She is about to step over the threshold, but then pauses and reopens the interaction at line 09. (Jill is visible only as a slightly darker blob at the right edge of Figures 12 and 13, but is more distinctly discernable in Figure 14.)

As Jill restarts the talk, she is standing at the far end of the room from the camera, in the passage leading away from the room. Jane is farthest away from the exit, quite close to the camera (on the left in Figure 12); Marge is standing between the camera and Jane to her right, and Jill and the exit to her left—looking straight ahead of her into the mirror, at her own reflection, as she tries to arrange her hair (apparently with a curling iron).



FIGURE 12.

## Extract 3. Sorority: Formal, 34:43-35:40 (simplified transcript)

01 Jill: Bye::  
 02 Marge: Bye bye[ Ji::ll  
 03 Jane: [( )  
 04 (.)  
 05 Jane: BYE::  
 06 (0.8)  
 07 (?) : (BYE::)  
 08 (2.0)  
 09 F<sub>1</sub> Jill: D'ja get (ya) dress yet,  
 10 (0.8)  
 11 Marge: Did I get dressed?  
 12 Jane: I don'[ (think she) did. ]  
 13 Jill: [Yer dress fer the formal.  
 14 S<sub>1</sub> Marge: No:::  
 15 (.)  
 16 S<sub>1</sub> Marge: My [mom sent it-] yes]terday: ]  
 17 F<sub>2</sub> Jill: [ I wanna see]: : ] i:t. ]  
 18 (2.0)  
 19 S<sub>2</sub> Marge: >Tuesday I guess<It's just like- (.) JoLe::ne's  
 20 S<sub>2</sub> mom made,=thee'exact same dress but bla:ck.  
 21 (1.8)

22 S<sub>2</sub> Marge: Thee'exact same dress.  
 23 (.)  
 24 S<sub>2</sub> Marge: My mom [made-  
 25 F<sub>3</sub> Jill: [with poofey slee:ves?  
 26 S<sub>3</sub> Marge: No: this'z- this'z the one that- (. ) that-  
 27 S<sub>3</sub> has little straps an' has a vee:, an has a  
 28 S<sub>3</sub> dropped [waist.  
 29 SCT<sub>3</sub>Jill: [Ah::.  
 30 (0.8)  
 31 S<sub>2</sub> Marge: Jolene's mom made the exa:ct same dress,  
 32 (1.0)  
 33 S<sub>2</sub> Marge: except it's out of black taffetta, an' she h's  
 34 S<sub>2</sub> a white sash like I have,  
 35 (0.8)  
 36 S<sub>2</sub> Marge: She [has black pumps out 'n I have ] blue pumps. yeah.  
 37 (Jill): [(She has white pumps from Maggie)]  
 38 (0.5)  
 39 S<sub>2</sub> Marge: And she's wearing gloves to he:re an' I'm wearing  
 40 S<sub>2</sub> gloves to here.  
 41 (0.5)  
 42 F<sub>4</sub> Jill: D'ja know anybody tha' has- (the)/(some) foot si:ze  
 43 F<sub>4</sub> sixs:: en a half: around, {(0.2)/('hh)} that has

44 F<sub>4</sub> white shoes,  
 45 (0.2)  
 46 S<sub>4</sub> Marge: No: [(I don't.)  
 47 F<sub>4</sub> (Jill): [(white pumps)  
 48 (3.5)  
 49 S<sub>4</sub> Jane: Well there's [ ( M o n i c a ) ]  
 50 F<sub>5</sub> Marge: [What're you wearing.]  
 51 (1.3)  
 52 S<sub>5</sub> Jill: I'm borrowing this dress [(from-[  
 53 S<sub>CT5</sub> Marge: [ 0 h [you told [me.  
 54 Jill: [Did I  
 55 tell you about- (Michael).  
 56 (1.5) ((Jill turns and leaves))  
 57 S<sub>4</sub> Marge: I haven't see:n white shoes. Jill, ((calling after Jill)  
 58 (2.0)  
 59 Jane: I have them in a (five enna half),  
 60 Marge: Aww:

What follows are some notes and observations on what transpires, drastically restricted in their detail to those features necessary to indicate the structure of the sequence and the interactional trajectory being prosecuted through it, against which the key postural alignments and changes in them may be appreciated. Its sketchiness is embodied in the format of a list of points that offer a parsing of the interactional episode in Extract 3 and should be read with continuing reexamination of the transcript, point by point and utterance by utterance, to track the parsing.

*Lines 09–16*

1. As the question at line 09 comes to an end, Marge moves into left torque, toward Jill. That is, her legs and lower torso remain oriented toward the mirror in front of her in which she is grooming herself, but the upper part of her torso and head are twisted to the left to face Jill (see Figure 13).

2. This seems coordinated to the onset of a sequence, and to her incipient answering of a question directed to her by Jill. It also embodies a limited commitment to the talk being launched and projects an orientation to not continuing it past its first possible completion.

3. Marge maintains this left torque through the start of line 16. This utterance will constitute the possible completion of the sequence, and the release of torque and return to home position can reveal from the start of the turn that it is meant to bring the sequence to closure, rather than to invite its extension. Specifically: The “no” at line 14 is the base second pair part answer to the question at line 09, as explicated in line 13 in response to the puzzlement displayed by the repair initiator at line 11. Line 16 is starting an account for line 14 (as negative or rejecting or “dispreferred” responses canonically make an account relevant), and its completion potentially constitutes the sequence’s completion.

*Lines 17–24*

4. Jill's turn at line 17 is virtually simultaneous with the one at line 16, not responsive to it (as shown in the transcript by the brackets). It is rather responsive to the "no" at line 14, or to Marge's untorquing to home position, which starts just before it and which projects upcoming sequence closure and withdrawal from interactional engagement. Jill's turn thus moves to extend a sequence that had appeared to be incipiently closed. Aside from the way that the action that it does (insistent requesting, complaining<sup>19</sup>) pursues the sequence, note the reference to "it," that is, the dress, which requires of its recipient retrieval of the preceding talk, thereby helping to embody the turn as more of the preceding sequence, though that sequence had made no overt reference to Jill's wanting to see the dress.

5. Marge's utterance at lines 19–20 (after its initial correction of the "yesterday" in her preceding turn) is addressed to Jill's at



FIGURE 13.



line 17, and is responsive to her complaint. It offers a sort of remedy (a preferred response type for complaints), letting her know what the dress "looks like" (even though it is unavailable) by describing it by reference to a dress she is taken to have already seen, that is, a recipient-designed description. And indeed Jill's turn at line 25 shows that she understands that constructional practice of Marge's turn and is able to use the description "like Jolene's dress" to "retrieve" a particular dress and to offer a candidate feature of the dress to check her understanding (even though it turns out to be incorrect and requires correction).

6. It may then be noted—apropos lines 19–20 being in response to line 17—that, just at "mom" in line 20, as Marge gets into her response and into the sequence expansion, she moves into left torque again, in the direction of Jill. She does this as part of "doing responding," as she did at the end of line 09 in anticipation of the responding she was about to do there.

7. The turn at line 22 again appears to herald/enact the end of the sequence. Upon no uptake by Jill at line 21 to the response at lines 19–20, the repeat at line 22 shows "no more to be said." It is unclear what the further talk at line 24 is going to be, but Marge "untorques" toward home position at "my mom" on line 24, just as she had done at "my mom" at line 16—in both cases in additional turn units (Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson, 1974; Schegloff, 1996b) after possible turn and sequence completion, following micropauses after the possible sequence-closing unit. That is, the talk by Marge at both line 16 and line 24 follows talk by her that had come to possible turn completion—at lines 14 and 22 respectively, turns which constituted possible completions of the sequences of which they were part, sequences launched at lines 09 and 17 respectively. Her untorquing in both of these environments displays her orientation to the incipient end of the sequence and unqualified return to her other activity.

*Line 25–40*

8. Note that this new turn unit following possible sequence completion also attracts overlapping talk by Jill at line 25, as did her talk in a similar position at lines 16–17. Coming as they do after micropauses, these might not merit the term “interruption” but rather be understood as delayed, post-gap responses (see Jefferson, 1983, 1986). But in both instances, what appears to be involved in attracting Jill’s talk in overlap is Marge’s untorquing of her postural alignment. Jill’s talk at line 25 is again a first pair part, making a response relevant next, and projecting thereby extension of the sequence that otherwise appeared on point of closure. This move to extend the sequence comes at just the point at which Marge’s resolution of torque toward home position displays an orientation to, and incipient realization of, imminent sequence completion.

9. In offering a candidate understanding of a reference that had invoked her knowledge (“just like Jolene’s mom made”), Jill’s utterance is again built to embody extension of the preceding talk (as did the “it” embodied in the earlier sequence at line 17). In offering an incorrect understanding, it serves well to accomplish the sequence extension, for it prompts not a confirmation but a rejection, which in turn makes a correction—an alternative description—relevant.<sup>20</sup>

10. As Marge begins responding to this extension at line 26, at the self-interruption in the first “this’z,” she turns to the left, toward Jill. This time she *does not torque* to the left while her lower body remains oriented to the mirror; rather she takes a step or two back from the mirror, does a full body turn to the left, assuming a new home position, a new transactional segment (Kendon, 1990), and aligning as cointeractant with Jill (see Figure 14; Marge’s image is partially obscured by Jane’s left hand but can perhaps be inferred from the position of her right arm). Note that this comes in the transition space following a first pair part, a question or request, as did the moves into torque at lines 09 and 20.<sup>21</sup> It is, then, a postural

alignment alternative to body torque in the same sequential position.

11. Note that, now settled into a stable vis-a-vis engagement, Marge provides several increments of description of the dress, passing points of possible turn completion without treating them as possible sequence completion (for example, at line 28, "waist"; at line 31, "dress"; and at line 36, "pumps," among others), ending with a feature—gloves to here and to here (lines 39–40), one of which involves gloves to the vicinity of the elbow—which can be heard as returning the account to the inquiry which prompted it, "with poofey sleeves?" (at line 25).

This series of extensions of the answering turn exemplifies the "release" of the talk that can be engendered by a resolution of body torque in the direction of the conversational interlocutor. Whereas at earlier junctures in this sequence, the approach of possible sequence completion was accompanied by a resolution



FIGURE 14.

of torque away from the recipient, eliciting overlapping talk cast in utterance formats designed to require yet further talk by its recipient, here—with posture resolved in the direction of the ongoing conversation—increments to the sequence are produced by Marge after gaps of silence, are formatted as additional description that do not impose comparable obligations of response, and so on.

*Lines 42–57*

12. Thereupon, still within the stable coorientation, Jill asks after some shoes to borrow. Note that this sequence, whether new or prepared by what preceded it, is doing a dispreferred, potentially delicate action—a request. It is not improbable that the earlier talk was undertaken as a route to this request, as dispreferred requests are regularly delayed within their occasions by other sequences or topic talk. And recall that this whole sequence, and the requests in it at lines 17 and 42–44, is in the first instance in a distinct “afterthought” episode, one launched after an exchange of good-byes at the very start of this transcript segment—that is, delayed past the original closing boundary of the interaction episode as a whole.

13. Marge’s negative response is delayed a barely respectable moment at line 45 and is not followed up with any account of the rejection or suggestion of alternative remedy in the very long gap that follows (at line 48). In part this is to be understood by the follow-up self-repair (transition-space repair; Schegloff, 1997; Schegloff et al., 1977) that Jill appears to introduce (the sound is equivocal) just after the “no,” specifying the request from “white shoes” to “white pumps,” thereby superceding the rejection (once again) by overlapping talk, and renewing the relevance of the (now specified) request. On this line, the long silence at line 48 intervenes between the request and the still-awaited response to it—a position in which silence regularly is a harbinger of rejection or disagreement forthcoming.

14. When finally Jane appears to respond with a *positive* response—a possible source for the shoes (line 49), its hearing is rendered problematic by Marge's inquiring in overlapping talk after the basis for the request (line 50), which it almost immediately turns out Marge had already been told (line 53). As Marge is registering her already knowing what Jill is planning to wear, she begins to turn back to her right, away from the home position directed at Jill and back to the mirror and to her grooming.

15. With Marge's resumption of her previous home-position posture turned to the mirror and away from Jill, marking and embodying the end of the sequence, Jill turns and leaves the scene, as Marge calls after her another disappointing response to her request (line 57).

16. The main points I wish to stress from this episode are these:

- a) the turning toward the sequence initiator with high body torque when the incipient sequence can be projected as limited in extension, and when there is another activity laying its own claim on participation involvement and postural alignment;
- b) the release from torque away from the interaction and toward home position each time the sequence is coming to a projected end, and the constraint on sequence expansion thereby introduced (reflected in the marked practices required to overcome it);
- c) a full posture, untorqued realignment when a longer-term extension of the sequence is in prospect;
- d) the provision *by* this realignment for a more "relaxed" or expandable production of talk (for example, lines 26–41 with their several increments of description after possible completion and silence);
- e) the latter suggests a way in which postural realignment *provides* for a sustaining of the talk and is *not only an adjustment* to it.

The import of these observations for students of conversation and other forms of talk-in-interaction (and possibly for students of interaction without talk in it) is this: although quite robust structures of sequence organization can be—and have been—described, and although the practices by which these structures are coconstructed include features that prompt sequence expansion (as overwhelmingly indications of rejection, disagreement, and other “dispreferred” responses do), sequence expansion and constraints on it can have extra-sequence-organizational sources as well, ones that are not endemic to the sequence itself or to the course of action that the sequence is implementing. Here expansion and its constraints are underwritten by displays of commitment to the interaction itself or qualifications of that commitment, and these can be embodied in postural alignments that are extrinsic to the particular sequences being pursued.<sup>22</sup> Once noted, we should suspect that there may be other extrinsic bases for sequence minimization or expansion as well.

#### *6. Body Torque Depicted: Revisited*

But how then does all of this relate to Titian’s painting? Look again at Figure 1.

It turns out that these participants—Grace in interaction with Diane and Marjorie; Mark in interaction with Brian and Al and his work station; Marge in interaction with Jill—manage their interactional contingencies quite like the young man does in the Titian painting with which we began. There, you will recall, the description read “a young man turns away from the organ on which his hands still rest and gazes . . . at a naked Venus.” That description, and the painting that it describes, depict the postural configuration that we have been examining in real life settings. If we bring to bear what we have been saying about body torque to this painting and Haskell’s description of it, we are invited to understand an orientation by the young man to more than one

course-of-action; the "turning away" is marked as "temporary," as "inserted," not only by the lower body but by the keeping of the hands still on the organ (the "field of activity" for his underlying main involvement, as it was for Grace and for Mark). The body torque thus described, and thus painted into the scene, provides an informing tension, in several senses of the term. But, in contrast to the quotidian settings we have been examining in which the context renders transparent the alternative commitments held in tension by the postural configuration, a proper understanding of the scene that Titian has painted is more elusive, at the very least because the circumstances of its production render it inescapably symbolic. For this we turn to perhaps the most authoritative account available on the symbolic import of Titian's painting.

In his Wrightsman Lectures, entitled *Problems in Titian: Mostly Iconographic*, the art historian Erwin Panofsky (1969) has quite a bit to say about the posture rendered by Haskell as "turns away from the keyboard on which his hands still rest." In this iconographic treatment of the painting, and of the series of paintings of which it is part, the figures are bearers of a symbolic import—here a rivalry regarding the respective merits of the senses of sight and of hearing. In describing two closely related representations of this scene in two other paintings by Titian, Panofsky focuses his attention on a particular contrast. He writes:

But more important [than previously discussed terms of comparison] is the change in the position and behavior of the player. In the Berlin picture he has lost all contact with his instrument. Both hands are off the keyboard and his right leg is swung over the bench so that, apart from the other leg, his whole body is turned toward the reclining goddess at whom he looks with rapt attention. In the two Prado paintings [examined here] this triumph of the sense of sight over the sense of hearing is less complete. Here the legs of the organist are still turned to the left. In order to

look at the nude woman he must turn sharply at the hip and must lean over backward, thus enabling the beholder to see the keyboard (invisible in the Berlin picture) and to realize that one or—in the signed version—both of the player's hands are still on the keys. This means, I think, that the supremacy of visible beauty (incarnate in the nude) over the audible charms of music is no longer uncontested. Far from abandoning his instrument altogether, the player now attempts to enjoy the world of sight while not cutting himself off from the world of sound. We thus witness a slight but unmistakable shift from a total to a partial victory of the visual over the aural experience of beauty (pp. 123–24).

Panofsky then goes on to contrast these pictures with two others, which he takes to represent a further development of this symbolic theme. After a brief description of the location and pedigree of these paintings, he writes:

However we may judge the relative merits of these two pictures, certain it is that they represent a final and radical change in iconography: the organist has become a lute player. This metamorphosis means more than the replacement of a keyboard instrument by a stringed one. It means that a musician *interrupted* in the act of making music by the sight of visual beauty embodied in Venus has been transformed into a musician doing homage to the visual beauty embodied in Venus by the very act of making music. It is difficult to play the organ and to admire a beautiful woman at the same time; but it is easy to serenade her, as it were, to the accompaniment of a lute, while giving full attention to her charms (p. 125, emphasis supplied).

Various other features of these paintings lead Panofsky to the conclusion that "Titian, musician as well as painter, has in the end accorded equal dignity to the senses of hearing and of sight."



The terms of this account presuppose an understanding of the import of body torque in much the terms that I have been trying to explicate. And not just in general, but in such details as whether the whole body is turned to the goddess or only part of it, whether the hands are visibly on the keyboard or not, and the like. Not only the terms of Panofsky's account, but also their import is consonant with our examination of less exalted characters in less exalted settings—for example, the involvement of the torqued individual in more than one commitment, and the tension between them of which the degree of body torque can be an indicator and a measure; for another example, whether the sight of the Venus constitutes “an *interruption* in the act of making music,” and the like. Where else would the notion of an interruption come from, in this mythical and symbolic—not to mention static—depiction, if not from the body torque of the posture? Indeed, if the body torque supplies an analytic resource for understanding the iconographic import of this picture, one might contest Panofsky's judgement that “the supremacy of visible beauty (incarnate in the nude) over the audible charms of music is no longer uncontested. Far from abandoning his instrument altogether, the player now attempts to enjoy the world of sight while not cutting himself off from the world of sound.” If anything, the audible has now assumed the favored position, for however far into body torque the musician stretches to gaze upon the Venus, the underlying commitment that his posture embodies is to the musical instrument, which he continues to play; the looking remains an involvement subordinate to the playing. Perhaps it was the impossibility of depicting the scene as Panofsky describes it, with the musician still at the organ but with visual beauty in the ascendancy in the contest between them, that prompted what Panofsky describes as Titian's “final and radical change in iconography: the organist has become a lute player.” It is not so much that “It is difficult to play the organ and to admire a beautiful woman at the same time” but that it is difficult, perhaps impossible, to depict such a scene with the organ playing second fiddle!

Here, then, the interactional import of the body torque may be seen to serve both as a tacit interpretive resource for Panofsky as analyst, but drawn from his competence as a human interactant, rather than from specific scholarly research; and as a constraining influence on the creativity of Titian, encountering the nonde-feasibility of readings of body torque as a posture, and finding that the scene he meant to paint could not be brought off with an organ player as a protagonist because of it.

### *7. Coda: Contemporary Concerns*

With all the contemporary interest in “embodiment,” in “habitus,” and the like, it may be salutary to attach these preoccupations increasingly to some external, observable phenomena. For if these notions are important, their importance will need in the long run to be grounded in demonstrations of how they matter in detail in the world. That is, how details of their situated realization matter for identifiable details of the character and trajectory of human interaction and humans’ experience of it. Is body torque one characterizable realization of what is meant—or might be meant—by “embodiment”? Is it one tacit practice of the sort of which habitus is presumably composed? There are prima facie grounds for inclining to this view. This postural configuration embodies physically the social import of what is going on in the scene and the participant’s orientation to it—embodies it in the very muscular and neurological tension that body torque physically induces and represents.<sup>23</sup> If body torque is a proper exemplar of what is meant by “embodiment” and “habitus” and related usages, then the constriction or expansion of sequences in conversation is a modestly well described feature of the composition, design, and trajectory of interaction that appears to be closely related, and this allows a connection—a reflexive connection—between the trajectory of interaction and this postural configuration to be described. If so, are “embodiment” and “habitus” the most telling, fruitful ways of talking about such practices?

*Appendix*

*Transcript Symbols*

(Adapted from Ochs, Schegloff and Thompson, 1996, pp. 461-65.)

1. *Temporal and sequential relationships*

A. Overlapping or simultaneous talk is indicated in a variety of ways.

[ Separate left square brackets, one above the other on two successive lines with utterances by different speakers, indicates a point of overlap onset, whether at the start of an utterance or later.

] Separate right square brackets, one above the other on two successive lines with utterances by different speakers indicates a point at which two overlapping utterances both end, where one ends while the other continues, or simultaneous moments in overlaps that continue.

So, in the following , Bee's "Uh really?" overlaps Ava's talk starting at "a" and ending at the "t" of "tough."

Ava:     I 'av [a lotta t]ough cou:rses.  
Bee:             [Uh really?]

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(0.5) B. Numbers in parentheses indicate silence, represented in tenths of a second; what is given here in the left margin indicates 5/10 seconds of silence. Silences may be marked either within an utterance or between utterances.

\*\*\*\*\*

(.) C. A dot in parentheses indicates a "micropause," hearable but not readily measurable without instrumentation; ordinarily less than 2/10 of a second.

2. *Aspects of speech delivery, including aspects of intonation*

A. The punctuation marks are *not* used grammatically, but to indicate intonation. The period indicates a falling, or final, intonation contour, not necessarily the end of a sentence. Similarly, a question mark indicates rising intonation, not necessarily a question, and a comma indicates "continuing" intonation, not necessarily a clause boundary. The inverted question mark is used to indicate a rise stronger than a comma but weaker than a question mark.

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B. Colons are used to indicate the prolongation or stretching of the sound just preceding them. The more colons, the longer the stretching. On the other hand, graphically stretching a word on the page by inserting blank spaces between the letters or words does *not* necessarily indicate how it was pronounced; it is used to allow alignment with overlapping talk. Thus,

Bee: Tch! (M'n)/(En ) they can't delay much  
 lo:nguh they [jus' wannid] uh- hhh=  
 Ava: [ 0 h : .]  
 Bee: =yihknow have anotheuh consulta:tion,  
 Ava: Ri::ght.  
 Bee: En then deci::de.

The word "ri::ght" in Ava's second turn, or "deci::de" in Bee's third are more stretched than "oh:" in Ava's first turn, even though "oh:" appears to occupy more space. But "oh:" has only one colon, and the others have two; "oh:" has been spaced out so that its brackets will align with the talk in Bee's ("jus' wannid") turn with which it is in overlap.

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- C. A hyphen after a word or part of a word indicates a cut-off or self-interruption, often done with a glottal or dental stop.

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word D. Underlining is used to indicate some form of stress or emphasis, either by increased loudness or higher pitch. The more underlining, the greater the emphasis.

word Therefore, underlining sometimes is placed under the first letter or two of a word, rather than under the letters which are actually raised in pitch or volume.

Word Especially loud talk may be indicated by upper case; again, the louder, the more letters in upper case. And in extreme cases, upper case may be underlined.

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> < E. The combination of "more than" and "less than" symbols indicates that the talk between  
< > them is compressed or rushed. Used in the reverse order, they can indicate that a stretch of talk is markedly slowed or drawn out.

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### 3. Other markings

(( )) A. Double parentheses are used to mark transcriber's descriptions of events, rather than representations of them. Thus ((cough)), ((sniff)), ((telephone rings)), ((footsteps)), ((whispered)), ((pause)), and the like.

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(word) B. When all or part of an utterance is in parentheses, or the speaker identification is, this indicates uncertainty on the transcriber's part, but represents a likely possibility. Empty parentheses indicate that something

( )

is being said, but no hearing (or, in some cases, speaker identification) can be achieved.

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(try 1)/ C. In some transcript excerpts, two parentheses may  
(try2) be printed, separated by a single oblique or slash;  
these represent *alternative* hearings of the same strip of  
talk.

### Notes

1. I am surely not the first to juxtapose scenes of mundane social life and artistic depictions in the hope of gaining illumination of one from the other—bidirectionally. Artists themselves have done so, of course (for example, Leonardo da Vinci, 1989), and students of painting (for example, Barasch, 1987, or Baxandall, 1972, 1985); the most fully realized effort by social scientists of which I am aware, though now rather dated, is Spiegel and Machotka, 1974.

2. A third key figure whose work hovers over much of this discussion is Erving Goffman, and especially his *Behavior in Public Places* (1963). There is an obvious coherence to these interpenetrations: Goffman was my teacher years ago at Berkeley, and later worked with Charles and Marjorie Goodwin at Pennsylvania. They have been the most productive and innovative developers of the notion of a participation framework, which figures throughout this paper, albeit informally. And Kendon (1988, p. 14) found in Goffman “the best way forward toward a theory of human face-to-face interaction that will permit an integrated view of it.” Which is not to say that any of these colleagues would endorse the present undertaking.

3. One possibility, not taken up in my examination of the painting and the posture, is that Haskell means to convey to knowing readers that the painting in question is not the one of three paintings with the same title in which the hands of the organ player are not visible, that is, it is not the one in the Staatliche Museen in Berlin, but is one of the ones hanging in the Prado in Madrid. For a discussion of these three paintings and other related ones by Titian, see Erwin Panofsky, 1969.

4. In fact, this cannot be seen in the painting by Titian, but will be visible in the first episode of ordinary interaction examined in Section 3. I

should mention, by the way, that none of the account that I am offering is based on paintings; it all is based on observation of naturally occurring human interaction.

5. As Goodwin notes (1981, p. 125), "Engagement displays thus integrate the bodies of the participants into the production of their talk, and are important constitutive features of their conversation. They permit those present to display to each other not just speakership and hearership but differentiated attention to, and participation in, the talk of the moment."

6. I had hoped to be able to display the three episodes to be examined in this and the following two sections in the form of video recordings, as has been done in conference presentations of this material. This is not the place to elaborate on the consequential differences between full motion and still frame presentations of real life episodes, but perhaps one point can be briefly noted. A central difficulty with the use of still photographs in the study and description of posture (and certain other features) in interaction is that the still/motion contrast embodied in the different technologies is also a contrastive choice for the interactants being depicted. A current bodily position can be one a participant is "holding," or it can be one the person is "moving through" in some continuing stream of motion; and a still picture does not allow discrimination between the two, although they may have (or have had) sharply contrasting import in the occasion of deployment being examined. However, constraints of technology and economy make it unfeasible to make the data available in video format at the present time, and the still frames that can be extracted from the original video and can be accommodated within the space constraints of the journal will have to suffice.

7. The principal investigator is Professor Barbara Fox, to whom I am indebted for use of the data; see Fox, 1993.

8. This episode was studied by a group at the Xerox Palo Alto Research Center organized by Dr. Lucy Suchman, to whom I am also indebted; accounts of this project and its settings may be found, *inter alia*, in Brun-Cottan, 1991; C. Goodwin, 1996; M. H. Goodwin, 1996; C. Goodwin and M. H. Goodwin, 1996; Suchman, 1993, 1996.

9. Also figuring indirectly in this episode is Jackie, the woman in the middle of the picture in Figure 4; she keeps track of where all the planes are when they are on the ground; she is a sort of coordinator of the various activities that have to be performed on and for the aircraft once it is on the ground on arrival, and before it is pushed away from the gate for takeoff on its next flight. When a flight lands, she generally sings out (so as to be heard above the noise of other activities in the room; see M. H. Goodwin, 1996) that some flight number is on the ground, as at line

42 in the transcript, "Four sixty's on the ground Mark." Though she generally does *not* explicitly address such an announcement, it is meant especially for Mark, whose job it is to then alert the baggage handlers at the gate at which that flight will unload its passengers and baggage that they should be prepared to receive it. Whether in this case she included an address term because she had observed Mark involved in a side conversation, we have no way of knowing.

In some instances, though not all, I have included in the transcript utterances hearable on the tape but belonging to quite separate interactions—such as ones on the telephone, as in Dave's lines 03–04, or the exchange at lines 38–39 between Al and Dave; I have done so because it is part of the work practices of these workers to monitor everything that is going on for its possible relevance to their work contingencies; that is why Jackie can ordinarily just sing out that some flight is "on the ground," without having to call out Mark's name; she can rely on his monitoring for just such utterances (see M. H. Goodwin, *ibid.*).

The numbers visible in the figures are indicators of the passage of real time; the right-most numbers are frame numbers (thirty per second), the center numbers indicate seconds; and left-most numbers indicate minutes. They allow the reader some sense of the time line on which the events develop.

10. Recall that Grace also planted an elbow to "set" a home position in the previous segment.

11. Establishing a body-torque posture as a home position is one way of qualifying or even neutralizing its implications, for example, of instability, at least in the short run. There may well be others. For example, interaction conducted by parties seated in furniture fixed to the floor may neutralize the reading of body torque as "instability" or "transience," as they understand the posture to be in some measure irremediable and imposed, rather than deployed.

12. And its invocation of the "official" business of the occasion that in Goffman's terms (1963, p. 44) mandates the primacy of "dominant" or "dominating" involvements and the immediate yielding of "subordinate" involvements to them. Indeed, Goffman's pair of terms—"dominant" and "subordinate" involvements—seems directly in point here. He writes:

A dominating involvement is one whose claims upon an individual the social occasion obliges him to be ready to recognize; a subordinate involvement is one he is allowed to sustain only to the degree, and during the time, that his attention is patently not required by the involvement that dominates him. Subordinate involvements are sustained in a muted, modulated, and intermittent fashion, expressing in



their style a continuous regard and deference for the official, dominating activity at hand (1963, p. 44).

For Goffman, then, "their style" is the telling indicator of the subordination of involvements—presumably intending thereby the observation that they "are sustained in a muted, modulated, and intermittent fashion." But when he continues by noting that "an undemanding but socially dominating activity can be sustained while the individual's main focus of attention is temporarily drawn to another issue" (p. 44), we may be puzzled as to how one might see—in *its course*—that someone's attention is drawn "temporarily." Plausibly, what is involved here (as well as in the achievement of "muted, modulated, and intermittent") is conveyed by an upper body orientation to the subordinate involvement that has become for the moment the "main focus of attention," with the implication that the contrary orientation of the lower body indicates the "dominating involvement" (though this is not in accord with Goffman's overt explication of the matter, which makes dominance turn on the obligations of the social occasion, not the "style" of the conduct). Still, clearly Goffman is grappling here with interactional themes implicated in the postural configuration we are examining. It is striking that Titian has rendered and exploited the implementing details of body torque without explicitly formulating their import, and Goffman has formulated a version of the interactional issues without making explicit the physical configurations from which he almost certainly tacitly inferred them.

13. As if in recognition of this "abandonment," as Mark turns away from Brian and leans into his "sending apparatus" at the work station in front of him to make his announcement to the baggage handlers, his trunk and shoulders are slightly turned to the left, embodying something of a "promise" of an imminent re-turning back to Brian.

14. On the capacity of silence in conversation to attract the eyes and attention of participants, see C. Goodwin, 1980.

15. Note that this new home position includes a twist of the torso itself in the body torque, reminiscent of the twisted trunk of the keyboard artist in Titian's painting (see Figure 1). A different balance of the competing claims of his work station and his conversation is thus displayed, now more heavily directed toward the conversation, in which, of course, his work supervisor is now a participant and to whom the posture is also aligned.

16. As Goffman (1964) pointed out long ago, much of what happens in talk in interaction is to be understood by reference to the properties of "situations," which are not designed for talk in particular.

17. A compressed, but empirically exemplified, overview may be found in Schegloff, 1990, a somewhat more generous, though still abbreviated, review in Schegloff, 1995, which runs to 275 manuscript pages.

18. Except for alternative next utterances that launch recognizable insertion sequences and simply defer the relevance of the *S*.

19. In more technically designed and differently focused work, these action characterizations would be accompanied by analytic explication, for their warrant rests not on ready vernacular recognizability but on the description of practices of talking, implemented in this utterance, which can be shown to do the action "possible complaint." See, for example, Schegloff, 1996a. In the present context, I have had to dispense with such a demonstration.

20. In this regard it is reminiscent of the correction-invitation devices described by Sacks (1992, I, pp. 21–23, 380–81), whose virtually purposeful wrongness could serve as a pick-up device precisely by its capacity to engender nonminimal further talk.

21. Goodwin (1980) describes a different kind of association between such a "phrasal break" and problems of alignment between speaker and addressed recipient, one in which an incipient speaker self-interrupts shortly after the turn's start if the addressed recipient is not aligned to the speaker, ordinarily via gaze direction. This may be involved here as well, but Jill is not visible on the videotape. In any case, the phrasal break occurs just where Marge is transforming the character of the alignment of speaker and hearer from the speaker's side, and the phrasal break may serve to mark that alignment issue as well.

22. As is suggested by the tutorial and operations room settings, the arrangement of furniture and work apparatus can have interactional consequences for other aspects of workers' jobs and nonjob-related conduct. This is most important when interaction with a clientele is itself central to the work to be accomplished. A nice example is afforded in a recent paper by Robinson (1998) on the openings of British medical encounters. The desk and computer in the physicians' examining rooms are flush with the wall and slightly off to the right, whereas the seats that patients assume are slightly to the left. The consequence is that physicians turning their heads and eyes to patients while still otherwise oriented to desk and computer are, in effect, in body torque, and this can convey to patients that contact with them is a mere interlude in the basic orientation of the physician's activity and can constrain the expansion (and even the initiation) of action and topical sequences. In Robinson's paper, he shows how this is part of a larger array of body behaviors that

constrain against patients successfully launching deliveries of problems before the physician is prepared to deal with them; when the doctor is finally ready to engage the patient, s/he shifts body and head direction to the patient first, and when the gaze direction arrives to the patient, it is in alignment, and not in torque, with the rest of the postural configuration. This, of course, is just one setting; the issue is much more general—how the arrangement of furniture (and other “microecological” features of the setting) can set default constraints on posture and can tacitly introduce sources of “strain” into a setting, whether work or domestic.

23. It may be for this very reason, and by virtue of the postural instability that it therefore implicates, that body torque serves the purposes of the painter. In dealing with the challenge of representing or conveying motion (and thereby time) in a static, momentary, representational medium, body torque offers as a resource the depiction of the *prospect* of incipient movement for the characters in the painting.

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