Introduction

Beginning with the Fall Quarter of 1968, Harvey Sacks' lectures were delivered at the then recently established Irvine campus of the University of California. The spirit of the new campus – at least of its School of Social Science under the leadership of its Dean, James March – was quite in keeping with the character of the 1960s. It was infused with a sense of possibility in its academic and scientific ambitions and was correspondingly innovative in organizational form. It dispensed with traditional academic disciplinary boundaries and encouraged small groups of faculty to develop new research enterprises and to define the terms – and requirements – of graduate degrees. The central theme was the unleashing of high quality minds to follow their scholarly and scientific instincts wherever the subject-matter, the theoretical thrust, or the methodological possibilities seemed to lead, free of the constraints imposed by traditional conceptions of disciplinary boundaries and other "professional" obstacles to developments which could genuinely surprise.

Whatever elements of his situation at UCLA suggested the possibility of leaving, the animating ethos of Irvine's School of Social Science was very well suited indeed to Sacks' own intellectual métier and character, and to the disciplinary iconoclasm of his intellectual enterprise. It was a felicitous matching of person and institution. Although Sacks developed a number of close ties to faculty colleagues and played a distinctive role in the inescapable politics of the academy – politics whose importance was amplified by the minimized institutional apparatus of the School – in his work Sacks pursued his own course and did not establish sustained collaborative undertakings with others on the faculty. This too was a viable possibility within the School's culture. Sacks spent the remainder of his academic career at Irvine, although at the very end he was considering another move.

There is little question that the character of Sacks' work as it is displayed in these lectures (as well as in those of Volume 1) was in various ways shaped

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The introduction to Volume 1 presented some biographical information on Harvey Sacks' education, and set the early phases of his work as presented in his lectures from 1964 to 1968 in the context of the academic social science of the time. That material is not repeated here, and the reader interested in this background is referred to the prior volume. The present introduction is concerned less with tracing linkages and contrasts between Sacks' work and other developments in social science (although there is some discussion of this sort) and more with the treatment of Sacks' work in its own terms.

I am indebted to Paul Drew and to John Heritage for reading a draft of this introduction on my behalf, and for the collegiality and helpfulness of their responses.

both by the larger social and cultural *zeitgeist* of America in the 1960s[1] and by the specific local ambience of southern California during that period, within which the scene at Irvine played itself out. A delineation of those connections will have to await another occasion. But there is equally little question that Sacks' *oeuvre* cannot be reduced to the socio-cultural environment in which it happened to emerge. The distinctiveness of his vision was formed before the 1960s, and his pursuit of a distinctive path antedated that special time as well. And it was formed not only in California but in such bastions of academic tradition as Columbia, Harvard and Yale.[2]

There is much continuity between the lectures published in Volumes 1 and 2. Most notably, the extraordinary, detailed analyses of small bits of conversation in which whole social worlds and whole ranges of personal experience are dissected from out of apparent interactional detritus continue to be interlaced with more abstract theoretical and methodological discussions. Various substantive themes persist as well – most importantly the preoccupation with sequential analysis, and a continuing tacit preoccupation with how to conceive of "culture."

There are discontinuities as well. Topically, discussions of membership categorization devices per se are not resumed, although on occasion the resources of that body of work and the problems attendant on "doing formulating" figure centrally, for example, in the lectures for Winter 1969. A concern with storytelling in conversation which first emerges in the Spring 1968 term is much more fully developed, beginning with considerations of sequential organization but extending into quite new analytic directions. Observations about sound patterning and other "literary" aspects of word selection emerge for the first time, and are taken up in several of the lecture sets.

Thematic and analytic continuities and innovations aside, there are some new stances taken up in the lectures published in Volume 2 to which it may be useful to call attention, if only briefly. Some of these may serve to suggest connections between the several sets of lectures which compose this volume; others may serve as ways of focussing an initial orientation to each set of lectures in turn. I begin with a theme which first appears in Fall 1968 but recurs thereafter.

I

One apparent shift of stance which appears concomitant with the move to

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[1] Recall, for example, (as a Los Angeles commentator recently did) that among the events of just 1968 were counted "the year of McCarthy for President, the fall of L.B.J., the assassinations of King and Robert Kennedy, the Beatles' White Album, Motown and "2001: A Space Odyssey"; of war, orgy and dreams of peace, in the summer after the Summer of Love" (*Los Angeles Times*, August 23, 1991).

[2] Views which reduce work like Sacks' to something like the product of a California flower child (for example, Gellner, 1975) are not only demeaning and intellectually evasive in dismissing by epithet what they cannot decisively engage in substance; they are factually ill-informed as well.

Irvine is a turn toward systematicity and toward the relevance of substantial amounts of data, that is, aggregates of conversations or of instances of particular phenomena in it. Consider, for example, the stance which Sacks adopts in launching his discussion of turn-taking in lecture 3 (and continuing into lecture 4) for Fall 1968. Among the key points in this new stance are the following (all from lecture 3, p. 32):

> What I want to do is to lay out in as general a way as possible at this point how the sequential organization of conversation is constituted.

Note the shift to "general" and the generic reference to "conversation."

> I start out with two observations about single conversations. . .

Note that although the observations are about "single conversations," they are about aggregates of them.

> I give in this first instance no materials for the observations, in that they are grossly apparent.

Note this shift in practice; nothing *in particular* is the point of departure; an observation about a regularity in an aggregate is the point of departure.

> By the term 'grossly' I mean that while they're overwhelmingly present features, they are also sometimes not present features – and their sometimes non-presence is something I will talk to at considerable length.

Note that the issue here is the dealing with occurrences that depart from a general practice, "sometimes non-presence."

The shift, then, is to:
an order of organization, rather than a particular practice, of talking;
a class of places in an aggregate of data, rather than an excerpt;
an organizationally characterized problem or form of interactional work, rather than an individually designed outcome;
invariancies of features rather than context-specified practices.

This is not, of course, a total shift of procedure. In lectures 5 and 6 Sacks again presents particular materials, and explores turn-taking issues (among others) in the context of a developing set of observations about that excerpt. But there are readily observable consequences of this shift in point of departure and analytic stance; one of these is an increasing (or increasingly explicit) orientation to organization and structure in the domain of conversational conduct. Again, discussion must be limited.

Near the beginning of lecture 4 (p. 44) Sacks develops the point that there

are grounds, built into the organization of conversation, for listening to every utterance for any participant willing to speak if selected, or willing to wait if another is selected to speak. The upshot:

> So again there's motivation to listen, which is independent of any rule that would say 'you ought to listen in conversation;' motivation to listen which turns on a willingness to speak or an interest in speaking.

This is not first time this point has been made in these lectures, but it has a different resonance in the context of the new casting of turn-taking. What is its interest?

Let us note first that the core point seems to be a grounding of listening to utterances in the technical requirements of talking or not talking, the technical requirements of the organization of proper conduct in that regard, rather than its grounding in a normative injunction directed to that outcome specifically. That is, an analytic concern for parsimony is at work here, setting aside a normative constraint, a "rule" if you will, designed specifically to secure "listening" or "attentiveness," or showing that such a rule, if there is one, is not there solely to secure attentiveness, because attentiveness is already a natural, a technical, by-product of the organization of turn-taking.[3]

Now this is surely not to deny a normative component to the organization of interaction or conversation; surely, the sorts of mechanisms by which the turn-taking organization is constituted are normative in character, for the participants and consequently for analysts.[4] On the other hand, it does seem to subordinate considerations which might be termed "politeness" to ones which might be termed "technically constitutive" or "sequence organizational."[5] The parsimony considerations here seem to take the form: what sort of basic organization would both drive the prima facie organization of the talk *and* engender whatever auxiliary effects seem to be involved.

One implication is that listening is not vulnerable to (or is less vulnerable to) whatever it is that may weaken persons' commitment to observe

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[3]Subsequently, in lecture 2 for Spring 1972, pp. 535–7, Sacks returns to this theme in the context of his discussion of adjacency pairs, the virtually unrestricted freedom of occurrence of their "first pair parts," and the potential usability of first pair parts for selecting a next speaker. From this, Sacks observes, it "falls out" that a participant willing to speak if selected to do so will have to listen to everything said, for at any point a first pair part selecting them may be done. This account in Spring 1972 is different only in its focus on adjacency pairs as instruments of next speaker selection, rather than on the turn-taking organization per se.

[4]And, indeed, at Fall 1968, lecture 4, p. 50, Sacks proposes, "We have in the first instance, some formal normative features for conversation, which are in a way a public law for conversation: One party at a time. . ." etc.

[5]Compare here the discussion (introduction to Volume 1, p. xxviii–xxix; l–li) of the treatment of "indirect speech acts" with primary respect to considerations of politeness and sequential organization respectively.

normative constraints.[6] The point here is that the basis for listening is not as much at risk as injunctions to be polite, when violations of politeness had become, for example, a systematic political tactic on university campuses. Listening was grounded in self-interest (wanting to talk, or being willing to) and the technical requirements of implementing it. Departures from "features of conversation" should be understood, therefore, not so much by reference to motivated deviation from rules prescribing them as by reference to modified operation of the system of which they are a by-product – for example, in response to variations in context or transient problems in internal coordination.

Note the bearing of this tack on the claims of certain forms of "intentionalist" theorizing (such as those of Searle, 1991) that our knowledge of human action or conduct has only been advanced when "patterns" (as Searle calls them) can be shown to be the causal products of intentions to produce them. If the stance taken here by Sacks is correct, then observed distributions of attention (i.e., observed patterns of listening to others' ongoing talk) may best be understood not as the product of an intention to comply with a rule mandating such attention (even if there was such a rule), but as an imposed requirement for achieving such outcomes as talking if asked to, or withholding talk if another is asked to. (For a more general statement of this theme, see lecture 2 for Spring 1970, and the discussion of that lecture below at p. xxiv and n. 17).

Sacks' grounding of the organization of attention/listening in the individual participant's willingness to talk if asked to or to remain silent (even with something to say) if another has been selected to talk, itself embodies a distinctly sociological theme in accounts of social order. Developed in Sacks' account of turn-taking most explicitly at lecture 4, pp. 50–2, this theme understands the enforcement of the turn-taking organization to work by its identification with individual participants' rights and interests. So understood, individuals are mobilized to defend their rights and interests (e.g., their turn space); the emotions are recruited to this enterprise as well, such that violations of "one-at-a-time" become treated as invasions of some speaker's right, and that incursion engenders anger in defense of those rights, that emotional energy being put in the service of a socially organized enforcement mechanism for the turn-taking organization. Further, gossip, reputation, and the like can be recruited into that enforcement mechanism as well, e.g., under the aegis of violators being "rude." This, then, is how this class of violations gets seen as violations of "politeness," and it is in this light that we should understand at least some "politeness" considerations. That is, it is by reference to "politeness" that sanctioning is *vernacularly formulated*, while the actual occasioning of the violations may be less a matter of normative etiquette and its violations, and more a matter of technical organization or action implementation, effectuated through the identification of individuals'

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[6]Something which was, of course, increasingly remarked upon in the 1960s, and certainly not less in southern California than elsewhere.

rights/interests with the resource which the turn-taking organization distributes.[7]

Throughout this discussion, it is apparent that considerations of systematicity, structure and organization play an important role in understanding orderly conduct observed across aggregates of data.[8] Although not all of the Fall 1968 lectures display this stance, it does play a continuing (even an increasing) role in Sacks' subsequent work, including subsequent lectures, for example, the lectures of Spring 1972 on adjacency pair organization.

II

Although "turn-taking organization" is the substantive focus for the Fall 1968 lectures, Sacks does not begin the course with a lecture on that topic; indeed, he does not begin his discussion of it until lecture 3. The first two lectures present another "take" on the "second stories" theme first treated in the previous spring, at UCLA, and it may useful to linger for a moment on what Sacks was doing in starting this course the way he did.

Note that the first lecture announces that it will be concerned with something other than what Sacks otherwise plans to focus on. He begins:

> Hereafter I'll begin with some rather initial considerations about sequencing in conversation. But this time I'm going to put us right into the middle of things and pick a fragment that will introduce the range of things I figure I can do.

He does this, he says, in order not to stake his claim on the usual insignia of academic work (". . . its theoretical underpinnings, its hopes for the future, its methodological elegance, its theoretical scope . . ."), but on the "interesting-ness" of the findings. This was a task which Sacks set himself in the late 1960s – to have "bits" with which to tell lay people (including, for this

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[7]The theme of ensuring outcomes by identifying them with individuals' property, interests or rights – a familiar theme in certain "liberal" traditions of social theory – comes up again in a strikingly different context in Sacks' treatment of the motivated preservation of experiences in memory for later retrieval and telling (cf. Spring 1970, lecture 5, pp. 257–9, and below at pp. xxv–xxvi).

[8]Another kind of consequence of this new stance, especially with respect to asserting claims about aggregates of data rather than specific data fragments, is an occasional vulnerability in the grounding of some claims in these lectures. Without materials as a shared point of departure, it is at times unclear what actual things Sacks is talking about, and, therefore, how to assess what he is saying. There are assertions, when the work takes this form, about things which are said to happen "all the time," which may not seem all that familiar to the reader. (E.g., for *this* reader, p. 49: "Some people say about each other, 'Why is it that we can never have a conversation without it ending up in an argument?' And in that it is a thing that is said all the time, it is of interest to see how it could be sensible.") Of course, what Sacks asserts – at times *ex cathedra* – and the tack which he takes, regularly turn out to be of great interest for their strategy of analysis even when subject to such reservations.

purpose, other "straight" academics) what "the work" consisted in which would have a kind of transparent appeal and interest, readily presentable and graspable in a relatively non-technical way, capturing "experiences" virtually anyone would have had access to more or less directly, etc.

For a while, a regularly offered "for instance" was what Sacks proposed to be an exemption from the ordinary recipient-design "rule" or "practice," for (among other forms of talk) storytelling – "Don't tell others what you figure they already know." Sacks proposed that there is an exemption for spouses. This is to be understood as a practice coordinate with a mandate to tell spouses many things first, before they are told to anyone else. Then, given that spouses are present together on many interactional occasions and that each would have been first to be told most tellables, without the exemption many tellables would have major constraints on their subsequent tellability to others.

But the exemption engenders its own troubles. Because spouses' presence need not deter re-tellings, spouses may find themselves having to hear the same stories over and over again. And the presence of an already "knowing" person can have consequences for the form that the telling takes. As a result, there is a pressure for the separation of spouses in social occasions where these various cultural practices and orientations are in effect (thus, for example, rendering them free for groupings based on other features, e.g., gender).[9]

This was a neat little package, in which a familiar social experience did seem readily traceable to practices of talking which ostensibly had little to with them (or with anything of general interest), and was appealing and satisfying as an "illustration" of the work.

Much in these first two lectures has the flavor that would make it attractive on these grounds. Especially points well into the discussion of lecture 1, regarding the counter-intuitive relative paucity of "things to talk about" with those one has not talked to in a long time as compared with the ready supply with those one talks to daily,[10] are just the sort of thing that Sacks saw as useful in these ways. His departure from his planned theme in the initial lectures in order to do this repeat "take" on second stories may embody his treatment of the class members as part of a larger general public whch had to be appealed to, at least initially, on the grounds of common experience.[11]

One other aspect of these lectures which occurs in various of the sets but is striking in the Fall 1968 set is what I will refer to as an aspect of their rhetoric. One form which this rhetoric takes is the assertion, after some particular

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[9]A version of this line of analysis appears in this volume as lecture 4 for Fall 1971, where, however, it is touched off by a particular data fragment, from which Sacks formulates the problem of spouses' talk.

[10]This theme is returned to in the initial lecture for Winter 1970, p. 172.

[11]In the lectures for Spring 1970, Sacks is explicit about the special cast being given the first lecture. Strikingly, the topic which here in the Fall 1968 lectures serves as the accessible beginning for the course becomes in the Spring 1970 lectures the "much more severely technical" (Spring 1970, lecture 1) material which warrants a more accessible introductory lecture!

analysis or type of analysis has been offered, of its "normality" as a scientific or disciplinary development. So, in Fall 1968, lecture 3, p. 38, Sacks proposes:

> In its fashion the history I've recounted is a perfectly natural history; i.e., it would be perfectly natural for whatever course of development of analysis of something that what you're looking for initially when you look at something – a plant, a social object, whatever it may be – is to find some parts. One would begin off, then, with things like 'greetings' and in due course come to things like 'one at a time' and 'speaker change' occurring.

Now, Sacks had read considerably in the history and philosophy of science, but the claim made here is merely asserted and not developed by reference to that literature. And what is asserted is an actual course of events of Sacks' own making, transformed into a putative generalized course of events which constitute normality or "natural history." The inter-convertability of modalities such as instructions and historicized descriptions is something Sacks was well aware of. It is a way of subsuming new departures, and a position staked out without benefit of colleagues close by, under an umbrella of "normal science."

Again at Fall 1968, lecture 4, pp. 54–5, Sacks invokes "naturalness". Having made a point about the co-occurrence of 'one at a time' and 'speaker change recurs' as features of conversation that are "basic," he then gives an argument for this basic-ness (i.e., that the system is self-organizing, in that breakdowns/violations are organized by reference not to some other rules but by reference to these very same ones).[12] And then:

> And I take it that that's an extremely natural criterion for some rules being basic; that is to say, when you reach them, you reach the ground. There are no other rules which deal with how to deal with violations of them.

It seems clear that this is not offered as an account of some actual history of usages of "basic," but as an effort to put into perspective the status of what he was proposing. Here the rhetoric of "naturalness" is "aggressive," in claiming a status within some putative developmental course of a discipline. Elsewhere, a more "defensive" (though hardly apologetic) tack is taken, as,

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[12]A similar argument is made with respect to adjacency pair organization in Spring 1972, lecture 2; cf. below pp. xliv–xlv.

The contrast, it may be useful to mention (or *one* contrast at least) to this "self-organizing" property is the sort of feature taken up in the 'Two preferences . . .' paper (Sacks and Schegloff, 1979), which is concerned with "second order organization." There, if two features meant to co-occur (in that context, "minimization" and "recipient design;" as here, "one at a time" and "speaker change recurrence") are not combinable on some occasion, there is an *ex*trinsic procedure for reconciling the conflict, i.e., relaxing one feature until the other can be achieved. The parallel argument for "interruption" (as an instance of non-combinability of "one at a time" and "speaker change") being resolved in a "self-organizing" fashion has yet to be presented formally.

for example, in lecture 4 for Spring 1972, where Sacks offers an aside while launching a discussion of adjacency pairs by formulating three abstract utterance positions in conversation – "last, current, and next utterance." He says (pp. 554–5),

> A lot of this will sound awfully banal but it's far from that, so you'll have to jolt yourself – if I don't jolt you – into thinking that it's not, after all, something anyone could have said; it's not that it's nothing; it's not that it has no consequences.

This should be appreciated as being at least as much self-directed as addressed to the audience – either the physically co-present class or the audience wherever. It is a sort of girding of loins before battle; a sort of assertion of resoluteness.

In the intermissions and aftermaths of days we were working together, Sacks used to bemoan the difficulty of the work. One of his metaphors for it was the need to be able to "look around the corner of the future," that is, to be able to see ahead to that formulation of the organization of the world which would appear in retrospect to have been obvious. And often this seemed to turn on seeing in some (but not other) apparently commonsense characterizations of empirical objects their potential for carrying heavy and complex theoretic/analytic loads. One problem which this posed was the vulnerability to lapsing back into a mundane, vernacular, commonsense hearing/understanding of those terms – one which would not sustain the analytic load they were to carry, but would reduce to some "banal" pre-theoretic assertion. It is that sort of vulnerability – both in his audience and in himself, however differently for each – that this invocation seems designed to confront; and it is similar vulnerability and transient self-doubts which the "natural development" rhetoric seems designed to combat.

III

The Winter 1969 lectures presented here do not themselves compose a thematically organized set, or even several such. Rather, they present a variety of analytic topics and problems occasioned by efforts to come to terms with a single stretch of material taken from the first of a series of group therapy sessions with "adolescents" which Sacks had recorded (and, later in the course, other materials as well). Although some considerations raised in dealing with one part of this excerpt may come up in connection with another, these lectures do not appear to have been designed to constitute coherent, systematic treatments; still, in some instances (e.g., lecture 3) they do seem to come together quite nicely. For the most part, however, some fragment of the data segment is isolated for treatment, and then several sorts of interest in it are extracted and addressed.

Not that this detracts from the striking and unexpected lines of analysis

which Sacks develops from his materials in the various, largely independent discussions. The tone is set from the very beginning.

In the Spring 1966 lectures Sacks had examined the notion of "possession," and in various respects reconstituted what sort of a cultural artifact it is. In lecture 1 for Winter 1969 (although not explicitly related to the earlier discussion), he makes another sort of novel use of "possession" or "ownership." In discussing the noticing/remarking by one participant in the group therapy session on the hole in another's shoe, Sacks notes that that the shoe is owned by its wearer may entail that another cannot *take* it, but it does not entail that another cannot *talk* about it. Further, if another talks about it, it is very likely that its owner will talk next, or soon. So "ownership" is conversationally consequential.

Furthermore, one of the generic matters conversation is centrally taken up with is the things that the participants have brought with them to the conversational occasion – their clothing, possessions, bodies, events they enact, etc. The talk works off what the parties have brought; and parties can then bring what they bring in part by virtue of the talk that may be made about it. And persons may avoid being present to a conversation by virtue of what they must necessarily bring to it (e.g., the current state of their bodies, possessions, etc.), in view of the talk which that company is likely to make about it. Possessions are then relevant not only to "the economy;" they are central to the "conversational economy" as well. And "ownership" turns out to be a social/sociological category which is consequential in hitherto unappreciated respects.

There are other sociological threads running through many of the discussions in these Winter 1969 lectures. One such theme concerns group formation, membership claims, and different ways of "partitioning a population"[13] to find who belongs together and who not. As the last of these clauses may suggest, it is by way of interactants' deployments of membership categories and ways of identifying or formulating one another that these various topics are addressed. In lecture 2, the issue is posed by how someone is praised without impugning the status of the others (the issue being who is the same category with the praised one and who not). In lecture 3 it is the alternative ways of grouping two of the attendees of the therapy sessions – Roger and Al – together vis-à-vis the observer, as between patient/observer and performer/audience. In lecture 7 it is the issue of who is a "hotrodder"

[13]By "partitioning a population," it may be recalled, Sacks refers to the results of formulating a set of persons by reference to the categories in some empirically coherent set of categories, i.e., categories which compose "a set" in an empirical sense. "Partitioning constancy" (lecture 3, p. 110) describes the outcome when a same collection of persons are distributed in the same way by reference to two or more different sets of categories. Thus, later in this paragraph of the text, the category sets "patient/observer" and "performer/audience" divide up the co-present persons in cognate fashion – the ones who are co-members of the category "patient" in one set of categories being co-members of the category "performer" in the other; these category-sets then display partitioning constancy for this population of persons, or constitute "analog structures," as Sacks also refers to the matter there (ibid).

(or "hippie") and who not, who is "authorized" to make such a judgement and how some persons "patrol the borders" of the category. In lecture 8, the issue is posed by reference to alternative ways of seeing some collection of persons in some place as legitimate or not, via their alternative formulations as "gals and guys" or "den mother."

Another, more methodological, theme which informs a number of the lectures across considerable variation in substantive topic concerns the relationship between "intuition" and "formal analysis" on the researcher's side on the one hand, and the relationship between analytical "formality"/ "abstractness" in contrast to the "concreteness" of "lived experience" for the "ordinary actor" on the other.

Sacks' characterization of what he is doing in lecture 2 – on "safe compliments" – is instructive; its logic here echoes that of the analysis of "invitations" as early as Spring 1966. In a discussion initially targetted at "the weather" as a "safe" topic, Sacks begins elsewhere:

> I did some work on 'compliments,' specifically on what I called 'safe compliments,' the idea being to see what it was about some compliments that made them 'safe' compliments, i.e., *to turn an initial observation into an analysis* . . . The question then is, can we extract from the sort of thing [some particular compliment] is, a set of features which will locate a class of compliments like it, which are also safe compliments? Where that is a test of the fact that we had some generative features. [emphasis supplied]

Then, after developing an analysis of what makes one class of compliments "safe.":

> Now the question is, with respect to 'weather talk', what do we need, to be able to show that 'the weather' is a 'safe topic'? What we need is to develop a notion of 'safe' for topics *so that we can have said something when we say 'weather' is a safe topic.'* The discussion on 'safe compliments' was to give a sense that something could be done with a notion of 'safe', *something of a formal sort*, i.e., *it doesn't have to be merely an intuition*, but what's involved in something being 'safe' can be laid out. [emphasis supplied].

Now it should be clear from this treatment that what the professional analyst might come to analyze as the formal features that make for "safeness" – whether for compliments or for topics – is proposed to be "real" for parties to talk-in-interaction; it is for them, after all, that it is proposed that the "safety" matters, and they who may suffer from the lack of it. Still, such formal accounts are vulnerable to charges of "formalism," of imposing analysts' categories onto the lived experience of the participants, and the like. To this theme it is useful to juxtapose Sacks' discussion in lecture 3 of one way in which two of the "patients" in the group therapy session deal with the fact

(of which they have been apprised) that there is an observer behind a one-way mirror in the room. They "enact" a scene of "personnel just before a performance," calling out "Testing, one two three" and the like. It is in this regard that Sacks points out the "partitioning constancy" in that setting between "patient/observer" and "performer/audience," which allows the latter set of categories to provide a set of "cover" identities, at least transiently.[14]

Now this appears to ascribe to the teenage therapy patients a kind of abstract or formal analysis of their circumstances which may appear to violate our understanding of their lived experience. But Sacks argues (lecture 3, pp. 110–11) that what is at issue in using a "theater" frame to deal with the presence of an observer is that people

> have their circumstances available to them in an abstract way, such that they can use the abstract characteristics of their circumstances to locate other circumstances that stand in a strong abstract relationship to their current circumstances.

The relevance of this point is precisely to counter the objection to this whole direction of analysis that, in explicating underlying abstract or formal features of ordinary activities, violence is done to the lived-experience of those activities for the actors who engage in them. By contrast, Sacks is proposing here that part of ordinary Members' competence is specifically an abstract understanding of their circumstances and activities, an abstract knowledge drawn upon in constructing further courses of action, and usable to construct further courses of action in a fashion coordinated with others. Thus:

> How can they *use* that abstract knowledge? They are able to use such knowledge to locate circumstances which have features that stand in a strong relationship to the initial circumstance, and those features are then used to project actions by reference to those other circumstances, which actions have some hope of being picked up. It's not just one person who is by himself capable of that, but he can have hopes that others can see what he's doing, see it fast, and collaborate with him.

The transformation by analysts of intuition into "something of a formal sort" is thus not merely a requirement of disciplined inquiry; its results are themselves meant to capture features of the procedures by which ordinary conduct by ordinary members is methodically achieved.

[14]See the earlier treatment of this episode in Volume 1, lecture 14 for Spring 1967.

Aside from the focus which the text brings to this discussion, Sacks' demonstration of what might be involved in seriously grappling with the effects which observers might have on a "scene being observed" is a salutary one in refusing to settle for a simple and clichéd concern about "Heisenbergian" influences of observation itself. Rather, it insists on a detailed attention to how and what sorts of changes in conduct there might be, how they are to be understood, and how they would/might bear on what an observer makes of that conduct.

IV

The lectures for Winter 1970 begin with a focus on the overall structural organization of the unit "a single conversation," linger in lecture 2 on the theme of exploiting whatever topics come to notice in the intensive examination of a single conversation, and then return to considerations of overall structural organization. There is much here that is penetrating and revelatory, concerning such objects as "the reason for the call" and "reason for the call relationships," as well as "no reason for the call calls," and relationships built on them, to mention only some of the attractions of the first lecture.

There are elements in these lectures whose relevance is related to some of the new emphases which I earlier suggested inform the lectures starting in late 1968. I want to take note in particular of a passage of two to three paragraphs at pp. 168–9 of lecture 1 in which a theme first appearing in Fall 1968 reappears, and that is the relevance of examining a fragment from a conversation in the context of (or juxtaposed with) other products of the sort of "machinery" conjectured to be involved, other instances of the "same sort of thing;" that is, the use of aggregates of data. In Fall 1968 this theme surfaced in passing with respect to turn-taking; here it comes up in a more sustained way with respect to the openings of conversations, both (and especially here) on the telephone and in co-present interaction.

This is a topic – single case analysis versus working with collections of data – which is not uncontroversial, and which Sacks and I discussed at considerable length over the years. This is not the place for a thorough airing of the issues or of those discussions. The key point here in Sacks' treatment in lectures 1 and 2, however, is that a proper grasp of what might be going on in a conversational opening in some particular setting might require a grasp of the range which the "machinery" involved in the production of the phenomena involved could produce, and this might require examination of a considerable array of data.[15]

Once dealing with an array of data taken to be "comparable," a comparative analysis may appear to be needed, and this can itself give rise to some methods of analysis which may obscure how the material being studied may have been produced, rather than illuminating it. One such analytic procedure requiring considerable care and reflection is "format-and-slot analysis," in which the prototypic problem is cast as a selection among alternative terms which could be used for a same reference, or alternative items which could be employed at a certain juncture in the talk, a juncture formulated by the format of the talk in which it is embedded. It is not that this form of analysis is flawed in principle; conversation analytic treatments of reference – reference to persons, to places, etc. – have exploited it.

Sacks points out, however, that there are circumstances in which alternatives to a term actually employed would/could not be used, even if they were "correct." He takes as his case in point a telephone call in which the caller has

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[15]See the discussion below at pp. xxxix–xl and n. 28.

called her friend about a commotion which was observed at the friend's place of work, a department store called "Bullock's." Sacks argues that in proposing that one has called to tell another "what happened at Bullock's today," the reference to "today" is not incidental. It is not properly understood as being selected from a set of cognate temporal references. Had the event happened several days earlier, the caller would *not* offer that temporal referent in the same utterance format; she might not tell the story, or find it tellable, at all. Indeed, given that the caller called in order to tell the story, she might not have called at all. For it is its occurence "today," Sacks proposes, which makes the event "news," and thus a possible "reason for the call," and hence in first topic position in the call. It is the fact that it was "today" that makes for a temporal reference being used at all, rather than a temporal reference being somehow slated to occur, with a selection procedure then invoked to find the term to be plugged into that slot. And further, it is not that its occurrence "today" makes it tellable as news per se; it makes it tellable to one with whom the teller talks daily. It might not be tellable to a twice yearly interlocutor, even if it happened "today," for it may not have the stature to be told in a six-monthly conversation. So all of the discussion is itself subject to considerations of recipient design. These widening ripples of analytic consideration surround the use of "slot-and-format" analysis, and may render its invocation questionable.

Lecture 2 for Winter 1970 (at pp. 184–7) contains what is to my mind one of the most striking discussions in all the lectures. Here Sacks turns a seemingly technical dissection of the mundane story mentioned above – about the commotion outside a department store told by one friend to another – into a stunning demonstration of the alternative grasps of a scene which may present themselves to different sorts of viewers – Sacks refers to it as having become "kind of a distributional phenomenon."

His account begins with the contrast between the actual teller's perception that there-was-trouble-and-the-police-were-taking-care-of-it on the one hand, and, on the other, what Sacks proposes others (e.g., residents of the "ghetto") might see as there-being-trouble-and-the-police-were-engendering-it. He proceeds through a series of further related observations, for example, the assuredness of the actual observer that her position as uninvolved witness is unquestioned, as compared with the possibilities which other categories of person finding themselves on such a scene would be required to entertain and protect themselves against – for example, the possibility that they would be treated as accomplices in whatever wrongdoing was suspected. The effect is to render the scene which the story is intendedly about as equivocal as the duck–rabbit of Gestalt psychology, and the actually told story as a situated, perspectival version of it.

Sacks' observations here carry the conversation-analytic treatment of an ordinary story told in conversation to an intersection with traditional themes of social and political analysis, and can well have served as a revelatory component of a liberal arts education for white middle-class undergraduates in Orange County, California in the aftermath of the Watts riots in Los

Angeles just to the north, in years which were, in all but their numerical depiction, still part of the 1960s.

This intersection with, and transformation of, vernacular understanding is, I would like to stress, *not* a time-out from technical analysis but a product of it. Sacks' discussion here should be juxtaposed with his discussion of "viewer's maxims" in the paper 'On the analyzability of stories by children' (1972b) (or the first lectures for Spring 1966 on which it was based), where the technical basis for these observations may be seen to have been rooted.

V

The set of lectures for Spring 1970 is as coherent and stunning in its range and perspicacity as anything in the collected lectures. It is the richest single set of materials on Sacks' treatment of storytelling in conversation, and surely central to our understanding of stories more generally.

Here as before (cf. lectures 1 and 2 for Fall 1968) Sacks announces the opening lecture[16] as one intended to appeal more broadly to the class than the material to follow, which he characterizes as "much more severely technical than most people could possibly be interested in." He continues here the practice of developing materials which could give "outsiders" a sense for this work and its possible payoffs in a relatively vernacular way. The "more accessible" materials of the Fall 1968 lectures, however, had become "much more severely technical" by Spring 1970 (at least they were going to be presented that way), and now were given their own, more readily accessible, introduction.

Whatever the long term relationship of ethnomethodology and conversation analysis turns out to be, this lecture as much as any other in the corpus of Sacks' lectures (at least those to which we have continuing access) exemplifies a convergence of the animating impulses of ethnomethodology and conversation analysis in its preoccupation with the "ordinary," the "normal," the "mundane" as achievements.

With lecture 2 Sacks begins the treatment of stories told in conversation. It is a beautifully organized and accessible account of the sequential problem of storytelling in conversation by reference to the organization of turn-taking in conversation, and the understanding of the "story preface" by reference to it (material later presented in Sacks, 1974). Perhaps two points may be underscored here which might be overlooked in a reading of the lecture for the aforementioned focus.

The first is Sacks' self-conscious attention to theorizing as an activity. He begins here – as he does in many other lectures – with what he calls an "utterly bland fact," one whose telling surely is not in itself of interest. The point, he remarks, is what can be made of such a bland fact. But many bland

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[16]This lecture – supplemented by excerpts from lectures 2 and 4, and lecture 1 for Spring 1971 – has previously appeared in print (Atkinson and Heritage, 1984: 413–29).

facts lead to nothing beyond themselves. It is necessary, then, to have found and pursued such a bland observation as allows something to be made of it. In the end, then, the blandness or "obviousness" of some observation is neither grounds for ignoring or suppressing it nor, in itself, for asserting it, but for seeing if its achievement or consequences can be seen to be more telling than the observation itself.

Such concerns with "theorizing" appear recurrently in this set of lectures (as they do in the corpus as a whole). To cite but one additional instance, in lecture 3 Sacks remarks on the common practice in everyday life that persons take note of "coincidences" – for example, that they rarely go to some place, and their interlocutor rarely does, and that it was a coincidence that they both happened to do so on the same day and encountered one another there. He then proposes:

> I want to see if we can get at the beginning of an answer to how we come to see these coincidences. The interest in the beginning of an answer is not so much in whether it's an answer – I don't have any idea whether it's an answer – but in some way that the answer is built.

As with the blandness of the point of departure in lecture 2, the concern here is with the ways of building an account, of theorizing in the presence of data per se, rather than with the final assessment of the adequacy of the account. By the end of the lecture, Sacks is again proposing that much of the observable orderliness of the world may be better understood as the by-products of ambient organizations which are quite unconcerned with these outcomes, rather than as products which were the design target of some organization.[17]

In passing Sacks here produces an account of the perception of coincidences that makes of it not a mistaken commonsense notion of probability, but something like Marx' notion of alienation;[18] that is, that persons' own activities (here the practices by which stories are formed up) produce a result (an account of activities that is designed to make for relevant-at-that-moment tellable stories), which is then perceived not as a product of the design of storytelling, but as an independently encountered – and somewhat mysterious – "external" reality.

Additional discussions of this explicitly methodological sort in the Spring 1970 lectures include an interest in "doing provings" (lecture 5, pp. 251ff), "getting . . . a problem" (lecture 6, pp. 267ff) and the relationship between a "sophisticated lay observation" and more technical treatments (lecture 7, pp. 271–2).

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[17]This is, then, a more general statement of a theme raised in Fall 1968, lecture 4, where "listening in conversation" was treated as a technical requirement and result of the operation of the turn-taking system, quite apart from any normative regulation explicitly concerned with "listening in conversation." Cf. that lecture, and the discussion above at pp. xii–xiv.

[18]For example, the account of "alienated labour" in the Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts (cf. McLellan, 1977: 77–87).

A second point worth lingering on is Sacks' treatment of the term "story." Especially in the years following these lectures there has been an explosive growth in interest in, and writing about, stories, narrative, "narrative logic," etc., with whole fields and sub-fields (e.g., "narratology") addressed to this subject-matter. Unsurprisingly, the growth of this academic and literary industry has spawned a profusion of definitions of the focal object – such as "story." Sacks parries the issues of "what is a story?" and "is this a story?" by asking not whether the label "applies" (i.e., is "correct"), but whether it is relevant – that is, relevant to the participants in producing the stretch of talk in and through which the object in question was produced. The issue is thus transformed from an "external analyst's" issue into a "a Member's issue:" how does it matter to the teller and the recipients that the talk being produced (*in the course of producing it*) is "a candidate story"? Lecture 3, and the other lectures for the term, go to this question for stories in conversation in a fashion that yields analytic leverage on the notion "story" for students of stories-in-conversation distinct from stories in other contexts.

Lectures 4 and 5 present, respectively, an extraordinary discussion of "entitlement to experience" (and to just the experience the events in question will sustain) as well as of the cultural organization of experience and the emotions, and a beautifully wrought account of "first" and "second" stories. But what I would like to call special attention to is the way in which Sacks brings an orientation to classical issues in social theory to a hypothetical – but compellingly plausible – account of cognitive organization (lecture 5, pp. 257–60).

Using the metaphor of "designing minds," Sacks asks how the preservation of "experiences" might be organized. One cogent possibility might be to store experiences by what would commonsensically be considered their most important or salient aspects, or their most central character(s), or events, etc. As an alternative he proposes the possibility that experiences be stored "in terms of your place in them, without regard to whether you had an utterly trivial or secondary or central place in them" (p. 258). The consequences which this might engender – both for the organization of memory for experience and for social intercourse about experience – are then cast in terms of the concerns of social theory about the relationship between private interest and the public good.[19]

And that might have the virtue of providing a generalized motivation for storing experiences. If it's your part in it that you use to preserve it by, then it might lead you to preserve lots of them, simply in terms of the idea of experiences being treatable as your private property. People can then collect a mass of private experiences that they then, by virtue of their generalized orientation to 'what's mine,' have an interest in keeping. You might, then, design a collection of minds, each one storing

[19] A theme which Sacks had invoked as well in the account of turn-taking presented in Fall, 1968, Lecture 4, pp. 50–4 and cf. discussion above, at pp. xiii–xiv.

experience which is to be used for each others' benefit, though you couldn't necessarily say "Remember all these things so that you might tell them to somebody else." You have to have some basis for each person storing some collection of stuff via some interest like 'their own' interest. Where, then, you get them to store experiences in terms of their involvement, but have them be available to anybody who taps them right.

This sort of linkage between social organization and the organization of personal experience and its cognitive and emotional substrate – between the social, the psychological and the biological – will surely have to be successfully made eventually, and this is a novel and provocative direction in which it might be pursued.

In its more immediate context, however, Sacks relates it stunningly to such diverse ancillary themes as the personal experience of being understood or not and the training requirements for professional therapists.

VI

Whereas the lectures for Spring 1970 were thematically coherent and focussed on storytelling, the materials for Winter 1971 (very likely a graduate seminar, rather than an undergraduate lecture course) deal with a congeries of more loosely related matters. But the central preoccupation is with "word selection" (cf. Sacks' reference to "procedures whereby the words that people use come to be selected;" March 4, p. 308), and in particular those considerations of word selection that are often associated with "poetics." This set of presentations (complemented by the lecture for May 17 in the Spring 1971 set, a lecture which deals with an eerie spatialization of metaphors, idioms, and other aspects of the talk of both parties in an emergency "psychiatric" phone call) constitute the basic point of depature in Sacks' teaching *oeuvre* for this still largely unexplored domain of phenomena.

This central preoccupation aside, special attention may be called to the presentation of March 11 which (at pp. 325–31) offers another one of Sacks' astonishing *tours de force* of analysis and interpretation. He starts with the text of a sequence which seems to be ordinary enough, even if in it a couple appear to press an offer of herring to an almost absurd extent. What Sacks does is to lay bare layer after layer of organization and preoccupation (on the parti-cipants' parts) – from the differing grounds for *making* an offer than for *re-making* it, to the tacit relationships between the parties that emerge into relevance over the course of the sequence and come eventually to drive it, to the ways in which processes such as those which this sequence embodies can be a major component in both the stereotype and the enforced actuality of the elderly in a society such as this – that is, the United States in 1971. We cannot know whether the account which Sacks develops is biographically accurate for this particular family, but it feels compellingly on target for the sorts of

interactional processes which can constitute the lived interactional reality for many persons. It is a signal display of Sacks' ability to use a fragment of interaction to capture in an analytically compelling way a whole complex of social reality, from its social-organizational sources to its interactional embodiment to its experiential consequences. This discussion presents as well both ends of a range of types of analysis which often appeal differentially to readers of conversation-analytic work.

One end of the spectrum takes a particular episode as its virtually exclusive focus, with its scope of generalization being defined by "however this analysis turns out." Various particulars of context are traced through the full array of their consequences; here, for example, that the offer-recipient – Max – is a recent widower, and the offer-makers find themselves (on Sacks' account) newly responsible for his well-being. The contingencies of the offer and its rejection, the relevance of pressing the offer and the import of its further rejections – all are understood by reference to these attributes of the participants, and the growing relevance of these attributes over the developmental course of the sequence. The account thus appears compellingly context-specific.

The contrasting end of the analytic spectrum focusses on the *type* of sequence involved, across variations in particular settings of enactment. For example, how is this sequence type – e.g., offers – related to other sequence types? Sacks had a long-term ongoing inquiry on request and offer sequences, and their relationship to each other and to other sequence types. Some of Sacks' students have also pursued these questions in this more categorical fashion. Davidson (1984), for example, writes about "subsequent versions of invitations, offers, requests and proposals dealing with potential or actual rejection" (and see also Davidson, 1990). For dealing with the episode in the March 11 session Sacks finds it more in point to juxtapose

> an 'offer' as something different than a 'request' or a 'warning' or a 'threat.' But in some situations the offer is simply the first version of getting the person to do something.

That is, the mode of analysis being pursued can lead to different sets of alternatives providing the relevant comparisons or contrasts, "offer" making such alternatives as "warning" and "threat" potentially relevant here, even if they are not in other contexts.

Though there may appear to be a tension between these two modes of proceeding, with the former often appearing more "humanistic," "context-sensitive," and "holistic" and the latter appearing more "formalistic" and "scientistic," Sacks pursued them both. And the Winter 1971 materials show them pursued hand in hand – the word-selectional considerations being pressed in a generalized cross-context fashion, with this extraordinary single case analysis occurring in the same class session.

VII

In contrast to the Spring 1970 lectures which developed a coherently focussed account of storytelling in conversation and did so by sustained examination of a few data fragments, the Spring 1971 lectures (like those of the preceding term) vary both in topical focus (from sound ordering to professional–client interaction) and in data sources (from the "group therapy session" to a telephone call invitation from one student to another to a call to a suicide prevention center).

Among these lectures are included a series – those for April 30, May 3, May 10, May 17, and May 21 – in which Sacks takes up the empirical materials which he addressed at the start of the 1964–5 lectures. Readers interested in the developmental course of Sacks' lectures may wish to juxtapose these two treatments, separated by some seven years of intense intellectual work. It is not only that the same data are involved which might inform such a juxtaposition, but that themes reappear in the Spring 1971 lectures which have not come up in the preceding several years. To cite but one example, there is Sacks' discussion (May 21, pp. 405ff.) of the characterization of someone as a "stranger," a discussion which goes back to the issue of categorization (though not in that technical terminology) taken up in detail in the paper "The search for help: no one to turn to" which was being written just before and during the first of these academic terms of lectures.

Although the first lecture as delivered did include some initial discussion of a data fragment,[20] it was largely given over to the stance which Sacks was taking up with respect to his audience – both those present in the room and those interested from afar (including, therefore, the present readership). It is a rather franker statement than most instructors would give of the auspices under which they address an undergraduate class. And it reverses the relationship which might have been assumed to hold between the students sitting in the room and those far away – in place or time – who might be interested in "the work." Rather than the latter being incidental and "by-product" recipients of materials designed for the undergraduates, it is the undergraduates who are recast as almost incidental onlookers to, and overhearers of, this analytic undertaking.

"Almost;" for there is evidence throughout these lectures that the relevance of the co-present audience did in fact enter into the shaping of the issues and the manner of their presentation. There is, for example, the initial substantive discussion.[21] Sacks explores some ways in which speakers find or select words

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[20]Cf. April 5 lecture, n. 1.

[21]As in the case of several previous consecutive terms of teaching, Sacks begins the substance of the lecture set in the second of the consecutive terms with what he was exploring less systematically in the preceding term. (See, for example, Winter and Spring 1970 on storytelling in conversation.)

Note that parts of the text here have been rearranged for the sake of continuity and coherence, so that some of the material included here with the lecture of April 5 was actually part of the introductory lecture.

for use. In particular, he focusses on their doing so in "a history-sensitive" manner, for example, by reference to the sound or (later on, in the lecture for May 17) the metaphor composition of the prior talk. The tenor of the discussion is instructive.

There are aspects of this discussion which suggest that, the stance taken in the first lecture notwithstanding, Sacks did not entirely ignore the nature of his co-present audience. The upshot which he takes from the discussion of sound-patterning (lecture for April 5, pp. 341–4) is (p. 343):

> for now . . . just to get some idea of how closely attentive in some fashion people are to each other, where picking up the sounds, doing simple contrasts, etc., are ways that they may be doing being attentive to each other.

And again (p. 344):

> when we begin to collect the sorts of things that I'm noting here, we can feel that a serious attention to the way the talk is put together might pay. These sorts of things at least suggest some sort of close development.

And again, at the end of that lecture (in the present edition), after a discussion of strategic considerations relevant to the parties in the talk in the group therapy session materials (p. 347):

> And that paralleling of the attention to a distinctive weakness can suggest that they are moving with a kind of close attention to each other in a conflictive way.

Two things may be said about the drawing of such conclusions. On the one hand, they are in point for hearers with no previous exposure to conversational materials and to this kind of close analysis of them. They seek to warrant the kind of attention being paid to these materials in a way that would not appear to be directed to an audience interested from afar in what Sacks has to say. On the other hand, it was a task to which Sacks recurrently addressed himself – to warrant these materials as respectable objects of study, and to establish over and over again, in a variety of respects, that these materials were orderly at quite refined levels of organizational detail. It is as if he were forever justifying – to others and to himself – the undertaking, its starting point, and its key premises. The upshots drawn here, early in the Spring term of 1971, can then be understood to be addressed not only, or not especially, to the students in the room, but to any recipients of his discussion.

There are two matters taken up in the Spring 1971 lectures which have a history, either prior or subsequent, which it may be useful to call to attention – the relevant identities of conversational participants, and the notion of "preference."

In the lecture for April 19, Sacks begins a discussion of "caller–called" by reference to the possibility that

> some part of a sequential organization of conversation has to do with
> *identities that the conversation itself makes relevant*, such that for at least
> those facets of the conversation one needn't make reference to other sorts
> of identities that parties have which are, so to speak, exterior to not
> simply the conversation, but to its sequential organization. If, however,
> we found that such other identities were central to almost anything one
> could say about a conversation, then there would be a way in which
> conversation could not be said to have an organization independent
> from such other aspects of the world as yielded other identities, e.g.; the
> names, sexes, social statuses, etc., of the parties. You could imagine a
> world where some social status the parties had, operated in such a way
> as to determine how they could talk to each other, and in that world
> conversation would not be an independently organized phenomenon.

The issue of the relevant formulation of the identities of participants comes up recurrently throughout Sacks lectures. In the Spring 1967 lectures, it may be recalled, there was a discussion of the possible "omnirelevance" of the category-set "therapist–patient" for the group therapy session materials – those categories straddling the line between "exterior" and conversation-specific.

Elsewhere, in the lectures of Fall 1967 (and even more centrally in early lectures for Spring 1967, not included in this edition) Sacks launched a discussion of turn-taking by considering a claim in a paper by the anthropologist Ethel Albert (1964) about the practices of the Burundi. In this account, members of that society are all hierarchically ordered, and the society is small enough that on any occasion everyone present can assess their place relative to everyone else present. The distribution of opportunities to talk is organized by reference to this hierarchical ordering,[22] with the highest ranking person speaking first, then the next, etc., until each has had an opportunity to speak in an initial round; subsequent rounds reproduce this ordering.

Leaving aside a variety of problems which can be expected in a system which worked in this way (and problems with the description), this account embodies what Sacks has in mind by "a world where some social status the parties had operated in such a way as to determine how they could talk to each other, and in that world conversation would not be an independently organized phenomenon."

The point is that, if one could show for *some culture/society* that there is an order or domain of conversation which is relatively autonomous of interactionally extrinsic attributes, then the *possibility* of such a culture would have been shown. Although it might be claimed *in principle* that there were other

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[22]As Albert put it (pp. 40–1), "The order in which individuals speak in a group is strictly determined by seniority of rank."

cultures where there was no such autonomous form, there would then be
certain burdens and opportunities of demonstration and exploration that
would have to be addressed. For one, it would have to be shown that there
was an empirical instance of such a society/culture, rather than simply be
asserted in the nature of the case. For another, it would be a feature of a
society/culture which might then be explored for what else it was related to,
how it came to be so, how it was embodied or implemented, etc.

This discussion, then, is intimately related to the issue of the omni-
relevance of gender or class status, etc. (class and gender are singled out here
because they are the features most often invoked as specially constraining and
shaping the conduct of talk in interaction). For to show a relatively
autonomous order of organization (or several such orders) for conversation
would be to establish domains of interaction not necessarily contingent on
gender, class, etc., and thereby to show conversation to be "an independently
organized phenomenon."

One significance of the categorical identities "caller–called" is that they are
conversation-specific (unequivocally so, unlike "therapist–patient"), and it
appears that they serve as the feature by reference to which various aspects of
talk are organized, especially with respect to the overall structural organiza-
tion of single conversations. This had been shown in Schegloff (1967, 1968)
for the organization of openings, e.g., with respect to who talks first. Part of
Sacks' argument here turns on the relevance of caller/called not only for
openings, but for "closings," for example, it being the caller's business to
initiate arrangement-making and other ways of getting to the end.

It is striking that in a prior discussion of omni-relevance (in Volume 1,
Spring 1967, lecture 14, and cf. the introduction to Volume 1, pp. liii–liv),
Sacks argued for the omni-relevance of "therapist–patient" in the group
therapy sessions by reference to its being the therapist's business – in *that*
capacity – to bring the session to a close, and that a new patient has to be told
that an "indirect" closing initiation by the therapist was doing that job,
something which he did not himself see and which it would not have been
doing had anyone else said it. The relationship of some identity to a bearing
on "closing" (at least of a conversation as a whole) may, then, turn out to be
of strategic importance in showing category omni-relevance.

The issue of the relative autonomy of conversation/interaction has had a
continuing relevance for students of interaction. Perhaps the most prominent
discussion of the issue within contemporary sociology was Erving Goffman's
presidential address to the American Sociological Association, 'The interaction
order' (Goffman, 1983) which also argued (albeit along different lines) for the
relative autonomy of the organization of interaction from other aspects of
social organization.

Another topic with a considerable later development figures in these
lectures for Spring 1971. At the end of the lecture for May 24 (pp. 414–15)
there is a discussion (the first of which there is a record, though Sacks refers
to an earlier related lecture) of the asymmetry of "yes" and "no" answers –
related to the form which a preceding "yes/no" question has taken. This is

an early form of what would eventually become, under the name "the preference for agreement" (cf. Sacks, 1987 [1973]), a much more general account. Here Sacks appears to focus on such questions as might be termed "pre"s, even if the future course of talk – the type of sequence – which the speaker meant to undertake is not at all clearly projected. Whereas the discussion in the May 24 lecture is quite specifically situated, and refers to courses of action in which some sort of sequence may figure as preparation or "setup," Sacks would two years later, in the public lecture at the Linguistic institute in Ann Arbor on which the 1987 publication is based, depict the preference for agreement as a much more general – structural – feature of question/answer sequences of the "yes/no" type, with still more general implications, for example, for adjacency pairs.

A key component of this notion is that of "preference," and it has a longer (and variably focussed) history in Sacks' *oeuvre*. In these lectures, for example, in the lecture for April 23, Sacks proposes that some formulations of the event for which an invitation is being tendered are "preferred:" if the occasion is to include dinner, for instance, the invitation should be for "dinner;" anything else (e.g., "drinks") and recipients will hear that it is "not for dinner," for, given its "preferred" status as an invitation form, it would have been used if it could have been used. And two years later at the Linguistic Institute, where the "sequentialized" version of "preference" was extended from the usage here to that of 'On the preferences for agreement and contiguity. . . ,' the application of the notion "preference" to "formulations" was extended from formulations-of-events to reference-to-persons in the drafting of the paper 'Two preferences in the organization of reference to persons in conversation and their interaction' (eventually published as Sacks and Schegloff, 1979).

And before the usages here in the Spring 1971 lectures, a similar notion underlies the conception of 'specific alternatives" (cf. Schegloff and Sacks, 1973: 305, 313–14; this paper was first drafted during the summer of 1969). There the notion of "specific alternatives" made relevant by an utterance such as a "possible pre-closing" was explicated by noting (p. 314) that

> the alternatives made relevant by an utterance of that form are not symmetrical. Closing is the central possibility, further talk is alternative to it; the reverse is not the case. . .

That feature of asymmetry – later central to the notion "preference" – came up in other working sessions of 1969 and 1970. For example, I recall Sacks remarking on it while examining tapes made by Melvin Pollner in a Southern California traffic court; the observations concerned the treatment by the parties involved of the source of income of a college student appearing before the judge; Sacks took it that some sorts of financial support (I do not now recall which) were central and "normative" (in the sociological terms of the time), and others were alternatives to them, but not vice versa.

The contrast figures, in essentially these terms, in lecture 6 for Fall 1971, at pp. 455–6, where Sacks is discussing a story told by a teenage girl to a teenage boy, a story which turns centrally on her spending half the night with a "guy that [she] liked a real lot." What is central to the telling of the story is that they spent the time "in the back house" (i.e., the house behind the main house, a sort of guest house) instead of "in a car." Sacks shows how "in the car" is built into the story as "normal" for teenagers, something with which the teller is trying to fashion a contrast. "In the back house" is then a specific alternative; it is an alternative to "parking" or "in the car," but the latter is not "an alternative;" it is the basic, unmarked (as linguists might put it) place. And in that same context Sacks introduces the use of the term "preference:"

> . . .She can. . .invoke the normal priorities, in which, for unmarried teenagers, parking is '*preferred.*' I don't mean that it's favorite, but there's some way it's preferred over the back house, if at least only in moral terms. That is to say, she brings off that *she* prefers the back house, but there is *a more abstract sense of 'prefer' which involves her in invoking the parking – that which is 'preferred' in the more abstract sense – as a first alternative*" [final emphasis supplied]

It is this sense of "preference," as "a *first* alternative, to which others may contrast but which itself does not contrast with them" which is one central thrust of subsequent uses of the term, both by Sacks and by most others[23]

VIII

Although the particular phenomena and data sources taken up in the lectures for Fall 1971 are quite different, the thematic commitment underlying this course is strikingly reminiscent of the lectures for Spring 1966. In both may be found explorations of how (a) culture is to be conceived which blend a fresh theoretical conception with a distinctive and organic relationship to "ordinary" conversational data.

One relevant bit of background for the first lecture of the term may well be an episode in law school (earlier recounted in the introduction to Volume 1, n. 6) which alerted Sacks to the mysteries of commonsense assessments of the plausibility and seriousness of conjectured events. Law students debating a point in the law of torts rejected as implausible the premise of an airplane flying at an altitude of five feet while willingly discussing hypotheticals only

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[23]This includes, for example, Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks, 1977. The notion captured by "preference" figured in my own work at the time as well (especially in Schegloff, 1970), but not under any of these names. For further discussion, cf. Schegloff, 1988, and, for another view, Bilmes, 1988. For applications, discussions and reviews of the notion of "preference" (and "dispreference") cf. among others Atkinson and Drew, 1979: chapter 2; Heritage, 1984: 265–80; Levinson, 1983: 332–45; Pomerantz, 1978, 1984.

marginally larger. The concerns then awakened, which had driven the insistence on actual observation and then recorded and re-examinable data, may have served tacitly as the grounds for the line developed at the start of lecture 1 on the trouble of dealing with imagined occurences, and the impossibility of dealing with events that strain commonsense credibility, events which otherwise can be shown to be real.

This theme reappears explicitly later in the Fall 1971 lectures, in Lectures 9–12 "On some technical considerations of a dirty joke."[24] There Sacks points to a staggering number of implausible co-occurances on which the story/dirty joke being examined depends, and without which it collapses. And he addresses himself especially in lecture 10 to the devices by which the telling of the joke/story can survive these apparent implausibilities. He rejects an "Aristotelian" solution along the lines of a generic "suspension of disbelief" by noting that no disbelief arises to be suspended, and that the story could not survive if it did. He suggests instead that a recipient is fully engaged in understanding the story, and that the artfulness of the story in deploying the elements from which an understanding can be achieved channels attention in a fashion which circumvents the implausibility by naturalizing and sequentializing the events.

Still, the isolation of this problem and the treatment of the narrative form by ironic comparison to a quasi-realistic story suggests a continuing underlying preoccupation on Sacks' part with the relationship between the real and the unreal, the plausible and the implausible, the real and the plausible, the real and the implausible, etc. And here again (as in the Spring 1966 lectures; cf. introduction to Volume 1, pp. xxxix-xli) may be found echoes of the "commentator machine" introduced in Sacks' early (1963) paper 'Sociological description,' with its metaphorically articulated depiction of various possible relationships between real doings and the accounts offered of them, and the account-offering as itself a real doing relative to which another doing may be a defective exemplar.

Lecture 1 begins an announced preoccupation with "storytelling in conversation" with an observation about a pun, and the first several lectures are as much about puns and proverbs as they are about storytelling.

Sacks' concern with puns, which would eventually issue in a presentation at the Georgetown Roundtable in March, 1972 and the little paper (Sacks, 1973) 'On some puns, with some intimations,' is analytically located at the intersection of problems of word-selection of a "poetics"–like character on the one hand, and the practices of storytelling sequences on the other. His discussion of puns here in lecture 1 as well as in the Georgetown Roundtable paper is focussed on their use[25] by a story-recipient just after story completion. The occurrence of puns – unintended and unheard puns – in this distinctive sequential position may have recommended itself to Sacks as a case in point

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[24]These lectures were published under that name, as edited by Gail Jefferson, cf. Schenkein, 1978.
[25]And the use of proverbs; cf. the ensuing discussion below.

for the contrast between "implausible 'real things' " and imagined things one could get someone to believe as a basis for theorizing about them. Or perhaps the order was just the opposite; entertaining the possibility of opening the lecture and the course with a discussion on puns, some groundwork seemed called for, addressed discursively to the believability of the sort of thing he was going to begin with.

The discussion of proverbs (at lecture 1, p. 422) goes back to Sacks' reaction while still a graduate student at Berkeley to the beginning of George Homans' book, *Social Behavior: Its Elementary Forms* (1961). There (pp. 1–2) Homans remarks in passing on the traditional folk sociology which (it was apparently his view) it was scientific sociology's business and mandate to correct and supplant. The hallmark of this folk knowledge was for Homans apotheosized by proverbs with their "obvious" truths, but also directly contradictory truths.

This theme was by no means unique to Homans. Both Homans and the many others who contrasted scientific sociology with common knowledge were engaged in defending sociology as an academic discipline from charges that it was "nothing but common sense." Many took it that one line of defense was to show the weaknesses of commonsense knowledge, and thus the proper office of sociology in reference to it. That office was to replace "common sense" with something more scientific. This was, of course, one central point of reference for Garfinkel's observation (1967: chapter 1) that the social sciences were addressed endlessly to the substitution of "objective" for "indexical" assertions, and the alternative ethnomethodological program which he put forward – to make commonsense knowledge non-competitively a *topic* of sociological inquiry.

Sacks was struck early on (that would have been in the very early 1960s, most likely in 1962–3, while we were at Berkeley's Center for the Study of Law and Society; cf. introduction to Volume 1, p. xv) by Homans' non-analytical, non-sociological stance toward proverbs – treating them as primitive and faulted versions of scientific propositions. The issue for Sacks was, precisely, what *were* proverbs (as natural objects, so to speak), and what were they used to do, that might make the features which Homans treated ironically seriously understandable. He sought out a relevant literature and found Archer Taylor's *The Proverb*, but did not find the answer there, though he respected it as a work of scholarship.

It is striking then to read Sacks' treatment here (at lecture 1, p. 422) with this history in mind. Briefly, in the context of a discussion of the use of proverbs by story recipients on story completion, and having remarked on the common observation of the inconsistency between different proverbs, he asks,

> Now the question is, is that a defect of proverbial expressions? Or is it that, if it turns out that what proverbial expressions do is that they are used to understand something else, then the question for them is, are they applied to something that they evince an understanding of? If so,

it's quite irrelevant that, as a package, they can turn out to have an inconsistency among them. The problem is not, on any given one's use, is it true relative to other proverbial expressions, but, does it, as something one understands with, understand what it applies to? Where, what it applies to is the story it's used after. . .

. . .What's done with them is to take one and see how, for what it's positioned after, does it understand that. It can then be seen as irrelevant, somewhat arbitrary, to say "Let's take the set of them and consider whether they're consistent, to determine whether they're true." That may be not at all how, empirically, they work.

Here, some ten years later, is Sacks' answer to Homans – his contrasting account of how proverbs should be treated by sociologists. And in this little passage is the direct confrontation of the effort to treat proverbs as defective propositions – failures as "objective" expressions – with the claim that they are designed fundamentally as objects for *indexical* deployment. They are meant specifically to display understanding of the local object they are placed after – they are prototypically indexical in that sense. Each is to be juxtaposed to its occasion of use, for which it was employed; that specifically renders problematic the detachment of each from the environment for which it was produced, for juxtaposition with other such disengaged-from-context objects. And Homans' critique of them – based on just such a disengagement – is the apotheosis of the social science practices to which Garfinkel meant to set ethnomethodology in "non-ironic" contrast. For Sacks, this analysis grew directly from his effort to figure out how proverbs worked.

IX

Those familiar with the published corpus of conversation-analytic work will recognize in lecture 5 a version of the 'Two preferences. . .' paper (Sacks and Schegloff, 1979). I do not recall at what point Sacks and I found ourselves both focussing on the contrast between what Sacks here terms "Type 1" and "Type 2" identifications of persons and what I was calling (with no restriction to the description of persons) "description-for-recognition" and "description-for-understanding." The written version of the paper was initially drafted by Sacks while we were living in the same house during the Linguistic Institute at the University of Michigan in 1973. I did not know he was drafting it, until he gave it to me early one evening to look over. Although we worked over it intermittently, the changes made from the initial draft were relatively small and technical.

The discussion of forms of reference in lecture 5 (as well as the paper which followed) can be located in another course of development. While still at UCLA (probably about 1966) Sacks had drafted a paper which came to be referred to as the "two-person identification" paper. The data fragment which had given rise to the "two-person identification" line of analysis, and around

which the paper was written, was taken from the observational materials collected by Barker and Wright.[26] In this episode, a little girl enters the kitchen of her home and finds her mother talking to another woman, someone the little girl does not know. The following exchange is then reported:

Little girl: Who is she?
Mother: That's Rita. Do you remember the other day when you went to the party and met Una? Well that's Una's mother.

This data fragment was appreciated against the following analytical background.

Sacks had established in his dissertation work (cf. the published version in Sacks, 1972a) that there was no general solution to what he termed "the one-person identification problem." That is, faced with the task of identifying/categorizing a single person, there were demonstrably available multiple "membership categorization devices" which contained some category which could properly categorize any person.[27] And there did not appear to be any general solution for selecting which device to use – no general preference rule that would select some device from among whose categories "the correct one" for the person being categorized should be selected. This was a finding with many analytic and theoretic reverberations. For example, analytically, any actually employed categorization employed by a speaker in talk-in-interation had then to be viewed as a contingent product whose achievement could be subjected to analysis by reference to the particulars of its local environment. (And, theoretically, social scientists' categorizations could not be warranted solely on the basis of their descriptive correctness, but had to be otherwise warranted, e.g., by reference to their relevance, whatever grounds of relevance might be chosen.)

What the data fragment reproduced above suggested to Sacks was that, whereas there seemed to be no general solution to the *one*-person indentification problem, there might be a solution to a *two*-person identification problem. In his dissertation (1972a), he had described what he proposed to be a categorization device composed of *pairs* of linked terms – "paired relational categories" he called them – (e.g., friend–friend, husband–wife, relative–relative, parent–child, neighbor–neighbor, stranger–stranger, etc.), which constituted ". . .a locus for a set of rights and obligations. . ." (p. 37). This categorization device was used to categorize a population of persons not one at a time, but two at a time – as incumbents of one of these paired

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[26]Although Sacks had worked on some observational materials which Barker and Wright had published (for example, *One Boy's Day*, 1951), I believe the fragment involved in the "two-person identification" paper was taken from other, unpublished, material of theirs which Sacks had secured.
    [27]Sacks had termed these devices "Pn-adequate," i.e., adequate for any, unspecified (hence "n") population (hence "P"). The devices/collections of "age" and "sex/gender" categories were his most commonly invoked instances.

relational categories. It appeared as well that there was only one such categorization device, only one which identified/categorized persons two at a time.

What the "Rita/Una's mother" data fragment suggested was that one way members might handle a one-person identification problem which had no general solution was to transform it into a two-person identification problem which *did* have a general solution. In the instance at hand, the little girl's mother adopts this solution: asked to identify one person ("Who is she?"), she introduces another person into the identification problem – Una – and then identifies the pair of persons by a set of paired relational categories: mother–[child] (". . .That's Una's mother"). This was an extremely elegant solution to the identification problem, and an extremely elegant account of it.

But there were problems, and on a visit to the west coast during the winter break Sacks and I discussed them at length, as we regularly did with one another's written work. The most telling – and ultimately fatal – problem was that this solution did not work as a general solution. For one thing, not all the paired sets of terms could be (or were actually) used by interactants; for example, although "stranger–stranger" was one of the paired term-sets (and one indispensable for the empirical context which first gave rise to the formulation of this categorization device), persons confronted with an identification problem do not respond by saying, "That's Rita. Remember Una? Una and Rita are strangers." Were stranger–stranger an eligible category-set for these purposes, there might be a general solution to the one-person problem by converting it into a two-person problem. Without it, it was not a general solution.

Another problem, equally fatal and with clear connections to the lecture which prompts this discussion (and to the 'Two preferences. . .' paper), was that not any person could be introduced as the second for co-categorization with the initial person to be identified, and not even any person in a specified range of relationships to the target problem. Only such persons could be introduced (or seemed actually to be introduced) as were expectably recognizable to the one posing the problem, the one for whom the categorization was being done. So again, persons confronted with an identification problem do not say "That's Rita; there's a little girl named Una, and Rita is Una's mother." There was, then, not only a constraint on which set of paired terms could be used for the target person and the one to be introduced as second; there were restrictions on which second person could be introduced for this purpose by reference to the knowledge of the recipient of the identification. Indeed, the possibility could not be ruled out that no second person could be found who would satisfy both containts (nor was it clear that these were the only constraints). The status of this categorization device as a general solution to a *two*-person identification problem was thus cast into doubt, let alone its status as second-order solution to the one-person identification problem. The "two-person identification" paper was shelved. But it was not without consequences, of which brief mention can be made here of only three.

First, the data fragment which motivated that earlier effort has here, in the Fall 1971 lectures (lecture 5, pp. 451–2) become an example of

> where a speaker doesn't figure that recipient knows who's being referred to, but knows something that involves it in being an 'almost,' i.e., that you know someone in some close relationship to that one being referred to.

Its bearing thus is incorporated into the discussion of "recognitional reference" and the preference for recognitional reference even when the possibility of its achievement is open to question (cf. Sacks and Schegloff, 1979).

Second, it seems to be relevant in a curious way to a tack taken in an earlier lecture, and on quite a different topic – lecture 6 for Fall 1968. A bit into that lecture (at p. 70), Sacks is discussing introductions (of one person to another), what occasions them and how they're done.

> One way to think about it is to consider that a way to simplify the task of doing any introduction would be, e.g., to constrain the occasions under which introductions could get done. You could say, for example, introductions should go 'first name to first name.' That can operate to constrain the initial use of an introduction to only people you can introduce that way.

But, Sacks points out, that runs up against the fact that the conversations within which introductions have to get made are generated by an entirely separate mechanism from the one that makes introductions possibly relevant.

The relationship to the problems with the "two-person identification" paper is this: one problem with that paper, as just recounted, was that the mechanism only worked for certain possible values of paired relational category terms (not for e.g., stranger–stranger), and setting such a pre-specification subverted the potential generality of the device. So here as well, where the point is that an introduction mechanism is needed which will have *as* general a scope as whatever occasions the relevance of an introduction and whatever occasions the already-ongoing conversation within which introductions come to be relevant. Pre-constraining introductions to certain values of introduction terms would subvert the viability of that institution. This is just another specification of the more general result that pre-constraining the elements of a device which can be employed subverts the possible use of the device as a general solution to some problem in the practices of interaction.

Third, the working through of the problems of the "two-person identification" paper seems to have deeply affected Sacks' thinking about the relative merits of single case analysis versus the use of aggregates of data *for the purposes of building a discipline*. Note that the issue is *not* the status of single case analysis per se, but the possibility of building the sort of desired *discipline* which had come to be the goal of conversation-analytic work. In a letter to me

a few years later (March, 1974), Sacks remarked on the relevance of "working with masses of data" as what "in the end differentiates what we do from e.g. French structuralism." And, in this regard, he invoked the experience of the problems with the "two-person identification" paper – and its effort to ground a general solution in a single case – as evidence enough.[28]

X

Having initially projected the Fall 1971 lectures to be about stories and storytelling, the first six lectures depart somewhat from a close focus on that topic, although remaining at least tangentially relevant with lectures 7 and 8, and then with the series of lectures from 9 through 12, Sacks comes back squarely to his announced topic.

Lectures 7 and 8 address the "motive power of stories." The theme is a penetrating and remarkable account of a particular class of stories. These are stories which come to be *re*told after a long time delay ("long" here meaning years), a delay during which one who had been the recipient of the story becomes the kind of person the teller then was, and tells it in turn to a recipient such as he was when he was told it – the retelling being done on just the sort of occasion which is appropriately analyzed by the story. Such a "delayed-fuse" story thus serves as a kind of cultural repository for occasion-ally relevant knowledge. (The material being analyzed involves an older man, seeable as "no longer having prospects," telling a younger man, who is about to depart for college – and prospects – about the time *he* was a young man, with prospects, and what became of them.)

These lectures call to mind the lectures of Spring 1966, for the way in which they speak to the nature of culture, the ways in which culture mobilizes minds as a repository of what it has to transmit, and uses stories as the vehicle for transmitting that knowledge, recruiting the interactional stances of the participants in the situations in which they find themselves – for which the stories provide analyses – as the energy driving the telling of the stories as matters of e.g., self-justification. They also recall lecture 5 of Spring 1970 on how memory for experiences can be motivated by having them stored as "the property" of the one to remember them, to be accessed by others by telling a "similar" story.

The theme plays off a by-now clichéd geneticist "witticism" that chickens are the device by which eggs reproduce themselves. Here persons, their experiences, and the stored versions of experiences in stories are the device by which culture reproduces itself and adapts to changing social circumstances. The line taken here is reminiscent of a term (though not necessarily the

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[28]He wrote, "The 'structures for particulars' direction [which is how Sacks had earlier characterized "the thrust of my stuff over the years"] doesn't work: recall the two-person paper failures, etc. and the 'system for masses,' for routine, etc. may." (The internal quotation marks have been added for clarity.)

correlative meaning) which the anthropologist Alfred Kroeber introduced some years ago for culture – "the superorganic."[29]

These resonances of lectures 7 and 8 are sustained in the following four lectures, 9 through 12, on the dirty joke as a technical object. In this discussion as well, the story form is treated as a packaging device for elements of culture, as was the case in lectures 7 and 8. There is a distinct shift in theme here, focussing less on the teller doing things via the story and more on the story doing things through the teller, and doing them through the teller as the instrument of a culture. The story in general, and the dirty joke as a technical object in particular, get worked up somewhat formally here in a fashion parallel to the account of games (and children's games in particular) as packaging units for a culture in the Spring 1966 lectures.

This is a weighty theme and it may be appropriate to understand Sacks to have prepared his audience for it in the opening lectures for the term. Recall that in the first lecture in this set for Spring 1971 Sacks had tried to provide grounds for taking seriously the possibility that there really was a pun in the story, that it was not just a "reading-in" by the analyst, just as he had done in other first lectures, to ground the seriousness of word-selectional or "poetics" observations. Here he proceeds in the same fashion by showing the "artfulness" of the dirty joke/story, the elaborate way it is put together in order to ground a claim for its status as a technical object, and eventually his claim for it as a serious transmitter of culture.

It is in lecture 11 that the theme of the dirty joke as a packaging device for culture, with its "dirtyness' serving as a form of restriction on its circulation, is stated most pointedly. It may be worth mentioning here again (cf. introduction to Volume 1, p. xxii) the relevance of the work of classical scholars such as Milman Parry, Albert Lord, and Eric Havelock, all of whose work Sacks was familiar with, and from whom he would have become familiar with the notion that the classic forms of oral cultures – such as the Greek epic – served as major instruments for the preservation and transmission of a culture, the story line of the epic being not so much the point of it as the shaper and guarantor of its transmission. It was just one aspect of the special métier of Sacks' mind and sensibility to see in this juvenile "dirty joke" told in a teenagers' group therapy session the contemporary operation of so grand a theme, otherwise treated as the special preserve of élite "culture."

Another echo of the Spring 1966 lectures in Fall 1971 is the appearance of a concern with children, and children's learning the ways of the culture and its rules, a theme which is central here in lecture 12. This lecture again calls to attention Sacks' extraordinary capacity to take apparently general views and characterizations of the world, ones which present themselves as "natural" accounts of it, and to specify them, often showing them to embody some distinct and limited perspective. Thus in lecture 12 he depicts what seems to be a potentially anybody's recounting of a scene as specifically embodying the perspective of 12-year-old girls. In the earlier lectures 7 and

[29]Cf. Kroeber, 1917.

8 for Fall 1971, he shows how a story embodies in particular the perspective of persons with live prospects for a future or those with already failed prospects. And in an earlier set of lectures (Winter 1970, lecture 2) he takes what appears to be a passing observer's "bland" general account of a scene in which "the police were handling some trouble at a department store" and shows that to other eyes – of members of different social groups with a different experience with authority – what might be seen might be not that there was trouble and the police came and handled it, but that the police came and there was trouble and it was unclear how it was being handled, how it would turn out, and how it would turn out to implicate them.

Although seemingly quite remote from that tradition of analysis, these are exemplary exercises in the sociology of knowledge. Apparently unsituated views and understandings of the world and of particular settings – otherwise understandable as just "how things are/were" – are analyzed for the distinctive social groups to which they are affiliated, and with whose experience of the world they link up. These discussions illuminate our understanding both of the particular settings and utterances being addressed, and of the distinctive experience of social circles to which we gain access by way of these discursive practices.

In this regard, it is striking that one of Sacks' characteizations of the special perspective of 12-year-old girls by reference to which the dirty joke being examined in lectures 9–12 should be understood is reminiscent of his depiction of the perspective of suicidal persons who see themselves (and report themselves) as having "no one to turn to." That phrase supplied the subtitle of Sacks' major early paper (and his dissertation), *The Search for Help: no one to turn to*. Now remembered primarily for its formal statement of the categorization problem and aspects of its solution, it may be useful to recall that, although textually at the beginning of that work, developmentally it was subsequent to the initiating problem, which was how someone might come to say "I have no one to turn to," and say it seriously (that is, as the reported result of a search procedure), delivered paradoxically precisely in an occasion in which it seems apparent that they have found "someone to turn to." Sacks *began* with that, although in the paper he *ends* with it.

The proximate solution of "no one to turn to," Sacks proposed, was that the person involved (the suicidal person, that is) had such a problem as would alienate precisely the person(s) whom the normative search procedure would locate as the proper persons to turn to. That is, there are in general "persons to turn to" (formulated by reference to paired relational terms discussed above at pp. xxxvii), but the problem involved, if reported to those persons, might lead to their abandonment of just the status which made them the one(s) to turn to. Thus, for example, turning to a spouse with a problem engendered by one's adulterous involvement.

What is striking is the formal similarity to this situation of the putative circumstances of 12-year-old girls in Sacks' account of the dirty joke: namely, the problem of checking out information about sex, information acquired illicitly, e.g., by listening in to the parent's bedroom from behind a door: with

whom can such supposition be checked? the parents one spied on? the friends to whom one cannot reveal just this inexperience? The formal similarity is striking: the nature of the problem is what precludes turning to just the ones one would otherwise turn to for its solution.

The last lecture for Fall 1971 is about dreams, and seems quite disengaged from the other lectures. In fact, Sacks developed a considerable interest in dreams (among other respects as a format in which stories are preserved), and pursued it, largely informally, during these years. In part, this had developed from his reading in Freud and in a variety of literary sources; in part it converged with an interest in popular culture (an interest which, in the last several years before his death, included such matters as advertising as well.) He was, for example, interested in the presentational modality of dreams – whether they were experienced as being read or being seen in action; if seen, like a movie, whether they were in color or black and white; what sorts of editing and directorial techniques informed their structure, and the like.

XI

The lectures for Spring 1972 begin in the same fashion as did those for Fall 1968, as a systematic and general account of an organization or a class of conversational occurrences – in this case, adjacency pairs and adjacency pair organization. It is not until the second half of the second lecture that a determinate, actual (as compared to intendedly exemplary or "characteristic") bit of talk is presented for careful and detailed examination. But the text of the first lecture and a half nonetheless makes clear that this general and systematic introduction to the projected subject-matter for the course is based in a detailed way on a substantial corpus of observations and analyses of particular stretches of talk of which adjacency pair organization is to be offered as a tentative account (though hardly preparing us for the illuminating detail exposed when the first bit of data is examined closely in the second half of the second lecture).

The general features of adjacency pairs are first introduced via a variety of particular sequence types – greetings, terminal exchanges, question–answer sequences, etc. – each of which names its own, recognizable class of sequences. Adjacency pairs are thus introduced as a class of classes. But the particular variety of sequence types is strategically selected to display something of the extraordinary provenance of adjacency pairs – used at the critical junctures of virtually all the main kinds of organization of conversation: at the opening and closing boundaries of particular episodes of conversation, as the central device by which next speakers are selected, as the basic tool for remedying various locally occuring problems in conversation, as the locus for departures from a single-sentence format for utterances (sub-sentential utterances characteristically being second-pair parts, and the construction of multi-sentence

utterances being mediated on this account by adjacency pair constructions), and so forth.

This introductory account of the generality of adjacency pairs by reference to the other types of organization in which they figure prominently and strategically is followed by another, an account of their provenance by reference to their distributional generality. That is, if we ask where adjacency pairs can go (and, in particular, where their first pair parts can go, since where the second pair parts go is given by the first pair parts, i.e., after them), we find that their privilege of occurence is unrestricted except by reference to adjacency pair organization. That is, they can go anywhere except after a first pair part, unless the one going "after" is initiating an "insertion sequence." The point here is two-fold: our sense of the centrality of adjacency pair organization is reinforced by its virtually unrestricted distribution, and our sense of its basicness is reinforced by its self-organizing character, that is, by the observation that the only restriction on its distribution is that imposed by adjacency pair organization itself. (Recall that a similar argument had been offered for the basicness of the turn-taking organization in Fall 1968, lecture 4, pp. 54–5, and this introduction, above, p. xvi and n. 12).

When Sacks turns to the examination of a specimen of an adjacency pair, the focus shifts sharply. The exchange – a question/answer sequence – occurs in

> a telephone conversation between two middle-aged women one of whom has gone back to college part-time, and is telling the other about a class she's taking

The other – Emma – asks:

> *Emma* :   Are you the oldest one in the class?
> *Bernice* :   Oh, by far.

In some five pages, Sacks shows an array of issues to be involved which most readers, I suspect, will not have anticipated. Here I want to draw out one of them, one which echoes themes raised in earlier lecture sets, especially that for Spring 1966 (and see the introduction to Volume 1, pp. xxxvii–xxxix). The issue concerns the proper understanding of the positioning of the subject-matter of these lectures – and of the area of inquiry which has developed with the name "conversation analysis" – among the disciplines.

One of Sacks' early observations about this exchange is that the question is not characterizing Bernice's position in the class as one of a possible set of positions, others of which might be "second oldest," or "one of the oldest," and the answer is not just a way of saying "yes," or saying it emphatically. Rather, Sacks proposes with respect to the former, the question is asking about a "unique position" in the class, with a variety of features which can go with occupying a unique position ("being the only X"); in that respect, its relevant alternatives are not the set of age-grade positions, but things like

"Are you the only woman? Disabled person? African American?" etc. Sacks continues (lecture 2, p. 538),

> So that what seems like a kind of obvious semantics turns out to be wrong for our language. It's one you hear around, and it says: Take "the oldest one in the class" and find its meaning by considering the set of alternatives to it, where the alternatives can easily be derived from it by just considering some obvious way in which it is part of a set of positions having to do with 'oldness.' . . . Now, *alternatives* are an obvious way to go about locating what something is doing or what something means. But the question of alternatives does not have an easy answer. It is, for any given thing, an empirical issue and not simply a transparent semantic issue to be gotten by lexical considerations. In saying what I figure to be the kinds of things that are alternatives here, both in the question and in the answer, I'm saying something that *has to be discovered from a consideration of the way the world works* that produces these kinds of sequences. This obviously produces a massively complex set of problems in analyzing things like a small question–answer sequence. For each one of them, if we're going to use alternatives to find out what it means, then we're going to have to go into a discovery of what the alternatives are. [Second emphasis supplied]

The point to which I wish to call attention is that this is not a matter of *linguistic* analysis in the usual sense; the closest might be some form of anthropological linguistics or linguistic anthropology, though those disciplines have shown qualified enthusiasm at best for this sort of analysis. The point here echoes a point like the one made in the Spring 1966 lectures apropos of "possessive pronouns;" they work linguistically as possessives only given an independent analysis of what they are affiliated to as "possessable" (hence the very different senses of "my shoes" and "my barber"). And the latter are not linguistic facts.[30]

But more is involved than there simply being a separate domain to be studied here, and therefore possibly a different discipline. When he turns to Bernice's answer, Sacks notes that it says "The question you asked me is correct. I am what you're supposing I am." Then (p. 539):

> And by using "by far" one indicates how one would know it; i.e., by looking around the class, without any particular interest in finding out the ages, she could age herself relatively to everyone else – which is after all not a thing that many in a class would do. But there are some people who can do it just like that, by virtue of that it's a 'by far.' That is to say, 'by far' is *glance-determinable*. And if it's glance-determinable, then that's how you could have known it . . . It's visible, like anything else

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[30]This discussion is clearly related closely to the one about "frame-and-slot" analysis in lecture 1 of the Winter 1970 set, and cf. above at pp. xxi–xxii.

in the room, that she is older by far. And as she knows it, so does anybody else in the class know it.

Sacks then points out that "that the answer says how one knows what one is saying is a common feature of answers." This is the sort of thing that linguists (e.g., Chafe and Nichols, 1986) mean by the term "evidentials." But "by far" is not, I believe, the sort of item (such as modals like "must have," attributions like "John said . . . ," access routes such as "I read that . . ." etc.) that is ordinarily counted as an evidential. It is not a linguistic feature, but a grasp of the course of action by which such a formulation would come to be made, and via an appreciation of its consequentiality to the circumstances of the one making it, that "by far the oldest" as glance-determinable needs to be understood. For while "by far" may have these attributes for this question by this asker to this recipient about this setting, it is by no means a feature of its linguistic realization per se, or even one of its variants. The range of further observations which an exchange like this can engender, and the theoretical directions in which they lead (both of which Sacks pursues in the remainder of this discussion) belong to a domain of inquiry that may well be a necessary complement to a thoroughgoing linguistics but is not part of it, and should be part of a thoroughgoing sociology or anthropology, but does not seem likely to become that either.

The Spring 1972 lectures present various of the juxtapositions or contrasts which run through Sacks' *oeuvre*. Lectures 1 and 2 juxtapose discussions of the most abstract and general sort – characterizing a formal structure, the adjacency pair, not only as a type or class of occurence, but as a class of classes – with a detailed examination of a single small excerpt from a conversation which is turned into a window through which the phenomenology (in a non-technical sense) of a person's social circumstances and experience is captured and fleshed out in a compelling fashion, and in a manner which resonates to the circumstances and experiences of many who might find themselves in cognate circumstances.

Lecture 3 begins with another excerpt, but uses it largely as the point of departure for a discussion of a type of sequence and of a characterizable locus of interactional experience – the initial contact between someone calling on the telephone and someone answering. The launching of the discussion from a particular exemplar of an opening sequence imparts the flavor of empirical analysis to the discussion, but in fact it is mainly near the end of the discussion that Sacks takes up particulars of that initial fragment. In between his characterization is chock full of the products of many empirical analyses, but only their upshots are offered, with intendedly typicalized reports of conver- sational exchanges to instantiate the themes, rather than analysis in each case, for each observation or upshot, with specific instances or exemplars. Here again Sacks catches the phenomenology of a social-interactional place in the world, but whereas the place in the first two lectures was something like "being a certain type of unique person in a setting," here it is a transient (though potentially recurrent) interaction state – answerer of the phone who

may or may not be the "called," and, if not, who may or may not get talked to.[31]

Lecture 4 is a specially striking exemplification of Sacks' ability to formulate an absolutely abstract issue, problem, or way of conceiving the organization of talk, and then to use it to set a vernacularly characterizable and recognizable class of occurrences into a relevant theoretical "space." Here, Sacks proposes to reconceive all utterances in (a) conversation in terms of three possible "positions:" last, current, next, and he then begins a course of theoretical observations about one of them – "next position" – as a purely abstract possible object; and he finds, given how conversation seems empirically to be organized (especially given the turn-taking system which it seems to employ) a set of characteristics of "next position" per se, characteristics which will always have some particular embodiment by virtue of the particular "current" utterance relative to which another is "next," but which are features of "next" position generically. From one such set of features – that any "next" can accommodate *some* range of possible utterances or utterance types, but *not any* utterance or utterance types – Sacks shows how competition for a turn falls out as a consequence. For a possible next speaker with something particular to say may see that it is possible to say it "next," but that each future "current" may restrict against this sayable in *its* next position. Were things otherwise organized, a speaker with something to say would never need to get a particular next position to say it in at the cost of not getting to say it; everything "intended to be said" could, and perhaps would, get said eventually – in some "any" next turn.

The power of this analytic tool is potentially very extensive, and some of it made its way into the eventually published version of the turn-taking paper (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, 1974). More work along these lines was planned; perhaps some day more will appear, however impoverished by Sacks' unavailability to press it ahead in his own distinctive way.

XII

After the Spring term of 1972 Sacks no longer recorded his lectures,[32] and made no special provision for circulating the work which he was teaching in

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[31] I should remark that in this lecture – lecture 3 – more than any other place in the lectures, there is a dialogue going on between Sacks and myself – my own part in it having been developed first in my dissertation (1967) and the initial paper (Schegloff, 1968) drawn from it, and then, most proximately to this lecture, in a revision of several chapters of the dissertation for possible book publication, undertaken in the summer of 1970, and discussed extensively with Sacks at the end of that summer. Some of that work has subsequently appeared in modified form, e.g., in Schegloff, 1979 and 1986.

[32] As noted earlier, at least some of Sacks' lectures at the Linguistic Institute held during the summer of 1973 were recorded, though Sacks did not choose to have them transcribed for circulation. As well, Sacks continued to record many seminars and working sessions with students and colleagues.

his classes. As it happened, I was that summer moving from a position at Columbia University to one at UCLA, and for the next three years Sacks and I maintained an often intensive, and intermittently attenuated, period of collaborative work. Most of both Sacks' sole-authored work and mine which appeared over the following half dozen years was the delayed publication of work done and written up much earlier.[33]

Leaving aside for the moment work that was being newly launched or developed in fresh directions during the years from Fall 1972 to Sacks' death in November, 1975,[34] those years saw the drafting of the paper on turn-taking (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, 1974), the earlier-mentioned 'Two preferences . . .' paper (Sacks and Schegloff, 1979), a paper on laughter (Jefferson, Sacks and Schegloff, 1984) and the paper on repair (Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks, 1977).[35] An extensive account of the foci of work during these years is beyond the scope of the present introduction.[36]

XIII

During the winter of 1974–5, Sacks and I were approached by several faculty members at the University of California, Santa Barbara about the possibility of establishing there an interdisciplinary program focussed on language, discourse and interaction. We explored the possibility through the first half of 1975; we each visited the campus, gave talks, discussed the prospects with the local interested faculty. It seemed increasingly clear that this was a serious possibility, and that what was wanted was just the sort of enterprise that conversation analysis was becoming – had already become. The prospects

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[33]Thus: Sacks, 1972a was the published version of Sacks' end product, dated June, 1965, of what (rendered in more accessible language by David Sudnow) was Sacks' Ph.D. dissertation. Sacks, 1972b was a somewhat edited version of lectures from 1966. Sacks, 1972c was originally a graduate student paper, written in 1962–3. Sacks, 1973 was the published version of Sacks' paper at the Georgetown Roundtable held in March, 1972. Sacks, 1974 was the published version of a paper delivered at a conference held in April, 1972. Sacks, 1975 was the edited version of a lecture last given in 1968. Subsequent publications under his name are edited versions of all or parts of pre-1972 course lectures, assembled by Gail Jefferson (cf. introduction to Volume 1, p. ix, n. 1). Only Sacks, 1987 [1973], although edited by others from a lecture, was first delivered after spring 1972.

Of co-authored papers, Schegloff and Sacks, 1973 was drafted (substantially in the form in which it was published) in 1969.

[34]Including his beginning to work with video materials, prompted in part during the 1973 Linguistic Institute by seeing the work of Charles and Marjorie Goodwin and its fit to conversation analytic concerns.

[35]Which Sacks and I outlined together in the spring of 1975, and which I then wrote the intial draft of, after Sacks went off to the first Boston University Summer Session on Ethnomethodology and Conversation Analysis.

[36]After his death, I made a list of papers we had discussed more than once, and more than casually, as needing to be drafted. There were 26 of them. Some account of these years may yet be written.

became increasingly enhanced. Jefferson (on the UCSB faculty that year) could also be appointed; we could tailor a curriculum to the special character of the subject matter and our approach to it; scheduling could be made flexible; space for a collegial, "working group" arrangement was possible; there would be support for our equipment needs, etc.

Finally, in the Fall of 1975, we received a request from those who were guiding these developments at Santa Barbara. They wanted – quite reasonably – to know what we proposed to offer as a program in return for the resources and possibilities which had been discussed over the preceding months. Sacks and I had several informal conversations about this. Finally, in mid-November, we decided we really had to sit down together and draw up a serious plan to offer to Santa Barbara. We decided to meet at Irvine, in part because Sacks had been suffering from an ear infection. We tentatively agreed to meet on a Monday morning. When I called the Sunday night before the scheduled meeting, the infection had not yet fully cleared up, and Sacks was still taking medication for it. But he resisted the suggestion that we delay the meeting. We would meet at the Irvine campus.

It was on his drive from the back canyons of Orange County to the Irvine campus to discuss the specifics of the program in conversation analysis which we might propose to Santa Barbara that his car was involved in a head-on collision with a truck, and he was killed.

XIV

Reading the lectures now, and especially reading ones which entertain agendas of work to be done (e.g., the last pages of Spring 1972, lecture 5), poses again and again the question of where our understanding of language and talk, of interaction and the social fates played out in it, of human sociality from the most intimate emotion to the largest issues of social organization, where our understanding would now be had Sacks not died in November, 1975. Recalling the years immediately following the last of these lectures, when some of that work was being advanced, and imagining what might have been accomplished in a program designed to advance this undertaking, in a supportive institutional environment, enhances the fantasy.

Whether or not the efforts of others succeed in establishing a discipline with satisfactory payoffs and sustainable continuity, we shall not have the discipline, or the understanding, which we would have had with him. Nor will it avail for others literally to try to execute the plans of inquiry which he projected. They were built from the breadth of his own past reading, from the depth and range of his analytic and empirical work, and were the product of the very special métier of his mind. What is needed is a continuous re-energizing of inquiry by the example of his work and the possibilities which it revealed – each person bringing to the enterprise the best mastery of past work which they can achieve and the special contribution which the character of their own talent makes possible. Not mechanical imitation or extrapolation but the

best possible effort to advance the undertaking in original ways will constitute the most appropriate and enduring celebration of Sacks' contribution.

The first lecture presented in these volumes began with a consideration of a conversation's opening; the last ends with a puzzle about how much can be infused into a conversation-opening "hello." An astonishingly rich tapestry of analysis comes between, in an intellectual career which did not tire of repeatedly going back to the beginning, showing again and again that there was an enterprise to be undertaken here. The achievement of the work is to be found not only in its results, but in its prompting of an undertaking, and in its constituting a standing invitation to others to join, and to begin, that undertaking themselves.

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