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# TEXT AND PERFORMANCE QUARTERLY

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## On the Poetics of Ordinary Talk<sup>1</sup>

GAIL JEFFERSON

*This article is based on a talk presented in 1977. Harvey Sacks, the founder of Conversation Analysis, had been killed in a traffic accident in 1975. Without his extraordinary presence the field seemed to be becoming defined by a paper published in 1974, "A simplest systematics for the organization of turn-taking in conversation." The 1977 talk was specifically directed to loosening up people's sense of the sort of work done in the field of Conversation Analysis.*

*Among his abundant and wide-ranging interests Harvey Sacks had been exploring (and eventually discussing in his lectures) various aspects of a phenomenon which somewhere along the line came to be called "poetics"—most roughly, that occasionally, talk appears to be produced at least in part by reference to, e.g., sounds and associations. Many of Sacks' students found the phenomenon appealing and began to contribute not only further instances of things he had considered, but new possibilities as well. The result was a mountain of roughly-sorted materials. The 1977 talk was a rather casual guided tour of a selected sample of those materials. This article is a more considered and elaborated version of that talk.*

## FOREWORD

A few years back my friend and colleague Robert Hopper sent me an edited transcript he'd made of a talk I'd given a long time ago on the poetics of ordinary talk. Mercifully he didn't send the tape as well. It was bad enough reading even an edited version of the sort of exuberant but not terribly coherent romps I do when I'm not constrained by the printed page. Robert wanted to include it in a special issue of *Text and Performance Quarterly* focusing on poetics, to come out early in 1993. He was asking me to go over his draft, maybe locate some missing data. I was happy for him to publish the thing, but told him to please get rid of my excesses. His answer, "My dear, if I get rid of your excesses there won't be anything left." (I'm going to try to work that into my epitaph; something like "Here she lies, rid of her excesses at last.") But even with a forgiving eye, some of it was badly garbled. I was forced to dig through a heap of old notes to see what I could have been trying to say. The result is that I've missed the journal's deadline by a good two years, but have come up with a rewrite in which I've tried for coherence without too much loss of the spontaneity captured in Robert Hopper's transcript.

*Gail Jefferson, an unaffiliated scholar, is the editor of Harvey Sacks' Lectures on Conversation and the developer of a method of transcription widely used in conversation analysis.*

The talk was given at the Boston University Conference on Ethnomethodology and Conversation Analysis in June, 1977. It was then a year and a half since Harvey Sacks' death, and the field of Conversation Analysis was coming to be identified almost exclusively by reference to the Sacks et al. paper "A simplest systematics for the organization of turntaking for conversation" published in 1974. As an antidote to that drastically constricted version of the field, I decided to present the wild side; stuff which we'd pretty much kept to ourselves and played with as a hobby. The stuff was wild, not only in its content, but in its lack of organization or development. It was, and still is, a big heap divided into not terribly descriptive or generative sub-heaps. In the years since that Boston conference I've gotten nowhere with it. It's remained a hobby, I'm still picking up cases, but that's as far as it goes. I present it now in the spirit I presented it back in 1977; an expression of the wild side of Conversation Analysis.

### THE BOSTON TALK (AS IT NEVER WAS)

#### 0. Introduction

This is not a paper. I don't know if there ever will be a paper. But we keep collecting these phenomena. And I think it's about time just to show some of the kinds of stuff we're collecting.

So the talk will be casual, a sort of guided tour through the data. The terms I'll be using are casual, the organization of the cases into "types" is casual—don't hold me to any of it, it's all just to show how this stuff keeps on turning up—the poetics of ordinary conversation.

Somewhere around 1966 Harvey Sacks dropped a note on my desk. It went like this:

With regard to the issue of word selections by reference to sound patterns, the question is, where to begin?

One possibility is with rephrased repetitions: the second variants might exhibit such patterns in a way that would allow attribution to the pattern to be made.

's breaking my folks

My insanity's breaking their bankbook

B-K form perhaps relevant to "bankbook" usage

Have Gail check this out

That's the note. And here's the data that the B-K case came from:

#### (0.1) [GTS:1:2:1]

Al: Hey you have a hole in yer shoe.  
 Roger: heh Do(hh)n' tell me. hhh heh  
 Al: This place co:s' too much money.  
 Ken: ( )  
 Al: ( ) Can'afforda buy shoes.  
 (2 sec)

Roger: → 's breaking mah folks.

(2 sec)

Ken: a(hh)h!

Roger: → My insanity's breaking their bankb'k.

Reading Sacks' note I thought oh yeah! Sound repetition. Sure! And began to think where would I look to find a phenomenon like that? And what occurred to me was estimated and fanciful numbers. They're not controlled by a need to be exact. I remembered one bit of talk that went "Nineteen minutes right on the nose." It came from the same group therapy session for teenagers that the B-K case came from. This is a bit later in the session. A couple of minutes earlier one of the kids, Al, had predicted that Louise would arrive soon. Sure enough, she does, at about eight minutes into the session.

#### (0.2) [GTS:1:2:12:R]

((door opens))

Al: 'h AAI!::eee!

(1.3)

Al: I toldju I ↓ toldju.

((door closes))

Al: → Nineteen minutes ↑ right on th' ↑ no:se.

I collected a bunch of those, and then we branched out and collected things like puns and rhymes.<sup>2</sup> It was so easy to gather that I got the feeling that this kind of study must have been going on forever. It couldn't be new with us. So we started checking out some of the literature. Judy Davidson had a lot of stuff on psychotics that she was using for a project on schizophrenic talk, and ran off some copies for me.

I developed an enormous affection for one guy, W. L. Woods, MD. In his studies of psychotic talk he seems to have a sense for what he called "the living language." That is, you don't run *tests* on people to see how they talk and how they make words, you *talk* to them and you listen to them and you pull it out of the talk. And you get a kick out of it.

He also had another line. The interesting thing about this kind of talk was that you'd listen to it and try to take it at face value, try to make sense out of it. And that was one of the problems of listening to a psychotic. You could be led to do this because the talk is, as Woods put it, "clothed in the formal structure of speech." Now, Woods was talking about sentence structure, and he kept insisting this talk is put into these beautiful sentences, and because the sentences are so perfect you don't see that there's all these noises, clangs, associations going on. The pathological phenomena are disguised by the formal structures of talk (Woods 312-13).

I figure we can just adapt that, and say that all the *interactional* structures we're learning about can be disguising those phenomena in the same way that sentence structures do. So I'll be introducing you to Dr. Woods, and to these phenomena.

There are two features I want to talk about.

(1) The objects (words, phrases, etc.) out of which people build their talk are made of *sounds*.

(2) A lot of these words and phrases belong to more than one *category*.

It's pretty much figured that all these wonderful mixtures of sounds and meanings are the provenance of poets who make it their business to work out, to seek, to really endeavor to find just the right word. I filched a poem by Paul Valery out of one of Sacks' folders of sound phenomena. It's in French, but I got together with the overseas contingent of folks at this conference, and they came up with this translation.<sup>3</sup>

I'm looking for a word (*said the poet*)  
a word which should be:  
feminine,  
of two syllables,  
containing P or F,  
with a muted ending,  
and synonymous with splitting, disintegration;  
and not scholarly, not rare.  
Six conditions—at least!

That's the poet's job. The *arrangement* of sounds and categories. Now you look at pathological talk, the psychotics and their clangs and associations, about which people say, well you have all these crazy things going on. What is the difference between what the psychotic does and what the poet does? It seems that sheer effort has to do with it.

As Woods describes the process: "The patient progresses from one . . . word to another by associations determined by similarities in sound, category or phrase" (Woods 295). He notes about a particular pathological activity which I'm adapting as a generic observation:

. . . there is probably nothing pathological about [it] as a purely subjective phenomenon. Introspective observation will verify that we are prone to [do it] . . . What is pathological is the tendency to incorporate such autistic productions without any endeavor to translate them into a form which considers the needs of a listener. (Woods 302)

W (With his observations on "the needs of a listener," it seems that Woods was beginning to glimpse what we talk of as "recipient design," a central feature of talk.<sup>4</sup> There was Woods in 1938 in a hospital in Iowa City, *talking* with patients and thereby finding *interactional* requirements. And in reading his reports you can see that he was delighting in the fact that he could pull this stuff right out of the living talk.)

Now, it is Woods' complaint that those psychotics will not *try* to design their talk for listeners, while we might say that the poet makes just that his life's work. And when we look at the arrays of sounds and categories in the conversations of ostensibly non-poetic, non-psychotic, ordinary people, we begin to see that just such "autistic productions" *are* incorporated into a form which *does* take into consideration the "needs of a listener." That is, they're produced with an eye to the various rules of competence and conduct by which conversation proceeds. Ordinary people neither reject the task nor make it their life's work. They just get it done.

What follows is a rough sketch, displaying a few of the phenomena we've found—what we talk of as the poetics of ordinary talk. What I'm going to do won't replicate how this stuff was found. I'll be starting off with utterly simple

instances, working up to the more complex, when in fact some of the earliest cases were horribly complex. And all of what I'll be saying, please do treat as nothing more than a glimpse of phenomena which are yet to be systematically collected and described. As I said at the start, the categories I'm using here don't deserve to be taken seriously; they're a way to try to subdivide the heap.

### 1. Errors.

I start with errors because they are places where the conversation's surface is already broken, so we can see a little way inside and begin to catch sight of the phenomena. That is, there is in the first place a problem about *seeing* these things. They inhabit otherwise ordinary talk; are embedded in those syntactical and sequential structures. Again, as Woods puts it about psychotic talk, the phenomena are "disguised by the clothing of sentence structure," where "the productions, because of their formal structure, have a plausibility which does not stand up before closer scrutiny" (Woods 294, 300).

It turns out that for some of the things we'll be looking at, the same is true for the talk of normals. There are phenomena which only emerge when the surface "plausibility" is pierced. And it makes it easier when the surface is already disturbed for us, as is the case with errors. So we'll be using errors as a window into some of the mechanisms by which words are selected in the course of an utterance.

#### 1.a. Sound-Formed Errors.

I'll start off with a few instances we've collected of speech errors that involve sound rows.<sup>5</sup>

##### (1.a.1) [Crandall Show]

B.C.: The arti(c)le thetchu [q]uote here refers to Roman [C]atholicism in what [kuh]-in what areas?

Here we get a row of sounds, a [k]-row: kuh, kuh, kuh. "arti(c)le," "[q]uote," "[C]atholicism." Then we get the sound "kuh-" possibly starting the word "country." But this is abandoned and replaced with "areas." So "kuh-" is being treated by its speaker as some sort of error. It is possible that the word "country" was begun, not because the speaker originally thought it was the right word, but because it started with the noise "kuh."

##### (1.a.2) [SBL:1:1:9:1:R]

Audrey: 'hhh en I: I: [w]ill uh be: up that [w]ay [w]n- (.) uh Thur:sdcc.

Here, a [w]-row is in progress, "[w]ill," "[w]ay," and at the point that a day is to be named, out comes another "[w]," possibly a start on "Wednesday," abandoned and replaced by the word "Thursday."

And here's one more, an [s]-row. Asked by her sister Emma what time she'll be leaving for her drive to the desert, Lottie produces an [s]-row, "Probably-[s]even, [s]even thirty or [s]omething." Emma then asking when Lottie will be

back, looks to be starting and abandoning the [s]-begun "Saturday," replacing it with "Tuesday."

## (1.a.3) [NB:IV:4:R:8]

Lottie: → Prob'ly- [s]ev'n, [s]ev'n thir'dy er  
[s]um\_p'n yihkno:w,

Emma: Ye: a h.

Emma: ↑ Won't take yih ↓ lo: :ng,

Lottie: "Him- m.°  
hhhh

Emma:

Lottie: Take me,

Emma: → {En you'll be} ho:me [s]ah- uh ↑ Tues ↓ dec.

Working through these sorts of materials you get a sense of a piling up of noises, kuh kuh kuh, wuh wuh, suh suh suh, and that those very noises are beginning to choose among possible next-to-be-uttered words. So if we were to examine the talk with an interest in *why* the errors were made, we could come up with a process, *sound-selection*. A tendency for sounds-in-progress to locate particular next words. In these cases, words are treated by their speakers as wrong, and replaced.

That seems straightforward enough. It begins to get tricky when we find errors which we would perfectly happily characterize as products of the sound-selection process, but where the participants (speakers or recipients) have gotten in ahead of us with an altogether different analysis. Not sound-selection, but something of deep psychological significance, *Freudian Slips*.

Here's an instance taken from a radio call-in show. The host is now reading out a commercial for suits, "Bond's Blue Chips."

## (1.a.4) [Crandall Show]

B.C.: [B]ig, [b]eautiful [l] savings from America's [l]argest c[l]othier. [B]oh- Bond's.  
Blondes, my goodness. Wuh that's a Freudian Slip.

In this instance there's a double sound-row underway, [b] and [l]. And now there's a projected two-word [b]-row, the first word of which is [b]+vowel (Bond's), the second of which is [b]+[l] +vowel (Blue). Call it a CV/CCV alternation. In classic tongue-twister fashion, the projected double consonant occurs first, yielding instead of "Bond's Blue," something moving towards "blonds boo."

Now that CV/CCV reversal turns out to be a standard phenomenon. For example:

## (1.a.5) [News broadcast]

Announcer: Bonavita would not [f]light- [f]ight [F]loyd Patterson.

Here, "... fight Floyd ..." becomes reversed and is starting to come out as "flight foyd." Another:

## (1.a.6) [Football broadcast]

Announcer: Staubach goes back in a [dr]eep- [dee]p [dr]opback.

That is, "... deep drop ..." becomes reversed and is starting to come out as "dreep dop."

Looking at these three cases we can see a similar sort of CV/CCV reversal, yielding instead of "Bond's," "blonds"; instead of "fight," "flight" and instead of "deep," "dreep." One of them is treated as something noticeable, characterizable, significant, a Freudian Slip. The other two are not dealt with in the ongoing talk, but might well be characterized by their speakers and recipients as Tongue Twisters, and understood as having no psychological significance.

Interesting. It looks to me like we've got two categories (Tongue Twisters and Freudian Slips) selectively applied to cases of a single phenomenon.

Here are a couple more which were seen at the time as Freudian Slips. I was among the recipients of the first one, as a passenger on a plane which has just made a very rough landing. The stewardess, delivering her standard spiel says:

## (1.a.7) [GJ:FN]

Stew: On behalf of the who[l]e f[r]ight- f[l]ight c[r]ew I'd like to thank you for flying  
Air California.

"Fright," and how! Freudian Slip! Lots of nudging and grinning among us passengers. But then I thought, no, it's one of those sound-selection things. As with dreep dop, blonds boo, flight foyd, here we were on the way to "fright cloo."

In this next instance, something I would attribute to a sound-production foul-up is treated as a Freudian Slip. Here, during a heated interchange in the course of negotiations between representatives of a civil rights organization and the Bank of America back in 1964, the word "bank" is produced, and a subsequent word, which should be "stacks," comes out rhyming with "bank" to make the word "stank."

At this point in the talk, the civil rights representative has once again raised the issue of the bank "discriminating against" Negroes, and "systematically excluding them" from the work force.

## (1.a.8) [CORE/BA:5:29-30]

Cross: Are we doing that,

Baumont: Gennlemen in the past you uv done it.

Cross: Prove it.

(pause)

Cross: Prove, that we are doing it, now.

Baumont: And while, While=

Baumont: =this company is scared et this moment,

Cross: =You said yerself that the past did not count. =

Baumont: =While, this company is scared et this moment,

Cross: "SCA: :RED,"

Cross: Oh God in heaven.

Baumont: Well.

Cross: De\_liver us a g a i : n.

Baumont: (this fea:r.) Ye:s.

Baumont: (fea:r), y'know I, jus' kind'v assume thet a

→ large comp'ny like th'B[ank]'v America thet  
→ s:st[ank]- stacks dozens of a:rm ed uh =

- Cross: → =Eh w'z that a Freudian Slip? Mister uh::  
 Baumont: blue uniform' men,  
 Baumont: in fr,onna their banks.  
 Cross: Baumont?  
 Baumont: hhunh hunh hunh 'hh'hh Well, it, could be,  
 Webb: (          )  
 Webb: (          ) however  
 Baumont: [Uh,  
 Baumont: Cert'nly indicates uh, some concern.  
 Cross: We are c'n,cerned about demonstrations,=  
 Baumont: [A::nd uh,  
 Cross: =Naturally, we're concerned about=  
 Baumont: [Yeah. Uh:huh,  
 Cross: =demonstrations but that does not make us afraid en I assure you we  
 are not.  
 Jessup: Well leh- let's get back to the issue here.

It seems to me all these cases have to do with various sound-productional mechanisms, but *some* get seen by speakers and/or recipients as having to do with something altogether different, some sort of psychological mechanism.

This is not to say that matters psychological/sociological don't show up in funny ways in people's talk. For example, it's possible that in the following instance someone is trying to *avoid* what he can foresee as a dangerous CV-CCV reversal, and that maneuver results in the omission of the dreaded consonant from a word in which it *did* belong. Here's the data. It's from a football game in which the Oakland Raiders were playing.

(1.a.9) [Football broadcast]

Announcer: Jones was not open on that [pay]-[play], both [backs] in their [block]ing.

What I'm proposing is that, just as with flight foyd, blonds boo, dreep dop, fright cloo, there's a difficult series here, "both backs . . . blocking."<sup>6</sup> And one dangerous possibility is "both blacks." Especially since both backs in question were in fact black. So avoiding the perilous [1] is much to be desired. But the omitting is done prematurely, and an innocuous speech-error results, the absence of an [1] from "play" for no readily discernable reason.

And somehow, in his next utterance, the announcer happens to notice and remark upon the elegant "black uniforms" worn by the Oakland Raiders. (Most of the professional teams wore uniforms in colors that invoked college days: blue and gold, maroon and white, etc. The Raiders' bad-guy-chic was a departure.)

This attention to the "black" uniforms gives us a possible case of a phenomenon we've been catching now and then, *suppression-release*. You're being very careful not to say something, and you succeed in not saying it, and it sneaks out in the next utterance. So we end up with this terribly convoluted account of someone's remarking on the color of a team's uniforms; that it was the consequence of and index to an attempt *not* to produce the word "black" in a prior utterance.

(Once, during one of Sacks' lectures he got into some stuff on poetics, and a student remarked that it might get "carried too far." Here's what Sacks said back. "The whole problem is that it's nowhere in the first instance. And the issue

is to pull it out and raise the possibility of its operation" (Sacks 2:325). Seems to me it makes sense to push the stuff, keep pushing at it, see how far it might go. You can always pull back to a more cautious, reasonable, sensible position. But when you're doing this explorative work, go ahead and push.)

Okay. Those were a few of our collected *sound-formed errors*. Some can get pretty fancy, some of them look like Freudian Slips and aren't, and that last one may have been brought on by the avoidance of a Freudian Slip.

I just want to notice about those cases, that where the category Freudian Slip was applied (either by participants or, as in the last, "avoidance" case, by myself as analyst), the talk was particularly ripe for such work; it had to do with Sex ("big beautiful blondes"), Fear ("fright crew"), Hostility ("the bank that stank"), Race ("both blacks in there blocking"). It's as if, in the first place, they qualify as *candidate* Freudian Slips, and are then duly noticed as Freudian Slips. So, if it *can* be a Freudian Slip, see a Freudian Slip.

But what if it isn't a reasonable candidate? What about "dreep dop" for example? It looks to me that such errors are not at all subject to the same sort of *accounting* as are the candidate Freudian Slips. A while ago I called them Tongue Twisters, but you don't find participants using that account except in drastic cases. These fleeting mixups, like "dreep dop," pass without notice. And it takes special analytic work to discover that in the first place there is a large corpus of sound-formed errors, a few of which can be seen as having psychological significance and therefore are so seen, whether or not they actually have such significance.

When I first started playing around with speech errors in 1968 or thereabouts, anybody I talked to about the thing came up with Freudian Slips, and that seemed enough for them. So I took a look at Freud's article, "Slips of the Tongue," published in 1901. The article begins by citing previous work on the subject by the linguists Meringer and Mayer in their 1895 article "Slips in Reading and Speaking." They had such categories as "transpositions," "anticipations," "perseverations," "contaminations" and "substitutions," and explained the phenomena in neurological terms such as "innervation" and "excitatory process." Freud pretty much replaced those sorts of accounts with the single account, "unconscious motives." It's beginning to look as if his attempted replacement is better treated as a possible *addition* to the sorts of accounts given by Meringer and Mayer. Sometimes a cigar is just a cigar, and sometimes, maybe most times, a CV-CCV reversal is just a CV-CCV reversal.

1.b. *Category-Formed Errors.*

Now I want to go on to some category-formed errors. And I'm using the term "category" in the most casual, weakest possible sense. I'm going to go through a series of errors. Some of them you could treat as having deep psychological import; for example, when a young man introduces himself as "Carol's sister." I'll be looking at all of them as cases of this categorial business.

This is a series of errors in which you have objects that very strongly belong together; sometimes as contrasts, sometimes as co-members, very often as pairs. Up-down, right-left, young-old, husband-wife. What seems to happen is that a gross selection-mechanism delivers up a category, but not the specific *member* of

that category, and it's sort of a matter of pot luck whether the correct one gets said. It's like the whole package gets dropped down, and it's up to . . . who knows what? your taste buds? to decide which word is going to come out.<sup>7</sup>

Sometimes speakers produce the full "wrong" word, then correct it.

## (1.b.1) [GJ:FN]

Larry: Hi. I'm Carol's sister- uh brother

## (1.b.2) [SBL:3:1:R:2]

Marylou: . . . then more people w'l show up. (.) Cuz they won't feel obligated tih sc:ll tih bu ↓ :y.

## (1.b.3) [GJ:FN]

Joe: And maybe there's a better way of geting uh, giving them some power.

## (1.b.4) [Pollner:TC]

Mr. L.: I was- made my left, uh my right signal . . .

## (1.b.5) [FD:Wife:R:5]

Harry: A:n:d. (.) the last we hea:rd they were coming sou:th <uh north,

In each case we get a correction done on a complete word, "sister- uh brother," "to sell to buy," "getting uh, giving," "my left, uh my right" and "coming south uh north." In these five the correction is done immediately. In the next instance, the error, "wife" for "husband," is apparently not caught until after a next story-component has been produced. These are the group-therapy kids again. Ken was looking through some record albums and found one he figures is his father's.

## (1.b.6) [GTS:II:2:27]

Ken: An' the very bottom thing he's got uh  
 Roger: Oh my,boil.  
 Ken: → a'record that goes How Tuh, Strip Fer=  
 Al: → Your Wife. An' I played this thing? or How To heh heh heh  
 Ken: → Strip For Your Husbin?  
 ( ): ((cough))  
 Ken: → An' I played this thing an' it was so stupidly, i-it was just it was ridiculous.

In effect, Ken retroactively provides for the "immediateness" of his correction by recycling the story-component ("And I played this thing") which followed the uncaught error, so that it now follows the correction. The reconstructed version has the same order of events as the other five cases: "he's got uh a record that goes How To Strip For Your Wife. or How To Strip For Your Husband? And I played this thing. . . ."

In the next set of instances we don't have a complete word, but a bit of noise which looks to me like it could be the start of a categorial error caught before it fully emerged.

## (1.b.7) [Anchorage:FD]

Caller: . . . my wi- uh my husband is ((up north))

## (1.b.8) [Anchorage:FD]

Desk: He was here lay- uh earlier but he left.

## (1.b.9) [Pollner:TC]

Mr. D.: So I proceeded through and the car be- in front of me, went on through. . .

## (1.b.10) [Crandall Show]

Caller: . . . uh:: of Ar- of Israeli conquests.

## (1.b.11) [GTS:I:1:43:R]

Louise: ↑ A TWELVE YEAR OLD ↑ GUY COMES OVER I say who's yi- older brother is he

## (1.b.12) [Crandall Show]

Caller: . . . that it would apply to any t- student

So we've got wife-husband, later-earlier, behind-in front, Arab-Israeli, younger-older, teacher-student, with the wrong word being cut off just as it's gotten started, and replaced with the correct word. Maybe it's just guessing-games to say I'll bet that was a start on "younger"; maybe I'm just imposing categorial co-membership on random little noises. But maybe not. This is beginning to be an obsolete polemic, but here it is anyway: All those messy little false starts and odd little noises are something you want to capture. You find out things if you look at them.

Every now and then you can come across something a bit more elaborate. Here, a word gets started and is cut off, and its categorial pair is produced. But then *that* word is replaced with the original, cut-off word, now produced to completion.

## (1.b.13) [Schenkein:II:98:R]

Ellen: You better be ca::reful because you might marry a woman who eats like Hester's: (0.3) ↑ nee- ← neph ↓ cw ↑ nie:ce.

It looks like what we've got here is a double trouble. In the first place there's a business you could go wrong on, and routinely do go wrong on: husband or wife, brother or sister, in this case niece or nephew. We also have a possible sound row. We've got "eats" and now she hears herself saying "niece." Hearing

that very close sound-relationship between "eats" and "niece." she may find herself not trusting her choice, so she cuts it and puts in what would then have to be the correct item; not "niece" but "nephew." But no, just in terms of sheer facts of the matter, it's not the right one. So she puts in the one that was right in the first place but just *had* to be wrong because it sounded too much like "eats!" As I said, you get an image of some gross selection-mechanism that delivers up a category, and then it's anybody's guess which member of the category pops out.

Here's another sort of trouble that looks to be brought on by the way categories work. You're setting up a contrast, produce the first item of the contrast pair, and then, instead of its contrast, its opposite, you repeat the initial item. In the first case, a speaker sees he's doing that, stops and corrects.

## (1.b.14) [GTS:II:2:24]

Dan: The men'll start wearing dresses, and the men'll- and the women'll start wearing pants? Is that the idea?

Roger: Yeh

Al: Yah.

In the next, a speaker doesn't see that she's done it.

## (1.b.15) [GJ:FN]

Beth: ... the Black Muslims are certainly more provocative than the Black Muslims ever were.

Jan: The Black Panthers.

Beth: The Black Panthers. What'd I.

Jan: You said the Black Muslims twice.

Beth: Did I really?

So. You say it, and you say it again. And sometimes you hear that you did it, and sometimes you don't.

Here's another sort of trouble with those categorials. You make an error and attempt to correct it. And in the attempt to correct it, you do the *error* again. In the first case, a black woman is trying to tell the interviewer about a problem with the research being done on race relations.

## (1.b.16) [Television Interview]

Woman: ... instead of you, studying us, 'n find out why white people cannot relate to- 'hh why white- why black people cannot relate tuh white people. ...

She does eventually get it right. But in the next two cases, they get it wrong, and get it wrong again, and give up. Here, one of the group therapy kids is trying to say "The father isn't holding you back."

## (1.b.17) [GTS:V:29]

Roger: → The mother isn't holdin- the father isn't- ah Freudian Slip  
heh heh "Mother" hah hheh hheh

→ The mother, isn't the uh the one thet's holding you back.

(4 sec)

Roger: Maybe it's just a lack of character. I don't think so.

Dan: No. I don't think so either.

And this next one caused a big fuss when it happened on a TV broadcast. It's an interview with the new, Republican, Postmaster General. He's attempting to do a criticism of the rival party, the Democrats.

## (1.b.18) [Television Interview]

PMG: The Republicans are less efficient than the Democrats. I mean the Republicans are less efficient than the Democrats. ((laughs)) You know what I mean.

Okay. That was a collection of errors that I think are clearly sound- and/or category-formed. Now I'm going to turn to a collection where the talk is perfectly correct, but contains such simple and obvious sound- and category-formed components that the poetics phenomenon is inescapable. It just leaps out at you.

2. *Correct Sound- and Category-Formed Components*

I'll go through these in the same order as I did the errors, starting with sound-formed components.

2.a. *Sound-Formed Components*

Sometimes a word can be selected by reference to a sound-row. The first instance has a [b]-row in progress. I suppose this is not the easiest case to see the phenomenon in, since the selected word, "bugged," occurs early in the row. I'd want to argue that the rest of the utterance is already formed up, and although not yet actually spoken, can have influenced the choice.

## (2.a.1) [Lamb Interviews]

Mrs. R.: [B]ut at the time it really, (0.3) [b]ugged us. [b]ecause we were in [B]ermuda.

Next, a [k]-row.

## (2.a.2) [SBL:3:1:R:8]

Claire: ... there's only ↑ one on the Ways'n Means (C)ommittee, and I [c]annot serve on two: be[c]ause 'hhhh all these [c]a[k]es and [c]a:ndy and [c]rap. ...

Here it's the word "crap" that seems to me to have been sound-selected. There are so many alternative expletives. And it looks like words with multiple alternatives are heavily subject to sound-selection. Here we have this [k]-row going, and the word that's used as its expletive is "crap."

In this next case, it's a [j]-row. Having just said "jetty," a speaker picks the expletive "Jesus."

## (2.a.3) [NB:II:1:R:5]

Lottie: . . . we wen'out'the:: (:.) mouth a'the [j]etty Tuesdee en [j]eeziz did we ketch  
ba:ss en halibut.

Of course there are other things that tend to get sound-selected. Assessments seem ripe for the phenomenon. In the next two instances, we get "he is doing fantastic" and "I am fascinated." Three guesses what the sound-row is.

## (2.a.4) [NB:V:7]

Emma: so [f]in'ly Bill came in [f]r'm playing go::lf en ↑ oh we got tuh- talking how's  
the beach'n ev'rything I z'oh [f]ine I s'd- 'hhhhh Ced I have the most  
wonder[f]ul neighbors down the street- [f]rie::nds 'n 'hhhhhhh I said you  
know prob'ly kno:w Jerry [F]ulton 'e sz Oh: a' course I do. °En I s- 'e sz how's e  
do:ng. End I sz° e-he is doing [f]a:ntastic.

We've got an [f]-row here, including [f]inally, [f]rom, [f]ine, [f]riends, [F]ulton. And then comes the assessment "he is doing [f]antastic." And in the next case, [f]oo[f]aw, [f]orth, [f]ire, [f]orth. And then comes the assessment, "I am [f]ascinated by this."

## (2.a.5) [Crandall Show]

B.C.: I have heard all this [f]oo[f]aw back and [f]orth about uh couldn't [f]ire the  
three shots in seven seconds and so [f]orth and so on. I am [f]ascinated by  
this. . .

Another phenomenon may be here as well. Rich Frankel is interested in "members' math." You watch these numbers, either the numbers themselves or words with the sounds of numbers, like "forth." So: "three shots in seven seconds and so forth." What is the relationship? It's simple arithmetic. Three from seven equals four. Now that sounds crazy, but it happens all the time.

In the next instance, someone is attempting to quote a bon mot, a catchphrase, and gets it wrong. I think this belongs to a category that's a favorite of Manny Schegloff's, "gist-preserving errors." What's said is wrong, but catches a great deal of the correct item (Sacks 2:143). In this case, the wrong item captures not only the sense of the correct item, but its alliteration. The correct item is "beards for brains." The wrong item, "sideburns for sense," happens to follow an [s]-row.

## (2.a.6) [TV Election Coverage]

McGee: What was it he [s]aid? [S]omething about [s]ub[s]tituting [s]ideburns for  
[s]en[s]e?

Delegate: Beards for brains.

McGee: Beards for brains. Right.

This stuff always reminds me of a game little girls play called "A, My Name is Alice." The idea is to go through the alphabet, doing stuff like "A, my name is Alice and my Auntie's name is Anna, we live in Alabama and we sell Apples. B,

my name is Betty and my Brother's name is Bob, we live in Boston and we Bake Bread." And I'll tell you, if you ever start lecturing on this stuff you have to be very careful, because you start doing it. And worst of all, you begin to get a sensitized audience. You catch them whispering "There's one! There's one!"

Okay, that was a quick glance at obviously sound-formed but perfectly correct utterances. In the next set, it appears that words have been selected by reference to some categorial business.

2.b. *Category-Selected Components*

The result of this sort of selection is a variety of puns. I'll go through two types.

(2.b.1) *Co-Class Puns*

I'll start off with a couple of utterly simple ones. We get two members of a paired category. Neither one is wrong, and the talk is otherwise perfectly coherent and correct. But one of the items is not being used by reference to the category in which the two are co-members.

In the first instance, the category in which both items are members is, say, "directionals." We get "left," and then we get "right." But while "left" is used to talk about someone's left side, "right" is used for something like repair, fix, make better. This is about the victim of a series of strokes.

## (2.b.1.1) [MC:II:11:9]

Lila: but the second'n third 'hh uh-eh-vuh- more'r  
→ less paralyzed [ his left hand, left side.  
Philip: [ tch  
Philip: Oh my goodness.  
Lila: [So thet uh ke ku-eh his speech is: hh  
is eh-muddled: hh But they think no:w, hh  
→ thet with therapy they c'n right it.=  
Philip: = [ Mhm.  
Lila: = [ t'some extent.

In the next one, a magazine, "Life," is named. Then we get another possible magazine title, *Time*. But the word "time" is not used for the category in which it would be a co-member with the magazine title "Life," it is used for something else.

## (2.b.1.2) [Lamb Interviews]

Mr. A.: → Well, we get Life, which is- I don't- we  
→ don't have time to sit down and read long stories so . . .

It seems to me that the word "time"—and the so-called thought to which it is attached—was put into play by the co-membership of the two words *Life* and *Time*, in the category "magazine titles," although the second word, as used, does not belong to that category.

In the next instance, *neither* of the terms (again, "left" and "right") occurs by reference to their shared category, "directionals." In this interchange, one



occurs for "went away" and the other for "correct," but the *words* are "left" and "right."

## (2.b.1.3) [GJ:FN]

Alan: You told him I was coming so he left.

Jean: Right!

As they are being used here, neither "left" nor "right" belongs to a category that has anything to do with "direction," or in which one word has to do with the other. So it's a sort of double crossover, neither being used for the category in which they are co-members, and by reference to which the word "*Right!*" may have come into play.

The same sort of thing holds for the next instance. The words "fall" and "stand" meet in a category having to do with, say, movement. But in this case, "fall" is used for "autumn" and "stand" is used for "tolerate."

## (2.b.1.4) [Lamb Interviews]

Mr. N.: I voted for Cranston in the Fall, mainly because I couldn't stand Rafferty.

The words "autumn" and "tolerate" have who-knows-what to do with each other. But with this double crossover we get a pair of synonyms which are intensely related, albeit in a category that has nothing to do with what's being talked about.

There are no errors to catch our attention in these four cases. We listen, it's plausible, we take it at face value, and we aren't led to see Woods' "autistic productions" crawling around through the matrix of the talk. But if you start looking for that sort of thing it sure seems to be there.

Just a couple more of these co-class puns. They're not as crisply related, and maybe strain the argument, but I like them, and what is exploration for anyhow?

## (2.b.1.5) [Lamb Interviews]

Mr. R.: → The computer business is absolutely filled with guys who pose as experts.  
→ whose opinions are viewed as holy, when they ought not to be.

Something which is not "filled" might, by a bit of a stretch, be seen as . . . it's not even a word . . . "holey"? Well, I'm not ready to throw it out yet.

And in this next one, there seems to be an egg image at work. Two women have been talking about sewing a pair of slacks with a yoke in the back.

## (2.b.1.6) [Schenkein:II:197]

Ellen: You might find something very similar t'this  
→ without the yoke en they're just ez easy tuh  
→ whip u:p.

This instance turned out to be controversial. I talked about it in class, and some people in the back started muttering. After class I was told that it's not egg yolks and whipping up eggs, it's *oxen*. You put a yoke on an ox, hitch him to the plow, and whip him to get him going. Okay, what the heck, one way or another we're pretty well agreed that those terms came out of somewhere, eggs or oxen, but not out of what they're talking about, dressmaking.

The next type of pun works the other way around. Rather than selection being done somewhere in a category unrelated to what's being talked about, here, the punning relationship is over-apt for what's being talked about.

(2.b.2) *Topical Puns*

This is something Sacks had been working on for a while now.<sup>8</sup> I'll just run through a few cases. I don't think they need any commentary.

## (2.b.2.1) [Lamb Interviews]

Mrs. A.: I wanted to go to an [agricultural] college but my mother [steered] me away from that.

## (2.b.2.2) [GJ:FN]

Dwight: I hope to become more consistent as I get [deeper] into this w[hole] problem.

For this next one, we need to know that Camarillo is a state mental hospital.

## (2.b.2.3) [GJ:FN]

Barney: I'm [committed] to visiting my sister at [Camarillo] every week.

## (2.b.2.4) [HS:FN]

Anne: Russia's the worst. We went twenty four hours once without [eating] a thing. I just got [fed] up waiting.

And the next one is about a stolen [ring.]

## (2.b.2.5) [HS:FN]

Ginny: Could you think of anyone who would want to steal it? uh, [off hand]?

## (2.b.2.6) [GJ:FN]

Beth: They're not doing anything to catch the rainfall. They're not building [reservoirs]. They just don't give a [dam]n.

## (2.b.2.7) [Lamb Interviews]

David: And what does it mean, the [flag] on your car.

Mr. B.: I think it means I'm proud to be an American.

David: I mean I ask that because there was something of a [flap] over what it was supposed to mean.

Actually, these are pretty much what we think of as common and garden variety puns, I guess. They really are all over the place. You can't get away from them.

Here's one last one, from a television interview with Senator Hubert H. Humphrey. He was discussing the delicate balance of governmental agencies, using the 3-legged stool as an image, where, if one leg is short, everything becomes unbalanced.

### (2.b.2.8) [HHH Interview]

HHH: . . . somebody's gonna fall on a [portion of their anatomy], and you know what I mean! The short leg of the Federal Reserve Bank has got everyone in a (0.3) [tail]spin.

This may be another instance of "suppression-release" that I talked about for Fragment (1.a.9), the dreaded word "blacks" being avoided, and then mention being made of the Oakland Raiders' black uniforms. Here, the delicately alluded-to "portion of their anatomy" shows up a bit later in the word "[tail]spin."

Those were the arrays of perfectly okay talk in which sound and category-formed components might be present. We've got these phenomena subdivided in all manner of ways, none of which seems to take us very far. But we've got to keep the stuff from piling up in one big heap called "poetics," and at least these sub-heaps give us a chance of finding a bit of data if we happen to need it. I'll go through a few of the sub-sets.

### 3. Sub-Collections

Each of us who's become addicted to the poetics stuff develops affection for one or another sub-type. Here's one of my favorites.

#### 3.a. Names in Sound-Rows

To report these cases I need to preserve the names unchanged. In other fragments I've now and then changed a name even though it was part of a phenomenon I was discussing. For example, in Fragment (2.a.4), pretty much all I've preserved about this guy's name is that it starts with an [F]. But who knows what other relationships are present that I've obliterated?

I'm a professional transcriber, and I really take a position about changing names in this data. We have to do it to protect their identities. It turns out that if you're protecting identities, you're messing up the data. You're ripping up the texture. You change a name, you step on a butterfly. (You know that Ray Bradbury story?)<sup>9</sup> Watch out! You may have removed some of the texture of the talk that matters to the way it's getting built up.

So. On to some names in sound-rows. Actually, in only two of them am I putting anyone at risk, since all the rest are public property, taken from broadcasts of football games. But the first and last cases are taken from private conversations.

### (3.a.1) [GJ:FN]

Martha: I called [Terry] and told her to come over around nine thirty.

Jan: It's nine thirty now.

Martha: Well then she'll be here momen[tarily].

There's something in this instance that we've noticed now and then. Sometimes a word occurs that seems a bit special, maybe out of character, maybe not register-fitted to the surrounding talk. In this case "momentarily" is such a word. And it may have been selected from alternatives such as "any minute now" by the sound relationship between the word "Terry" and the last bit of "momentarily." A sound-row. What we're learning to do is to track back into the talk and see if we can find a possible source for some striking word.

Alene Terasaki was working on some materials where the word "affronted" popped up. Tracking back, she found a possible source; reference to someone who "came up [behind] me."<sup>10</sup> I won't go through that case because the distance between the odd word and its possible source is too great. I'm trying to stay with utterly simple instances.

And here is a batch of the simplest possible cases. As I mentioned, they all come from broadcasts of football games.

### (3.a.2) [Football Broadcasts]

- (a) Bill [Knox] [knocked] the ball loose . . .
- (b) Kenny [Stabler] has really [stabilized] the club.
- (c) [Chester] Markol [checks] in . . .
- (d) And [Eischeid] has really been [shining] here in the second half.
- (e) A nineteen yard touchdown run by Gregg [Pruitt]. So the Browns are really [proving] tough today.
- (f) Willie [Lanier] [nearly] took his head off!
- (g) And we have Lawrence [McCutcheon], a [clutch] runner.
- (h) Jim Le[Clair] had a good [clear] shot at Franco.
- (i) Plunkett may make a [last] ditch attempt throwing to Jim [Lash].
- (j) [Norm Snead] throwing to his favorite receiver who has [enormous speed] potential.
- (k) [Fore]man is stopped at the [for]ty, thirty yard line.

I'll finish off this set with a more complicated instance, again from a telephone conversation. Here we get a question asked which ends up being produced in overlap. The question is "What's his name?"

### (3.a.3) [GJ:FN]

Norm: He'll be here a little after one. He's  
at my house now.

Gail: [What's his name.

Now, it's perfectly possible and routinely done that an overlapped speaker goes on to respond to the overlapping talk. Here, another tack is taken. We get a display of "I'm still occupying this turn, undisrupted by what you did."<sup>11</sup>

## (3.a.3) [Expanded]

Norm: He'll be here a little after one. He's  
at my house now.

Gail: What's his name.

Norm: Barring any unforeseen trouble.

As it happens, I was one of the participants. Having asked the question "What's his name?" when Norm produced the "bar . . ." of "barring," I thought he was going to say "Barney." I was wrong. But not all that wrong.

## (3.a.3) [Expanded]

Norm: He'll be here a little after one. He's  
at my house now.

Gail: What his name.

Norm: → Barring any unforeseen trouble. His name's Bart.

It looks like what happened is, at a place where an answer to "What's his name?" is due, we get an artifact, in "[barr]ing," of the object that will constitute the answer, "[Bart]." This could be another case of "suppression-release," like (1.a.9) and (2.b.2.8) where something being avoided ("blacks" and "tail" respectively) slips out. Here, building a display of imperturbably going on with one's own talk, not deigning to answer an "interruptive" question the moment it is asked, something wonderfully close to that answer pops out.

That's one little sub-collection, "names in sound-rows." Here's another.

## 3.b. Numbers

These come up in all sorts of ways. We can get a pure sound phenomenon as in this instance in which "nine" shows up first as a number and then in a way that has nothing to do with numbers. And this may be one of those striking words, uncharacteristic for its speaker, that I mentioned about Fragment (3.a.1), "momentarily," and Terasaki's experience with "affronted."

## (3.b.1) [GTS:II:2:65]

Roger: We mebe g(h)o [nine]dy miles o(h)n a Friday night. Going nowhere. An' my dad thinks it's as[nine].

On the other hand, looking at numbers as numbers you can find them organizing themselves in ways extrinsic to what's being talked about. For example, here's a 3, 2, 1 series in talk that has nothing to do with a countdown.

(3.b.2) [NB:IV:13:R:22]<sup>12</sup>

Emma: Yihknow en ah'm a big ↓ m:eat eater

Lo[ttie.] We: ]come] d o: w n]

Lottie: I: kn ow it e 'n you know I n ever eat  
me,at.

Emma: hhh We come down here en my God we buy-  
→ (0.4) we'll eat about (.) [Three] dollars worth  
→ a' stea:k. The (b) [two] of us [one] ni:ght  
yihknow a gr:eat big stea:k . . .

(It would be especially nice here if Emma's "The (b)" with its incipient, not-yet-voiced [b], was a start on "The both of us," shouldered aside by the developing extrinsic countdown.)

And then we find cases in which some of the numbers are intended as numbers while some are words with the sounds of numbers.

## (3.b.3) [GTS:II:2:54:R]

Roger: ↑ It wz a ↑ ba:ll yihkno:w. We got in[tuh] [three] r:aces. that night yihkno:w.  
We [won] [two] of um,

I've marked "in[tuh]" as a possible case, since the word when "correctly" pronounced is "to." But maybe these sorts of clangs don't work with what a word "should" sound like, and "intuh" is no more akin to "two" than, say, "night" is. Leaving "in[tuh] [three]" aside, the next segment, "We [won] [two]," is a clear case.

Here's another mix of actual numbers and sound-likes:

## (3.b.4) [Goodwin:93:AD(a):16]

Bart: [Fi:rs'] comp'm<sup>13</sup> I've had'n [three] years 'n yih expect hhme no:t [to]?  
Lenny: [Three] yea:rs you had [one] b'[fo:re]?

You can start getting a little punchy with this stuff, wandering around mumbling "First three two?" "Three one four:?" Or, as in the next case, you can find yourself tempted to say "The [four]some is going to [five] it out for [sixty] thousand dollars," rather than ". . . [fight] it out . . ."

## (3.b.5) [Golf Broadcast]

Announcer: So we've got a [four]some going out to [fifteen] to [fight] it out for [sixty] thousand dollars.

Or, as in the next case, tempted to say "[Five]" instead of "[Fine]."

## (3.b.6) [HS:FN]

Abby: So why don't you call either the evening of the [third] or the evening of the [fourth] Louise.

Louise: [Fine].

Or, as in this discussion of a prescription, tempted to say "[First of all] he gave me [second of all]."

## (3.b.7) [SPC Calls]

Caller: [First of all] he gave me [Seconal].

I'll close this sub-collection with a case that hasn't got to do with numbers, but with measuring terms. It's something like Fragments (2.b.1.3) and (2.b.1.4), "left" and "right" for "went away" and "correct," and "fall" and "stand" for "autumn" and "tolerate," in the sense that the words are not being used for the set in which they meet, as "half" and "whole." So it's a double cross-over. But in this case, the words aren't "half" and "whole" at all, but sound-alikes.

## (3.b.8) [Football Broadcast]

Announcer: Staubach in trouble, he'll [haf]tuh [hol]d it

It took a lot of words to try to describe that thing. It took a lot fewer to mark it as a candidate instance on its occurrence: "There's one!" was adequate to that task.

So far we've looked at the sub-collections "names in sound-rows" and "numbers." Here's the next.

## 3.c. Colors

Now and then we come across materials in which it looks as if a category like "colors" is in operation; where the naming of a color can select how a next thought will be phrased. That is, also in terms of color.

## (3.c.1) [Football Broadcast]

Announcer: Joe [Lavender] . . . saw a [golden] opportunity.

The next instance is from a 1963 sensitivity training session for prison guards. They're being encouraged to air their feelings about homosexuals and blacks.

## (3.c.2) [Ward-Kassebaum:II:2-28-63:17]

Baines: → When I see a [white] girl with a [colored] man I always want to go over and punch him in the nose, but -- I saw several [colored] girls that I might have gone out with but I figured I get caught you know, somebody might see me and I'd feel awfully guilty about it.

Arlett: Why would you punch him in the nose.

Baines: → I don't know. I just see [red]. I mean who does the son of a bitch think he is.

These two "color" instances have a detail in common. It's not only that we get the colors but we get them in an identical format, "I [see] [color]." The football player "[saw] a [golden] opportunity," Mr. Baines tells us "When I [see] a [white] girl with a [colored] man," and "I [saw] several [colored] girls that I might have gone out with," and "I just [see] [red]." This may be a fluke of these two cases. Maybe not.

As a last case in this series, an excerpt from a long story by one of the group-therapy kids about his first traffic ticket. It is presented as a story about age discrimination.

## (3.c.3) [GTS:3:47-8]

- 1 Ken: I used to drive from Saratoga, (1 sec) all  
2 over the place. Drive trucks an' they- they  
3 never stopped me. And out here, you get out  
4 here, they see that you're seventeen years  
5 old, an' WHAM you've had it.  
6 (1 sec)  
7 Ken: I got a ticket for goin' two foot over a  
8 stop sign. My first- my first ticket.  
9  
10  
11 Ken: There was a truck coss- crossing it's one a'  
12 these temporary stop signs y'know they stick  
13 it in the middle a' the road? . . . An' it's-  
14 You turn this corner an' you see the stop  
15 sign, you know? So I hit my brakes an' . . .  
16 I skidded an' I stopped, uh maybe this far  
17 over.  
18 (2 sec)  
19 Ken: Cop says pull over, I pulled over, you know  
20 . . . He says uh can I see your license?  
21 Where's your operator's license. You know,  
22 Yeah. I took my wallet out, he says uh take  
23 it out please. I took it out, he looks on  
24 the back, he says Mm hm,  
25 (3 sec)  
26 Ken: Looks at it real carefully an' sees I'm not  
27 eighteen. He says well you know, you went  
28 two foot over that stop sign. Now uh, I'm  
29 very sorry but I'm gonna have to writechu  
30 out a ti- citation on this. . . . He says  
31 → 's against the law to go over that [white]  
32 line. And he gives me a big long lecture  
33 → he's a [colored] guy.  
34 (1 sec)  
35 Ken: An't it- it burned me up you know, because if  
36 it was an adult, they sure wouldn't stop an  
37 adult, you know, somebody- somebody thirty,  
38 thirty five years old, (no they wouldn't)  
39 Louise: Y'know watchu sh'do  
40 sometimes? When you ever get stopped you say  
41 I didn't do anything wrong . . .

I said it's presented as a story about age discrimination. For one, it's bracketed by that sort of talk. The left bracket, "They see that you're seventeen years old, and WHAM you've had it" (lines 4-5). The right bracket, "They sure wouldn't stop an adult . . . somebody thirty, thirty five years old" (lines 36-7). And in mid-story, "age discrimination" is the key to a cryptic "Mm hm" by the police officer who, having asked for Ken's driver's license, "Looks at it real carefully and sees I'm not eighteen" (lines 23-7).

So there's a thread, "age discrimination," running through the story. And we're introduced to the on-site representative of "they" who do that discriminating: Ken skids past the stop sign whereupon "Cop says pull over" (line 19).<sup>14</sup> As the incident unfolds, there is no description of the cop, who is referred to exclusively as "he" (lines 20, 22, 23, 24, 27, 30 and 32). Suddenly comes this thing, this announcement, "he's a colored guy" (line 33). And then it's gone, the story closed off with the right-hand age discrimination bracket "They sure wouldn't stop an adult, you know, somebody- somebody thirty, thirty five years old" (lines 36-38).

It's like catching sight of a streaker out of the corner of your eye. What the heck was that?!

So, what was it? If it's true that the naming of a color can beget further reference to color, then this may be an innocuous case; Ken's quoting the policeman's own words, "It's against the law to go over that white line," summoning up the otherwise unremarkable, and to this point unremarked, fact that he was "a colored guy."

(Ken seems to be working at reproducing the policeman's ways of formulating things. For example, he initially quotes him as saying "Can I see your license?" and amends it to "... operator's license" [lines 20-1]. He starts to quote him as saying "I'm going to have to write you out a ticket," a formulation he himself used earlier. "I got a ticket for going two foot over a stop sign" [lines 7-8], but breaks off and changes to "citation" [lines 29-30]. And his description of the offense, "going two foot over a stop sign" shows up again attributed to the policeman, "He says well you know, you went two foot over that stop sign" [lines 27-8], but soon after we get another version, which may be closer to the policeman's actual words, "He says it's against the law to go over that white line" [lines 31-2].)

Rather than a case of bigotry revealed, this might be no more noxious than had he said, after "... white line," and in place of "And it- it burned me up you know," something like "And I- I just saw red, you know." Color begets color.

On the other hand, this could be another case of "suppression-release." Perhaps in general, perhaps specifically in these therapy sessions, Ken may be cautious about expressing some of his attitudes. Although he may well see it as adding insult to injury that he was given not only a ticket but "a big long lecture" by this "colored guy" (as Brother Baines has it, "Who does the son of a bitch think he is." That's in (3.c.2).), he might equally well be trying to avoid saying anything that could be turned into therapy talk. He may be concentrating on *not* mentioning it, as the sportscaster in (1.a.9) may have been concentrating on not producing the [I] that would turn the two "backs" into two blacks, which they happened to be. And perhaps in this case, using the policeman's formulation of the offense, not "going two foot over a stop sign," but "over that white line," trips the release mechanism and out comes the suppressed "he's a colored guy."

Either way, innocuous color pun or a pun-triggered release of suppressed bigotry, it's possible that had Ken not been trying to so faithfully quote words which were not his own—"white line" among them—there would have been no mention of "colored guy."

In fact, I tend to see it as a suppression-release, not a harmless pun. One reason is that he uses the idiomatic expression "it burned me up," as his

commentary on the event. And that may be overly apt for reference to something done by a "colored guy." These materials were recorded in Los Angeles in 1964, the Watts Riots were still fresh in people's minds, as were such slogans as "Burn, baby, burn."

It turns out that this over-aptness of an appended comment is a systematic business. In one of his papers Sacks points out that various idiomatic expressions which occur after, and understand, appreciate, etc., a prior one, tend to stand in a punlike relationship to it. (Sacks, "On Some Puns with Some Intimations") Sacks argues this systematicity with one instance. I like to do it the other way, with a mob of instances. So here is a small mob. Another sub-set.

### 3.d. *Categorially-related Assessments*

And here I'll just show the very few that have black people as the target and/or source of the assessment.

#### (3.d.1) [GTS:V:9]

Ken: → Have you ever seen the [Harlem Clowns]<sup>15</sup> before?  
(1 sec)  
(Jim): [Pro ball?  
Ken: [The basketball team?  
Dan: Oh yes, Mm hm,  
Ken: I saw 'em last night, at our school.  
Jim: → They're a [riot].

So we have this black basketball team getting assessed as "a riot." One nice thing about this fragment is that although it's from the same corpus that gave us "white line" ... "colored guy" ... "burned," the pun is produced by a newcomer to the group. It's now about 15 minutes into his third meeting with them. So it's unlikely that he's picked it up from them. Rather, the poison seems to be all over the place.

In the next instance we get reference to "a colored man," and later an assessment "He's a riot." But in this case the colored man is not what's being assessed. It may be, however, that that's the source of the assessment's terminology.

#### (3.d.2) [MC:I:16-17]

Harmon: ... I said is her boyfriend a nice man  
Joey? He says oh he's very nice he's a  
[colored man] hhhHHHH, HAH hah!  
Lila: Oh no:::the poor kid=  
Lila: =Yer, kidding.  
Harmon: [I said-  
Harmon: No waita second I said Joseph that's not your  
mother's boyfriend. That [colored man] is the  
man ( ) takes her tuh work  
every day.  
Lila: Uh huh.  
Harmon: This [colored man], ( )  
Lila: Sure- What difference does  
it make. Sure.

Harmon: Yah. And-and uh -- she (h)rea(h)lly(h)y  
 lau(hh)ghed.  
 Lila: Of cou:irse.  
 Harmon: → He is- He's a [riot]. That [boy].

And now as part of this sub-set:

(3.d.3) [GTS:3:48:R]

Ken: en 'e gives me a (.) big long lecture eez a  
 → [colored gu:y.]  
 (1.2)  
 Ken: → en ih- it (burned me up).

One thing these sorts of data can get you to wondering about is what exactly are they an index to? Where are these categories lodged? Are they analogous to the Freudian Slip, revealing deep hidden secrets? Or are they more like the innocuous processes described by the pre-Freudian linguists? Is it a matter of surface vocabulary which can be as changeable as fashions in clothing, or a glimpse of something deeply etched and intransigent?

One last sub-collection and then I'll turn to another issue.

3.e. *Fractured Idioms*

This last batch, I won't even call a candidate phenomenon. It's a curio. I don't believe it for a minute, but they keep turning up. And I like them. Most people I show them to not only don't believe them but don't like them.

Here's the idea: Some unit, some idiom seems to be putting itself together, constructing itself across a spate of talk that has nothing to do with that idiom.

(3.e.1) [Jack Green Data] Unit: *Billy the Kid*

Jack: As long as your parents are footing [the bill kid], you just go right ahead.

Sacks had collected this, as a case of "body-part flurries," which I'll be getting to. So here what was of interest was "[foot]ing" and "a[head]." At some point I noticed this weird similarity to a famous bandit, Billy the Kid.

This next one occurred as Anita Pomerantz and I were finishing lunch. Anita suggested that we return to work, in the following way:

(3.e.2) [GJ:FN] Unit: *Star Trek*

Anita: Well, shall we [star]t our [trek] back?

I felt myself freeze for an instant, noting this new case. Anita read my behavior as a lack of enthusiasm for her suggestion and apologized for hustling me along. All I could do was yelp "Star Trek! You said Star Trek!"

(3.e.3) [GJ:FN] Unit: *A name, Inoyue* (in-uh-way)

This guy's wife recently quit working for a Mr. Inoyue.

Frank: ... and he wants her back [inna] worst [way].

The next two are spread out over a longer stretch of talk.

(3.e.4) [SBL:2:3:R:23] Unit: *Ace in the Hole*

Chloe: Well that's the Way Ge:ne bid.you know I  
 told you he went to a little slam and didn't  
 → have the [ace] king queen.  
 (.)

Chloe: → 't'hhhhh Now ↑ ho:w [in the] na:me of all  
 → that's [hol]y.  
 (1.3)

Chloe: → could anyo:ne, in their ↑ right mi ↓ nd ...

("Ace in the hole" is a card-game idiom, but I think it comes out of Poker, and Chloe is rehashing a Bridge game here.)

(3.e.5) [NB:VII:7] Unit: *Golf Course*

Emma: ... so fin'ly Al came in fr'm playing  
 → [go:lf] en ↑ oh we got tuh- talking how's the  
 beach 'n ev'rything I z'oh fine I s'd- hhhhh  
 God I have the most wonderful neighbors down  
 the street- frie::nds'n hhhhhhh I said you  
 know probly kno:w Jerry Fulton 'e sz oh: a'  
 → [course] I do.

This fragment appears as (2.a.4). I had collected it as a case of an [f]-row and on some Nth typing, the unit Golf Course emerged.

Now comes the one I like best because it prompted a transcription error. As I was transcribing along, I had Ken saying that someone he knew was "second in command of the dorm." On re-hearing it I realized he hadn't said that, but "second in charge." I'd done a piece of rotten transcribing.

And you see errors like that now and then, where a word with the same meaning but different sounds appears in a transcript. One I think of off-hand is, the transcript shows someone talking about this or that "guy," where what is actually being said is this or that "dude." The transcriber had "heard" a more conventional version of what had actually been said. And here, I'd done something similar. But then, as I worked through the subsequent talk, I got the sense that what had happened to me as transcriber had happened to one of the coparticipants. Both of us had come under the influence of a powerful idiom.

(3.e.6) [GTS:IV:22]

1 Ken: When he had th' responsibility to take- take  
 2 → charge of- He was [second in] charge of the  
 3 dorm. When I'd leave that j- dorm=  
 4 Roger: = [ hhhhhh heh!  
 5 Ken: that dorm would act perfect.  
 6 Ken: No shit he- he'd rule with an iron hand.  
 7 Roger: Well then he was  
 8 → well [in command] of his- eh situation and all  
 9 of his faculties and he knew when to ac' like  
 10 an asshole an' when to uh  
 11 (1 sec)

- 12 Ken: Well I don't know  
 13 Roger: [uh sober up, an' he- an' he had his own  
 14 feelings of right an' wrong.

It may be that Ken, who produced "[second in] charge," is contributing to the reconstruction of this idiom. His subsequent "rule with an iron hand" (line 6), itself a powerful idiom, ends with an item that rhymes with the idiom-in-question's last component, "command." And along comes Roger with the component itself, in his "well [in command]." Actually, "well in command of his-eh situation" is a jumble. There is yet another idiom, which would be expressed here as "Well then he had the situation well in hand." Ken's having said "iron hand" may have awakened "situation well in hand," but it seems to have collided with "second in command" which is still being built up. It looks as if Roger finds himself struggling with a grab-bag full of idioms in bits and pieces.

I just want to note one other point where Roger may be following up on something Ken said. After Ken introduces "No shit," we get Roger mentioning "asshole" (lines 6 and 10, respectively). It's interesting because Ken is the group's clod, is forever being put down by the others, is anything but leader of the pack. And yet when it comes to the idioms here, it is Ken who is taking the lead, Roger following along.

This last case makes a point of something which, although it can be seen in a few of the prior cases,<sup>16</sup> hasn't been focused on, and that is that sometimes this poetry/pathology emerges across the talk of more than one participant. And that's what I'll be dealing with now as a topic in its own right.

#### 4. Cross-Speaker Poetics

From now on I'll be dealing with Cross-Speaker Poetics, again just going through a series of collections.

##### 4.a. Cross-Speaker Sound-Selection

I didn't bother showing any cases of puns done on purpose. I take it we all know the phenomenon. I will show a single case of cross-speaker sound-selected utterance done on purpose, just in case it sounds like something people wouldn't do. In this case, it's used to make fun of someone's difficulty putting an utterance together.

##### (4.a.1) [GTS:I:1:52:R]

- Roger: You gotta watch the signs hehhehh 'hehh  
 I gotta distinguish myself without (.)  
 u-telling people (see)?  
 Louise: → 'Yah <° u-but I:, I-I  
 (0.7)  
 Louise: di, dn't f ca, tch the s, j: gns.  
 Roger: → [A y : : ] y a i : :

Here, Roger takes Louise's stammering "I, I-I" and turns it into the Judeo-Cuban war chant, "Ay yai." Now, the next case has a similar feel; there's some

play in it, but what emerges is not a distillation of words into sound. Rather, the sound is transformed into other words. And that's the core of this phenomenon. Noises from a prior utterance generate words in a next.

I overheard this one in a Southern California sauna. Two young married women are lazily chatting; one mentions the high price of her husband's latest hobby, hi fi equipment.

##### (4.a.2) [GJ:FN]

- Alice: The speakers cost twenty dollars.<sup>17</sup>  
 Betty: → Each!  
 Alice: → Eatcher heart out!

Our comic-book orthography is not very pretty, but it captures the "each"- "each" replication here, which would be lost in standard orthography's "Eat your . . ."

In the next case we're getting an "ord"- "ord" replication.

##### (4.a.3) [SPC Calls]

- Caller: I wasn't aware of the fact at that time that  
 you do have certain people that you send out  
 Caller: when necessary.  
 Desk: Well wait a minute.  
 Caller: [Or d]o you.  
 Desk: [Ord]inarily we don't.

In the next instance, an exclamation, "Bitchen!" is put together out of a series of sound-particles in a prior utterance. Again, the group therapy materials. Al is doing horrible things with a cigar.

##### (4.a.4) [GTS:II:72]

- Ken: Taste, good?  
 Al: [I-  
 Al: → No I [bit] off the [en]d of it I was  
 → [ch]ewing the [en]d of it.  
 Roger: [Uh:::m,  
 Ken: → [Bitchen]!

"[Bit]" + "[ch]ewing" + "[en]d" = "[Bitchen]."

The next one, from this same gang, was collected for its "[plast]ic"- "[plast]ered" relationship, and a couple of other things turned up.

##### (4.a.5) [GTS:I:2:35:R]

- 1 Louise: They gitting rich on the money (h)we p(h)ay  
 2 um. =  
 3 Ken: = Yeah I guess so they got a coffee machine  
 4 en thè-  
 5 (0.7)

- 6 Ken: (tapes) e r : :  
 7 Louise: → En the [plastic] bottle a' bee:r.  
 8 (0.2)  
 9 Ken: [No] that's m i : ne.  
 10 Roger: [No]=tha t's h i : s. = He (innovated) that.  
 11 (0.2)  
 12 (Roger): (huh) è-huh,  
 13 Ken: h i : got a buncha those.  
 14 Roger: That's for atmosphere. =  
 15 Roger: =hhe:h-è- 'hèh'uh'hhih::hhhhhhh  
 16 Louise: h e h  
 17 (.)  
 18 Roger: → Yihknow w(h)in yer [plastered] yihknow y'  
 19 talk mo:re ehheh heh.

The "[plast]ic"-"[plast]ered" relationship jumped out right away. Then at some point we wondered if we could do with "innovated" (line 10) what we'd done with "affronted";<sup>16</sup> track back and find a source. Didn't have to look far. There it was, the "[No]," "[No]"-"in[no]vated" series (lines 9-10). Then somebody wondered if "bottle of beer" (line 7) and "atmosphere" (line 14) might not belong together.

In this next, and last, instance of "cross-speaker sound-selection," a whole topical node is generated from a bit of replication. Here, three women, Barbara, Claire and Jean, are sitting around a kitchen table having coffee. Barbara, whose kitchen it is, gets up and starts rummaging through a cupboard.

#### (4.a.6) [GJ:FN]

- Claire: ((To Barbara)) What are you doing.  
 Barbara: → I'm looking fo:r, -- I'm looking fo:r,  
 ((brief silence))  
 Claire: ((To Jean, with whom she has a lunch date))  
 → I'm looking forward to Saturday, I hope I'm  
 feeling well enough.

In this set we're looking at discrete little groups, "I, I-I"- "Ay yai," "Each"- "Eatcher heart out," "Or do you"- "Ordinarily," "bit . . . chewing . . . end"- "Bitchen," "plastic"- "plastered," "No," "No"- "innovated," and "I'm looking for, I'm looking for,"- "I'm looking forward to Saturday." In other materials you can find flurries of similarities across big chunks of talk.

#### 4.b. Flurries

Again, I'll divide them up into "sound" and "category," and look at a few cases of each sort.

##### (4.b.1) Sound Flurries

These can be the sorts of things that Sacks put me to work on in the first place: that [b]-[k] series in "My insanity's [b]rea[k]ing their [b]an[k][b]oo[k]." I'll just show two of these; they're terribly long and cumbersome.

The first is a [k]-[g] flurry. I'm going to have to use the real name of one of the group-therapy kids, whose name occurs in the talk itself. The one we've been calling "Al." Real name, Mike.

##### (4.b.1.1) [GTS:I:1:71:R2]

- 1 Ken: ((about Roger)) i-he ↑ did loo[k] LI(K)EA  
 2 HOO(h)d heh u,hh he:hhh  
 3 Louise: (perfect)  
 4 Ken: (h)t's (h)all you [c]'n seh=  
 5 Louise: =ú What'd Mi[k]e loo[k] li: [k]e  
 6 Roger: W'L I don'pu'my  
 7 → [G]OOD [C]LOTHE[S] on Saturday morning yihknow=  
 8 Ken: en  
 9 Roger: =hhenh-eh=  
 10 Ken: → En Mi[k]e loo[k]ed li[k]e the [k]ahna [g]u:y  
 11 who wz [c]omin' in here duh (0.6) 'e:il  
 12 (0.2)  
 13 Roger: S[c]atterbrain' ba:stehhr' dhin'know wut  
 14 {e(h)end wz rup}Oo:  
 15 (Ken): { }  
 16 Louise: { ↑ heh { } ↑ heh ↑ ha=  
 17 Ken: No  
 18 Ken: = h He loo[k] li[k]e'w wz [c]oming in here  
 19 fer uh  
 20 (0.7)  
 21 Mike: { [k]i[ck]s.  
 22 Louise: { [g]ui:d'nce.hh  
 23 (0.2)  
 24 Ken: No: uh:=  
 25 Louise: =fr'm [K]ieretz  
 26 (1.0)  
 27 Ken: Weh (0.4) I d'know maybe I read too many  
 28 mystery(m) (0.5) these mystery things wer'  
 29 → [k]ids [g]o in en yihknow (.) li[k]e inna  
 30 p'lece departm'n or I seen too many movies?  
 31 (0.5)  
 32 Ken: I don'know this (.) s- [c]ause my father sih  
 33 now t:ere's [g]'nna be a buncha [k]ids in here  
 34 'n this routine 'n  
 35 (0.6)  
 36 Ken: th,is'n t h a t'n the other thing  
 37 Roger: → [K]eep yer [g]ua:rd'u(h)u p'he ↑ hehh ↑ hihh  
 38 Roger: Ther [g]'nna p(h)rainwa(h)ash,yu h  
 39 Dan: Ye h  
 40 Louise: hmh ↑ hm h<sub>h</sub>mh ↑  
 41 Ken: t<sub>h</sub>hh"  
 42 Mike: =aa'aa  
 43 Dan: =Well whatcher saying is Mi[k]e (.) seem' li[k]e  
 44 a pla:n,t?  
 45 ( ) : eh  
 46 (0.5)  
 47 Roger: A pla:n't<sup>19</sup>  
 48 (0.2)  
 49 Louise: hhhh,h  
 50 Ken: No: : Mi[k]e  
 51 Louise: Or : one a these: [k]ids who=  
 52 Ken: s:ce-



- 53 Louise: =[c]ome in: to obse::rve,  
54 (0.2)  
55 Louise: "instead of be in the [g]roup?"  
56 Ken: No:?  
57 (0.4)  
58 Ken: You were uh  
59 (0.5)  
60 Roger: Yih know right away you tried duh win me over  
61 buhfore we wal[k]ed in here,  
62 (1.2)  
63 Ken: Me?  
64 Roger: Yah  
65 (0.3)  
66 ( ): hhh  
67 (0.5)  
68 Mike: ù-I don' wan' (  
69 Louise: [C]uz YOU LOO[K] LI[K]EA ↑ HOO:D.]

It seems to me that up to about line 44 the talk is liberally sprinkled with [k]s and [g]s, which more than occasionally form [g]-[k] or [k]-[g] clumps:

- "[G]OOD [C]LOTHES" (line 7)
- "the [k]ind of [g]uy who" (line 10)
- "[k]i[ck]s," "[g]uidance" . . . "from [K]ieretz" (lines 21–5)
- "[c]ause my father said now there's [g]oing to be a bunch of [k]ids in here" (line 32–3)
- "[K]eep your [g]uard up" (line 37)

And one possibility is that the [g]-[k] or [k]-[g] clumps have to do with the forming up of two joking completions to two as-yet-incomplete utterances. The first, in response to Ken's "*He loo[k]ed li[k]e he was [c]oming in here for uh,*" where Mike provides a completion which is one big [k], "[k]i[ck]s," which Louise transforms into a [k]-[g] clump with her contribution, "[g]uidance," and then makes her own independent [g]-[k] clump by appending "*from [K]ieretz*" (lines 18–25). The second, in response to Ken's "*[c]ause my father said now there's [g]oing to be a bunch of [k]ids in here and this routine and,*" where Roger offers a hypothetical quote of Ken's father's advice, "*[K]eep your [g]uard up*" (lines 32–37).

And it seems to me that the [k]-[g] clumps dwindle away after culminating in "*[K]eep your [g]uard up.*" There's one thin clump by Louise, "*Or one of these [k]ids who [c]ome in to observe, instead of be in the [g]roup?*" (lines 51–55), and that's it.<sup>20</sup>

Sacks has an interesting angle on the presence and non-presence of flurries. Here's what he says.

One also wants to get—not now but eventually—some idea of where these compactions of local organization occur. They don't build up in a conversation to some kind of finale where, say, at some point all people are doing is producing variants on what's so far been done. Though it can happen that within, say, a topic in conversation, there are places where people are almost exclusively employing the resources-so-far for the topic, to produce a next utterance. . . . But if conversation were proceeding simply in a step by step historical development in which parts are being picked up and put into a different organization, we might suppose that it would just continue that way, additively, and it does not. So one wants to deal with the disjunctiveness as well as the way things get put together within flurries or short

sequences—or, as I might eventually get to claim, within a kind of unit within conversation that we otherwise talk about as "topic," but where we don't think of topics as having this sort of intensity of organization. (Sacks 2:343–44)

In short, flurries may be topically boundaried. And it seems to me that there is a drastic shift in the talk, around about Dan's reference to Mike as a "plant" (lines 43–44). It's not a change in topic, but some sort of sub-topical shifting maybe. And it's there that the [k]-[g] flurry dwindles away.

Here's another chunk of conversation in which I think I see something similar happening. In this case, with a flurry of [aa]s. (Here also I'm using the real name of one participant because it appears in the talk itself. Again, the name is Mike.)

(4.b.1.2) [Goodwin:AD:11–14:R]

- 1 Mike: → So:mebuddy r[a]pped uh:  
2 Cal: "((clears throat))"  
3 Mike: DeJong'nna mguth.  
4 Cal: Well, h, e deserved it.  
5 Mike: [But yihknow eh] uh-he made iz first  
6 mistake number one by messin' with Keefer  
7 because a'pits'r fulla Keefers en when there  
8 is,n't a Keefer there=  
9 Cal: "Mmhm."  
10 Mike: =ere's a' La : n g s ,  
11 Cal: [ <There's a' La:ngs,  
12 Mike: ( )  
13 Cal: (I kno [w.)  
14 Mike: [Because they're related jihkno:w?  
15 Cal: ((clears  
16 throat))  
17 (0.8)  
18 Mike: ((cou,gh))  
19 Cal: → Oh th[a]t's screw d[a]t-  
20 (0.2)  
21 Mike: So it ended up thet-  
22 (0.2)  
23 Mike: d[et u h : . .  
24 Cal: → D[a]t see d[a]t re]minds me of,=  
25 Cal: =we wz o:::  
26 Mike: = [He wz up on]thè: (.) trailer, hh er up on the  
27 Mike: → b[a]ck of iz pickup truck with a, (0.4) with  
28 → a j[a]: ck.  
29 (.)  
30 Cal: Who DeJo:ng?  
31 (.)  
32 Mike: DeJo:ng. Ye(h)ah.  
33 (0.2)  
34 Cal: → try(h)ina keep (h) ev'ry body b[a]::ck,  
35 Mike: [tryina keep f m]  
36 g(hh)et- k(hh)eeep 'imse(h)lf f m gettin'iz  
37 → [a]ss beat.  
38 (.)  
39 Cal: W e : l l you r'mbuh-]  
40 Sandra: [Mike said ] e usetuh::: race go,carts en=  
41 Mike: [He use-

- 42 Sandra: → =e got barred f'm the go- (.) cart tr(a)ck  
 43 → be\_cuz he r(a)n little kids (h) off the tr(a)ck.  
 44 Mike: → <sub>o v e r i n T i f f e n .</sub>  
 45 (.)  
 46 Mike: → Th(a)t's a- th(a)t's a f(a)ct, 'n-  
 47 Sandra: → hhh  
 48 (.)  
 49 Cal: → Jeezuz.  
 50 Mike: → {De}Jo:ng is a big burly b(a)stard jhknow.  
 51 Sandra: → hhh hhehhhehheh, {Mm hm.  
 52 Cal: → (.)  
 53 (.)  
 54 Sandra: → hh,hheh  
 55 Mike: → {En th(a)t's a f(a)ct he got barred from  
 56 runnin' go carts over in Tiffen because he  
 57 → use tuh run the little kids off the tr(a)ck.=  
 58 Cal: → =Well you remember when McHugh did th(a)t.  
 59 (0.2)  
 60 Mike: → Yeh.  
 61 Cal: → {Lo:ng time ago it reminds me when you were  
 62 tellin' about, DeJong en uh s:sitting up there  
 63 'n, psst!  
 64 (3.7)  
 65 Lenny: → 'N Keefers aren't (always) very big are they?  
 66 (0.4)  
 67 Mike: → No. They're a ll t h i n .  
 68 Cal: → {They're not } They're not  
 69 to o bi:g but-  
 70 Lenny: → {('T's right if) they're all Keefers like  
 71 the ones around Greensprings they're all kind'v,  
 72 bout five five, five si(x).  
 73 Mike: → {They're all from around Greensprin(gs).  
 74 Cal: → {Y e , h ,  
 75 Mike: → {Yeah.  
 76 Mike: → They're the o:nes,

In this case the flurry may have to do with the forming up of Mike's story-commentary "Th(a)t's a f(a)ct" (lines 46 and 55). And the flurry is extinguished at what may be a topical boundary, after Cal's attempt to tell a story about McHugh by tying it to the DeJong story with "Well you remember when McHugh did th(a)t" (line 58).

#### (4.b.2) *Categorical Flurries*

I mentioned earlier that Sacks had collected case (3.e.1) as a "body-part flurry." It is a compact instance, "foot" and "head" appearing in a single utterance.

##### (4.b.2.1) [Jack Green Data]

Jack: As long as your parents are [foot]ing the bill kid, you just go right a[head].  
 Judy: You're not kidding.

Here's another compact instance, with "hand" and "face" appearing across a couple of utterances of a single speaker.

##### (4.b.2.2) [Crandall Calls]

- Caller: → They're not-  
 B.C.: → {In [hand] work, let's [face] it. Let's [face] it, you're uh only gonna be able  
 tuh turn out a cert'n amounta work.  
 Caller: → It's rough buh- We'll al:ways make a living.  
 B.C.: → Right.  
 Caller: → Buh we'll never be really rich.  
 B.C.: → Right. But on the o:ther [hand] . . .

Some of the body-part flurries can get pretty elaborate. Here's one where body parts are scattered across a long story-complaint by one speaker, Maggie. At one point her recipient, Lynnie, does a most powerful display of understanding. She takes up the story-complaint as if it were her own. In the course of which, she tosses in a body part (lines 28-9).

##### (4.b.2.3) [Goldberg Data]

- 1 Maggie: → When I ca- really (0.5) I mean it was just  
 2 shocking when I came [back] from Europe=  
 3 Lynnie: → (Yeah)  
 4 Maggie: → {an' I had been gone what three enna half weeks.  
 5 Lynnie: → Yea:h.  
 6 Maggie: → I might just as well of either never come  
 7 [back] or never gone (0.5) becuz the problems  
 8 that I [faced] were so insurmountable that uh  
 9 it has taken me this entire month to just  
 10 fi:nd where they had hidden things that they  
 11 didn't want any{body} to find.  
 12 Lynnie: → Yuh mean ((falsetto)) right in your store?  
 13 Maggie: → Yes.  
 14 Lynnie: → ((falsetto)) In your little store?  
 15 Maggie: → In eight hundred and thirty six square [feet]  
 16 they hid things they threw things out=  
 17 Lynnie: → {huhhhhhh!  
 18 Maggie: → {they just ignored them. I have had San  
 19 Francisco on my [neck] where is this money=  
 20 Lynnie: → Ohhhhhh Go:::d  
 21 Maggie: → {where are these transfers, where are- where  
 22 is the merchandise. I said now waidaminute.  
 23 (0.5) I wasn't here. Do you wanna know who  
 24 was here. I can give you that person's name=  
 25 Lynnie: → Yeaah.  
 26 Maggie: → {don't har[ass] me, I don't know.  
 27 Lynnie: → Ri:ght.  
 28 Lynnie: → Yuh wanna conduct an investigation ( )  
 29 go right a[head]=  
 30 Maggie: → Ri:ght.  
 31 Lynnie: → (but fer) Chrissake don't ( [Ri:ght ] )  
 32 Maggie: →  
 33 Maggie: → ( ) yuh know fer six hundred  
 34 dollars ha-yuh know here's my [body] go look  
 35 it over.  
 36 Lynnie: → Yea:h yea:h goo:d Christ.

The thing culminates in a literal use of the word "body" (line 34), and

Lynnie's recipientship verges on Holy Communion, her "good Christ" (line 36) fixing on the utter martyrdom of "here's my body."<sup>21</sup>

I'm going to move now to phenomena that seem to have rather more consequence for the interaction in which they occur. I'll just note that while most of them are cross-speaker events, one or two are not.

#### 4.c. Triggered Topics<sup>22</sup>

It's one sort of thing for sounds and categories to select from among a series of possible words which might be used—and much of the data we've looked at so far has that character. (I made special note of the fact that in [4.a.6] not merely a word, but a topical node was generated.) It is a whole other sort of thing for sounds and categories to select something like a train of thought; to generate what can turn out to be a considerable chunk of conversation.

On psychotic talk, Woods notes:

It is a common finding in schizophrenia that the point of departure from one idea to the next takes place from a single word rather than from the organic unit of thought, the legitimate content of a well organized sentence. . . . A part of the whole is taken and the response is made to this part only. . . . A schizophrenic girl, for example, interprets the proverb, *you can't touch pitch without being tarred*, by the single word "Music." It is seen that she takes the single word, *pitch*, and gives a response which belongs to the like category. The mechanism involved has wide implications when we observe it in the natural setting of conversation. (Woods 307-09)

And in our work in the natural setting of conversation we find materials in which "a part of the whole" serves to trigger perfectly lovely blocs of talk.

At the start of this talk I mentioned Woods' complaint about these psychotic characters who just won't design their talk for their recipient. He says that the various "autistic productions" are not in themselves pathological; that what is pathological is that they are incorporated into the talk "without any endeavor to translate them into a form which considers the needs of a listener."

A thing I'll be noting about the materials here is that the triggered talk is managed in various ways for a listener. That is, you get the "autistic" object (or the poetic object, whichever way you want to see it. Or both.). And it is very carefully managed to tell its recipients exactly how to hear it, and specifically *not* to hear it for what it might well have been. *Not* to hear it as a noise fathering a thought, but to hear it in the ordinary conventional ways that we know and accept as legitimate, that people get their talk.

I'll start off with a *sound-triggered* topic. It comes from an interminable, meandering, deeply boring conversation between two young mothers. Sacks every now and then tried to get me interested in transcribing some of these materials, at one point offering as bait that there was a lot of laughter in them, at a time when I was working on people's laughing-togethers. No sale. It was just too boring. Eventually I did get around to it, deciding that the sheer boringness of it was something we'd have to come to grips with. Also, I began to see it as pure Americana, a sort of museum piece. And of course it turned out to be wonderful stuff.

This is early in the conversation. One of the women, Joan, is talking about

problems cutting her little boy's hair. I think what happens here is that mention of the word "part" triggers talk about a "party."

#### (4.c.1) [TCI(b):16:11-12]

Joan: My biggest thing is tryin' tuh figure out how tuh cut the neck en around th' ears.

Linda: Yeah.

Joan: → [That's the hard [phha(h)a(h)art]=

Linda: = Yeah, =

Joan: = m' hhhh without makin' it look yihknow c'z

I c'n take the scissors 'n cut right around iz

ears but then yih c'n rilly tell it, too. ] So,

Linda: [Yeah.]

Linda: Ye, ah.

Joan: → [i' hhhh that's (.) the [part] I gotta figure out how tuh do., hh

Linda: [Yah how much didju git et yer gift 'n gadget [party],

(.)

Joan: ' hhhh uh:::u-sevendy I think it wa:s=

Linda: =Hm: hh I hadda pretty good party ' hhhh uh quite a few people came,

Joan: Uh huh,

Linda: A::n' 'hh she s-h-ih this wz her last party this season.

Joan: Ye:ah =

Linda: =So she sold out v'er kit, too.

Joan: [hhh 'Oh: that wz ni:ce.

In the first place, "part," as in "that's the hard part" and "that's the part I got to figure out how to do," may be as good a "topical pun" as any in set 2.b.2.<sup>23</sup> What I want to focus on is that the possibly pun-generated word "part" then sound-triggers a new topic, Linda's successful gift 'n gadget party (which she initiates by inquiring into the success of Joan's gift 'n gadget party). You couldn't be crazier, or you couldn't be more poetic, or maybe you just couldn't do it better in perfectly normal conversation.

Supposing it did happen that way, then I think Linda is designing her talk to show that what she's saying now is *not* the sound-triggered topic that it in fact is, but just an ordinary change of topic, and who knows how these things come up. She uses a particular format to initiate the new topic; the terse, compacted "Yah" followed by the shift. I suspect that it's a way to show the agenda'd character of the new topic; to show that if anything, she was hardly listening to what Joan was saying, when—at least in this pathological/poetic sense—she was listening, but good! But I couldn't begin to develop the argument here.

This may be a sort of reverse analogy to the Freudian Slip. In that case, if an event *can* be such a thing it gets treated as such a thing. In this case, it may be that if it's *not* the sort of triggering that is accepted as rational and legitimate, then it is not acknowledged to have been a triggering. Where there are, of course, some triggerings that routinely do get marked as such (Jefferson 220-22). One of the simplest, most obvious markers is the "speaking of X" format. For example (this is from well into a very long conversation): Maggie has been telling all about her trip to Europe, where one of the advantages is a day-care system where you can drop off your kid (she has a 12-year-old boy) and call your life your own.

## (4.c.1.1) [Goldberg Data]

- Maggie: ... an' you say y'know guhbye love y'know  
 because when y'get back I'll see you when  
 yuh get back. 'hh, hh a:n-
- Lynn: → Talking about getting back  
 I've gotta take my mother home.  
 (0.6)
- Lynn: Uh: she was over here t'day an' I've gotta drive her back t'Beverly Hills. = When c'n I come over...

Here's another.

## (4.c.1.2) [SBL:2:5:12:R]

- Gloria: I s'd I'm gunnuh go àr else. Becuh- but  
 uh then when I found out the water wz, o ↑ ff e, n =  
 Be: Ye: ↓ ah!
- Gloria: = I saw ev'rything (.) ih drumping its head  
 → even the dahlias.
- Be: Uh, huh.
- Gloria: 'hh I: thought well good Lord yih can't  
 let the yard uh do th\_a : t , so,
- Be: → Saying 'say'ng dahlias?  
 I jus' cut some fresh dahlias et my neighbor's  
 this evening?

But it's one thing to have been reminded about your freshly cut dahlias by your friend's mentioning her drought-stricken dahlias. It's something altogether else to have been reminded of a party by your coparticipant's having made the noise "part."

The next instance is a combination of sound and category. Emma's grandchildren were at a traditional Thanksgiving dinner she prepared, complete with turkey and all the trimmings. She's remarking to her sister how nice the kids looked, "all dressed in turtlenecks." A bit later comes an announcement, "Hey I've been eating a lot of turkey" which has been good for her psoriasis.

## (4.c.2) [NB:IV:13:R:6]

- Emma: °God they've° all grown up'n they look' so  
 → nice all dressed'n (turtle) necks: 'n::
- Lottie: Uh huh,  
 (.)
- Emma: °°Ril cute°° But uh (0.7) 't hhh ↑ They left  
 early Lottie 'n then we decideh we jz we  
 were goin' ho::me<sup>24</sup> 'n then we decided it wz  
 so nice 'n quiet dow- hhhh HEY I B'N EAT'N A  
 → LO:TTA (TURKEY) YIHKNOW I DON'T HAVE ↑ ONE:  
 BITTA ITCHI:NGk?  
 (1.2)
- Emma: 't hhhh YIHKNOW AH HEARD THET T(h)URKEY wz  
 GOO::D FOR YUH with this thi:ng?  
 (0.3)
- Lottie: Is that ri:ght?
- Emma: eeYah a girl'n the apartm'n tol' me tha:t.

In this case, although a participant's name is used in the talk, I can't bring myself to use her real name. I'll just note that the possible relationship between "Lottie" and "a lotta turkey" is nonexistent since her name isn't Lottie.

At one point Emma says "turtlenecks" (and there's something in the way she says it that makes two words of it rather than the one-word, robbed-of-meaning name of a kind of highnecked sweater. The way she says it there's definitely a turtle present) and suddenly she's telling about eating "turkey" and the wonders it's doing for her psoriasis. So here it's not merely a sound-triggering, "part"- "party," "tur"- "turkey," but a categorial triggering involving a pair of creatures, "turtle" and "turkey."

In terms of sheer consonance, a "better" trigger has been let go by. At the very beginning of this phone call, Emma had said of the dinner that "the turkey was delicious."

## (4.c.2.1) [NB:IV:13:R:1]

- Emma: 'hhhhh So they ca:me dow:n'n had dinne:r,  
 hh, hhh
- Lottie: {Uh hu:h?
- Emma: 'h 'hh, h 'hh
- Lottie: {Wz it ni:ce?  
 (0.6)
- Emma: → °Oh yeah the turkey wz deliciou:s,°
- Lottie: {Oh ↓ goo:d=
- Emma: = 'hh They sto: by tuh see Mister Cole on the  
 wa:y down. So they lef' kahna early but: she  
 s'd the behú the bus schedules were so: 'hh 'hh  
 'hh h, hard on, Sundee tih git Greyhou:nd'n hhhh  
 {ihYeh,
- Lottie: °It isn' a very ni:ce day, anyway, °en, then it's
- Emma: ((tearfully)) (s ↑ n : : : ↑ N O : : )
- Lottie: (.)  
 gonna rai:n.
- Lottie: (.)
- Lottie: How's Mister Cole.
- Emma: We::ll...

It may be that the triggering mechanisms are not something inevitable and irresistible, something that we're just not in control of. It's possible that you can have *selective* triggering. So, for example, the point in a conversation at which a topic is introduced can be informative about its importance to the one who introduced it, and can have consequences for how the conversation runs off and/or how the topic is handled. If that is so, then a topic which is triggered at an inappropriate place in the conversation might be suppressed. And that could be happening here.

This next instance may be a version of the sort of thing Woods was referring to in the case of a schizophrenic response to the proverb "You can't touch [pitch] without being tarred." "[Music]," but where, rather than immediately producing the triggered word, some work is done to mask the triggering.

Here, in an utterance assessing the world of politics, "Kind of a [mess]," the word "mess" may trigger a related word, "[garbage]," and a story that goes with

it. Now, the story is introduced immediately on the occurrence of "mess," with "Really when you consider it. It's . . . it's like uh I heard Senator Kennedy say . . ." which proposes that the talk to follow is topically coherent; is not, as Woods has it, "departing from a single word, but from the organic unit of thought." We don't get to the triggered word "garbage" until well into the story.

## (4.c.3) [Adato:III:21]

- Stan: The guy in the middle is playin' both of 'em against the other, so, you know, whaddiyu got.
- Jay: → hih! huh huh ki(hh)nd of a [me(hh)ss].
- Stan: → Really when you consider it. It's . . . it's like uh I heard Senator Kennedy say uh, -- when he wz in Watts,<sup>25</sup> en he talked to a kid over there, -- some, kids  
(Oh
- Tony: you mean Robert Kennedy?
- Stan: Yeah. He wuh- he wz talking, he wz talking to them ( ) -- he got up there, en these kids wouldn' siddown. . . . Okay so finally he got one kid tuh talk to him, (fer a minute), you gonna tell me about- he siz cz I'm eighteen  
→ years old. -- I'm sick'n tired of the [garbage] here. They don't pick up trash  
( ) (the garbage you know),
- Tony: Yeah yeah yeah.
- Stan: He said en uh I t- I wen'down to the office, en asked the guy, y'know, about, asked im about -- y'know havin' the trucks come through a liddle more often . . . he said en the man asked me how old<sup>26</sup> I was, I told im I wz nineteen. He sid you haf to be twunny one y'know tuh talk- becuz-  
( )
- Tony: (To make a complaint?)
- Stan: Yeah. To discuss, this thing with um y'know,
- Jay: huh-huh-huh, huh huh
- Tony: Is that what'e told im?
- Stan: Yeah. You gotta be twunny one, you know, to, -- so he said, now, I've gotta be twunny one tuh do this. Yet when I'm eighteen they draft me tuh go fight a wa(hh)r y'(h)know. . .

Simply enough, in terms of an "organic unit of thought," Stan's story is not particularly coherent with politicians playing each other off, one against the other. At the level of "departing from a single word," "[mess]," to "[garbage]" is as nice a clang as any.<sup>27</sup>

The next instance is a possibly sound-triggered matter, and in this case there are clear instructions how to hear it, and that is not as a sound-triggering. The participants to this conversation have just come back from a local art fair with a piece they bought. They don't quite know what it is; maybe it could be used as a toothpick holder, or maybe as a candlestick.

## (4.c.4) [Schenkein:II:137:R]

- Bill: Actually this'd make a nice: uh:m, =
- Lori: =Yeah I wouldn't put it tihgether,
- Ellen: Jack be nimble Jack be quick.  
(0.2)
- Ellen: → Ja, ck jump over the [cand]lestick =
- Bill: (Mh)
- Ellen: → =it's a da:rling [cand]lestick, (proba'ly).°
- Bill: (Uh huh)°
- Lori: °Yeh (rilly).°

- Bill: °( )°
- Ellen: °(Really cu:,te)°
- Bill: (I know.)  
(3.7)
- Bill: → Oh did you see [Cand]id Camera the other week they hadda thing about: hh ladies en::: and ciga:r smoke?  
(0.3)
- Bill: . Ih wz really cute you woulda gotten a ba:ng out'v it I wz thinking of you when it wz o:n.  
(.)
- Bill: hhhhhh w'ss uh (.) all the ladiess: (.)  
hating the cigar smoke en subtly 'hh leavin:g  
e:r f::fann,ing
- Ellen: (the room) e-hr! Yea:h u-huh-huh

Ellen produces the word "candlestick" twice, and then the talk goes into a lapse. When a conversation lapses and goes into silence, a task imposed on participants is to think of something to say. One thing that can happen is you remember something you wanted to say at some point in the conversation, and this is as good a point as any, so you say it. And Bill ends the silence with "Oh did you see Candid Camera."

"[Cand]lestick," "[cand]lestick," "[Cand]id [Ca]mera." How could it not be a sound-triggered topic? However, given the way the talk, and the absence of talk, have gone, coparticipants are led to see it as a matter of a search during a lapse, Bill having remembered something out of the blue, specifically not generated out of what was said before.

Furthermore, his comments on the program are an account of how he remembered it—and it's certainly not "Speaking of cand, did you see Candid Camera?" Rather, "I was thinking of you when it was on." That is, trying to find something to say to end this silence, I remembered a while back when I was thinking of you. It's telling his coparticipants exactly how to hear how that topic came to be raised, and it guides them quite away from any inspection of the prior talk; where, if they looked, they might find the poetics/pathology of "[cand]lestick," "[cand]lestick," "[Cand]id [Ca]mera."

In this next instance, two young mothers, Beth and Ann, are sitting together at a picnic, watching Beth's little girl work a hoola hoop. The child's legs are getting abraided from the hoop.

## (4.c.5) [Goodwin:91:E]

- Ann: Yihknow I think that's from that hoop goin' around th'm s(h)u mu:ch, hn
- Beth: Ye:s,
- Ann: Y'c'n see the ma:rks of it. 't's gettin'  
→ [ra:w],
- Beth: (It is it's fr'm the hoola hoop.  
(0.8)
- ( ): °hm°  
(3.0)
- Ann: They're ( )
- Beth: Wha:t.
- Ann: Thro:win' those [e:gg]s I got one cracked over my hea:d,

Ann's announcement that she got an egg cracked over her head generates a series of egg-throwing-contest mishap stories. In this case the trigger may be something like a shift from "raw legs" to "raw eggs." Much like (4.c.4) the triggering is masked with a lapse, a casting around for new material, and what may be reference to the appropriate if not actual source of the egg story, some people throwing eggs: "They're ( )." This might be a case of *mis*-attribution of source, a version of "speaking of X" (in this case, some people still tossing eggs around after the contest), where the actual "X" was the word "raw" in conjunction with their gazing at the little girl's abraded legs. Where "speaking of 'raw legs'" is simply an unacceptable attribution of source.

While here I can only guess that "They're ( )" is a reference to people throwing eggs, and thus a version of "speaking of X," in the next instance there is no question that that's being done. And it may, as here, be a *mis*-attribution of source, where the actual source is unacceptable.

The general topic is occult phenomena. At this point the issue is whether one participant, Tina, was actually cured by a faith healer.

#### (4.c.6) [Theodore:Alt]

- Milly: Lo:tta times headaches er caused f'm a:nxiety  
en djet.
- Milly: So:le I y . ]  
Brenda: { B't she ad,da pinch ed ne::rve,  
Milly: { I don't eat things. } thet  
give me heada:ches,  
(0.3)
- Tina: → We don't [eat] a lotta [cra:p]. =tht's  
got prese:ratives 'n stu:ff. =  
Brenda: { uhh hmh-hmh-m-hmh,  
Jason: =En spea:king o::f,  
Brenda: { She az a pinch ed nerve.  
Jason: { Speaking of weird ex:perience,  
Tina: { B't thazz 'nah w't causes } the  
hea:dache. That's sep'rate,(really),  
Jason: { Did:é Di d } anybuddy  
see that Ni:ght Ga:lery where the guý hastuh  
→ [ea:t] (.) the [si::ns].

Given the general topic, Jason's "Speaking of weird experience" is legitimate enough. But there is a much finer relationship with a much more local possible source. Specifically, Tina's "We don't [eat] a lot of [crap]" may be the trigger for Jason's remembering a TV show about someone who has to "[eat] the [sins]."

As with (4.c.5) where "raw legs" triggers "raw eggs" but the source gets attributed to some folks nearby throwing eggs, here "eat . . . crap" may be the trigger for a story about someone who has to "eat . . . sins,"<sup>28</sup> but the source is attributed to the general topic, "weird experience."

Now, the literature on psychotic language treats the various processes that show up in psychotics as also present in normals. "But," according to Eugen Bleuler, "they occur only exceptionally and incidentally, whereas in schizophrenia they are exaggerated." Schneider also has it that in psychotic talk the

processes "are not constantly suppressed as in normal thought progression" (in Woods 291).

What if these processes are not all that "exceptional" or "incidental" or "constantly suppressed" in normal talk? It may be that because they are conceived of as abnormal by the culture, by its professionals and by its laymen, then, on those occasions when they do occur, they are recognized as such and masked in ranges of ways. For example, the triggering may be left unacknowledged as in (4.c.1) and (4.c.2), with the shift in topic passed off as just an ordinary topic shift. Or it may be proposed as simply coherent with the talk in which the trigger occurred, as in (4.c.3). Or it may be buried in a lapse and presented as the product of a search for a new topic as in (4.c.4) and (4.c.5). And/or it may be masked by *mis*-attributing the source, as in (4.c.5) and (4.c.6).

So it doesn't look as if these processes are constantly suppressed in normal thought progression. Rather, they are embedded in and obscured by a range of syntactic, sequential and interactional structures. Most of them, then, become unnoticeable. And the few that are noticed, for whatever reasons we come to notice them, can be explained away as exceptions.<sup>29</sup>

I'm going to close, and I'll do it on an involuted note with a look at a close-relevant phenomenon.

#### 4.d. Triggered Terminations

It's simple enough. Someone in the course of talking uses a word or phrase that has its home in leavetakings, departures, closings. It is not being used as such in the talk that's now underway. But on its occurrence a coparticipant initiates closing or leavetaking.

We have that case I showed as one instance of the "speaking of X" format (4.c.1.1). As it happens, it's also an instance of a triggered termination. Specifically, a hypothetical leave-taking triggers an offer to close this conversation.

#### (4.d.1) [Goldberg Data]

- Maggie: → . . . an' you say y'know [gubbye love] y'know  
because when y'get back I'll see you when vuh  
get back. 'hh, hh a:n  
Lynn timer: { Talking about getting back I've  
gotta take my mother home.  
(0.6)  
Lynn timer: { Uh: she was over here t'day an' I've gotta  
drive her back t' Beverly Hills. -- When c'n I  
come over . . .

Lynn timer's "When can I come over" refers back to the reason Maggie got in touch with her, and initiates close-relevant arrangements.

In this next instance, some neighborhood cronies are sitting around drinking beer. For a good long while several of them have been trying to get Vic to tell his best story. He finally lets himself be persuaded. It's about his time in the armed forces, posted in Newfoundland, wandering the streets of Saint John's.

## (4.d.2) [Frankel:USI:114-5:R]

- 1 Vic: ( ) ah'm l'gokin' fer a piece. O ↓ kay. =  
 2 James: =üFoh a p<sub>ic</sub>:ce. Y<sub>eh</sub> h<sub>h</sub>eh-eghh  
 3 Vic: S<sub>o</sub> :  
 4 Vic: aa-Ah'm intuh: stand'in fronna duh: awff  
 5 limits pla<sub>c</sub> i z  
 6 James: heghh  
 7 (.)  
 8 Vic: En u<sub>h</sub>:  
 9 Joe: ( )  
 10 Fred: → [∞( ) split.∞]  
 11 Fred: °Oka<sub>y</sub>  
 12 Mike: Yeh i<sub>t</sub>'s f u n n y . ]  
 13 Fred: → cin(g) g'nna<sup>30</sup> split]  
 14 James: eghh,uhh  
 15 Vic: This fat w'm'n comes u<sub>p</sub> tih me: en<sub>1</sub> =  
 16 Joe: ( )  
 17 Vic: =she's tellin' me ih she's saying uh 'hh uh  
 18 ((insinuating, clammy voice)) Ah'll ↑ go wit'  
 19 chu euu:eu:ih =  
 20 Fred: = ( )  
 21 Vic: l'n tsh'e's z'm like (.) t'ree hundred sixty  
 22 → pou:nds e<sub>n</sub> I said ["Ma:n lemme get adda heuh,"]  
 23 ( ):  
 24 James: ° ↓ hHe::y.  
 25 Vic: So me en niss gu<sub>y</sub> hung ar ou<sub>n</sub>' t'ge thuh =  
 26 James: ekhh::: hehkh ekh  
 27 Vic: =he's from Brook ↓ lyn. His name is James Wal ↓ kuh.  
 28 James: °Quartuh peyss. I gotta go.  
 29 Vic: James Walkuh  
 30 (Mike): Ye::h.  
 31 Vic: So  
 32 (1.0)  
 33 Vic: de ↑ nex' m<sub>orning</sub>.  
 34 Carol: ( )  
 35 (.)  
 36 Vic: we go (0.2) s:leep yihknow we're  
 37 sle<sub>e</sub> e p i n' i n d u h (.) ü =  
 38 James: °(I'm going' d u h meed uhr)  
 39 Vic: =Royal Moundid Police s<sub>argent</sub>'s house.  
 40 (0.3)  
 41 ( ):  
 42 Mike: aahhh<sub>h</sub>:  
 43 Vic: of duh Royal Mounda P'leece. y'know.  
 44 ( ):  
 45 (0.3)  
 46 James: eh-hh  
 47 Vic: En d u h :  
 48 James: Sa:ve me'one d'I come back.°willyih?°

By the way, there's another of Rich Frankel's "members' math" phenomena in here, at lines 15-22. Fankel points out that three hundred sixty pounds is an especially apt description of a fat woman. It's a perfect circle, 360°. (The other

case is (2.a.5), the simple arithmetic relationship of "[three] shots in [seven] seconds and so [forth]," three from seven equals four.)

As to the triggered termination here, it may be a double trigger. That is, Fred's announcement that he's "going to split" (lines 10 and 13) may select the phrase Vic then uses to describe his horror at being solicited by the fat woman—"I said 'Man, let met get out of here' " (line 22). Which may then set off James' "Hey . . . Quarter past. I got to go." (lines 24/28).

(James explains a bit later that he's got to pick up his wife from work. And he does leave before the story proper gets underway. Fred, who may have started the series, sticks around until the story is over.)

This next instance was actually the first. Anita Pomerantz turned it up. It's from a radio call-in show. The caller is chatting about the joys and perils of flying your own plane. He's been going on for some five minutes, and as he is describing a dangerous situation he uses "Goodbye!" to express the sheer awfulness of it.

## (4.d.3) [Crandall Show]

- Caller: Y'haftuh stay undu(h)nea(h)th de approa(h)ch.  
 B.C.: Oh great.  
 Caller: → I tried it once. 'hh [Guhbye::!]  
 B.C.: hehh heh heh hahh hahh ha:h h hahh ha hehh<sup>32</sup>  
 Caller: 'hhh!  
 B.C.: → I know whatche mean. [I gotta go, sir.]<sup>33</sup>  
 Caller: De place is  
 gone now, but uh:: i-yuh know, even at those  
 days. It was scary.  
 B.C.: Flying, flying I think now fer the private  
 pilot fer pleasure, should be restricted way  
 out of metropolitan areas.

And in this last instance, an hour and fifty-plus minutes into a two-hour group therapy session, Roger is talking about his parents' inability to see him as an individual.

## (4.d.4) [GTS:IV:68]

- 1:54:00 Roger: I don't think any of 'em- many parents do.  
 They see you as a part of them. Too much  
 a parta them. And all the hassle come in  
 → when- when they- when [you realize it's  
 time to break] and they don't an' vice versa,  
 an' all that shit.  
 (5 sec)  
 Dan: → Well let's see whether or not we can't get into it a little earlier next-  
 uh next week.<sup>34</sup>  
 ( ) : Yeah.  
 1:54:30 (3 sec) ((people leaving, their  
 voices fading.))  
 Dan: (C'n I see you now?)  
 Roger: Okay.

(Jim): (I have to go, I'm dead.)  
 Jim: I hafta  
 Ken: Does anybody wanna run over an' grab a cup  
 of coffee?  
 Jim: Yeah  
 Al: Yeah, ( ) when we come back over  
 here though.  
 Ken: Oh  
 1:54:45 ((end recording))

It is literally getting to be "time to break." And now Roger has produced this description of family life which is so apt for the situation at hand, "you realize it's time to break." Having done that, he may thereafter be specifically putting some work into capping off an utterance which might otherwise have a longer trajectory, with the two idiomatic phrases "and vice versa, and all that shit." These contribute nothing substantive, and don't invite inspection for substance. If "and vice versa" were to be taken literally here, Roger would be proposing that his parents see it's time to break and he doesn't, which is altogether counter to his position. And "and all that shit" has its home in lists, where it and things like it (for example, "and stuff like that," "and so forth and so on") work as "generalized list completers" (Jefferson "On Some" and "List"). Their occurrence here may be analogous to another sort of idiom, "over and out."

So: Perhaps still in full spate, Roger produces this terribly apt component, "you realize it's time to break," whereupon he brings his utterance to a screeching halt with "and vice versa, and all that shit." and becomes silent. It's not only that Roger becomes silent, but that no one else starts to speak for a good five seconds. And it's the therapist who breaks the silence, announcing the end of the session.

I think an argument might be built that if Roger himself did not break the silence, turning it into a mid-utterance pause, then it is the therapist who would expectably do so, and perhaps specifically do so with an announcement of closure. One part of the argument would have to do with the fact that the last ten minutes of the session have been focused on Roger, and that the last seven of those ten minutes have been on sufferance of the therapist, who had made an initial attempt to close the session after a three-second silence.

(4.d.4.1) [GTS:IV:65]

1:46:45 Dan: But the point is you weren't hurt by it just  
 now were you?  
 Roger: No,  
 Dan: As a matter of fact I think maybe you  
 expressed some of the feelings of the other  
 members.  
 Roger: I think I broke the ice. Maybe somebody else  
 who would not uh  
 Dan: Well, ( )  
 Roger: Follow in uh open uh their armor.  
 ( ): t'hh  
 Roger: Take off the ( ) lid.  
 → (3 sec)

Dan: Well let's-  
 Roger: Maybe not.  
 Dan: Let's see (whether) ( )  
 Roger: But I don't think I'm  
 making an ass of myself or-or anything, I-I  
 may get something outta group therapy this way.  
 Dan: Well this happened once before. I don't know  
 whether or notchu were he -- here when Rick  
 was here.  
 Roger: No, I wasn't.  
 Ken: Uh uh  
 Dan: Course this is one of the things that that Al  
 uh See, Al has his own ways of presenting  
 himself to the group . . .  
 1:47:45

I'd want to argue that Dan's "Well let's see (whether) . . ." is a first occurrence of his subsequent "Well let's see whether or not we can't get into it a little earlier next-uh next week." with which he terminates the session.

The next silence occurs a couple of minutes later. It is broken by the therapist, this time with an offer to continue the session.

(4.d.4.2) [GTS:IV:66]

Roger: it should all spill out in fronta the floor  
 for us to take it apart.  
 Dan: Take apart, understand.  
 1:49:30 Roger: An' understand, analyze, And maybe after  
 all this uh discovery, change.  
 Dan: Maybe, if that's-  
 Roger: If that's the answer.  
 → (7 sec)  
 Dan: → But even your initial comments today, in one  
 way, if I were to analyze them . . .

And the next silence, some five minutes later, is the one that follows Roger's capped turn, ". . . you realize it's time to break and they don't and vice versa, and all that shit." I'd want to argue that at that point "continuation" and "closure" were the relevant alternatives, given the occurrences at the two prior silences. At this point the therapist would be the one to speak, and would either offer continuation or move to close. And Roger's capping of his own utterance might be designed as a vote for closure.

Looking at each of the four cases of "triggerred terminations," I think a case could be made for something like pressure to close, imminence of closure, readiness to close. In each case the pun-like reference to closure is made by someone other than the one who then initiates closure. But in each case the one who makes that reference may well be sensitive to the pressure to close. In (4.d.1) Maggie's reason for the call had been dealt with at length, and unrelated matters are now being chatted about. In (4.d.2) Vic had offered to finish his drink and go home with his wife Carol about a half hour earlier, and now Fred is making noises about leaving. In (4.d.3) callers to radio talk shows have closure as a possibility almost from the start, and this call has been going on for five minutes now. And I've roughed out the possibilities for imminence of closure in (4.d.4).



There could be great orderliness here—and for at least some of the other poetics phenomena. There may well be systematic, specifiable conditions for their occurrence. We're still slogging around wondering if these things are really happening, never mind systematicities. But it's these sorts of materials that Sacks could have been talking about in the two sentences I'll use to close this talk.

We're dealing with something real and powerful. And not just grossly powerful, like providing for the rate of industrial development, but it provides for little tiny things that God might have overlooked. . . . (1:238)<sup>35</sup>

### Comments and Questions

Following the talk there were several comments and questions, a few of which Robert Hopper included in his transcript.

Q: A psychologist, George Malle, ran an experiment of monitoring. Four different situations. With and without earphones, with and without white noise. What he got was the less monitoring they could do of their own speech, the more this sort of stuff came up.

GJ: Wonderful. Oh that's fabulous.

Q: And also other things—

GJ: Wait a minute. You have to be suspicious when a recipient says oh that's terrific. It means they're going to talk. About monitoring: What I've been noticing doesn't have to do with people being able to monitor their own speech, but the importance of the back-and-forth, instant-by-instant monitoring of each other's talk that goes on in conversation. I've tried to give a nice spread of cases here, but it seems to me that in the base collections there is a disproportionate amount of this stuff occurring in things like interviews or sportscasts, things where people are forced back into their own resources to talk, and keep re-using their own materials. I get the feeling that if they are kept for long out of this ongoing instant-by-instant monitoring of each other, they're almost into a state of sensory deprivation.

Q2: Let me just raise what I take to be the obvious objection. Why are these examples not coincidences.

GJ: [That's right, absolutely.]

Q2: In other words, why is it not simply gratuitous linkage of uh:::

GJ: That's the objection=

Q2: =phonetic similarities.

GJ: Absolutely.

Q2: [I mean obviously there are um, there are countless conversations in which these connections do not appear. So in a sense you're sort of uh you're data dredging. You're supplying only the cases that validate your thesis.

GJ: [That's the one!]

Q2: I mean that's the obvious objection=

GJ: =That's the one.

Q2: And is there any sort of,

GJ: Not me,

Q2: rejoin(der)

GJ: Nope.

((laughter))

Q2: Let me raise one other—It's rather disconcerting. You're implying that much of everyday business conducted through talk hinges to a large extent on phonetic accidents. Given that premise, you might want to examine particularly fateful interactions to see if rather critical outcomes turn on what appear to be conversational flukes.

GJ: So you've given us two ways to go: Just don't believe it at all, and go see if it works really crucially. And that could be something for someone to do, but I'll stay with the everyday stuff as it happens to emerge. I think, by the way, that Sacks was looking to see if this stuff could work in important ways. Towards the beginning of the talk, I read from that interchange between Sacks and the student who'd asked if this couldn't be carried too far, Sacks answering that we first have to raise the possibility that it operates at all. He goes on to say that perhaps the only way to get yourself to work on this "otherwise boring" stuff. . . .

. . . would be under the hope that it was really much more important than it will turn out to be. So the fantasy that leads you to try to work on it is that it might turn out to have some really outrageous operation. I guess I don't think so, but while I'm working with it I'm going to propose that it could be.<sup>36</sup> (Sacks 1:325)

### APPENDIX A. THE UNLIKELY CASE.

I've always figured that this case is so improbable that presenting it would simply impeach anything else I might say. Even at the Boston conference where my aim was to show the loopy side of Conversation Analysis, I left it out. But at this point I don't see that there's anything to be gained by being self-protective, so here it is.

I'll first give some background, and work up the surrounding talk a bit. The conversation takes place in June, 1968, in the week that Robert Kennedy was assassinated in Los Angeles. Emma and her husband Guy live in Los Angeles and are weekendending in a beach community some fifty miles further south, where Emma's sister Lottie and an acquaintance of Emma's, Nancy, live permanently. As Guy is preparing to leave for a noon golf date, Emma tries to phone Nancy but the line is busy. So she phones Lottie instead. After her conversation with Lottie, she succeeds in reaching Nancy.

In each conversation Emma introduces the television coverage of the assassination and its sequelae, and does it with the same device: "This has really been a week, hasn't it," adding "I won't even turn the TV on." In her conversation with

Lottie we can see Emma discovering the device. She first tries with "What a miserable weekend!" but that is treated as a weather report, and some weather-talk follows, in the course of which a misunderstanding arises about exactly when it rained, last week or this week. And out of that emerges the successful introduction of talk about the assassination coverage on TV.

## (A.1) [NB:II:1:R:2-3]

Emma: → WHAT A MISER'BLE WEEKEND.  
(0.2)

Lottie: Yea:h en gee it's been: beautiful ↓ down here  
I know you've had it (.) lousy in town  
have,ncha.

Emma: Yea:h it rained yesterday.

Lottie: It rained about uh ↓ :: u-let's see: =  
Emma: Ye:h.

Lottie: =Thursdee morning real rily hard about five  
uh'clock down here.

Emma: ↑ Did it? ↑

Lottie: Yeah.

Emma: Memorial Da:y.  
(0.4)

Emma: That wz the ( )  
Lottie: → =Oh this week. Th[at's ri'] =  
Emma: → =Oh this week. Th[at's ri'] =  
Lottie: Ye:ah.

Emma: → =God'v lost track a'time = This's rily been a  
week hasn' it.

Lottie: Oh: ↓ God a lo:ng wee:k. Yeah.

Emma: Oh: my ↓ God I'm (.)  
→ glad it's over I won't even turn the teevee  
o:n.

Lottie: I won't either.

Emma: °aOh no. They drag it out so°

And in her conversation with Nancy, Emma moves directly to the newly-discovered—and successful—device.

## (A.2) [NB:II:2:R:2-3]

Emma: → gosh uh this is really been a ↓ week hasn'  
it? =

Nancy: =((sadly)) Oh:: it rily has.

Emma: It's rily

Nancy: Gee it rily, it rily has.

Emma: → Ah won't  
ev'n turn the teevee o:n,h

Nancy: Well I had turned it on w'n I firs' got u:p  
j's tuh see: how thin:gs were: p[ro]gressi:ng  
but the thing wz so sad'n all that h[or]rible  
sad music they kep' (.) keep playi:ng, all th' =  
Emma: Oh::::

Emma: = { Go::d

Nancy: = { time yuh know,

Emma: They go on en o:n en o:n with thi:s

Nancy: [°Y a : h, °]

And once into talk of the television coverage, Emma brings out her little gem, perhaps the reason for the two phone calls. It seems that she has a personal involvement in this historic event. The very spot where RFK's body was put onto the airplane was precisely where she and her husband had taken off on their trip to Hawaii.

Here's how it is announced and received in her conversation with her sister.

## (A.1)

Emma: THAT'S WHERE THEY WE TOOK OFF on ar chartered  
flight that sa:me spot didju see it?  
(0.7)

Emma: hh when they took him in, the air:pla:ne, =  
Lottie: n: N! o:: =

Lottie: =Hell I wouldn't ev'n watch it. I Think it's  
so ridiculous. I mean it's 'hhh it's a  
h[or]rible thing but my: Go:d play up that  
thing it it's jst ↑ h[or]rible.

Emma: [It'll] drive

people nu:ts.

Lottie: Why id i-en makes Americ'n people think why  
ther no goo:d.

It appears that while the remarkable coincidence is a topic for Emma, Lottie doesn't find it a topic for us, for this conversation, and stays with the topic-for-us that Emma herself introduced—complaints about the television coverage—to which Emma accedes for a time. And then tries again a bit further on.

Emma: I think teevee's ruined the wo:rd mys:lf,

Lottie: Ye:ah.

Emma: Da:mn teevee:, hh,hh

Lottie: Ye:a,h.

Emma: → ↑ That's where ↑ we  
took off. The exa:ct spot: on that chartered  
flight.

(0.4)

Lottie: ↓ Oh: =

Emma: =°where the° pla:ne came in. I jst watched  
that but

(0.3)

Emma: hhh

Lottie: [Uh I wouldn't ev'n turn it o:n I mean I j's

Emma: [Uh-uh]

Lottie: 'h hhh Iss too depresing.  
 Emma: { Oh: ↓ ↓ it is  
 terr:uhble ↓ = What's ne:w.  
 Lottie: Gee nothing Emma . . .

Emma's remarkable coincidence is sunk without a trace—at least for that conversation. Here's how it is announced and received in her conversation with her acquaintance Nancy—and possibly why Emma was trying to reach Nancy with her gem in the first place, and not Lottie.

(A.2)

Emma: → 'h Hey that wz the same spot we took off fer  
 Ho:nuhlulu  
 (0.3)  
 Emma: where they puut him o:n.  
 (0.6)  
 Emma: et that chartered pla:ce.  
 Nancy: { Oh: ri↑ll,y?  
 Emma: y::Ye::ah.  
 Nancy: ↑ Oh: fer ↓ heaven ↓ sa:kes.  
 Emma: { ExA:Ctly it says on West  
 Imperial Booleva:rd i:n : u h  
 Nancy: { Mm hm?<sup>∞</sup> }  
 (.)  
 Emma: ū-then I c'd see the bui:lding en then the  
 Wo:rd Airways wz uh: 'hhh on the side there  
 whur it comes in en that's ↑ j's where ↑ we  
 took o:ff  
 Nancy: W'l ↓ ah'll be ↓ da:rned }  
 Emma: { Ye:: } ah, 'hhhh, hh  
 Nancy: { Oh:: }  
 Nancy: Well I'm glad ih didn' ha:ppen while you were  
 tryin' tih get o:ff.  
 Emma: hOh: my Go:d hh  
 Nancy: { God that w'd'v been a mess you'd  
 a'never got'n tuh Hawaii.  
 (.)  
 Emma: n:no ↑ wou:ldn' that a' been sum, 'p'n°  
 Nancy: { Jgemunny }  
 Ch::rismus. No kidding.°  
 Emma: °Mm hm,°  
 Nancy: { hhhhhh Yeah it's been a rough week . . .

A world of contrast between this, and Lottie's stoic reciprocity. Nancy is an adroit and facile conversationalist, taking Emma on a little carousel ride and dropping her just where they started—reviewing the week that was. Now, both Lottie and Nancy go on to tell of their own week. Lottie had a successful fishing trip, her description of which gave us (2.a.3), “. . . we went out to the mouth of the jetty Tuesday and Jesus did we catch bass and halibut.” And Nancy, who has returned to college as a mature student, just had her final exams—including an evaluation by her Psychology classmates which seems to have been an accolade.

(A.2.1) [NB:II:2:R:5–6]

Nancy: They were jus:t (.) ye:ry 'hhhhhh very very  
 sweet with me; h-a:nd it wz so funny in fac'  
 one'v the kids came up t'me, (.) one a' the  
 young 'hhh fellas thet (.) Ma:rk's 'bout  
 twunny two: . . . Ma:rk came up ene's said  
 (.) I: 'd like (.) Nancy? (0.2) he said I'd  
 like t' (0.2) take you over tuh Shakey's en  
 buy you a ↓ bee:r.  
 (.)  
 Nancy: uhhhh ↓ huh ↓ huh 'h, hhh  
 Emma: { H o : w ↓ cu::te.  
 Nancy: { ↑ Yeah

In the end, Emma's historic moment is sunk without a trace by Nancy, just as it was by Lottie. But whereas Lottie flatly rejected the topic—Emma then giving up and beginning the conversation all over again with “What's new?”—Nancy effuses for a bit and then, with “Yeah it's been a rough week,” circles back to the starting point of Emma's story, seamlessly replacing it with her own.

So much for background information and a tour of the surrounding talk. Now to the triggering mechanism(s).

Each of the announcements is formed up in the same way. Emma is pointing at something, “that spot,” as if she and her recipient were passengers on a bus, and she's noticing a feature of the landscape. And in each case her recipient has difficulty locating what's being pointed to.

(A.1)

Emma: THAT'S WHERE THEY WE TOOK OFF on ar chartered  
 flight that sa:me spot didju see it?  
 (0.7)  
 Emma: 'hh when they took him in, the air pla:ne, }=  
 Lottie: { n: N o: . . }  
 Lottie: =Hell I wou:ldn' ev'n watch it.

and

(A.2)

Emma: 'h Hey that wz the same spot we took off fer  
 Ho:nuhlulu  
 (0.3)  
 Emma: where they puut him o:n.  
 (0.6)  
 Emma: et that chartered pla:ce.  
 Nancy: { Oh: ri↑ll,y?

Compare the dysfluency here with the responses to Emma's successful topic opener.

(A.1)

Emma: This's rilly been a wee:k hasn't it.  
 Lottie: Oh: ↓ Go:d a lo:ng week. Yeah.

and

(A.2)

- Emma: gosh uh this is really been a ↓ weɜ:k hɑ:sn'  
it?=  
Nancy: =(sadly) Oh:: it rɪljly hɑ:s.

While "this has really been a week" is adequate to its task, getting immediate and rich response even from Lottie the taciturn recipient, "that was the same spot we took off" gets silence, even from Nancy the fluent recipient. So what is going on?

It may be that Emma is indeed pointing to a feature of the landscape, but a landscape accessible only to her; an internal landscape. And it may be that the feature of the internal landscape that she's pointing to is present in the words that immediately precede each announcement.

(A.1)

- Emma: I won't even turn the teevee o:n.  
Lottie: I won' eether.  
Emma: → °aOh no. They drag it out so° THAT'S WHERE  
THEY WE TOOK OFF...

and

(A.2)

- Emma: Ah won't ev'n turn the tee vee o:n,h  
(.)  
Nancy: Well I hed turned it on w'n I firs' got u:p  
j's tuh see: how thin:gs were: pergressing  
but the thing wz so sad'n all that hōrrible  
sad music they kep' (.) keep,playing,=  
Emma: Oh::)=  
Nancy: =all th'time yuh know,  
Emma: Go:::d  
Emma: (→) They go on en o:n en o:n with thi:s  
Nancy: [°y a: h, °]  
Emma: Like yesterday showin' um goin' in the chu-  
'hh ↑ Ah mean so much I: know it's sa:d but  
my God let's don't throw it at the public  
°constantl,y°  
Nancy: t' hhh We:ll I think it's sad  
thet they don't ah::h allo:w ü-you know the  
fam'lies et least th'decen,cy of hav,ing=  
Emma: ceY a h  
Nancy: =s'm ↑ privacy.  
(0.4)  
Emma: Yeah 'n the church yesterday thih 'hhh  
fla:shin' the ca:m'ras on um when theh w'r  
there yihknow went in tuh pra:y and an' (.)  
↑ Go:d g-(.) j a h-  
Nancy: Ah thi nk iss ↑ terrible.=

Emma: → = 'hh ↑ Jackie looked u:p ↑ 'h Hey that wz the  
same spot we took off fer Ho:nuhlulu

What I'm proposing is that "They drag it out" and "Jackie looked up" trigger the noticing of some feature of an internal landscape, which is then pointed to in "That's where we took off" and "That was the same spot we took off," respectively.

In (A.1) "they drag it out," which is being used there as an idiom for "prolong," has a literal sense that might capture a scene shown on that morning's television: The taking of Robert Kennedy's confined body from the holding area out to the plane. And that may be the scene that Emma is pointing at with "That's where they we took off!"—to the utter mystification of her recipient.

And "they drag it out" may have the same fate as another problematic utterance, the "What a miserable weekend!" that generated weather talk and was abandoned for the in-situ-discovered "This has really been a week!" which was then stored for re-use.

That is, in (A.2) when Emma makes her comment on the prolonged television coverage, we no longer get "they drag it out," but "They go on and on and on" (see bracketed arrow, above); that substitution possibly having to do with Emma's attributing the failure of her announcement in (A.1) to its precipitousness, and solving that by abandoning the graphic phrase that triggered it for something devoid of imagery. And indeed she gets past "They go on and on and on" with no outburst of the story that so much wants to be told—only to fall prey to another image.

In (A.2) "Jackie looked up" describes a poignant moment captured on film, perhaps in closeup. I don't have a clear sense of this trigger. For example, it's possible that there were several such moments, including one at the church the day before, and one at the airport that morning. Where, then, one image crossfades into the other, and here we are at the airport, again at the scene to which Emma now points with "Hey that was the same spot we took off for Honolulu"—again to the perfect confusion of her recipient.

Another possibility is that there was just the one occasion when "Jackie looked up," and now we're getting a transformation involving *who* looked up. That is, "looked up" triggers for Emma exactly what happened to *her*. She looked at the television screen and there it was: "The same spot we took off."

This latter version is perhaps supported by Emma's subsequent talk.

(A.2)

Emma: I c'd see the bui:lding en then the Wo:rl'd Airways wz uh: 'hhh on the side  
there whur it comes in en that's ↑ j's where ↑ we took o:ff

She's reporting on her own looking and seeing—at the time she and Guy went on their trip to Hawaii, and then this morning watching the scene unfold on television, and now, with such a phrase as "World Airways was on the side there where it comes in," she is taking us through that internal landscape that she can see so clearly.

This may be an extreme case, both in general and in this lady's life. That is,

she's got this brush with history to tell about, but however exciting she may find it, she knows it does not qualify as a "reason for a call" (if it were, she could begin the conversation with something like "Guess what just happened to me!" and she does not), but has to be worked into the conversation somehow, to emerge as "interactionally generated"; something that just came up as we were talking together.<sup>37</sup>

That what happens is not so much an emergence as an eruption results perhaps from the combination of pressure to tell the story, and the aptness to the story of a phrase being used to refer to something else. That Emma has twice succumbed to such a triggering and has twice produced this enigmatic pointing to something that just isn't there (as Woods has it, "... without any endeavor to translate [it] into a form which considers the need of a listener") (Woods 302), might testify to the terrible urgency of the story's need to be told.

#### Appendix B. Sample of "working with" poetics.

In one of his lectures, Sacks offers a way to approach a piece of data: "A kind of easy way to start out is to pick out various sorts of sound sequences, and just mark them out on the transcript" (2:320-21). Here's a replica of a doodling of that sort, that he did on a segment of transcript. (For clarity's sake I'm only replicating that set of markings and not the wealth of notes, arrows, circles and lines for other issues that are also present.)

#### (B.1) [Sacks:4 Calls:Draft 1:C4]

- A: ((Hello))  
 B: Hi honey,  
 B: How are // yuh.  
 A: Fine.  
 A: How'r you.  
 B: hhhhhhh Oh, I'm pretty goo::d.  
 B: I hadda liddle operation on my toe this week.  
 I hadtuh have toenail taken off.  
 (0.5)  
 A: Why:hh  
 B: Oh, I have a fungus 'n I had'n infection,  
 (0.3)  
 B: T's a // hell of a  
 A: Oh::: Agnes  
 B: Innate awful  
 (0.7)  
 A: Well wha' a shame.  
 A: Didjeh taftuh go in the hospic'?  
 B: No:: I dist had a local deal, en I id wadn'  
 any fun but I'm better I w'z, lying on the  
 couch out n front.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>The exploration of the poetics of ordinary talk was introduced and developed by Harvey Sacks in his UCLA and UCI lectures, an edited version of which can be found in Sacks 2: 264-65, 291-93, 305-09, 314-15, 396-401, 425-28, 431-36, 505.

<sup>2</sup>The "we" in this case included Judy Davidson, Rich Frankel, Anita Pomerantz, Jim Schenkein, and Alene Terasaki.

<sup>3</sup>Here is the original. See Valery 413-14.

Je cherche un mot (*dit le poète*) un mot qui soit:  
 féminin,  
 de deus syllabes,  
 contenant P ou F,  
 terminé par une muette,  
 et synonyme de brisure, desagrégation;  
 et pas savant, pas rare.  
 Six conditions—au moins!

<sup>4</sup>For some discussion of "recipient design," see Sacks 1: 765, 790-91; and 2: 7, 229-30, 404-05, 445-50, 540-41, 564.

<sup>5</sup>In many of the instances throughout these materials, square brackets in a transcript text are added as a display device. They do not represent any particular emphasis by the speakers, but are intended as pointers to the phenomena under consideration.

<sup>6</sup>In American football the team is populated by "backs." There is the quarterback, running back, fullback, scatback, etc.

<sup>7</sup>In programs broadcast by the satellite channels CNN and CNBC in which the O. J. Simpson murder trial was being discussed by various legal experts—virtually on a daily basis—the contrast pair defense-prosecution was chronically problematic. Time and time again the one was produced when the other was meant. Often the mistakes were noticed and corrected; sometimes they seemed to pass unnoticed.

<sup>8</sup>For a discussion of this phenomenon or something very like it, see Sacks 2: 419-36.

<sup>9</sup>The story in question is Ray Bradbury's "A sound of thunder." Briefly, Mr. Eckels, a time traveler on safari, steps momentarily off the safari path. Returning to his own time he finds everything horribly changed. It turns out that when he stepped off the path, he'd stepped on a butterfly now embedded in the mud on his boot.

It fell to the floor, an exquisite thing, a small thing that could upset balances and knock down a line of small dominoes and then big dominoes and then gigantic dominoes, all down the years across Time. Eckels' mind whirled. It couldn't change things. Killing one butterfly couldn't be that important! Could it?

<sup>10</sup>The data is as follows:

[Frankel:TC:1:1:3]

((Laverne is reporting an incident at a restaurant where she works, which is popular with her under-21-year-old friends who keep trying to get away with mixing liquor into their soft drinks.))

Laverne: So one a'the- u-one a'the other guys came up  
 → [behind] me they alweez do:. Yihknow they-  
 whenever you take a drink away fr'm a gi:rl.  
 'hh ( ) you alweez have a bouncer with you.  
 'hh jest in ca:se the guy-(0.2) who's with  
 'er decides 'c'ome 't'hh stand up en hitche.  
 (0.3)

Esther: M-hm.=  
 Laverne: = p' hhhhhh So: she goes w'l ah'on't see w't  
 cher so c'ncerned about you didn't seve it  
 uh me..  
 (1.0)

Laverne: 't'hh So I looked at 'er en I s'd Cathy, I  
 → said 'hh I feel personally, [affronted], 'hh  
 thetchu w'do it in a place that I work 'hh  
 (→) en put me in a [position]like you jis put me in.

<sup>11</sup>The first time I noticed this business of finishing one's own line before addressing the other's, was back in 1968, transcribing the following:

(1) [NB:11:4:R:10-11]

Nancy: † U-hnfor:ch'nly he lives in V<sub>2</sub>:n Nu l :ys.  
 u-mghh::m. tch { h h h h h }

Emma: → Is'e unencum bged?

Nancy: → u Works: e-out there Yes he's livin::g with  
 his ANT,h

Recently I've come across a few more cases, including these:

- (2) [Holt:088:1:8:1-2] ((Modified standard orthography))  
 ((Joyce's dog is being "absolutely stupid"))

Joyce: Geoff: put down the phone in the hall 'n went to pick up the: hhh you know the cordless phone in the bedroom t' bring it=

Leslie: {V e: : s? }  
 Joyce: =in to me 'hhh An' as soon as he sort of (.) hurries down the (0.5) down the corridor she(h)e sta(h)rts to whi:ne.

Leslie: Oh::  
 Leslie: → Are you not in bed are you?

Joyce: { Most peculiar }

Joyce: { mNo: no ↓ no l' m: }

Leslie: { Oh ↓ no. }

Joyce: No: I'm in the sitting room.

- (3) [Holt:088:1:9:7-8] ((Modified standard orthography))

Ed: An' I've only just uh got back from: holiday as well.

Leslie: → aOh yes did you go to Ireland,  
 Ed: { } half term

Ed: { hh No: I went to Spain. }

- (4) [Tracy:1:64] ((Modified standard orthography))

Tracy: "I mean I've done done it all my life"  
 (0.5)

Tracy: Charming people 'n getting along 'n being  
 (0.3)

Tracy: you, k n o w \*

Bernie: → But what about the black \*marks.\*

Tracy: → { all of that stuff }

Tracy: { The black ma: rks they just once uh-you know they don't come up very often. }

- (5) [HospSite:8-27-92:4] ((Modified standard orthography))

Patient: MAYBE you can t' h you know (0.5) help me to get a (.) strong 'hhh PAI: N (.) reliever.

Intern: Ah ha h?

Patient: { Cause the QNES:: (0.4) on the market (.) don't work. }

Intern: → =What what've you been u\_sing.

Patient: { ( ) 'don't work' }

Patient: { t' hhh I've used (.) Mido: l . . . }

\*If Ed is saying "During half term," this could be an attempted collaborative completion of Leslie's "Did you go...?"

<sup>12</sup> This material was recorded in 1968 when \$3.00 could buy you "a great big steak."

<sup>13</sup> Here, the word "compliment" is condensed to "comp'm."

<sup>14</sup> For some discussion of story characters introduced in the way the policeman is here, see Sacks 1: 410-11, 183-84.

<sup>15</sup> The Harlem Clowns is a basketball team entirely populated by blacks; a version of the Harlem Globetrotters.

<sup>16</sup> See (1.a.3), (2.b.1.3), (3.b.4), (3.b.6), (3.d.1) and (3.e.6).

<sup>17</sup> This conversation was overheard around 1970 when \$20 was a lot of money.

<sup>18</sup> See page 19 and note 10.

<sup>19</sup> Something in the way Roger produces this makes it a reference to something green and leafy rather than someone deceptively positioned.

<sup>20</sup> Here is some more of that conversation, tracking the occurrences of [k] and [g].

- 69 Louise: [C]uz YOU LOO[K] LI[K]E A ↑ HOO:D.  
 70 (0.2)  
 71 Louise: ↑ HE WANNIDA loo[k] li[k]e a hoo-ood.  
 72 (0.5)  
 73 Dan: \*We:il | n u h' wai: t |  
 74 Roger: | [g]ue ss 'th a' t's, ↓ it. \*  
 75 Dan: | Nah this is  
 76 [k]ind'v l : thin[k] in int' restin :g=  
 77 Ken: |hh "h e h h e h - n h"  
 78 Dan: \* =poin'v view =Ah wanna know wut Ken's  
 79 \*reaction was tuh Mi[k]e too.\*  
 80 (0.4)  
 81 Ken: Tuh Mi: [k]e?  
 82 Dan: ° ↑ Yeah ah mean you s- you w'r starting dih  
 83 ↑ say ↓ th et uh ↓  
 84 Ken: { Uh: }  
 85 (0.5)  
 86 Ken: i-He loo[k]ed li[k]e (0.4) uh (.) i-he  
 87 loo[k] li[k]e a [k]id (0.4) ehh khnhn hn no  
 88 \*o(h)ff(h):nse" h, hhh  
 89 Louise: { }  
 90 Ken: → Li[k]e a [k]id who (.) who js [g]ot out'v ↓ a:  
 91 (0.6) tch (.) a: (0.4) boy's lo: dge hhnh  
 92 hgh-eh  
 93 (.)  
 94 Roger: 'hhh I summedju up th' firs' time | I=  
 95 Louise: | R e f o : r m' s(c) h o o : l ? |  
 96 Roger: saw you 'n jis' so happened I wz ↓ right.  
 97 Ken: = { Yeah: h' Sump n li[k]e t h a : t. }  
 98 (0.3)  
 99 Louise: → Refo:rm s(c)hool 'e jis [g]ot out'v?  
 100 Ken: Ya:h. I d'know why: maybe it wz a'way e wz  
 101 dre:ssed er (.) th'way e a[ç]ted er  
 102 something b't  
 103 (.)  
 104 ( ) : hh, hh  
 105 Ken: { he did(l) e-he did (.) in some wa:y seem  
 106 li[k]e (.) someb'ddy who js [g]ot (h)out  
 107 (h)'v a refo:rm s(c)hool er something  
 108 t, uh ↓ me.  
 109 Roger: { En so did't:: (.) w'n you wal[k]ed so  
 110 right away you too[k] }  
 111 (0.3)  
 112 Roger: { }  
 113 Louise: { What'd Bill Re:lly loo[k] li: [k]e. }  
 114 (0.6)  
 115 Mike: \* [K]ho: d damn he must' loo[k] li[k]e  
 116 Louise: hh, hhmh  
 117 Ken: → { The b(h)(h)[g] tall, [g]u:y? }  
 118 Mike: → { ex [ç]e' : n. }  
 119 Louise: ngThe blo::nd.  
 120 (0.4)  
 121 Ken: Oh the sur ↓ fer.  
 122 (0.2)  
 123 Louise: ↑ NO: tha' wss e-aaW'dju thin[k]  
 124 o, f the ↑ s, urfer, A: ↓ an.  
 125 Dan: { That w'z A l a n. }

The sprinkling of [k]s remains fairly consistent, but there are few [g]s and only three strong [k]-[g] clumps: "He loo[k]ed . . . li[k]e a [k]id who just [g]ot out of a, a boy's lodge" (lines 86-91), "Reform s(c)hool he just [g]ot out of?" (line

99) and "... li[k]t somebody who just [g]ot out of a reform s[c]hool" (lines 106-7). A thing to note here is that the clumping is a matter of repetition (e.g., all three [g]s appear in the same word, "[g]ot"), and does not seem to be generative in the way it may have been earlier in the interchange. There is one dubious clump (lines 117-8), Ken's "bi[g] tall [g]uy" which is overlapped by Mike's "ex [c]on," but I'm not so sure that the [g] in "bi[g]" qualifies for this set of [k]-[g]s, and by the time the [g] in "[g]uy" has occurred, Mike is already committed to the phrase "ex [c]on"; i.e., again may not be generative.

\*Ken's real name has no [k] in it.

<sup>21</sup>It would be nice to see if the flurry is topically bounded, but someone else (probably Jo Ann Goldberg) transcribed the conversation, and I don't have a copy of the tape or transcript.

<sup>22</sup>This phenomenon has been given some consideration. For example, Sacks talks about "touched off" topics (1:761-2), and I talk about "triggered topics" in "Sequential Aspects of Storytelling in Conversation."

<sup>23</sup>Here is another, similar, possible pun. The year is 1964, the topic is the Beatles, who had recently appeared on the scene.

[GTS:1:2:17]

Roger: They gotta get them screamin::: mh someway  
y'know, so, a- (0.5) combination a' things.  
n the [hair] is [part] of it.

About which, somewhere in his research notes, Sacks jotted down, "The 'part' is part of the hair."

<sup>24</sup>Emma and her husband Guy live in Los Angeles, where he works. They have a little house at the beach some 50 miles south of L.A., and that's where everyone gathered for the Thanksgiving dinner. Emma and Guy had been planning to return to L.A., but decided to stay down at the beach.

<sup>25</sup>Watts is the sprawling Los Angeles slum where the Watts Riots took place, not long before (4.c.3) occurred.

<sup>26</sup>Recall (3.c.3) in which a complaint by a white teenager about treatment by a black policeman is formed up as a story of age discrimination. Here, a young man who is more than likely black, seems to have formed up his complaint about the city's neglect of his neighborhood as a story of age discrimination. Maybe there's something like a *surrogate complaint*; something less volatile than the actual one, which is more talkable about?

<sup>27</sup>In the Foreword I mention my tendency to excess. I might as well supply an example. Here is some of my discussion of the "mess"/"garbage" material as it appears in Robert Hopper's transcript. It can be seen as representative of the sort of thing I'm leaving out of this draft.

You get "kind of a mess"—"garbage," not introduced that way. He doesn't say "Oh, speaking of messes I have a story about garbage." ((laughter)) No, but he says "Here's a story about politics," which eventually has in it what the story is about, which is that they don't pick up the garbage. He builds it in, and by the time he's finished you're not going to believe me, right? You're not going to believe me that "kind of a mess" triggers "garbage" because you're not supposed to. So you don't. Because if you believe me we'd have to empty out the booby hatches. Or all move in.

<sup>28</sup>There may also be a shadow of sound-triggering here. Although the 1990 *Webster's New World Dictionary* defines "crap" as "nonsense" or "junk" or "trash," the word has long been used as a euphemism for "shit." Actually it seems to me it's no longer a euphemism but a synonym. Euphemism or synonym, it may be that aside from invoking a category that it shares with "sins," the word "crap" also invokes the word for which it is routinely used as a substitute, a word which stands in at least an assonant relationship with "sins"; i.e., "shit."

<sup>29</sup>See Appendix A for a case that I never had the nerve to present outside of the classroom.

<sup>30</sup>"ein(ŋ) g'nna" is an attempt to capture a nasalized "I'm gonna."

<sup>31</sup>Sounds like Mike just had a big swallow of beer, and now comes the "ahhhhhh."

<sup>32</sup>Caller is very likely laughing as well. Routinely, when B.C. gives utterance, his coparticipant's voice fades.

<sup>33</sup>"I've got to go, sir" (or "ma'am") is this radio-show host's standard entry into closings.

<sup>34</sup>There may be a [w]-row developing here. "[W]ell . . . [w]hether [w]e," plus the rhyme of "[we]" . . . "[wee]k." Dan may be doing an error-preemptive checkout in his "next-uh next week." Recall (1.b.13), the speaker's difficulties with "... [eats] like Hester's (0.3) [ne]- nephew [niece]." In this case they've been revising the schedules, so it's not automatically going to be "next week." Rather, something like "next time" might be more appropriate.

<sup>35</sup>Sacks 1:238. The quote as it appears here is slightly edited.

<sup>36</sup>See Appendix B for a sample of "working with" poetics.

<sup>37</sup>For some discussion of "interactionally generated" matter, specifically, invitations, see Sacks 1: 791-93; and 2: 210-11 and 574-75.

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