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A LINGUISTIC PHENOMENOLOGY OF THERAPY TALK

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The social sciences have always been faced with a dilemma that seems periodically to produce a state of crisis: the more "scientific" they become, the less they seem to tell us about human experience; the more concerned they become with human experience, the less "scientific" they seem. Fifty years ago Sapir (1949) revealed his concern with this split when he argued that the social sciences must return to the "living context from which [our theories have] been abstracted in the first place." This gap between the realm of concrete human experience and our ideas about that experience is perhaps the most fundamental phenomenon of social science, for what we think about the relationship between theory and experience not only has relevance for indicating possible directions of research for constructing theories of human social life, but also may have the most profound repercussions on the individual lives of large numbers of people living in the world today through the applications of that research especially in the provision of human services. It becomes important then to confront this dilemma and to attempt to understand its nature.

We feel it critical to realize that our models of human being do not in fact capture human experience in all its potentiality. There seem to be two general styles of thought regarding the study of that experience. Differences between these two approaches go very deep and seem to revolve around matters which were, before the Renaissance, considered matters of "faith," and have to do with the most basic assumptions regarding human nature. On the one hand is that tradition of thinking which is pervaded by the highest skepticism about the ability of the individual person to make "valid" judgments. One thinks immediately of Descartes and Hume in this context, and particularly of certain aspects of the modern scientific tradition as exemplified in the school of logical positivism and the "anti-metaphysical" thinking of Rudolf Carnap (1956). Truth here is conceived as a collection of verifiable descriptions of relations between facts in the world. Both facts and their descriptions are independent of the individual person's life experience, particularly that of the scientific researcher. Some critics have charged that this tradition has reduced the world to a set of meaningless relations (Polanyi, 1975).

The other mode of thought, on the contrary, views the individual person, the life process, and the nature of truth in a radically different light. Among such thinkers as Nietzsche, Jaspers, Heidegger, and to some extent the Wittgenstein of PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATIONS, there is at least an implied faith in the ability of the human organism to realize its own truth through the unfolding life process itself. Truth here is not an accumulated body of data and generalizations over that data. As

Giambattista Vico, one of the earliest proponents of this view argued, truth is historical, and that "the validity of all true knowledge . . . can be shown to be such only by understanding how it comes about." For Vico, truth is created by human beings in their "pursuit of an intelligible purpose, [in] man's effort to understand himself and his world, and to realize his capacities in it." (Berlin, 1976). Therefore, our basic orientation toward the aspect of the world we wish to study is not something we can take up in a mood of pure abstraction, but must derive ultimately from our prior historical experience and from our nature as human beings needing to create meaning in our own lives.

As with other social sciences, linguistics established itself over the last two centuries as a science largely by working within the rationalist-empiricist tradition. Ricoeur (1976) points out that linguistics has made immense progress by considering language as a set of discrete entities in "systematic relationships involving only the interplay of oppositions constitutive of the system" in a self-contained whole. Language became an object of study entirely removed from persons who speak to each other. Ricoeur argues that as soon as linguistics wishes to understand language as, in Wittgenstein's phrase, a "form of life" i.e., as discourse, it can no longer afford to bracket out considerations having to do with people involved in creating various kinds of meaningfulness in their interactions with each other. Traditional methods of collecting data and forming generalizations to describe the data as a self-contained system will clearly continue to have important bearing on the study of language. However, we suggest that these methods by themselves can never lead to an understanding of how meaning comes into being through historically-lived time in human discourse, although we cannot demonstrate this claim here (v. Polanyi, 1975; Kuhn, 1970; Dreyfus, 1972; Berlin, 1976). We will therefore shy away from a simple direct transposition of established linguistic concepts such as "deep structure," "well-formedness," "linguistic competence," "grammaticality," etc., from their original use in the study of phonological and morpho-syntactic relations to the study of meaning in discourse. We suspect that in fact, no algorithm can be formed which will automatically "extract"--let alone predict-- the kinds of meanings people consider worthy of concern in interaction with each other, because meaning on this level is unique to the specific persons acting together within the discourse world. Meaning is to some extent "occasional" in Gadamer's (1976) sense of the term. We in fact concur with Sapir (1949), who suggested that if linguistics wishes to play a role in returning human sciences to concrete lived experience that its "definitions, meanings, and classifications must be capable of significant restatement . . . which transcends the best we have yet been able to offer." If such a thorough rethinking of the most fundamental concepts in linguistics is in fact needed in a linguistic approach to discourse, we cannot attempt it here, nor can we predict what the result will be for linguistics. Before this kind of reflection becomes possible, we

need a much better understanding of what human discourse is all about. As linguists, we can as yet say very little about the fundamental nature of the acts persons perform in creating meaning in their daily interactions. It is in the study of meaning, then, as it is created and experienced by acting persons that linguistics is most called into question.

This questioning becomes particularly acute in the study of therapy talk which typically involves persons living in what they perceive as problematic life situations. Therapy interaction can have great impact on each person who enters into it, whether therapist or client. The study of therapy interactions thereby encourages us to raise the most basic questions as to the nature of the coming-into-being of meaning in discourse. These questions deal primarily with the interpretive process: (1) What specific meanings are created by persons in interaction? (2) How are these meanings brought into being by the interactants? (3) What in fact would constitute "valid" answers to such questions? (4) Are certain kinds of answers that we might give more valuable to us than others?

Rather than attempt to provide conclusive answers to the questions we have asked, we will confine ourselves to indicating a direction for thinking about discourse that we believe will prove fruitful in the light of this questioning. Our first step is to bring our rather general questioning closer to the concrete realm of lived-experience by focusing on the interpretation of specific instances of discourse and to allow our attention to be directed to specific issues which are crucial to that particular kind of discourse for those who participate in it. We have already identified therapy talk as crucial for the self-realization of persons engaged in it. The segment of therapy talk we have selected appears to us as having particular bearing on this issue because both the participants and the researchers felt it was in fact not an especially helpful interaction for either person. The therapist, one of the authors of this paper, felt she was not able to achieve a deep enough understanding of the client's experience to enable her to be helpful to him in such a way that he would feel better about himself and begin to realize in his own way his potential as a human being. The client, when asked by the therapist "What are you getting out of our talks?" explained that he hadn't been "getting much mileage" out of them.

The other author of this paper had independently arrived at a similar conclusion after repeated listenings to the tape recording of the session and before eliciting any comment at all of the therapist's interpretation. He felt that the level of mutual understanding achieved here was little more than merely adequate to maintain the more superficial aspects of interaction. That is, cooperativeness between both persons was maintained in such regards as sharing turn-taking, providing responses which take up reference and predication in a consistent and appropriate way, sharing topic selection and allowing at least some shifts in focus within topics to take place, providing continual listening responses to

the speaker, etc. Yet on repeated listenings it became apparent that little depth of understanding was achieved in terms of mutual recognition and acknowledgment of each other's experience in the interaction, and that in fact there was an undercurrent of conflict between client and therapist which may well have interfered with the development of a deeper understanding of this kind. In short, standards of politeness were apparently being maintained as a veneer over a conflict as to what this interaction was going to achieve for either participant.

Given these general characterizations of the interaction, our first question arose: "What is it about this discourse that allows us to interpret it in this way?" Our interpretations are for us the particular meaning of this interaction. They were what came into the foreground of our attention as an explicit awareness set forth as assertions of the kind given above.

For the purposes of this sort of interpretive study we draw on the hermeneutic phenomenology of Heidegger (1952), and on Polanyi's (1975) formulation of meaning. Polanyi defines meaning as whatever is in focal awareness, arguing that focal awareness is made possible by its relationship to subsidiary awareness. This creative process is, for Polanyi, always ongoing, as long as the person has consciousness, and thereby involves at all times his ongoing experience of the world as a continual process of the unfolding of focal awareness of something (objects, feelings, sensations, verbalizations, etc.) out of a background of subsidiary awareness.

To ask the question, "What allows us to arrive at our particular interpretations of the world?" necessarily means attempting to uncover the act of meaning-creation itself, or at least certain aspects of it that we consider important for our purpose.

Without arguing the case here, we will propose that the achievement of a deep mutual understanding in therapy interaction is hindered when the participants are in conflict as to what the interaction itself is to achieve--i.e., what it is to come to mean --for each of them, particularly when this conflict is not brought to the level of explicit attention in the situation. This is in fact the case with the interaction we will discuss below. Our question, "What in the discourse allows us to interpret it as unsatisfactory as therapy (beyond the reported views of participants and researchers)?" may be made cogently answerable by first providing answers to the following questions: (1) What is the nature of the conflict between the participants? (2) How do we know there is a conflict of a particular kind? Answering these questions means, again, bringing to our own focal awareness at least certain aspects of subsidiary awareness relevant to our specific interpretations regarding the nature of the conflict. The most viable interpretation would not only be one which accounts for the most data (Taylor, 1971) but also would, as Vico suggested, best further our understanding of the world and the realization of our human capacities.

Our contention is that very little is in fact known about the

acts of meaning as described above, and that attention to these acts in specific instances of human discourse is needed if we are to get beyond the more general theories of the thinkers referred to above, and particularly if we wish to further the realization of the human potential of specific persons, such as those involved in therapy interactions.

In bringing aspects of subsidiary awareness to our attention, we need to look at two kinds of data: the observable speaking or communicative behaviors of the participants in the interaction; and, those aspects of cultural knowledge and experience, such as certain assumptions and expectations that participants and/or researchers make use of in interpreting those behaviors in a meaningful way. That is, we need to understand better how people bring the knowledge they have already gained through their history of interactions with other persons to bear on presently occurring events in such a way that they can arrive at particular meanings or interpretations.

Our research has so far focused on the analysis of several therapy sessions between the same therapist and several clients, using selected audiotaped sessions for detailed study. In particular we have concentrated on three tapes involving one client. One tape is a ten-minute monologue by the client recorded a year prior to the other two tapes, which are actual sessions with the therapist spaced about a month apart. We defined in preliminary analysis four basic "interactional moods" aside from greetings. By "interactional mood" we mean both the perceivable verbal/nonverbal behaviors of the participants, and the "meaning" the interaction has in their experience, including their outlook, feelings, perspective, etc. Merleau-Ponty (1968) refers to these dimensions as, respectively, "the visible" and "the invisible," and speaks of their "intertwining" (the chiasm). We choose a single word to refer to both aspects of face-to-face interaction because that foregoes dividing what goes on in talk into signifier and signified, form and content, linguistic expression and what is expressed, language and idea, etc., all of which presuppose a full understanding of the relationships between the visible and invisible aspects of human experience which is what we want to investigate in the first place. We wish to think of them as two perspectives on the same phenomenon: human beings speaking to each other.

We see interactional moods as "forms of life" (lebensformen) in Wittgenstein's (1953) sense of the term. Defining them is less a matter of forming a limited set of necessary and sufficient attributes, than an investigation of family resemblances between different segments of the interactions under study. We provide below brief descriptions of three of the interactional moods found in the tapes mentioned above involving the therapist, one of the authors, and a single client. We will then provide a more detailed description of the fourth mood, with accompanying transcribed text, and will then proceed to a brief discussion of certain implications of the kind of descriptions and analyses we are attempting. We have informally designated the four moods as (1) Challenge and Duel,

(2) Instructional, (3) Joking, (4) Bombast. We offer this material merely as an exemplification of our approach as it now stands, being well aware of the complexity involved in elucidating for the reader the intertwining of even limited aspects of our interpretations of the taped discourse we are interacting with as researchers, and in the case of one of the authors, also as therapist. Our impression so far is that despite mood shifts the relationship between the therapist (T) and the client (A) remains a distant one, characterized by a kind of estrangement it is very difficult to describe. The therapist feels that after nearly two years of weekly sessions, she knows a great deal about the client, but has not come to know him as a person. Her uncertainty as to the nature of his invisible experience makes it difficult to provide help. Given this, an examination of the movements of the interaction from mood to mood would be especially valuable, though we cannot attempt it here, for it is in the transitions that one might expect to find the greatest possibilities for realizing interactional moods which would be new for these participants and which might enable both of them to realize their unstated--and for the client, perhaps unstatable--interactional goals, which might allow the client to reveal himself more clearly both to the therapist and to himself. An understanding of how such possibilities do not in fact materialize in the case at hand, might open up a path toward them.

CHALLENGE AND DUEL. This mood typically grows out of Mood 4, Bombast. T shifts topic focus away from what A has been talking about. Generally A has been talking about other people, things he did or thought about, what his plans are, and T's shift is usually posed in the form of a question about his feelings. For example, in one passage A had been talking about a newfound friend who had "rescued" him from a recent heavy bout of drinking. T shifted focus rather abruptly by asking, "So did you get some relief [from the drinking episode]?" A appears to take such shifts as a challenge rather than as an offer to open up discussion to cogently personal matters. Typically he puts off answers to T's questions, treating them as requiring further elucidation, and often providing relatively brief responses which are either relatively literal or formulaic. T frequently can be observed interrupting A, but the reverse case is rare. A, in his responses,appears to attempt to return to his prior topic, but never overtly suggests such a return. There are often long pauses (2-10 seconds) following T's questions. Prosodic features in A's speech differ considerably from the longer turns he takes in Mood 4, in being more rapid, less emphatic, and more "muted" in that modulations of stress and pitch are less extreme. This mood is usually found embedded in Mood 4 talk, or sometimes is followed by Mood 2, Instructional.

INSTRUCTIONAL. In this mood T does most of the talking, providing long stretches of material on such matters as her experience of A, her interpretations of what he has told her about himself, her own feelings about the nature of personal growth, etc. A provides frequent and appropriately spaced listener responses, but, as we shall

see below, this differs from T's responses to his longer stretches of talk in Mood 4. T's responses there show no more than comprehension, while A's responses in Mood 2 further indicate agreement: "Right," "yeah," "I know," etc. A rarely interrupts T (contrast T interrupting A in Mood 4 below). Long pauses occur between turns, during some of which A does not take the opportunity to speak and T again takes up where she has left off. T typically feels she is failing to get through to A in these moods. Instructional moods occur generally after a session is well underway and instances of Moods 1 and 4 have already taken place.

JOKING. These involve brief excursions out of any of the other three moods. They involve A and T in mutual banter of a somewhat "personal" nature and a shared laughter. They have a foundation in their own personal interactional history, drawing on standing jokes and references to that interaction that could only be known to them. They are therefore good candidates for furthering rapport and solidarity, yet T feels this does not in fact happen.

BOMBAST.

A: ..I've got a period now of adjustment/ I have to go through/ at work/ because I'll be going out/ into the field more/ ... and uh...uh...and buying houses/..and selling them/. I won't be.. taking any more complaint calls/ and and all that sort of thing// I'll still be renting properties/.. ( )..which I don't like the idea of/.. but it it'll be for the time being/ a little bit/ on the (income) side//

T: Mhm

A: 'cuz I can go out and buy it/ and then turn around and rent it/ I'll get..y'know

T: Mhm

A: For there..uh..[4 seconds] but I was saying/..uh.. today/.. to Bill/ that uh...uhh...I resented/ resent/ being shut up in the office// I resent... [4 seconds] being stuck there/.. in many respects// stuck either in the office/ or with somebody's complaints/ or out on the job/..when/ other people/ in the office/ were coming and going/.. and I wasn't being paid by the hour// No/ I.. put in as ...al-almost as many hours as Dave/ and (I'm fighting it)// so I was.. I was I was feeling sorry for myself there/..saying Oh woe is me/ uh.. I can't get out and they can/ I don't like this/ because I can't do that// And all I had to do was say/.. realize/ that I'm ( ) who am I to say (well) I don't wanna do this/ I wanna do that/ but.. I'm also caught with/ .. in property management/ .. there is al-uh.. more or less a guarantee there's more security/ than when you're on straight..

T: Uhmhm//

A: commission/ making it on yourself//

T: Uhmhm//

A: so I want my cake and eat it too//

T: \Mmm// 34
A: I wanna be able to'work when I wanna^work// ..<u>but I</u> 35
<u>(don't wanna hafta do\that)</u> 36
T: \Mhm// 37

In Mood 4 A does most of the talking, while T supplies listener responses which typically do <u>not</u> show agreement, but at most indicate T is following A's talk: "Mhm," is most frequently used with low-rising tones, interspersed with "Mm" with low-falling tones. The client's discourse is characterized by the following collections of features:

1. Frequent use of parenthetical asides (underlined in the transcript), as compared to his talk in the other moods. These are prosodically marked, relative to his talk before and after the asides, by: (a) downward register shift over whole groups of phrases; (b) increased speed; (c) decreased loudness; (d) relatively less phrasal modulation in terms of the degree of shift on the scales of loudness and pitch within tone groups (indicated with slashes); longer stretches of talk between pauses.
2. Parenthetical asides appear to be prosodically marked in a fashion conventional for that familiar form of American English exemplified in the speech of national TV news anchormen. Yet on the level of propositional content parenthetical asides seem to be disjointly connected with propositional content in the main bodies preceding or following the aside. For example, in lines 14-31, the proposition "I was feeling sorry for myself there" (i.e. in the office) L 21-22, may imply a contradiction with the proposition at L 14-15, "I resented/ resent/ being shut up in the office." The contradiction here is not a strictly logical one, nor a factual one: clearly one might feel resentment and at the same time imply one shouldn't feel resentment by saying to oneself "I'm just feeling sorry for myself," overlaying a verbal interpretation on a felt experience. However, the degree of emphasis A has given his statement of resentment does not lead one to expect that in an aside he will reinterpret that resentment as unjustified. (This emphasis is carried prosodically by sharp increases of stress on the words "resented" and "resent," as well as by the repetition of the word and the use of parallel constructions.)
3. The main body sections of A's talk are prosodically characterized by: (a) frequent, regularly spaced, relatively long pauses for expository and narrative discourse (2 or 4 seconds); (b) prosodic peaks, such as high stress points (indicated by accent marks placed before the stressed word: 'word; ,word) and nuclear tones (indicated by traditional tonal symbols over words: \, /, \/, ^,), etc. are spaced in very regular rhythms, such that the moment of their occurrence is easily anticipated by the listener. The tempo of A's speech is relatively slow, about 60 beats/minute, and prosodic peaks occur with high frequency on every fifth beat. This rhythmic pattern could be most simply analyzed as a series of measures each composed of four beats (4/4 time) with initial beats typically receiving stress in the form of a prosodic peak (v. Bennett, 1977,

for discussion of rhythmic organization of verbal and nonverbal features in talk). (c) Parallel constructions abound, such as those involving a repetition for "effect" of a particular work, like the use of "resent" in L 14. (d) Frequent use of introductory phrases which put off statement of the main theme: "but I was saying..uh..today" L 13. ("on the other hand," "Can I go back to...?" not in text given here.)

4. T's reactions to A's speech in this mood vary considerably over a range of feelings, including anger, sadness, boredom, amusement, but her general impression is that A is saying very little that is directly relevant to his experience. She experiences herself as making a "maximal effort to follow A" which requires a "more than usual involvement of energy."

5. A's talk in this mood appears confused, incoherent. It is particularly difficult to distinguish main themes from subsidiary material. One feels lost in the frequent and often highly elaborated asides and we sometimes have difficulty connecting long introductory sections with main body talk they are supposed to have introduced. At any given moment it can be very difficult to grasp what A is saying now in terms of how it relates to what has gone before and to what might be expected to follow.

6. A's talk seems to be in contradiction with his feelings, either those of the present moment in the interaction, or those he reports on, and it furthermore carries an aura of saying something serious and important while actually saying very little --hence our designation of it as "bombast."

INTERPRETATION AND THE NATURE OF DISCOURSE

We have said that points 1-6 above are "features" of the interactional moods found in the three tapes we have worked on. Yet points 1-3 above focus largely in visible behaviors, while those in 4-6 attend to the invisible meaning responses of the researchers, i.e., their interpretations. The astute reader will already have recognized the interpretive character of all six points. The intertwining of visible "behaviors" and invisible "experience," which is what we wish to elucidate is in fact problematic, particularly since we do not believe the relationship between linguistic "forms" and "meanings" is direct and fixed prior to the events and acts of meaning of specific discourses (v. Bennett, 1978). One of the chief reasons that the elucidation of the chiasm of discourse is problematic is that, upon turning our attention to either visible or invisible aspects, the phenomena undergo radical transformations. For example, T's interpretation that she invests a "more than usual amount of energy" in following A's bombast did not arise as an explicitly formulated proposition--as given here--"signalled" by certain behavioral features of A's talk. Such an assertion becomes possible only after considerable experience in interacting with A. In listening to A's bombast--occurrences of which in every session are frequent --T came to experience an increase in tension, sensing a distance open up in which she "moved back and became an observer." She "found herself" repeatedly following threads taken as main points

which turned out not to be developed as expected, but leading down innumerable passages which lead nowhere, like a labyrinth. The assertion of having to make a maximal effort could not in fact be made until aspects of these experiences which were first in subsidiary awareness were brought into focal attention, the making of the interpretation into an explicit assertion being merely a late stage of the focusing process. Furthermore, this interpretation is necessarily based on some kind of comparison T had to make with her interactions with other clients. How such comparisons are performed, and how they are made available, is itself mysterious, yet their "results" can enter focal attention without the person having ever made the act of comparison explicit to herself, as was in fact the case with T. The "comparative data" from other interactions remained in subsidiary awareness in a manner that is impossible to capture in explicit assertions, since subsidiary awareness is by definition not explicable in this way.

In the same way, our characterization of A's talk as "rhythmically regular" and "relatively slow" (in main body sections of Bombast) is a description, but a description already entwined with interpretation. Even the most precise measures of spacing between prosodic peaks, through the use of machines, could not guarantee the experience of regularity, since rhythm is an experiential phenomena. Prosodic peaks are in any case not discrete phenomena but themselves evolve through time, albeit relatively brief durations. They are not fixed objects in uncurved space, but phenomena whose "meaning" (e.g. rhythmic regularity) is not "derived" from the phenomena of the discourse, not only prosodic phenomena, but linguistic, nonverbal behaviors and our own ongoing experience. For example, if each of A's utterances were heard separately, their rhythms might not appear regular and flowing, as they do in his long stretches of talk, but rather regular and abrupt.

Furthermore, prosodic patterning is normally in the background of our attention as either speakers or listeners, as is rhythm in speech (contrast this situation with certain forms of modern music, such as various hard rock styles). Yet these phenomena contribute to our experience of time, to the raising of particular expectations which must be either satisfied or not satisfied in specific ways. How these expectations are met is crucial to our evolving interactional experience. If we anticipate the occurrence of a prosodic peak, and the peak does not occur, this event will be as meaningful as if the anticipation were met exactly, but the meaningfulness will be of a quite different texture. For example, we noted that the prosodic patterns associated with A's frequent asides are typical of a familiar English style. A listener "keeping time" in subsidiary awareness with A's speech, given certain very general assumptions regarding its "appropriateness" which writers like Austin (1961), Searle (1969) and Grice (1975) have tried to explicate, might well have certain expectations when A begins an aside, particularly if the prosodic patterning is what keys the interpretation that an

aside is now evolving. The listener might expect this material to be subsidiary with regard to themes set forth in the main body (e.g. the statement of resentment theme in lines 14-20). Subsidiary material might be either totally irrelevant to the point, or might provide supporting matter for the elaboration of the main theme. An "irrelevant" bit might be something like, "By the way, I saw Joe the other day" embedded in a discussion of the weather. A's asides are usually not irrelevant in this sense, but rather contain material that clearly has reference to similar material mentioned in the main body, as in L 13-29, references to A's job. Yet they seem to obfuscate rather than clarify. They typically carry no overt verbal introductory expressions like, "by the way," "although," "of course," etc. They are also rather diffuse and their content relates only weakly to the main theme. In L 13-31 A framed his talk at the beginning of his turn by indicating he was going to tell what he had told Bill. Yet the underlined subsidiary material, which we isolated largely on the basis of prosodic features, apparently has nothing to do with what A said to Bill, but gives instead, directly to T, the thoughts running through his mind while in the office. The main point becomes obscure--although clearly A is not happy about his work. Even under close scrutiny of the transcribed text and repeated listenings to the tape, we found it difficult to isolate a main point. Yet one does eventually emerge: "I want my cake and eat it too." (L33) This statement "sums up" A's dilemma as "described" in lines 13-31: he wants to work in the office on straight salary, which is secure but unpleasant, but he also wants to work in the field on commission, which is insecure but more interesting, and he can't do both. Note that this main point is not made explicit until A has run through a complex elaboration of details in his job experience (what he said to Bill, what he feels and thinks while in the office, the kind of pay system he's on, what he has to do--answering complaints--what he should have said or done, etc.) and this elaboration itself involves two excursions into parenthetical asides. Thus the experience of time that is set up by prosodic patternings conflicts with the experience of trying to make sense of the content of A's talk. The prosodic patternings are conventional, consistent with themselves, and are easily followed, and "tell us" that some material is parenthetically related to some other material. Insofar as we base our experience of A's speech on this temporal organization, we will probably anticipate the coherent working out of his themes. But there is a disseverance of temporal organization from thematic organization, one leading down a well-paved highway, the other into a thicket.

This very preliminary elucidation of the intertwining of phenomena in this piece of discourse implies a particular definition of discourse itself. Following Heidegger (1962) we view discourse as "the articulation of intelligibility," or more precisely as the articulation of our world as a shared intelligibility which is worked out through our communication with ourselves and others. Discourse is a continual unfolding of our possibilities

and simultaneously a disclosing of what we are now and have been. Discourse can therefore take many forms, face-to-face human interaction being an obviously important one. We therefore do not see discourse as sequences of "abstract acts" (Labov and Fanshel, 1977) or "social acts" (Keenan, 1977) or of object-like "adjacency pairs" (Sacks, et al, 1974). These concepts we feel beg the question of interpretation, since they not only presume the reality of "acts" which can mysteriously be "abstract," but imply that meaning is a set of ideas in a mind residing in a body which signals across an infinite distance to other minds, as described by Locke in the Essay Concerning Human Understanding. This is to presume meaning, i.e., our actual interpretations, are somehow already "there" without our having to create them out of what we do, which raises problems for our well-recognized ability to create anew each time we speak, and which takes for granted what needs to be elucidated.

The implications for linguistics of the kind of discourse study we propose, involving as it does a theory of human persons, perception, language, as well as a particular kind of approach which happens to be difficult to embody in the form of a methodological system, are many. Under our view the nature of linguistic phenomena becomes transformed. Traditional linguistics has had considerable success in viewing language as composed of interrelationships of discrete categories, fixed definitions, and autonomous classifications. The achievements of linguistics with regard to the accumulation of a large body of knowledge regarding language structure and language change are obvious to anyone at all familiar with the field. However, in entering the realm of discourse--a realm we in fact always inhabit as persons--where meaning somehow "takes place" between persons, traditional methods of viewing the visible phenomena of human communication, as well as assumptions about the relationship of these phenomena to meaning need serious re-examination, a glancing back over what linguistics has so far done with a view to seeing what it yet might do, which cannot be confined within the traditional boundaries of the discipline itself, but which must draw on our membership in the world of persons, whether we borrow from other disciplines such as philosophy, psychology and anthropology--as as have done here--or whether we learn new ways (beyond the use of "linguistic intuitions") of involving our own experience--as we have also done here. In discourse, interactional "units"--which we have called moods--clearly occur, yet they are never exactly identical, and they are never fully isolable as discrete objects. People talk to each other in a variety of ways that have multifold implications for their relationships with each other; and for us the study of discourse is an attempt to elucidate these implications. But discourse does not seem to be like a building with an underlying framwork layered over with a facade of verbal "forms" which "indicate" the hidden substructure "supporting" the facade, or which "click off" a "unit" of meaning in the way a surge of current opens a relay switch.

Discourse is an always evolving--yet already evolved--constellation of visible and invisible phenomena which support each other in mutual relationship. It is a continual interplay of focal awareness, subsidiary awareness, and acts of attention that allows us to experience the world as soaked with meaning for us at every moment. Relationships between the phenomena of discourse are contrapuntal and always involve an intertwining of occurring behaviors and personal history in acts of meaning. Understanding how discourse comes to mean what it does involves the researcher in a participatory act of interpretation in which particular forms of this contrapuntal movement (lebensformen) are taken up and scrutinized. Meaning is not on the phrase like the butter on the bread, like a second layer of "psychic reality" spread over the sound: it is the totality of what is said, the integral of all the differentiations of the verbal chain; it is given with the words for those who have ears to hear (Merleau-Ponty, 1968). To make discourse a matter for study, is to make our normally taken-for-granted human experience into an enigma in which we engage in order to elucidate ourselves through the elucidation of what we do together as human beings. To do this is to demand of ourselves a commitment which, as social scientists, as students of language, and as persons, we already are possessed by whose depths we are yet unsure of.

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