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SACKS AND GARFINKEL, EARLY ON

Abstract

Early on, in the 1960's and 1970's, Harold Garfinkel and Harvey Sacks were independently and sometimes collaboratively pioneering an alternative to the prevailing theories of social action and models of formal analysis by radically re-specifying the study of social life and social order. Garfinkel and Sacks rejected the notion that rules were adequate to explain or determine social action. They focused instead on the methodic practices and competencies through which social order is enacted and recognized, treating the features of a setting and the actions in that setting as situated accomplishments of the participants to that setting and activity. Sacks "envisioned the possibility of a science of practical actions that would elucidate formal structures exhibited in actions" [Lynch 2017: 11, later published as Lynch 2019], while Garfinkel resisted any program of formal analysis. Yet when viewed together, this paper argues that their groundbreaking corpus of studies demonstrates an already existing world of specific occasions, practical tasks, embodied skills, and contextures of activity as these are regularly organized by people *in situ*, in real-time, and in material detail.

Keywords: ethnomethodology, practical action, radical break

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INTRODUCTION

In the 1960's and 1970's, Harold Garfinkel and Harvey Sacks were independently and sometimes collaboratively building an alternative to the prevailing theories of social action and models of formal analysis. They were developing their distinctive initiatives, research aims, and programs and rejected the idea that rules were adequate to explain or determine social action. Garfinkel and Sacks focused on how ordinary activities are organized and accomplished by participants in actual settings. Their attention was on what people are collaboratively *doing* in everyday life to methodically and recurrently produce their naturally organized ordinary activities and common sense understandings.

Garfinkel pioneered the research agenda for ethnomethodology (EM), proposing that it made a radical break with formal theory and "classic" social science, and instead offered foundational analyses of the everyday practices and routines for accomplishing social order. He emphasized that "every feature of sense, of fact, of method, for every particular case of inquiry" is to be rediscovered and treated as the "contingent accomplishment of socially organized common practices" [Garfinkel 1967: 32–33]. Sacks innovated ways of describing and analyzing social activity, specifically by collecting actual conversational data and recorded and transcribed instances of talk which could be closely examined for their detail and sequentially organized features and regularities. Garfinkel had no prescribed or prohibited research procedures or methods, as long as the data and analyses were adequate to the particular social phenomenon being studied. The idea was to "identify practices through which social order is performed in everyday life" [Lynch 1984: 333].

Harvey Sacks's early studies drew upon Harold Garfinkel's work and his meetings with Garfinkel, and the field of conversational analysis (CA) is rooted in EM. Garfinkel's notion that people in society organize their activities to be mutually intelligible and recognizable to each other in actual contexts and on specific occasions inspired the development of CA. Sacks collected a large corpus of tape-recorded conversational materials and over time produced a substantial body of unprecedented and empirically detailed findings about the sequential organization of conversation and the practices and methods of ordinary language use. For Sacks, conversation itself was the primary phenomenon of interest and object of study. He investigated how things get sequentially worked out by conversational participants in real-time by studying distinct "fragments" and instances of conversation.

Harvey Sacks was breaking new ground, analyzing the tape recordings and transcribed materials of these to find out in detail how various sorts of activities are accomplished by speakers and listeners over the contingent course of their talk. He developed methods for analyzing conversation that were grounded in assembling collections of observations and from these observations identifying conversational features, structured sequences of action, and recurrences that had not been previously considered or understood, such as turn-taking, adjacency pairs, preference organization, and others. For example, in his work on story-telling (discussed below), Sacks described the naturally organized features of storytelling and how puns and proverbial expressions are commonly used and positioned in storytelling [Sacks 1971 and Sacks 1972, later published as Sacks 1973]. In his research and teaching, Sacks was not so much paying attention to the substantive content of what the interchange was about or the social position of the participants, as he was attending to the conversational observables and things like adjacency pairs in a Q–A sequence, and how what happens now in the conversation may delineate a possible "next" sort of action.

This article discusses a tape-recorded and transcribed early meeting that occurred between Harold Garfinkel and Harvey Sacks [Garfinkel, Sacks n.d.]. The paper also draws on transcripts of unpublished lectures and exhibits from Harold Garfinkel's Sociology 271 Seminar course entitled "Ethnomethodology," taught at UCLA in 1998 [Garfinkel 1998]; an unpublished paper by Garfinkel [n.d.] entitled "Outline on *et cetera*;" and publications authored by Garfinkel [1967, 1972, 2002], and by Garfinkel and Sacks [1970]. In addition, the article relies on transcripts of Harvey Sacks's recorded lectures given at UCLA in 1964–1965 [later published as Sacks 1989a]; transcripts of Sacks's recorded lectures given in Social Science 132 at UC Irvine in Fall 1971; and a conference paper by Harvey Sacks presented to the Georgetown Roundtable on Linguistics in 1972 entitled, "On some puns, with some intimations," that was later published as Sacks 1973. Many of the unpublished sources from Garfinkel and Sacks are in the Harold Garfinkel Archives at UCLA and/or the Garfinkel Archive in Newburyport, Massachusetts.

THE *ET CETERA* PROBLEM

From the outset, Sacks and Garfinkel were concerned with what became known as the "*et cetera*" problem. The *et cetera* problem underscored for both Sacks and Garfinkel that conditions and contingencies are ever at hand in social action, description, and analysis. In Sacks's first publication entitled, "Sociological

description," he discussed the problem of comparing a proposed description to an intended object, noting of any description that "it will not only be incomplete but that … it could be indefinitely extended … [which] implies that any description can be read as far from complete, or as close to complete, as any others" [Sacks 1963: 12]. For example, in Sacks's work on "membership categorization" [Sacks 1992, vol. I: 40–48], he notes how any particular identification of a person and of their activities is selected from an open-ended range of possibilities in a way fitted to the context. But instead of treating the indefinite list of potential identifiers as an irremediable problem, Sacks sought to specify the practices through which members addressed the problem *in situ*.

For Garfinkel, the *et cetera* problem similarly highlighted that the orderly features and facticity of any social setting or course of action are inexorably and unavoidably situated, contingent, reflexive, and potentially defeasible achievements of the parties to that situation and activity in which those features are made evident. Of the *et cetera* problem, he noted that "[a]lthough it has received little if any attention by social scientists, it is a matter of the most abiding and commonplace concern in everyday affairs …" [Garfinkel 1972: 28–29, and see Burns 2023].

The topic of *et cetera* came up, and at times contentiously, in the tape-recorded meeting between Sacks and Garfinkel [Garfinkel, Sacks n.d.] that most likely took place in 1963–1964 at UCLA when both were Research Fellows at the Center for the Scientific Study of Suicide under the sponsorship of the Center's then Director, Edwin Shneidman [e.g., Shneidman 1973]. The conversation addresses their respective interests in *et cetera* as they first discuss how to read a novel and the novelist's *et cetera* problem, and later in the conversation as they discuss the *et cetera* problem with respect to Wittgenstein's famous concept of "language games." The conversation between Sacks and Garfinkel not only reveals how each scholar was coming to grips with *et cetera*, but also shows something about Sacks's very original way of looking at the social world and re-looking at it to find new sequential structures and practices people use to do certain sorts of familiar activities. The interchange plants the seed for Sacks's interest in storytelling, sequential analysis, and other conversational recurrences. Their conversation evidences commonalities between the aims and approaches of Sacks and Garfinkel and also some distinct differences in their evolving research programs and inquiries.

The discussion of how to read a novel and the novelist's *et cetera* problem began with Harvey Sacks describing his distinctive way of reading *The Age of Reason* [1947/1992], a novel by existentialist philosopher, Jean Paul Sartre.

Sacks described his observations about the sequential organization of the novel's first chapter and recounted his practice of re-reading just the first chapter of the novel over-and-over again and discovering, upon each re-reading, features of the story that he had not previously noticed: "What I do is I read … until I stop … and when I want to pick it up again I pick it up and read it from the first chapter again, from the first page again … whenever I pick it up, I pick it up from the first page …" [Garfinkel, Sacks n.d.: 10]. The conversation continues:

> Garfinkel: You start from the beginning each time?
>
> Sacks: So that I may have read the first chapter 15 times … Each time I read it over, I read it over to see what is going on.
>
> Garfinkel: This is deliberately or what?
>
> Sacks: This is because I know in those novels the way it is constructed is that everything that is in the book is in the first chapter … All the formal features are there. All the possible connections and themes … And it's just their problem of writing in a very minimal space setting up as much as possible implication as you can … [Garfinkel, Sacks n.d.: 10–11, underlining in original].
>
> …
>
> … So that's the way I read. And then … you have a series of – a set of themes – and their relationships, their juxtapositions [and] you read the story that way. You read the development that way … [Garfinkel, Sacks n.d.: 13].
>
> …
>
> What I do [is] I have a rule that when I don't find anything more in the first chapter, I probably don't look at it again … [Garfinkel, Sacks n.d.: 16].

Sacks contended that the novelist lays out all the features, themes, relationships, juxtapositions, etc., of the story in the first chapter and makes these features recognizable as promised details to be filled in, specified, and tied together later as the story unfolds. What Garfinkel at first heard in Sacks's comments was that the novelist/storyteller's work may have something to do with "ambiguity" and "Anson's [Empson's 1955] book on Ambiguity … [*Seven*] *Types of Ambiguity*" [Garfinkel, Sacks n.d.: 16], but then Garfinkel recalled a talk he gave at UC Berkeley where "I had exemplified *et cetera* [in my reading of Wittgenstein]" [Garfinkel, Sacks n.d.: 17]. Much of their further interaction considered the issue of *et cetera*, and they did not re-visit Sacks's interest in reading and re-reading the first chapter, looking for something more.

SACKS AND GARFINKEL ON WITTGENSTEIN'S "LANGUAGE GAMES"

In their conversation, Garfinkel brought up a talk that he (Garfinkel) had given at UC Berkeley where he argued that philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein's later investigations [e.g., Wittgenstein 1958/1967] "exemplified *et cetera*." According to Garfinkel, Roy Turner, who was in attendance at the talk, contended that Garfinkel was "not reading Wittgenstein correctly." This set off a spirited discussion between Garfinkel and Sacks regarding Wittgenstein's notion of "language games" and its relation to their own research interests. Sacks appears to be saying something positive about Wittgenstein, while Garfinkel seems to take issue with Wittgenstein because he fails to address the *et cetera* problem:

> Garfinkel: When I gave a talk at Berkeley, and I forgot the name of your friend – the guy who made the remark about my not reading Wittgenstein correctly … what was his name?
>
> Sacks: Roy Turner … I think he misunderstood you.
>
> Garfinkel: You think he misunderstood? … I'm not quarreling with him. No that's not [it] and I don't bring it up you know to win a quarrel or repair a quarrel or anything of that sort. The thing that intrigues me … about Wittgenstein is in this: That for all the references to the language game … I find that what I am doing when I see not only what he is talking about, but I see that it can be *done in this way* … though if I had to describe it I can't describe it. Which is to say, if someone were to ask, "All right, now tell me once and for all where in fact does he ever lay out what he means by a game" … or what counts for a demonstration or what counts for the meaning of … the language game – at that point I find myself only able to parrot that phrase … So I encounter again a strange face of *et cetera* … Yeah, that's it [,] but it resembles it; it's not quite it. Not all of it" [Garfinkel, Sacks n.d.: 17–19, emphasis added].

Sacks suggested that Wittgenstein was trying to open up questions about how the practical organization of language was obscured by philosophers' focus on the relationship between language and the world, rather than on what parties do *in situ* as they use language as constitutive features of those doings:

> Sacks: I don't understand … The notion is held that there is a language … This language … is about the world, and [that] it's about the world raises a series of problems. Like it could be about the world but not very good in being about the world … And on the one hand the scientist can take some of its objects – the objects in the language … And study them, and then give you a better version of how you might call those things [and] how they work.
>
> …
>
> Sacks: We started out with the issue that there is a language in the first place … [and] with the notion that "that's not a very good language …"
>
> Garfinkel: All right, okay.
>
> Sacks: So he [Wittgenstein] is going to give you a better one to do the same job. Now he comes back [to philosophy] and he now takes his view … of the other philosophy, the view

> of science insofar as they deal with this ordinary language … [and] he said that's all wrong … What he said is "what are the kinds of things you can say about the ordinary language in which it still retains the sensibility of what you're doing"[?] [Garfinkel, Sacks n.d.: 20–21].

Sacks went on to discuss his interest in Wittgenstein's notion of "family resemblances" among different "language games," whereas Garfinkel several times described "language games" as hopelessly subject to the *et cetera* problem, which Sacks did not dispute:

> Sacks: … Where the game stands [and] why the family of families – from the view out of the natural language. Think things [that] are related, closely, more closely, somewhat … I mean it's a help in the sense of – just setting it up strictly as a topic. But it is not to be … solved by treating it as something it might be which can be solved.
>
> Garfinkel: Go over that again … [T]he talk about the problem of the external world … There is the external world … That was the question. Could they have been puzzled about that in the first place? [Garfinkel, Sacks n.d.: 23].

In later lectures, Sacks acknowledged that the notion of "family resemblances" seemed to resonate with his own idea of collecting instances of practices that appear to be related in conversational structures, sequencing of activity, and recurrences (e.g., storytelling). As he suggested, "Wittgenstein talks about «families of games,» and proposes … that there is some intersection of rules between games in the same «family»" [Sacks 1964–1965: 185–186, later published as Sacks 1989b: 367–368]. Sacks asked of his collection of data, can it be described as a common and methodic practice and can we find other instances of such a practice in the social world?

Of course, Wittgenstein's work did not address any actual conversation or real occasion of language use, so he did not describe any of the conversational details and features that Sacks explored and analyzed. And although "language games" do include things that people actually do with language and thus "partly converge with the … sequential structures for giving orders and obeying them, asking, thanking, cursing, greeting, joking, telling stories" [Lynch 1993: 279], the notion of a "game" inevitably leaves open for detailed specification *how the sequential ordering of lay and professional activities and tasks might otherwise be found, in actual cases*. For example, while lawyers use conversational formats in witness interrogation (e.g., question/answer, agreement/disagreement, preference, first person and third person reference, etc.), the analysis of conversational features does not fully explain what legal interrogation is, or how to technically and contingently conduct it.

In their conversation, Garfinkel's retort to Sacks's comments on "language games" comes down to the *et cetera* problem:

> Garfinkel: Harvey you're going to have to say something more on what the hell he is talking about when he is finished … [Garfinkel, Sacks n.d.: 24–25].
>
> …
>
> Garfinkel: … You see, in the ways in which I find his [Wittgenstein's] remarks illuminating … also raises for me exactly the things that I am puzzled about with respect to *et cetera* features … I still find the inevitable character of the thing that he is calling my attention to … And I feel puzzled because … in the way in which I see it … via the *et cetera* procedure … in each case [Wittgenstein] leaves me with the problem of attempting to address directly the *how I am doing it* … I would not like for it finally to come to this … When I see some of the consequences of it [,] that's when I do quail a little bit" [Garfinkel, Sacks n.d.: 30–31, emphasis added].

For Garfinkel, the world runs away from Wittgenstein who was not finally coming to terms with or addressing the problem of practical action or how rules of a "game"/instructions get invoked, applied, followed, sometimes challenged, etc. *in situ*, on any actual instance of their use. Indeed, for Garfinkel the most interesting case of a "game" is "where in fact the rule is already given as a rule in a game … [s]o that the *et cetera* character of the instructions … has to go to the thing that *et cetera* is in the first case concerned with … i.e., the situation which can arise given all its further contingencies over a course of in fact coming to manage it or coming to terms, or … whatever it is that actually has to be done, in accordance with instruction" [Garfinkel, Sacks n.d.: 36].[1]

Despite seemingly divergent views about Wittgenstein, Sacks and Garfinkel were both focused on what people are doing *in situ*, how they do it, how it works, and what it comes to mean. Garfinkel and Sacks investigated naturally organized ordinary activities, setting up new possibilities for research.

SACKS'S OBSERVABLES AND COLLECTIONS OF SOCIAL OBJECTS

Harvey Sacks was fully aware of the *et cetera* problem [Sacks 1963: 10–15], but nonetheless began by inspecting and describing singular instances of interaction. He developed a unique approach to the domain of research that came to be called "ethnomethodology/conversation analysis." Sacks stated that it "seeks to describe methods persons use in doing social life" [Sacks 1984: 21].

In "Notes on methodology," Sacks [1984] explicated "some central findings" of the research in which he was engaged, noting that "[t]he detailed ways in

[1] See also Garfinkel [2002] on the work of following chair assembly instructions to assemble the various parts of a chair and produce a finished chair.

which actual, naturally occurring social activities occur are subjectable to formal description … [and] [t]he methods persons employ to produce their activities permit formal description of singular occurrences that are generalizable in intuitively non-apparent ways and are highly reproducibly usable" [Sacks 1984: 21]. He further urged that "[i]t is possible that detailed study of small phenomena may give an enormous understanding of the way humans do things and the kinds of objects they use to construct and order their affairs" [Sacks 1984: 24]. Sacks contended that "[i]t may well be that things are very finely ordered; that there are *collections* of social objects … that persons assemble to do their activities; [and] … the way they assemble them is describable with respect to any one of the activities they happen to do, and has to be seen by attempting to analyze particular objects. We would want to name those objects and see how they work …" [Sacks 1984: 24, emphasis added].

Harvey Sacks's method of investigating ordinary language use was to "isolate a fragment of conversation for an extended examination, when in the course of our routine listening and re-listening (with or without the aid of transcripts) to the recordings that compose a current corpus, some «initial observation» is made" [Sacks 1972: 2, later published as Sacks 1973]. Indeed, the way Sacks listened to tapes and/or read transcripts of recorded conversations was that he would play (and/or read) them again and again, with particular interest in opening phases of conversations and stories. The *et cetera problem* relates to how Sacks often returned to the same extracts from the group therapy session or the suicide prevention center recordings, and raised completely different points about them.

Sacks collected observations of "lay-familiar" phenomena and then "… proceed[ed] to assemble a collection of observations, where … we use the fragment as a mnemonic for such things, trying to notice observables in it which we «recall» as being present, though previously unnoticed in such things as one can with the new observation be led to recall previously unnoticed recurrences" [Sacks 1972: 3, later published as Sacks 1973].[2] He explained that "[t]here are a large range of sorts of noticings that count as initial observations. One sort … involves hearing «on tape» a first instance of what we recognize as an instance of something that anyone knows to happen. We then extract the fragment within which the instance occurs to see if from its examination we may learn about a possible «fine structure» the familiar object may turn out to have" [Sacks 1972: 2, later published as Sacks 1973]. He used his observations and collections of observables

[2] Sacks [1972: 3, fn. 1] states: "Noticing [the fact] that we proceed in this way is an observation I owe to Harold Garfinkel."

as the basis for theorizing and discovery of some surprising things: "We can then come to see that a base for using close looking at the world for theorizing about it is that from close looking at the world we can find things that we could not, by imagination, assert were there" [Sacks 1984: 25].

SACKS ON A "SECOND LOOK AT THE STORY-TELLING OCCASION"

In Sacks's first lecture at UC Irvine in fall 1971[3], and reminiscent of his practice of *re-reading* the first chapter of Sartre's novel, he set up the fragment of the interchange he would be coming to terms with, noting that it could "go under the name of a second look at the story-telling occasion" [Sacks 1971, Lecture #1: 5–6]. In this 1971 lecture and his conference paper entitled, "On some puns, with some intimations," Sacks raised several general points about storytelling and the use of puns and proverbial expressions on storytelling occasions. He first suggested that "[w]hile puns are a natural target for us, a characterization of their operation is of quite peripheral interest to our main research concern on the sequential organization of conversation" [Sacks 1972: 1, later published as Sacks 1973]. Sacks indicated that stories involve the analysis of more extended and complex structures of conversation than turns at talk. He suggested that an utterance may prompt a story from a conversational participant (the teller) who works to set up the storytelling with a story preface sequence, such as by soliciting a "go ahead" from the other participants (e.g., "have you heard the news?"). The response of the listener/s may be consequential for whether and how the story gets told [Sacks 1974]. The actual telling of the story involves the speaker taking an extended turn at talk, along with a story-closing sequence that is commonly done by a recipient, and where puns and proverbial expressions often occur [Sacks 1972, later published as Sacks 1973]. Sacks's analysis of the selected excerpt focused on the sequential organization and conversation structures of storytelling, not on the fact that the story was being told in group therapy and he did not identify who in the conversation was the therapist or the patient, although in his lectures Sacks did sometimes make an issue of the difference between the therapist and the others.

[3] This lecture is reproduced in edited form in Sacks [1992, vol. II: 419–424]. The transcript has been revised (probably by Gail Jefferson) in the published lectures, but the overall discussion is very similar.

For Sacks, the "noticing that warrants study is of the occurrence of a curious sort of pun." In providing warrant for his claim that the data indeed exhibited a "pun," he cautioned, "Let's hold the pun in abeyance [and our claim that it is there] and work our way up to some assurings that it's there. The way I'm going to work our way up to that is by examining this utterance, «something to look up to» … in terms of what is to be a persistent theme of this course, something … to be called sequential analysis of storytelling, and do some specifications of that relative to this utterance" [Sacks 1971, Lecture #1: 7]. In the segment, three teenagers (Ken, Roger and Louise) are talking together in a group therapy session and Sacks explained that "[a]s the excerpt begins, Ken is telling a story about his 12-year-old sister's affection for the Beatles, a story that is on topic with a good deal of prior talk" [Sacks 1972: 1, later published as Sacks 1973]. Sacks asserted that Louise's "explication of the need for an idol---«something to look up to»--plainly puns on Ken's preceding story" [Sacks 1972: 2, later published as Sacks 1973], in the following segment:

> Ken: W'—the –her whole room she's got it wa:l=papered. She just—she just got done re--wallpapering it about a month ago—
>
> Louise: – with the pictures of the Beatles.
>
> Ken: No. A month ago mom has it done in grasscloth like junk y'know it looks like // Hawaiian.
>
> Louise: Yeah I know we have it.
>
> Ken: She came in there the other night with scotch tape an' every inch of the room. You couldn't—the roof I think she's got done in Beadle pictures and she lays in bed at night--
>
> Roger: She's doing that cause all her friends are (//) over the Beadles.
>
> Louise: Well they need some kinda idol you know, something // to look up to …" [Sacks 1972: 2, later published as Sacks 1973].

Sacks stressed that: "My interest is now in this particular utterance, «they need some kinda idol, y'know, something to look up to.»" He paid particular attention to "its relation to the story told about the twelve-year-old sister; in particular to this utterance of the story, «The roof I think she's got done, in Beadle pictures. An' she lays in bed at night,»" [Sacks 1971, Lecture #1: 5]. Sacks pointed out that the story is told by the storyteller to the recipients and ends with one of the recipients using a proverbial expression and making a pun, which also served as a way of summing up her understanding of the story. He noted that Louise's take on the word "«Idol»" as "«something to look up to»" is a proverbial expression that explicated a sense of Idol "relative to what she was talking about, i.e., «something to look up to»" [Sacks 1971, Lecture #1: 5].

Sacks argued that "«something to look up to»" stands in a possible punning relationship to the details of the story: "That is to say, the story has her lying in bed with pictures of the Beatles on the roof, and what's asserted in Louise's utterance is that «they need something to look up to»" [Sacks, 1971 Lecture #1: 5]. He explained that "the story constitutes a puzzle or a problem … [W]hat Ken is telling is something he is offering as «here's something weird my sister did. Why in the world would she have done it?»" and at the point where an understanding for the story is appropriate, what's done is something that stands as an explanation for the puzzle that the story contains …" [Sacks 1971, Lecture #1: 10].

Harvey Sacks's paper "On some puns …" [Sacks 1972] was presented two years before the publication of the turn-taking paper [Sacks, Schegloff, Jefferson 1974] and set forth an advanced understanding of conversational sequences. He stated that exhibiting understanding is done with something that is an instance of things people regularly use to show understanding, "[a]nd to use them in just such a position as this one is used, is commonly done … it has a methodical source for being there, not simply as something that understands the story, but as something that is commonly used to do such a job" [Sacks 1971: 9]. Sacks suggested that "part of the common business of storytelling occasions involves story recipients positioning an appreciation of the story on its completion. So that it's an altogether common feature … that, on some story's recognized completion, recipients will offer understandings of the story … There's no particular news to that except that there's an initial sense for the sequential organization of stories: On their completion, something is done by somebody else." In the "«Idol»" data (above), he observed that "[t]he utterance is done by a recipient of the story. It's one of two utterances done on the completion of a story, by recipients. Both utterances can be readily seen to be explanations of the reported event, morals to the story; [and] more generally indications by a listener that the story was understood" [Sacks 1971: 7–8]. Sacks concluded his proposal noting that "… proverbials systematically happen after stories because stories commonly are told of events that are known to be commonly occurrent, and have understandings affiliated to their common occurrence" [Sacks 1972: 15, later published as Sacks 1973]. He found that proverbial expressions and puns were regularly positioned at the end of the storytelling, which is the place where the story recipient does a sort of wrap up and show of understanding, often by using a proverbial expression that is also sometimes a pun.

In his lecture "On proverbs" Sacks emphasized that proverbs have "the character of being *potentially* descriptive or relevant. Persons learn them and have them available for use …" [Sacks 1964–1965: 191, emphasis in original,

later published as Sacks 1989b: 373]. He suggested that proverbs are pieces of knowledge that are "organized in an atopical fashion" [Sacks 1964–1965: 190; 1989b: 372] and "are quite abstract [i.e.,] «a rolling stone gathers no moss» doesn't contain any reference to a particular rolling stone, a particular kind of moss, *et cetera, et cetera* …" [Sacks 1964–1965: 189; Sacks 1989b: 371; emphasis added]. Sacks argued that proverbs are among the most stable elements of culture, specifically because of the way they are repeated *exactly* on different occasions of use, while lending themselves (and their "truth") to an open-ended variety of contextual usages. He noted that "their reproduction consists of the exact repetition of them" and that proverbs "lose their character when they're paraphrased", and further stated that "[t]heir stability […] can be something independent from any occasion of use" [*ibidem*]. Sacks suggested, "[…] what's being recommended is: [t]ake an object like proverbial expressions, subject them to a distributional investigation; use that distributional investigation to see what's done with them. One then comes up with that *they're used to do other things*; that what they are, are things to understand with – things to evidence understanding with …" [Sacks 1971, Lecture 1: 9, emphasis added].[4]

PEDAGOGIES, PRACTICES, AND "HYBRIDITY"

Garfinkel recommended in his later work [Garfinkel 2002] that EM be "hybridized" with other disciplines and encouraged his students to master the technical practices of their respective fields of inquiry by undertaking "hybrid studies of work" that would cross traditional academic boundaries. As Michael Lynch has suggested, "the long-term aim was not only to enrich the sociology of the sciences, arts, and other occupations …, but [that] … ethnomethodology would take a distinctive form as it became integrated with the pedagogies and practices of music, law, medicine, mathematics, and so on" [Lynch 2012: 165].

I planned to attend law school for my dissertation research in sociology in order to attain first-hand ethnographic access to the law school training process and substantive knowledge of the law, and to the work-site practices of judges and lawyers. I attended Yale Law School (like Harvey Sacks) and after graduating, became a lawyer [Burns 1997].[5] My "hybrid studies" are informed by Garfinkel's

[4] Cf. Burns [2001] on the use in judicial mediation and settlement work of maxims like "Think your blackest thoughts and darken them," and proverbial expressions like "Great jockey, but doesn't have the horse underneath".

[5] Emanuel Schegloff, Literary Executor for Harvey Sacks, suggested in a footnote to Sacks's posthumous publication entitled, "The lawyer's work," that Sacks's contribution to the collection of EM/CA studies on law in which it was included "should be understood not as

studies of work initiative and by my legal training and law practice experience. In studying the pedagogies and practices of law and the work of lawyers, judges, and other participants in legal settings, I also made significant use of Sacks's sequential analysis of people's situated methods of action and recurrent interactional practices.

Sacks's sequential analysis provided analytic tools for my examination of lawyers' and judges' work as the work of real populations *in situ.* In these studies, I center on the *practical action* going on in specific legal cases and use actual instances of recorded and transcribed interchanges as my data. Like Sacks, I focus on the naturally organized activities and practices that lay and professional persons use in everyday life to produce and recognize the orderliness of their ordinary world and accomplish their everyday tasks. I pursue Sacks's method of finding and describing instances of some practice, collecting other (potential) instances of that practice, and noting "family resemblances" among the different enactments. This serves to reveal previously ignored but "finely ordered" features of ordinary legal activities and interactions and how they work. For example, astute cross-examiners repeatedly use a Q–A format and embed damaging presumptions and inferences in their questioning, assert de-ontologizing claims, and otherwise build questions in ways which demonstrate the attorney's disbelief about the witness' credibility and doubt about the veracity of their testimony [e.g., Burns 1996: 25–28, Episode 2]. It is sometimes possible for a skillful attorney to show a witness to be intentionally evasive or uncertain even when the witness is actually trying to testify truthfully and accurately [e.g., Burns 2000b, Second Episode: 244–247]. In addition, judges who engage in settlement work routinely construct their talk in ways that induce doubt, such as advising litigants to "«think your blackest thoughts and darken them»" [Burns 2000a, 2001]. Settlement judges also often encounter certain sorts of obstacles to producing concessions and movement toward settlement and use specific sorts of devices to address and overcome these obstacles, such as invoking a rule of "no reverse movement" in opening offers or demands [Burns 1998]. Although judicial settlement work and lawyer's impeachment work cannot be accomplished without conversation and all

conversational-analytic … but as ethnomethodological in inspiration. [A]t the time of the writing of this draft no hint of «conversation-analysis» … had yet appeared. The draft manuscript … which is published here carries no date … [but] following his completion of Yale Law School [in 1959], it seems most likely that the paper was drafted either in the 1960–1961 or 1961–1962 academic year … Its extensive acknowledgment of indebtedness to Garfinkel marks the convergence of Sacks's engagement with Garfinkel's ideas with his own, at the time central, interest in how the law as an institution can work" [Sacks 1997: 47–48, fn. 1].

the structures and processes that conversation makes available, such law-infused work cannot be understood simply as conversation without consideration of the substance of the law at issue, the particular facts and evidence in the case, and the practical legal activity going on [Burns 2000a, 2001, 2004, 2008, and 2009].

CONCLUSION

On the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of Harvey Sacks's death, it is fitting to honor Sacks's work and his collaboration with Harold Garfinkel, and to acknowledge their distinctive contributions to sociology and cross-cutting disciplines. From their pioneering EM/CA work, we gain a myriad of novel insights, innovative research strategies, and new conceptual tools for understanding the social world, now and into the future.

Sacks and Garfinkel dispensed with easy or pat answers and instead studied naturally organized ordinary activities and practical action in actual social settings, with sustained interest in the observable, study-able, and accountable features and "routine grounds" of everyday activities. Lynch emphasizes that the "Formal structures of practical action" paper (the only publication co-authored by Garfinkel and Sacks [1970]), "explicitly presents a *radical* argument to the effect that ethnomethodology and what was later called conversation analysis takes a different analytic stance toward ordinary language use … than the rest of sociology; a stance that, as Garfinkel and Sacks point out, also differs from traditions in linguistics and logic dating back to the ancient Greeks" [Lynch 2017: 6, emphasis in original, later published as Lynch 2019].

Sacks and Garfinkel understood that constructive analysis and naturally organized ordinary activities both occur, but recognized that they were not commensurate [Garfinkel, Sacks 1970]. Yet, as Lynch points out, there was a key point of difference in their respective programs and approaches: "[f]rom the outset, Sacks envisioned the possibility of a science of practical actions that would elucidate formal structures exhibited in actions that are recognized and used by participants to constitute social orders. Sacks was also attracted to «machine» metaphors, and construed systems of rules as «machineries»" [Lynch 2017: 11, later published as Lynch 2019]. Garfinkel, however, resisted any program of formal analysis and "treated the possibilities for achieving formal analysis – discovering and analyzing structures of machineries – as a phenomenon [to be investigated] rather than a goal for ethnomethodology" [Lynch 2017: 11, later published as Lynch 2019].[6]

[6] In his teaching, Garfinkel used as a perspicuous example what he called "cocktail party phenomena," i.e., when multiple conversations are happening simultaneously within a single bounded

Early on, Sacks and Garfinkel were in the process of radically re-specifying the study of social life. They analyzed the methodic practices and competencies through which social order is enacted and recognized by treating the features of a setting and the actions in that setting as situated accomplishments of the participants to that setting and activity. Their groundbreaking corpus of studies demonstrates an already existing world of specific occasions, practical tasks, embodied skills, and contextures of activity as these are regularly organized by people *in situ*, in real-time, and in material detail.

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space with different speakers and listeners, and conversational groupings form and disband as new members join and others leave the conversation. He distributed to students a cartoon of a cocktail party by artist Charles Saxon that had been published in the *New Yorker* and labeled it "Rendering cocktail party talk" [Garfinkel 1998: 7, "Exhibits for working out Durkheim's aphorism"]. This cartoon rendering demonstrated how the idea of a "conversation," with turn-talking rules like "one-speaker-at-a-time," relied in the first place on people's situated understanding at any given moment of what a particular conversation is, such that only one speaker was permitted within that conversation (i.e., one-speaker-at-a-time per conversation).

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SACKS I GARFINKEL, POCZĄTKI

Streszczenie

Na początku, w latach 60. i 70., Harold Garfinkel i Harvey Sacks, niezależnie od siebie i od czasu do czasu wspólnie, wprowadzali pionierską alternatywę wobec dominujących teorii działania społecznego i modeli analizy formalnej poprzez radykalną re-specyfikację badań życia społecznego i społecznego porządku. Garfinkel i Sacks odrzucili koncepcję, zgodnie z którą to reguły miały być adekwatnym sposobem wyjaśniania i warunkowania działania społecznego. W zamian skupili się na metodycznych praktykach i kompetencjach, poprzez które porządek społeczny jest ustanawiany i rozpoznawany, traktując cechy okoliczności oraz działań w owych okolicznościach jako usytuowane dokonania uczestników tych okoliczności i tych działań. Sacks „dostrzegał możliwość nauki o działaniach praktycznych, która objaśniałaby formalne struktury okazywane w działaniach" [Lynch 2017: 11, opublikowane następnie jako Lynch 2019], podczas gdy Garfinkel sprzeciwiał się jakiemukolwiek programowi analizy formalnej. Gdy jednak rozpatrywani są razem widać, że – jak dowodzi ten artykuł – przełomowy zbiór ich badań ukazuje istniejący świat określonych sposobności, praktycznych zadań, ucieleśnionych umiejętności i układów działań jako regularnie organizowanych przez jednostki *in situ*, w czasie realnym i w materialnym szczególe.

Słowa kluczowe: etnometodologia, działanie praktyczne, radykalne zerwanie