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ETHNOMETHODOLOGY AND ETHNOSOCIOLOGY

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Understanding ethnomethodology seems to pose severe problems for many social scientists. The discussions and critiques of ethnomethodology by nonpractitioners are *almost* uniformly viewed by insiders as incompetent, and that is often so for even the sympathetic discussants. It is my intention, here, to try to provide the grounds for an intuitive grasp of what "classical" ethnomethodology[1] is about and to do so in a way in which it can also be appreciated just why this discipline should be so difficult to grasp. One of the difficulties in understanding ethnomethodology is that it both involves a substantive area of study, and its practice requires the use of a specific attitude or posture which is related to but different from that of traditional sociology. This means that ethnomethodology is, in a sense, a discipline which is distinct from sociology, although both its attitudes[2] and its subject matter are related to and relevant to the concerns of sociology.

Garfinkel coined the term "ethnomethodology" (recounted in Garfinkel, 1974, pp. 15-18) after seeing interests cognate to his own in the developing "ethnosciences" of ethnobotany, ethnomedicine, ethnopharmacology, ethnogeology, and the like.[3] It was the initiating idea of ethnoscience and some of its descriptions which caught Garfinkel's attention and not the specific attitudes, orientations, theories, and methods which, in fact, markedly contrast with those of ethnomethodology (cf. Wieder, 1970; and Eglin, 1975). The initiating idea of the ethnosciences was the notion that the knowledge possessed by members of some societies could be viewed as analogous to the knowledge systems of the sciences (cf. Sturtevant, 1964, pp. 91-100; Tyler, 1969, pp. 5-7).

Along the same lines, one could also propose an

ethnosociology which inquires into folk theories, concepts, methods of theorizing, and the like which are sociological in character. For example, what forms of role theory, if any, are employed by the members of some society, and how do these theories organize the world of roles as they are experienced in that society. In its relationship to the ethnosciences, ethnomethodology is the general study of the methods employed in folk-disciplines of ethno-disciplines.

The word "methods" in ethnomethodology means simply "methodology," as in the methods of science—chemistry, biology, sociology, even history, etc. Just as we have found analogues to botany in the field of study of ethnobotany, we can find analogues to scientific reasoning in the reasoning of "the folk"—hence, we have ethnomethodology (see especially Garfinkel, 1967, Chaps. 1,2,3,4, and 8).

Furthermore, in some ultimate sense, since the sciences are also social activities, they too are analyzable as ethno- or folk-disciplines, so eventually a complete ethnomethodology would also describe and analyze the methods of the sciences as well. Indeed, one recent ethnomethodological study concerns the situated methods and practices involved in using the microscope (Lynch, 1974).

In order to clarify what ethnomethodology is about, it will be useful to exemplify the order of affairs that one sees if one looks "ethnomethodologically" or "ethnosociologically."

AN EXAMPLE OF OBSERVING ETHNOMETHODOLOGICALLY-ETHNOSOCIOLOGICALLY[4]

If we adopt a posture which provides us with some distance from the ordinary familiarity of the objects and events of our everyday lives and which is disconnected from the thematic concerns and relevancies of that life, we might quickly see that in every society, and within every social scene within those societies, the nonverbal activities of the participants are intermittently, though frequently, punctuated with verbal accounts concerning those very same activities. Some of these accounts consist of descriptions, evaluations, explanations, and analyses of current

activities, while others concern plans, forecasts, and prophesies, and yet others recount precedents, histories, and memories. We could see children discussing the differences between boys and girls and speculating on the likely adult careers of each of their peers. We could see lovers gently or angrily explaining to one another how they were unavoidably late because of the patterns of traffic on this particular day. We could see a parole officer writing a report about the continued bad behavior of one of his parolees and just why it was to be expected that the parolee would behave in just that way. In various governmental meetings, we could see assorted specialists testifying about social and nonsocial objects, events, and activities in their society. For example, in the late sixties and early seventies, we could have seen sociologists testifying about the causes of violence in the ghettos, the patterns and consequences of smoking marijuana, and the known effects of consuming pornography.

Large portions of human activity are devoted to accounts. The amount of time that societal members devote to the assimilation of, reflection upon, and production of accounts is related to their social positions. It appears that all competent members, in Garfinkel's sense (1967, p. 57 ftn.), can give such accounts. The socially incompetent are either unable to offer accounts, e.g., the comatose, some catatonic schizophrenics and the severely retarded, or their accounts are ignorable and discountable, e.g., the accounts of children, some of the insane, the less severely retarded, criminals, etc. On the other hand, the accounts of some storytellers are accorded special warrant, e.g., priests and shamans in some societies and scientists in others. The history of natural science, medicine, and current social science makes it clear, however, that these special claims are not always accepted.

Since the stories of social scientists concern action and situations of action, they share content with the bulk of stories told by everyday folk. On the one hand, social scientists are differentiated from laymen in that they appear to be more diligent, careful, and precise in gathering evidence and in their analyses (however, see Garfinkel, 1967, pp. 104-115), and in that their methods and their logic have been explicity codified. On the

other hand, there are many similarities between the stories of social scientists and others.[5] They even use some of the same concepts, and, from time to time, social scientists and others engage each other as equals and debate questions. We could finally note that social scientists are not always successful in getting their special claims accepted outside their own profession. The responses of politicians and the public to the recently commissioned reports to Congressional committees on violence, pornography, and marijuana show this rather clearly.

In both cases, human stories, told either by ordinary people or by those professionally charged with such storytelling, play similar roles. They are simultaneously stories *about* the society and constituent events *within* it. Ethnomethodologists use the term "reflexive" to refer to this feature of social accounts—that they are features of the very scenes which they describe.[6]

Although storytelling makes use of language skills, its work is not captured by formal linguistics. It is a type of activity which is consequential for the objects and events which it describes. Storytelling organizes the perceptual world by making observable and understandable the patterns of collective life and the individual activities which contribute to those patterns. Rather than being a simple, passive, coding process wherein prestructured objects and events in the surrounding perceptual world are identified as instances of a class, storytelling actively contributes to the structure of that world. From the standpoint of a "storyhearer," the heard content of a story contributes to the formation of perceptual objects in the surrounding world by serving as "instructions to perception." These "instructions to perception" are synthesized with directly perceived features of the surrounding world (e.g., a body movement) in such a way as to make up the *constitutive* features of a perceived object as a gestalt-contexture.[7] The orderliness that societal members detect and experience in their own activities and those of their fellows is thus an achieved orderliness that is accomplished through (the hearing of) their own describing work.

One of the principal ways that experienced, creatively revealed, and portrayed orderliness in human affairs is accomplished is through the perception and description of those

affairs as motivated. Accounts of motives and action take a characteristic form whenever humans explain, predict, justify, or merely make sensible some activity through the act of telling stories. Weber (1947) called this form of exposition a "correct causal interpretation of action." Although he meant to be describing the task of the scholar who is directed toward explaining uniform patterns of behavior, as Schutz noted (1967, p. 232), the form of the story applies as well to the explanations ordinary laymen offer of an individual's conduct. A "correct causal interpretation" shows how the behavior or action in question follows from, and can be predicted by, some particular course of reasoning on the part of the acting individual. That course of reasoning is typically described in terms of motives and rules.

SOME PARTIAL DEFINITIONS

These observations and initial analyses provide a context for the following definitions of ethnosociology and ethnomethodology.[8]

(1) Ethnosociological studies are the general substantive study of storytelling by humans about humans. They are obviously closely related to ethnopsychology and ethnopsychiatry. We may anticipate that we can discover many different kinds of stories, storytelling, and storytellers, and even "storyhearing," etc. I expect that we may find interesting relationships between all these matters, and that, in some respects, these matters bear on the differing ways in which a story is accepted and acted upon by societal members.

(2) Ethnomethodology would then concern the formal properties of stories and storytelling which might better be thought of as the practical methodological concerns that societal members have. They are concerned with such features of their stories as objectivity, facticity, rationality, logicality, and the like in ways that appear to parallel the methodological concerns of scientists. These matters of objectivity, facticity, and so forth seem to be directly linked to the acceptability of a story and its perceived usability as grounds for further inference and action.

Both ethnomethodology and ethnosociology are concerned with the consequences of storytelling for the structuring of social environments.

We are now in a position to more specifically lay out the methodological steps that permit and sustain the ethnosociological and ethnomethodological vision. The definitions that have just been offered primarily concern the subject matter of the ethno-disciplines. We now seek to explicate the attitude or methodological-theoretical-analytic posture of ethnosociology and ethnomethodology.

ETHNOMETHODOLOGY, PHENOMENOLOGY, AND THE NATURAL ATTITUDE

"Classical" ethnomethodology's relationship to Husserlian phenomenology is obvious with regard to many general matters, provides the motivating rationale for much of ethnomethodology's radical character, and is problematic in its specifics (see footnote 10). Quite independently of the argument that "classical" ethnomethodology is some variant of Husserlian phenomenology, a matter that is clearly part of the dispute concerning ethnomethodology (see Bauman, 1973; Coser, 1975; Mehan and Wood, 1976; Zimmerman, 1976), it is important to note *some* comparabilities.

Whereas the Husserlian phenomenologist understands the experientially objective, factual, anonymous, uniform, resistant, typical, familiar features of the life-world as achievements of consciousness, the "classical" ethnomethodologist understands these same rational features as "ongoing achievements of the concerted commonplace activities of [lay or professional] investigators" (Garfinkel, 1967, p. 11), i.e., as the achievements of lay or professional investigative and accounting methods. Although it is beyond the scope of the present paper to elaborate the matter, it appears that "methods" are phenomenologically analyzable as matters of active synthesis, along with those other affairs which Husserl identifies as works of formal and practical reason such as collecting, counting, dividing, predicating, inferring, and so forth (cf. Husserl, 1960, p. 77).

A characteristic feature of those experiential affairs which are given through the synthetic activities of consciousness (in phenomenology) or methods (in "classical" ethnomethodology) is that they exist with the features they display independently of the beholder and his methods of apprehension, that they have those features for everyone, and that the witnessed affairs display structured features (e.g., uniformities, repetitions, standardizations, etc.) which are likewise features of the unwitnessed but, piece by piece, witnessable world. (On the ethnomethodological side, see Garfinkel, 1967, Chapt. 1; Pollner, 1970; Wieder, 1974; Zimmerman and Pollner, 1970; Zimmerman and Wieder, 1970.) It is here that phenomenology and "classical" ethnomethodology are radical departures from the natural and traditional social sciences and the implicit, science-founding world-view of laymen everywhere—that sort of unformulated naive realism which Husserl (1962) identified as the Natural Standpoint, further analyzed by Schutz (1962, 1964) as the Natural Attitude, and by Garfinkel as the "seen but unnoticed background expectancies" (1967, Chapt. 2). The radical departure is this: that the objective-rational features of witnessed events are, for laymen and (ordinary) scientists, presuppositions, while for phenomenology and ethnomethodology, they are phenomena for investigation—phenomena whose apprehension establishes and thematizes the domain to be investigated.

Despite all the differences between science and common sense, there is a major point in common among all the varieties of perspectives within professional sociology and between it and common-sense sociology. One's own acts are not considered as consequential activities within the world under investigation, but are merely acts toward it, where that world is pre-given as autonomous, structured, and resistant. That is, one's own actions are conceived as practical actions directed toward a world that has been investigated, or practical acts of investigation directed toward an autonomous investigatable world. In neither case are one's own acts regarded as both about and within that same world as aspects of it.[9]

THE ETHNOMETHODOLOGICAL ATTITUDE

The ethnomethodological attitude departs from the traditional social scientific attitude in specific ways. While the life-world under investigation in the social sciences is the world of others, in "classical" ethnomethodology, it is not just a world of others, but it is also a world that includes me (the investigator) and my acts as well. Here, the world is first a world given to me through my acts, for example, acts of investigation or acts of perception. Others "occupy" this world as objects of my perceptive, cognitive, investigative acts.

Like the person adopting the sociological posture, in the account of Schutz (1962, pp. 245-259), the individual adopting the ethnomethodological attitude also no longer experiences the world as structured with himself and his practical concerns at its center. Like, and perhaps even more than, the traditional sociologist, he detaches himself from his own practical concerns, but none the less sees himself and his activity as directed toward and within the very world that he investigates.

Like the phenomenologist, the ethnomethodologist brackets or suspends certain aspects of the world that he experiences within the ethnomethodological attitude. While no longer living naively in the practical intentions of daily life, he attempts to live within the methods of inquiry of that practical life and then to withdraw and reflect on them while "reducing" them to mere methods of inquiry and the correlative objects of inquiry—both objects inquired into and reported about. I might note that this is roughly equivalent to the phenomenological *epoché* of "reducing" the world to the neotic—noematic correlation, that is, to the intended object and the act in which that object is intended.[10]

As ethnomethodologist, I shift my attention in such a way that I put my own perceiving, my own inquiring, into the very field that I am investigating. My field of study is methods-done-in-the-world-while-being-about-that-same-world-that-they-are-done-within and- sociology-about-the-world-while-being-done-from within-it. The reflexivity of these matters is retained as a specific feature of interest to me, and it means that I am engaged in a descriptive rather than a causal-explanatory task.

Ethnomethodology, of course, is not alone in seeing sociology as an activity done from within the world. Such shifts of attention, although with a different emphasis, are also topical for the sociology of knowledge and for critical theory. Ethnomethodology, however, does seem to be unique among the social sciences in considering its very own activities as data and subject matter.[11]

NOTES

1. The ethnomethodology explicated here was conceived in the approximate period of 1956-1968 by Harold Garfinkel, his students of that period, especially Egon Bittner, Cicourel, D. Lawrence Wieder, and Don Zimmerman, and his associates Lindsey Churchill, Craig MacAndrew, Michael Moerman, Melvin Pollner, Edward Rose, Harvey Sacks (in his earliest writings), and David Sudnow. Some of the early writings of Alan Blum and Peter McHugh also belong to that tradition. Although original work in this tradition is still being published, there has been a gradual shift among the "classical" ethnomethodologists, including Garfinkel himself, to a multiplicity of orientations which all start from the posture of the "classical" tradition which is explicated here but which is in no sense adequately circumscribed by it. None the less, there are several reasons for explicating the "classical" tradition—(a) the multiplicity of current perspectives emerged out of analyses and findings which belong to the "classical" tradition. Even when these later views appear in opposition to the earlier ones, they are none the less motivated by them and are most intelligible in their relationship to them as compared to, e.g., their relationship to current mainstream sociology; (b) when ethnomethodology is referred to in the sociological literature, e.g., in Coser, 1975; Meltzer, Petras, and Reynolds, 1975; Mullins, 1973; Turner, 1974, it is this "classical" tradition which is referred to; (c) and, of course, work still goes on within this tradition. Its possibilities were barely explored by those who since have gone on to other things.

2. By "attitudes," of course, I mean in the Husserlian and Schutzian phenomenological sense, as in Natural Attitude, Scientific Attitude, and Phenomenological Attitude (cf. Schutz, 1962, pp. 207-259).

3. A variety of titles refer partially or globally to this area of study—formal analysis, componential analysis, folk taxonomy, ethnoscience, ethnosemantics, and (certain sectors of) socio-linguistics. For general discussions of the area as a whole, see Sturtevant, 1964; Tyler, 1969, pp. 1-41; Wieder, 1970; and the classic pieces of Conklin, 1955, 1962; Frake, 1961, 1962; Goodenough, 1956; and Lounsbury, 1956.

4. This section is closely related to an exposition that Zimmerman and I put forth in a recent essay (Wieder and Zimmerman, 1976, pp. 105-107). The notion of the posture of estrangement was suggested by Pollner's formulation (1970, pp. 6-15) or the "transcendental stranger." (Also see Garfinkel, 1967, p. 37.) The substance, of course, concerns what Garfinkel calls accounts and accountability (Garfinkel, 1967, Chapt. 1; Garfinkel and Sacks, 1970).

5. For technical discussions of the comparability and differences, see Elliot, 1974; Garfinkel, 1967, pp. 1-34, 76-102, 262-283; Garfinkel and Sacks, 1970; Pollner, 1970; Schutz, 1962, pp. 3-47, 207-259, and 1964, pp. 64-88; Wieder, 1974, esp. Chapts. 1 and 8; Wieder and Zimmerman, 1976; Zimmerman and Pollner, 1970; Zimmerman and Wieder, 1970.

6. For technical discussions of reflexivity, see Garfinkel, 1967, pp. 1-34; Mehan and Wood, 1975, pp. 8-14, 137-162; Pollner, 1970; Wieder, 1974; Wieder and Zimmerman, 1976.

7. Just how "heard talk" plays a constitutive part in perceivedly organized environments requires a more extensive discussion than space permits here. See Wieder, 1974. esp. pp. 183-214. The formulation of gestalt-contexture as it is employed there was developed by Gurwitsch (1964). It should be noted that the argument that that order which is perceived in everyday life is founded upon the heard content of stories does not entail the presupposition that the world would otherwise be experienced as a "buzzing, blooming confusion." The argument put forth here is consistent with the position that there is a pre-predicative perceptual organization in our experience upon which are founded "higher" levels which include such things as cultural objects and meaningful actions. The position here is generally consistent with that developed by Husserl (1960, 1970, 1973) concerning intersubjective

environments. For an easily accessible exposition of the organization of stratas of experience and founding-founded levels, see Zaner, 1970, pp. 169-174.

8. The definitions are adapted from Wieder and Zimmerman, 1976, pp. 107-108.

9. This is not to say that science and common sense are blind to the ways that some specific method contributes to that which it reveals in the sense that it may prejudice one's apprehension of some state of affairs. (Indeed, such a possibility establishes many of the methodological problems of natural science, social science, and ethno-social science.) It is this which defines the problem of veridicality. Yet the very way in which veridicality is defined and identified preserves the presuppositional foundation of traditional science and common sense (cf. Pollner, 1970).

10. See Cairns, 1940; Gurwitsch, 1966, pp. 124-140; Husserl, 1962, 1970; Mohanty, 1972, for the phenomenological reduction and its relationship to the revealed neotic-noematic correlation, and see Garfinkel, 1967, pp. 31-34; Wieder, 1974, pp. 29-31, 39-43; Zimmerman and Pollner, 1970; Zimmerman and Wieder, 1970, for partial *epochés* or bracketings in ethnomethodology. Whether or not these partial *epochés* could ever amount to the phenomenological-transcendental reduction remains an open question beyond the scope of this paper (see Husserl, 1970, Part III). Resolution of that question, however, is essential to the formulation of any precise relationship between Husserlian phenomenology and "classical" ethnomethodology.

11. In "classical" ethnomethodology, considering one's own activities as data and subject matter has meant, in practice, that the investigator considers his own or his staffs' or his subjects' situated investigative and conceptual actions *qua* lay or professional sociology as data and subject matter for his ethnomethodological inquiries and reflections (e.g., see Bittner, 1965, 1967; Cicourel, 1968, 1973; Garfinkel, 1967, pp. 11-31, 76-103, 104-115, 186-207; Leiter, 1969, 1974; Pollner, 1970, pp. 1973, 1974; Ramos, 1973; Sacks, 1972; Schwartz, 1971; Sudnow, 1965; Wieder, 1974; Zimmerman, 1970a, 1970b). This strategy seems more a

matter of defining a problem which is of interest to social scientists generally, rather than a principled restriction. (See Wilson, 1971, but also the writings of Blum and McHugh—Blum, 1970a, 1970b; McHugh et al., 1974.)

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MARCUSE AND THE PROBLEM
OF INSTRUMENTAL RATIONALITY

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This paper examines Marcuse's approach to the major problem of capitalism—the domination of subjective reason over objective reason. It is argued that Marcuse's approach to this problem differs from the approach of Critical Theory. It is further argued that there is a contradiction in Marcuse's argument, namely, the contradiction between revolutionary change and the change suggested by Marcuse's aesthetic perspective.

Herbert Marcuse, along with other critical theorists, has found the major problem of capitalism, especially in its modern stage, manifested in the way that instrumental rationality has been employed. For him, the present stage of history can be singled out as a period in which the process of rationalization has become entirely one-sided and limited only to the rationality of methods and means. The reason for such one-sidedness and limitation, according to Marcuse and the Critical School, can be found in the domination of "subjective reason" over "objective reason". Rationality, which in its totality aims at the emancipation of man, has turned out to be the main source of alienation and self-imprisonment for mankind. The manifestation of one-sided rationality (instrumental rationality) and alienated man can be seen in the dialectical relationships among man, society, and nature.

In order to explain the dialectical relationships among man, society, and nature in the contemporary system of domination, Marcuse argues that a new approach to social phenomenon must be adopted because the traditional perspectives, including the instrumental perspective, have not been able to predict the developments of the present stage of history. According to Marcuse, a new perspective is needed to understand and guide the