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Reading Newspapers : A Theoretical Description  
of a Practical Activity

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Ph.D.

Submitted to the University of Durham

1992

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Department of Sociology and Social Policy



- 7 AUG 1995

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Reading Newspapers : A Theoretical Description  
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Rosemary K. Rushmer  
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**ABSTRACT**

A simple observation about the nature of reading initiated this project. The observation was that in reading we are able to use ink on paper as an equivalence of the real world event it details. Attempts to account for this by examining reading as it progresses did not give rise to clarification of this phenomenon, but solely to reading itself. Encounters with the text always resulting in 'ending-up-just-reading'. This is identifiable as a central characteristic of the material and the reader's attitude towards it.

As this difficulty with the nature of the undertaking threatened to stop any theoretical progress, various methodologies, including Ethnomethodology, were applied to the material in order to produce a way forward. However, these theoretical approaches did not solve the phenomenon of reading but merely multiplied its problematic features. Their terms displacing the focus of attention away from reading, to the internal expression of the approach itself.

Elsewhere within the project a more reflexive approach was adopted. Examining the roles of reader, theorist and author that were variously adopted. The recognition that the author in detailing experiences as a reader of texts succeeds only in creating another text. There is an examination of levels of access available to the project reader and the constraints this places on any reading that can be made. Otherwise expressed, it is the reading of one text through the confines of another, we are always trapped within the medium.

From this recognition that 'viewing from within' is an intrinsic, inescapable feature of reading, a solution to 'ending-up-just reading' offers itself. Aspects of reading are made obvious by getting the reader to activate them, as they read of them. The solution is an ethnographical account of the reading of a newspaper story, an interpretive account. Its success may be gauged by the familiarity of its description and its expression of shared reading experiences and common reading practices.

## FROM AN IDEA TO A PROBLEM

"..unread print is merely a lot of paper and little ink." Herbert Spencer cited by Harold Evans, Editing and Design, Book Five: Newspaper Design (London: Heinemann 1973) p.vii

Yes, I suppose a newspaper is paper and ink, although not a haphazard mess of paper and ink like one might have if one were to spill such items on the floor - still my newspaper is a mix of paper with ink albeit ordered, tidy and arranged.

Although, even given this, begrudged acceptance of this definition it still seems a bit stark a description - just paper and ink. It doesn't seem to (as one might say) do justice to what a newspaper is. My newspaper doesn't come to me as paper and ink, it comes as maybe a sinking feeling when I read that America has restarted Nuclear Arms testing or possibly pleasure that the weather report says that it may be sunny at the weekend. During the Falklands War I could go to my newspaper and read off places like Port Stanley or the battle at Goose Green and then I was able to leave my newspaper and talk knowledgeably about places I had not been and events I had not witnessed. I could say I knew of them, could talk about them to others, informed, aware. How could I do that, how can any of us do that with just paper and ink?

How is it that we are able to use newspapers and their stories, to make of them, what we would make of the real world events that they detail? This was the start of it all. This was the idea.

Paper and ink - rubbish! My newspaper is about real happenings, significant histories, things that I should know, things that I am able to know. BUT my newspaper is only paper and ink.

So the mystery becomes: how can we use paper and ink in this way?

What is it that we do with our newspaper that enables us to use that paper and ink as if it were those real world events?

Whatever it was and however it was done, it had to happen through reading, this was my activity carried out at the newspaper. What was going on in this reading activity then? The idea grew.

I went back to my newspaper to discover what it was I was doing when I made this leap of faith: paper and ink to real world events. What was it I did when I read newspapers?

BUT always I was confounded. The lure of the text, the 'suck' back into the histories always won. I ended up just reading the stories. Neil Kinnock's attack on Mrs Thatcher, America's arms sale to Iran, and so on. How could I stop just reading to be able to see just for a moment how it was that I could do that reading. This was a problem. I somehow felt that if I could just adopt the correct theoretical attitude I could break free of the lure of the text, stop 'merely' being able to do reading and start being able to see 'how' I could do that reading to see what it was I was

doing while I was doing it.

There was an irritation there, that went: all competent members of our society see it as a matter-of-course to read newspapers, and as a member so did I, but as a sociologist, as a theorist - I could not detail or describe what was involved. I could do, but not talk about the doing. The problem began.

I could only and would always end up just reading. K. Morrison has also noted this quality of didactic texts, he describes it as,

"collaborating in the manual's effectiveness."  
Morrison, Kenneth L. "Readers work, devices for achieving pedagogic events in textual materials for readers as novices to sociology." (York Univ. Toronto PhD thesis 1976) p.87

Collaborating? A curious term, was this 'ending up just reading' what was expected of me as a reader? Was it the role I was there to play?

The thought was there from the beginning, that, that from which I was trying to escape or somehow avoid (the 'ending up just reading') was an integral if not characteristic feature of the activity itself. But at that moment it seemed to be the very thing that stopped the whole project getting underway, as a sociologist it left me nothing to say, it just left me reading newspapers.

The hunt began for the way to escape the trap of being engulfed by the newspaper texts. To be able to 'see the wood for the trees' or more precisely 'the activity from the

doing'.

This seemed to be the problem the idea had developed into; later the problem became the realisation that the trees were the wood, to escape them was to miss everything altogether. The activity and the doing were forever one. But that was later...

## THE FACTUAL NEWSPAPER TEXT

We've all heard the age old newspaper adage, 'Tell it like it is.' Well if in my reading I am drawn so powerfully into the 'action' of the text that I am only able to read the story and not to detail how it is I am able to do that, then maybe this is because newspapers do 'tell it like it is.' Put bluntly: the stories are what I get from my newspaper because that is what is there to be got. The newspaper tells a story, a real happening, an occurrence, this is what they tell, so is this what I get when I read them, a real world event? Do we assume the 'straight backness' is due to ontology captured in print? Does this explain why the pull of the text is so strong?

The idea rests on two assumptions. Firstly, that my newspapers are factual texts, newspapers not propaganda publications (and despite the obvious political colourings to certain newspapers, I do believe this basically to be true) and secondly, (and perhaps less obviously) that we can only have a factual account of the past. A factual account of the future does seem an absurdity. The future does not lend itself to such certainty, because as yet it has not happened for us to be certain of it. So in effect, our factual accounts must necessarily be factual histories. The two ideas, the past and the facts must become intrinsically linked if we are to hold a belief in a factual newspaper i.e. we must believe in events that really did happen (factual histories).

This I would imagine is the unquestioned belief shared by

most users of newspapers. When asked, 'Why do you read newspapers?' an answer I might expect would be, 'To read about what's happened in the world recently.' To gain knowledge of actual happenings and recent events, this might be a common sense reason for reading newspapers (I can, before we go on, think of alternative reasons for reading newspapers however; to see what's on TV, or to consult the 'stars', but for the moment we must leave the possibility of competing alternative uses, in order to follow our present argument).

So if newspapers give factual accounts of recent history 'tells it like it is' (or perhaps how it was), then a reporter goes out into the world to discover those events (the 'it' that it is like) to find the facts and report them. This immediately (as it all follows on) must be supported by the belief in 'news' pre-existent, out there waiting to be discovered. As if those events we read of, were objects like, perhaps, stones in the street, and the reporter walks out of his office, gathers some of these stones (factual events) from the ground and takes them back to his newsroom to capture them in print. The reporter as a collector rather than a creator of news, and news as something solid that one might fall over like any other physical object.

These notions sustain the belief in a factual newspaper. The idea that 'what actually happened' is a hard and solid fact, goes undisputed. It is the implicit assumption that facts, in the form of news existing out there in the 'real world', (like any physical object, sitting, waiting to be chanced

upon by an eagle-eyed reporter, like a gem on a seashore) actually exist. Can we sustain these notions? If we cannot, and they already start to sound child-like in their naivety, what of my hopes to find in them the explanation for the pull of the newspaper stories? A fact as reported is only one of many things that happened. What a reporter takes as news is a selected taking from many possible events that could have been reported.

But (and this is a cry from my deep set beliefs as an 'ordinary newspaper reader') it did happen, didn't it? It was still there to be discovered? Yes, but in what sense can it be discovered and indeed what is 'it'?

Smith has argued that events become reorganised around 'what was seen to happen', the event, and the 'facts' are selected as relevant to it. That the reporter of the facts will see the answer and not the question eliciting the data he reports, whereas it might be more accurate to see the answer as caused by the question. He indeed creates the fact he will report by asking the 'right' question determined by his definition of the event. It becomes obvious that the answer one gets is contained in the reason for the question.

Our reporter, for example, sees an event and needs evidence to substantiate it as being the sort of thing he has taken it to be, he needs the facts. Like in the following episode: the reporter going out into the world sees an accident on a building site in which a worker has been killed after a block of concrete fell on him from a crane. He has found a story (a story being only one of many events that has



happened in the world that day, but one that is for the reporter, 'newsy', (in itself a definition I must return to later). Around the event (the story) relevant and pertinent facts begin to cluster (carefully unearthed by our sleuth reporter). That Mr X (the crane driver, the man seen to be at the centre of our story as the man whose 'fault' it was) had had a few whiskies in the pub at lunchtime ("..who admits he had been drinking ...", we can picture it print) becomes a fact of the case. Other facts like he also played the Space Invaders machine in the pub at lunchtime (with the dead man) or that he had been drinking at morning break (although then it was coffee) do not become facts of the story; they are not pertinent to the kind of event as it has been defined. That Mr X who claims he was not drunk, has a previous charge for being 'drunk and disorderly' ("Mr X who has a police record for heavy drinking," as it might appear in print) can be seen to be relevant, whereas, that he was not over the legal limit of blood alcohol level or alternatively that he also has a police record for 'breaking and entering' do not become facts of the case. What the event was, what sort of thing it was seen to be (a drunken accident - negligence) determines what questions it is pertinent to ask, and what it is relevant to put into the story in print and reflexively; that is what the event can be seen to be, what the facts appearing as answers to these questions prove.

The event finds its own facts out of many possible factual events. Finally, though to dispel any final cries of 'but it did happen didn't it', see in the end of our example how exactly 'what happened' remains open to change and is

essentially intangible; bringing to an end finally, any conviction we can have in 'news' pre-existent in the form of a 'to be discovered physically existing object.'

Say suddenly, at the inquest it is revealed that Mr Y (the man killed) was in fact dead before the block of concrete, which fell from the crane, hit him. He had had a heart attack, collapsed and fallen in the path of the crane that Mr X was driving, and that Mr X and the block of concrete could not have missed him.

The facts of the matter change. Mr X's drinking history is no longer relevant in a case about heart failure, no longer a factual part of 'what really happened'. We can see that even though they, 'in fact' still did happen, this is not enough to make them a feature in the facticity of the story. The reason for this being simply because they no longer support the definition of what type of event it was, even though the actual accident remains the same historical event in the two cases, the facts of the story change as we move from a definition of 'drunken accident' to 'tragic death.' There is different news to tell.

What is a relevant fact of the matter now is Mr Y's history of high blood pressure, his doctor's warning three days earlier to take things easy. Ironically enough, irrelevant and dismissed past events may now take the limelight as new 'facts', for example the game of Space Invaders in the pub that lunchtime between Mr X and Mr Y, was this the over-excitement that contributed to the later fatal heart attack? Earlier events seen as innocuous take on new significances

as definitions of 'what really happened' turn fluid and change.

So things are not as straight forward as they might have seemed. We can now understand that what we take to be a fact is created and not discovered. That the event reveals and illuminates its relevant and for all practical purposes factual precedents. What we read in our newspaper is not everything that happened in that 'straight through' way we might have assumed. Such observations are of course not new for as Dorothy Smith has said at some length,

"The fact is not what actually happened in its raw form. It is that actuality as it has been worked up so that it intends its own description. That actuality has been assigned descriptive categories and a conceptual structure. The structure incorporates a temporal organisation which both marks the boundaries of what actually happened so that it comes to have the form of an 'event', 'episode', 'state of affairs.'

Smith, Dorothy, *The Social Construction of Documentary Reality*. Sociological Inquiry 44 (4) p.263

So much for the idea that the pull of newspaper texts was a feature of their absolute dedicated factual nature. No straight back to the real world through a newspaper text. The real world it presents is in part a creative feature of the discoverer of the facts - the journalist. These creative features are again described by Dorothy Smith when she writes,

"These categorial and conceptual procedures which name, analyse and assemble what actually happens become (as it were) inserted into the actuality as an interpretive schema which organises that for us as it is or was. Using that interpretive schema to organise the actuality does not appear as imposing an organisation upon it but rather as a discovery of how it is."

Smith Documentary Reality p.258

That our newspaper seems naturalistic, factual, that we can see that it 'tells it like it is' seems now to be more a feature of its skilfulness, rather than any absolute verity of its content or message or its ability to transport us back to the event as it happened.

What we start to see is evidence for a way of telling that allows us to 'see' or to read and to accept it as a telling that tells it like it is, even though when we start to examine the assumptions behind this we realise that there is not, and never could be any 'it', as such to tell it like. There is only the way in which it is told and what we as readers do with that.

However as an ordinary reader I am becoming rather perplexed by the stripping bare of my assumptions about newspaper texts, with its facticity in doubt. I find myself thinking about truth and about acceptance and about use, really about matters of trust in general. It's an uncomfortable feeling, will there be anything left about my newspaper I can trust?

As Dorothy Smith said, once incorporated into the interpretive schema for seeing and telling the events, these creative processes become invisible, blotted out by a way of seeing the telling as a natural telling. All we are left with as she says is:

"Facts constructed in a context of telling."  
Smith. Documentary Reality p.258

Yet still, I keep thinking about truth, that for me as an ordinary reader of newspapers I must believe, accept, trust

that they tell the truth. If I were to lose this I would think I was being duped, not reading of histories or events but of propaganda. Am I duped?

Is this myth (so widely accepted) of a 'telling like it is' a plot to deceive? I don't think so; my faith in the discretion of newspapers remains, I believe them (mostly). Dorothy Smith argues a similar way, when she talks of the examples of created news, she uses in her paper, she writes:

"..these examples have been given not as instances of an organisational pathology but as general and fundamental processes of our society."  
Smith. Documentary Reality p.266

The beginning of my investigation into the lure of newspaper texts has started by taking me from those texts, to question first my beliefs about them and then to try and see my assumptions that lie behind my reading of newspapers.

My belief in newspaper truth - what I think this consists of and why it is so 'rocked' by accepting that news is created and not found is all part of the same thing. It is the belief that when I read newspapers, I do not read a reporter's personal account of what has happened in the world, but rather I read it as what happened - fact. A factual story created by an individual, maybe. However, because of its facticity (indeed a feature of it) is that I accept that the story could have been thus discovered or rather created by any individual.<sup>1</sup> That my newspaper story provides an account of the way these things could have been seen by any competent person (albeit a cultural seeing and a journalistic telling) yet we would all have seen it. As well

as seeing an event happen that we might be able to agree was the same event, I also assume that my newspaper itself is the same for all of us. I assume that in my newspaper you and I see the same things; that the newspaper is available to be seen by us all in basically the same way. That it is a stable physical object, that what it opens to be viewed does not alter, is not fluid in the same way, as for example, that sight opened to be viewed by a television screen, that it will be the same in half an hour, an hour, two days as it is now. That it is a stable physical object. (Whether at a later viewing we might read or understand in the same way that same sight in our newspaper is a different question. For example, say in the light of the evidence of the tape recordings, a reading of President Nixon's denial of involvement in Watergate might later have been differently viewed as a reading about his lies rather than his innocence). This example also helps us to understand what it is Smith means when she says:

"The factual property of a statement is not intrinsic to it. It is the knower's method of reading a statement and using it or a teller's method of arriving at a statement which lends itself to that method of reading."  
Smith. Documentary Reality p.258

So we see how a reading of Nixon's denial is easily made into an ironical report which tells now, more of his deceit, once the reader is 'in the know' about the Watergate tapes. The reader is in a different position, is able, because of later knowledge to use the same words in an alternate way to make a different reading. The physical object of the newspaper does not alter however, nor what it offers to be viewed, merely our ability to make something of it. What we see has changed, not what was there to be seen.

We say of such a change in perspective that we 'see in a different light', that the new evidence 'sheds new light upon', that the new fact is 'very illuminating', as if later facts shine brighter than earlier ones, as if we only now see clearly what was dim and unseen before. We allow later facts easily to outshine earlier ones.

So what have we so far? The newspaper a stable physical object; a reader seeing in different lights that stable physical object. A journalist creative and enterprising, truthfully telling in journalistic ways.

How is it the reader uses the journalistically established facts to arrive at a telling that is a telling 'like it is'?

The thought goes: if I can discover how it is a reader uses the techniques a journalist builds into his account to create and present facts, if I can just tease out these techniques, then maybe I can yet see where the lure back to empirical events lies. Why do I end up just reading? Wherein do the techniques/resources lie that give me always this empirical reading, that sucks me back to the events, leaves me reading and not theorising? As the journalist uses these resources to build the facts, how do I as reader use the resources to re-live the facts? However, the journalist builds them into his text, I as reader select them from it, it is our place of touch.

As an ordinary reader all I have is my newspaper text. It is not the journalist or his pragmatic journalistic reasons for writing what he did that is in my presence, but solely his

text. I do not meet him, he does not drop through my letter box each morning, only as it were, the products of his labour - the newspaper texts. Whatever he intended, desired, included, excluded is apparent to me only through the finished text. Independent now of its creator (much as this text is now independent of me, and for your use only as a reader), the text takes on a career of its own. Able to be made of, whatever a reader makes of it. Here is our clue - reader and text. The author's work done, only the text is present to the reader. If we are to gain insight from the journalistic creative abilities, it seems that we must do so as they come to us through the text itself for only we (as readers) sit in its presence. So should we turn away from the creation of the news and to the text itself to get to these resources and techniques used? Is a particular reading dictated because of some endowments present in the text itself? Smith says:

"..the point at which the account is put into its final form it enters what I shall call "document time". This is that crucial point at which much if not every trace of what has gone into the making of that account is obliterated and what remains is only the text which aims at being read as "what actually happened"."  
Smith, Documentary Reality p.260

We should have known this much; I wrote before of the text covering its created origins only daring to appear as 'what really happened'. So my potential way forward to an analysis of reading is again halted, for at the point at which we get the text we are prevented from getting any of the creative techniques and resources which go into its making. Some theorists have indeed looked at this creation and negotiation of what is 'news' and its embellishment in reports and stories<sup>2</sup>; but for the ordinary reader of the



newspaper?

There is a sense in which what goes into the making of the text of a newspaper is totally irrelevant to its reader. What matters, and indeed at this point it constitutes all there is for the reader, is what he can get out of the text. What has gone into its making for the purposes of a mundane reading of newspapers to get news, is of no concern to him. Indeed what is present in the text at all, is only of concern if it does to some extent limit what he may make of what he reads. So, even if as Dorothy Smith says of the journalistic efforts,

"Such structuring procedures are of particular importance because they are ordinarily not visible in document time, while their effects remain."  
Smith, Documentary Reality p.262

That the effect of the techniques used and resources drawn upon stay, become integrally part of what the text is. What is, for my purpose, of interest, is not some absolute sense of what a text is, but what a reader may be able to make a text out to be. It is the reading and not the writing that concerns me. My interest does not even lie with the textual structures themselves, (although I talk of texts) except insofar as these close off options of reading available to the reader.

My areas of concern begin to multiply, as I look into the phenomena of 'ending up just reading', of the lure of the empirical factual texts. I feel as if I am still in the process of the uniquely sociological preoccupation, 'defining the problem'. Other features emerge and become of

concern for they will not subside till they are dealt with. I start to feel as if I am being somewhat side-tracked, as if these new problematic areas must be dealt with before I can progress onto what I 'really want to look at'. What I must slowly come to realise is that what I want to look at cannot be separated, in some abstract sense, as an entity, clearly distinct, from the occasion, the actual happening of that looking. For those newly emergent problems are not problems to be dealt with and disposed of but are the very substance of the investigation. They don't stop me from getting on with the looking at reading, they are the looking at reading. Yet, this was the realisation that was to come, only, gradually.

These early attempts to examine the lure of the texts, raised more issues, issues of 'news', 'fact', ways of telling, ways of reading, truth and trust, acceptance and use, of reading occurring because of what the reader read? Still more, did that reading occur in the text or in the mind of the reader or somewhere else? More questions than I could solve (and such questions, that I at this stage don't think I could even appreciate their complexity).

I had opened a floodgate to 'water', that I was to spend the rest of my time 'mopping up' and trying to contain. Ideas, belief, assumptions all awash. The mess and the mix were now becoming apparent, I hoped the order would become clear also, but as yet that had not happened.

## Footnotes:

1. This belief rests on the assumption that we all share a common way of seeing and interpreting the social world that surrounds us. That any event seen by one individual could have been likewise seen and understood by any competent member; in short that we share a "reciprocity of perspectives". Schutz, Alfred Collected Papers, Studies in Social Theory (The Hague, Nijhoff, 1964) esp. pp.11 - 13.
2. For a version of the creative construction of newspaper texts see for example, Tuchman, Gaye. Making News : A Study in the Construction of Reality (New York and London, Free Press, Collier Macmillan, 1978).

## A FIRST TEXT-BREAKER: A WORD OF CAUTION FOR THE READER

My writing, my analysis is of newspaper texts, of, so far their creation, hopefully going on to their reading. BUT as a reader yourself, what is your role?

I talk of the lure of the text, its ability to suck you into the reading, so you see only what it details. As a reader at this moment you read my text. Does it lure you? Do you 'end up just reading'? Are you, in reading my text falling into the very trap that my text details to you?

The invisible structuring features that Dorothy Smith writes of, well, my text has them too. Maybe forewarned is forearmed? What might I warn you of? How can I prepare you, to stop you falling into the traps I detail, maybe to see the snares (as you spring them perhaps)?

Notice, my language is of warnings and traps and snares, of preparation and protection. I suppose it is because I regard any reader as unprepared, even unsuspecting of what might befall them; because to use Wittgenstein's notion such things are hidden because of our total familiarity with them.

So, shall I give you a few tips as to what to watch for? Firstly, think of the stages in the creation of this text. How to do this? Think of the stages, say, as if they were literally stages, floors in a building. Then this text, complete as it is now would be level 0. Then the other levels might follow thus:

Etc...

- 1 Your reading of the (my) text.
- 0 The(my) text.
- 1 The writing/construction of the(my) text,  
(drafts/notes etc).
- 2 My reading of the texts cited (e.g. D Smith's  
"Documentary Reality").
- 3 The text cited (e.g. D Smith's "Documentary  
Reality").
- 4 The author of the cited text constructing their text  
(e.g. the drafts/notes of D Smith's "Documentary  
Reality").
- 5 The author of the cited texts reading of their cited  
texts (e.g. D Smith's reading of her sources).

Etc..

There are a number of things to note about this construction. The only levels you as reader have access to are levels 1 and 0 (any use to which you might put my text could constitute a level 2 or more). My access is to levels 0, sub-1, sub-2 and sub-3.

#### Level 1:

The level I do not have access to is level 1. Your reading. It belongs to you. It is in no way mine - that is important. I also have no access to levels sub-4 and sub-5 (and so on) I play no part in Smith's construction of her text or her reading of her sources. The point I am making is that at level sub-1, I am author; at levels sub-2 and sub-3 I have access only as reader. As roles and levels change so does our ability to use the material in certain ways.

#### Level 0:

This is the only level we share, level 0, the text itself.

That too is important.

#### Level sub-1

So, be careful when I claim to tell you of events happening at level sub-1, for you do not have access to it. For example, how thoughts and ideas came to me, of the temporal structuring of ideas, of phrases like "..it was much later I realised that.." for these events cannot occur for you as they did for me (at level sub-1) only at level 0. They are part of my text, they happen for you, only in context. You know them where I place them (deliberately) you do not slowly learn of them later. Remember I am carefully controlling the slow unfolding of the mystery for you.

#### Level sub-2:

My reading of the texts I cite e.g. D. Smith's "Documentary Reality". Do I paint an accurate picture of her work, or is it misleading, biased, have serious omissions? I do only use some of her work, not all, is it representative? From my text (level 0) you cannot tell (as a newspaper reader does not know of the fidelity of the words he reads in his newspaper texts, without going beyond them). You could consult Smith's text yourself. In all academic honesty, I give you a bibliography, cite references to allow you to do so, but are you lulled into a (false?) sense of security to do so? Do you trust my text like I trust newspaper texts?

#### Level sub-3:

Direct quotations. An interesting phenomena of didactic texts using the words of others. Do I do so faithfully, accurately, in the true spirit of, if so, to what purpose,

for what end? And level sub-3 is the limit of my reach, my power fades. Levels sub-4 and sub-5 are a mystery to me (because I am now a reader also).

#### Level 0 vs. Level Sub-1:

The text as presented vs. the text as it happened. The scruffy notes, the scribbled drafts, all, if you saw them might suggest to you, that what you read now is a final and polished, laundered version of ideas that buzzed, phrases that nagged, of meetings and happenings and readings over a number of years. When my text starts to sound as if the ideas are occurring to me at that very moment, maybe you can stop, pause, save yourself from the snare? My text is frozen, snippets of past events that come to you in a fixed particular order. Why?

All these misgivings, warnings, possibly you start to feel as if I deliberately plot your downfall, ensnarment into my text's arguments and plausibility. Manipulation? Not so, I try to give you an insight (although occurring at the level of my finished text, level 0) into levels sub-1, sub-2 and sub-3 to give a flavour even if I may not give direct access. I try to capture the 'stops' and 'starts' of it all, how a solution finally came, order to the chaos. It is an attempt to be sincere to the occurrence.

Between level 0 and level sub-1, maybe you lose the confusion of different books read 'out of order' because of the erratic nature of the interlibrary loan system, a book suddenly received three months after you thought that topic was resolved opens it up all over again etc.. If I let you

taste this flavour of the research, then maybe the polished level 0 text appears dishonest? Dishonest in the same sense that all academic texts must be dishonest. But, if the polished version (level 0) is so dishonest, why not leave it at the more honest, unpolished version (level sub-1)? Why bother to polish it up and make it dishonest?

Simply because, otherwise it would make no sense; as such there would be nothing to tell, no 'What it was all about'. The activity was fragmentary, discontinuous, diffuse, no text was constructable from it, it had nothing to say, it was confusion, there could not have been an unpolished version. Now, if this is true, how did a text emerge?

It came from reading different things and saying 'Ah, that's a bit like so and so' or 'I recognise that bit'. Bits came like other bits (stronger - were they saying the same thing? Stronger still - talking of the same process?). The bits clustered to themes, to issues.

So inadvertently I had made 'sense-making structures', constructed a matrix and slotted the bits in. Then a more formalised plan (on bits of paper like a jigsaw) and then a draft and finally a finished text. Well, maybe now armed with this I can open your reading to viewing? But then again, maybe not...



Introduction

Following from the 'Factual Newspaper Text', evidence emerges for a way of telling in newspapers that enables us to see them as, and use them as if, they 'tell it like it is', and that perhaps creators of such texts and readers of those same texts draw upon the same resources to do their work - whether writing or reading. The following chapter examines a journalist's account of the construction of newspapers and how he considers they achieve their particular effect.

Very broadly, his account will be used to indicate the extent to which journalists and readers can be said to use newspapers in the same ways; while covering in great detail a technical way of describing newspaper texts that accounts for the newspaper's appearance as a direct result of the constrictions of the medium. The newspaper's need to display sufficient information, yet disparate information.

Individual resolutions of such restrictions as limited space and differential emphasis of some news items over others, produce distinctive journalistic ways of telling and for each newspaper a unique identity which, if successful, gives rise to credibility and sincerity.

It is also true to say that the following chapter has a style that is very detailed, specific, tight and heavy-going. For that I have no remedy, only a warning.

## Possible Front Pages

To start again at the front page, this time taking a different route; consider the way things might be on the front page - think hypothetically: <sup>1</sup>

"The first page could conceivably be simply the first page sent to press. It could record the earliest news of the day and the other news could follow chronologically on other pages as in a book. That would be wasteful of space because news 'dates' news, but it would have a logic."

Harold Evans, Editing and Design, Book Five: Newspaper Design (London, Heinemann 1973) p.50

The newspaper printed in obedient response to chronological time.. or maybe arrangement to time and topic.

"News pages could be divided, for instance, according to time, to place or subject. Everything that the newspaper heard about at, say 3.00pm, would be listed under a bold numeral. Or all the news from France or Yugoslavia could be listed under such place titles. Or all fires, road accidents, speeches... could be listed under such subject titles."

Evans, Newspaper Design p.65

The page would be ordered, have sense, be comprehensible but it would not be familiar. What would be familiar then? I suppose I expect to see the 'big' stories, the 'important' stories of the day, the 'news' on the front page. If that is so then the front page could give:

"...a short text summary with each headline - a self-contained summary rather than the beginning of a full story."

Evans, Newspaper Design p.59

so that (as in the 'poster front page'),

"The idea of the front page as the urgent conveyor of news is carried to a logical extreme by publishing as many group one news signals as possible, to the exclusion from the front page of supporting text. This detail is carried inside with the other editorial categories."

Evans, Newspaper Design p.58

But this would not be our familiar old newspaper either. This poster front page, this bitty overmix of all the news, screaming all at once to be seen is not what I am used to. It isn't what I expect to see, and I am not alone in this it seems,

"...the traditionally organised front page, that is, a page which weighs the news for the reader in order of importance, was a service which the poster approach eliminated and which readers of standard-sized newspapers would not forego." Peter Palazzo cited in Evans, Newspaper Design p.63

Do I want my news 'weighed' for me? I thought, I expected and wanted the most important news to be told to me with the urgency it deserves, but I was wrong; this is too 'raw.'

#### A More Familiar Front Page

Let me try a different approach. If I am unsure of what it is I am looking for, let us concentrate rather on what I get, like news on the 'signal and text' front page;

"..is signalled both by headline and positioning in a clear scale of priorities and supported with text. Other items of editorial group one of less importance or freshness are placed inside the newspaper. Opinion and features of interpretation or entertainment are also placed separately inside. No effort is normally made on this kind of front page to indicate the existence, content or placing of those inside-paper items." Evans, Newspaper Design p.57

That sounds more familiar, comfortable and well known,

"the text on this kind of front page begins at the beginning and goes on to the end, preferably on the same page. It is not a summary of a fuller article elsewhere;" Evans, Newspaper Design p.57

So I am looking for order and not 'rawness' of the 'bare news', I am looking for some kind of assessment that allows me to select the most 'important' stories. I have been

promised it, is it what I get?

The Display of Disparate Information to Reflect its Significance

"2,000,000 words...When they appear as the New York Times, they have been transformed from mere words on a teleprinter or a galley sheet. They have become in that newspaper's assessment - and it is one which will move other men, the most important words in the world. They have been fished expertly from the erratic torrent, weighed, assessed, revalued in the light of later catches, and finally prepared for public display in a setting which, hopefully, will exactly reflect their significance."

Harold Evans, Editing and Design, Book One: Newsman's English (London, Heinemann, 1972)p.2

My need is recognised, rawness is refined and ordered to 'reflect its significance', but what does this mean?

"..we begin with a message and a reader and that editing and design fail if they do not connect the two as directly and efficiently as an electrical circuit."

Evans, Newsman's English p.X

The newspaper is made for me as a reader, its aim, to connect me with the news through editing and design? Is this the means by which the 'significance' of the news is reflected?

"A newspaper fulfils different functions from a poster or a book. Its purpose is to print a variety of disparate information for a multiplicity of individuals."  
Evans, Newspaper Design p.38

Not just for me but for all its readers, not personal property, but a social object, a physical object with its own special role to fulfil in displaying a particular type of information in its own way for its own audience. We know that whatever this information is, that the newspaper has to display it to the reader in a way directly in keeping with the significance of that information, so that:

"The page has not merely to organise the news. It has to organise it to certain news values."  
Evans, Newspaper Design p.78

The 'information' we talked of becomes 'news.' How might the display of news present 'news values?'<sup>2</sup> Quite simply by asking of each piece of news,

"How much and which page and with what display?"  
Evans, Newsman's English p.6

But who makes such evaluations? Surely the news does not present itself already ordered? Somebody must make the decision of what is important to us, for us. Yes, somebody to 'put us right' with regards to the news.

"Here is the pivot of the whole operation. It is the projection editor's job to refine the process of selection by deciding an order of priorities and expressing them with space and type and illustration."  
Evans, Newsman's English p.6

My guess was correct, what I am dealing with is the carefully structured results (in the form of my newspaper) of highly trained individuals' work. It is the journalists who mould and construct what it is they decide we all should know, in a way (or design) that they feel can tell us in the most appropriate way exactly what it is we should know about it (that reflects its 'news value').

Exactly how though, do I become aware of this creative construction behind the newspaper? I am aware that it is possible as reader to appreciate that one story is more important or of greater import/significance than another, but as I am not directly in touch with the journalists who have ordered this 'erratic torrent', I do not get any clues from them. What I do confront is solely my newspaper. Then

if I am to see that order has been achieved, significance reflected, importance displayed, it must be through the physical object of the newspaper itself. I see only the result of the journalist's work. For me to 'see order' I must see order displayed. The journalist's desires, intentions or creative forces upon the news are lost to me except for the extent to which I am able as reader to encounter the newspaper and make an order of what I see and read. I can take HE's words and use them to see that I am given sense from chaos, a comprehension of order, an acceptance of importance, then, if in my creative work as reader, I achieve a reading of which a journalist might say, 'that is what I intended you to read' then to this extent we might say that his creative efforts succeeded, if I read and gleaned from the paper that which he desired. But, if I should make of his newspaper something which he had not intended - what then? We both only have the newspaper to point to as physical proof, he as 'to what I should have read', I 'to what I was able to make of what I found there'. Our journalists have to realise that the newspaper now created, becomes independent of its authors, now out of their control, has a career of its own, shows a face for all readers to see and make of what they can.

Even Harold Evans acknowledges that ultimately it is what the reader can make of what appears on the page that gives the words meaning, rather than what any journalist intended.

"Some journalists even think that it will do to tell the court that the libel was a slip: we didn't mean it. That too, is no defence. What the writer meant the words to mean is irrelevant; it is what a jury can be persuaded to read into them that counts."

Evans, Newsman's English p.177

But I do appreciate that the journalist as author draws upon the same methods and techniques to construct the newspaper, as I draw upon to read and make sense of it, that there is a set of resources which culturally we share, that enable he in his way to 'make a newspaper' and me in mine to 'read a newspaper'. That such a 'sharing of ways' exists is confirmed for me,

"..every newspaper must have some understandable system for presenting that mass of disparate information and ideas. The common system which has evolved is to use the pages as more or less self-contained units for the presentation of a content sub-divided into subject units called stories, the latest or most dramatic subject units retained for the front page."

Evans, Newspaper Design p.50

#### The Story as the Building Block with Design as the Construction

This is the 'system of understanding' that we share, its identity begins to become visible. The story emerges as the 'unit piece' of the newspaper the smallest manipulable unit that has sense in itself, the building block; and the page becomes the 'unit whole', the stories gather together to give identity and completion to the page. We now begin to understand what kind of thing design is: it is the way the story units congregate to form their page, the face they present as they group to display the page. Such grouping is not haphazard, we are told that design,

"..tries most perfectly to serve the message."

Evans, Newspaper Design p.4

Back to disparate information again, non-identical but not non-compatible stories, (providing the correct 'fit') is made. For bits of a jigsaw there is only one way to fit them together to form the whole that makes sense. To get the

order correct is to slot the bits together in the right places and the face on the jigsaw is formed, so too the front page attains completion and sense. But the order of the jigsaw's configuration is simple, its pieces physically demand and define their place in the whole, literally because of their form they will only fit together one way, but of the newspaper's 'bits'? What is it about the stories that makes their place, defines their neighbours? Their shape is not pre-determined to define their place, rather their actual placement defines their shape. So, how do they come to be placed?

"Efforts were now beginning to be made to place stories on the page in some kind of order of importance."  
Evans, Newspaper Design p.24

That was in 1864, the problem was recognised then, but the solution? Exactly what was involved in the foggy term 'order of importance'?

#### Designing Order and Relative Emphasis using Headline, Typography, Size and Placement of Stories

"Emphasis and organisation are the two basic elements but they are not a complete description. Organisation implies a sense of proportion in the weight or colour assigned to elements of a page, and balance in the distribution of the weight or colour. It implies text which is easy to follow, which does not jump away from its headline. It implies legibility and unity. Emphasis implies vigour, variety, contrast, movement. Clearly there can be conflict between the principles of organisation and emphasis, between unity and variety and it is a satisfactory solution to this tension between them that is the test of a satisfactory page layout."  
Evans, Newspaper Design p.79

So what have we got so far? A mass of disparate information, 'bits of news', told in stories, arranged to show significance/importance through the emphasis of some above



others, yet an overall order, an organisation to make the 'relatively emphasised' stories clear and easy to read. We are told to:

"..divide page space according to a scale of values - the most considerable happening on the front page with the largest headline, the most trivial happening tucked far inside at the foot of a column under a small heading, and entertainment features presented in a more relaxed easy-going style.."

Evans, Newspaper Design p.65

Placement on a particular page as well as the position on that page, aid organisation, express 'values' in the news. That some have 'better' positions than others is vital as,

"An attempt to emphasise everything ends up by emphasising nothing."

Evans, Newspaper Design p.163

that,

"..emphasis is a matter of relativity."

Evans, Newspaper Design p.78

It is the company a story keeps on a particular page; 'news values' is like social snobbery, one's place in the pecking order, vying for the attention of the reader. So, like there is no sense to the idea of the 'rich and wealthy' if there were not those who were poorer, so too no sense in the 'big, important, dramatic' news, if other bits of news were not 'smaller, less important, or dramatic'. We need the contrast of those lower in the order and display of the news to provide the foundations for the sense of those stories of greater 'news value' - those larger and superior. But exactly how might this be achieved?

"Let us, for the moment, accept that the function of a newspaper design is to project a range of wholly different news items in a coherent and consistent order. There are

four ways which within one page, display type can be used to indicate to the reader the relative importance of the item;

- 1) The size of the headline.
- 2) The weight of the headline.
- 3) The spread of the headline.
- 4) The position of the headline on the page.

There should also be a relationship between the length of text and the newspaper's judgement of the importance of the news. Normally the biggest headline at the top of the page and the longest text should signal to the reader the most important report."

Evans, Newspaper Design p.11

Now we may realise that with a story bigger is better, but in our newspaper's order, biggest is best. We may also understand that the importance of a story is a quality that must be 'in keeping' with itself. A 'big' story must have a 'big' text under a 'big' headline, large in spread and also in weight, thicker, heavier black type and height from the bottom of the page, is like an accent to be proud of, 4" up is better (more considerable) than 2" up. We are told as a general rule, that the longer the text, the bigger the headline.

"There is thus an internal proportion between headline and text and an external proportion relating the worth of one headline-text unit to another."

Evans, Newspaper Design p.11

On a page, intra and inter story consistency. A story amongst its peers. To excuse an awful pun, if certain sorts of people 'hang-out' in certain sorts of places then certain sorts of newspaper stories 'lay-out' in their certain sorts of places.

### Newspaper Design as a Moral Enterprise with Layout as its Physical Result

"Layout means the arrangement of headline, text, artwork and white space on a page or sequence of pages."

Evans, Newspaper Design p.73-4

Although the page is the unit-whole, it is not a hermit, it has to daily appear with other pages.

"A page is not a solus poster; it is part of a complete newspaper, so I need to know the position of the page in the newspaper (and particularly the make-up of its facing page)."

Evans, Newspaper Design p.141

Things 'appear together' that 'go together' - harmony in our order. But here I hear the voice of the journalist; I am reminded of the view of the newspaper as a service provided for me by skilled and kindly journalists; that they stand as creators and I as reader to the newspaper. They cater for me and others like me in the layout.

"Order requires first that the predictable content should be in predictable positions ..should be anchored in the same place day after day."

Evans, Newspaper Design p.51

Layout is about allowing those that travel as they read to begin easily and follow the route with no problems:

"The old layout is full of dither. It is hard to know where one should begin."

Evans, Newspaper Design p.196

and is bad if,

"Anyone interested in this story has to wander all over the page."

Evans, Newspaper Design" p.196

I begin to get a feel for the plight of the journalist, his, unlike mine is a moral task. He must create a 'good' layout to show his reader where to go, he is a man with obligations. He can (and does) make the distinction between 'good' and 'bad' layouts on the basis of what he wants to achieve; drawing upon professional knowledge of what he

'should' do. As a reader of newspapers I am not tied down with the problems of creating an object to the best of my ability, I just read. I simply make of the object that already is, what I can. I may see a layout or placement of a story that I can understand as inappropriate or misplaced, but I do not see it as 'bad' or a 'failure', simply that it does not work for me. I have no obligations to help others to read, I am just able to, or not able to, read myself. My involvement is casual not personal. The journalist and I, our tasks are different. I must take care to read his words as a 'recipe for making a good newspaper' not as 'directions on how to read a newspaper'. His appeals are to 'correct productions', whilst mine are to 'possible readings'. My reading is not 'good' or 'bad' - it just is.

So, I recognise my journalist (Harold Evans) as a creator facing moral dilemmas, I can understand too, how he may have an 'intuitive feel' for his work through experience, a 'feeling' as to what is 'right'. So that,

"If all the problems inherent in a given task are properly understood, the design solution will already begin to take shape." Evans, Newspaper Design p.4

Possibly a suggestion that the news itself suggests its own correct display. That once understood, the 'correct' display for the news is 'obvious'. But there is an important move in terms here, which requires elaboration. The term 'layout' becomes 'design'. We are given the indication that stories are purposely 'designed' to 'layout' in a particular way. Literally, that the news begins to 'take shape'. 'Layout' is a term descriptive of the page, telling how it is organised; whereas design is the artful and constructive deliberate

placement to a particular layout. As a reader I might notice layout as 'the background' as being merely 'just there', as a potential journalist I would need it, to know 'how to do design', more specifically how to design a particular layout.

### Different Types of Layout

We talked earlier of a story's compatibility with its neighbours: let us now explore how this neighbourliness may be purposely brought about by designed layout. Layout may be either modular:

"Modular layout breaks the page into a series of rectangles - headline and related text form a four-sided, rectangular unit."

Evans, Newspaper Design p.77

or irregular,

"Irregular layout breaks the page into a series of interlocking shapes - the jigsaw."

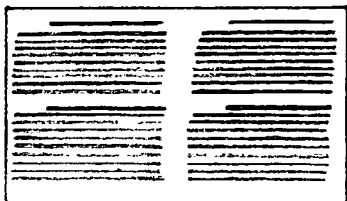
Evans, Newspaper Design p.77

"..the news page of the British Guardian; it is irregular. The Guardian feature page is modular."

Evans, Newspaper Design p.74

The newspapers these terms describe seem familiar.

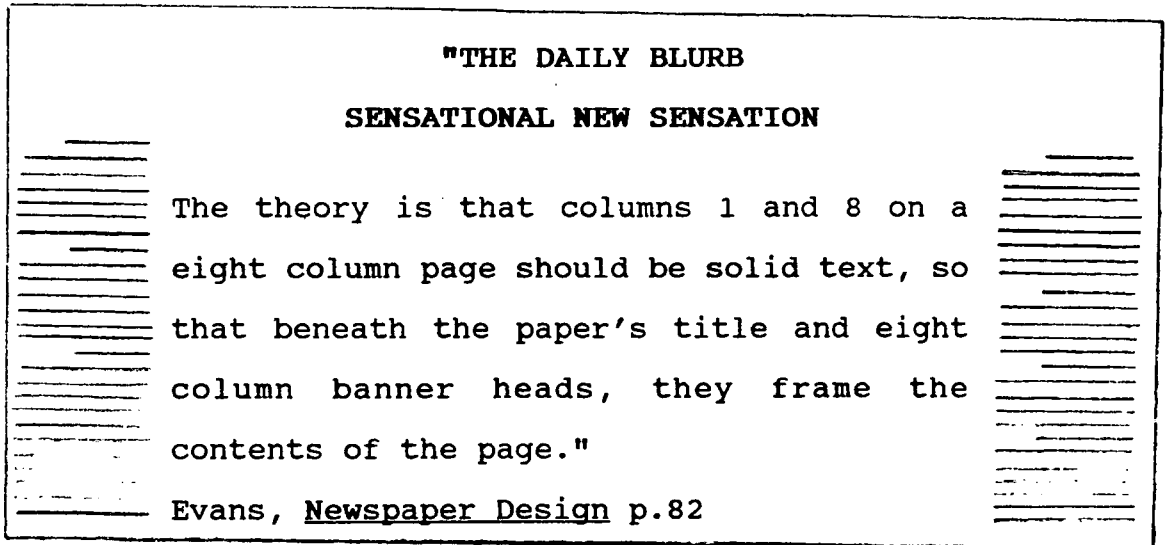
Alternatively, there are quadrants, where :



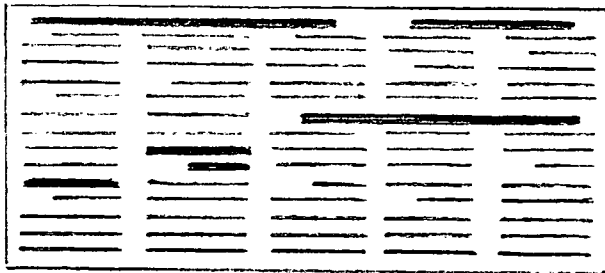
"Each of these four quarters is equally assigned, ..an attention compeller, - a stopper."

Evans, Newspaper Design, p.82

or a 'Frame layout',



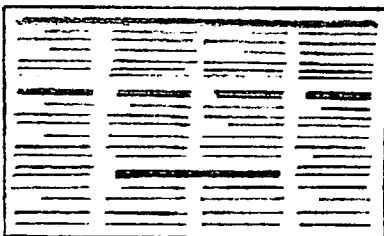
or 'Diagonals', that allow the reader to climb into the page.



or

"..the 'circus layout', the term is an American one for the layout where everything seems to happen at once."  
Evans, Newspaper Design p.83

Layout may be symmetrical as around a mirror,



although we deal with an 'optical centre' of the page and not a 'mathematical one'. As this is 'where the eye rests.'

or asymmetrical in,

"..an attempt to have both order and emphasis."  
Evans, Newspaper Design p.85

for

"In asymmetrical layouts there is a balance of unequal forces at unequal distances from the centre."  
Evans, Newspaper Design p.86

an,

"..artistic balance."  
Evans, Newspaper Design p.86

### Static vs Dynamic Layout

Such a technical description of the front page is very interesting, but what are the implications for the reader? In its layout, whether modular, irregular, symmetrical or asymmetrical, a newspaper may be static or dynamic in its design. To be dynamic is for the readers to be unable to predict what the front page will look like from one day to the next, whereas to be static is for a newspaper to produce a front page that will look the same day after day,

"The static layout fixes a pattern of headlines, text, and picture positions and pours the news into the moulds each day."  
Evans, Newspaper Design p.74

Even if the design of the lead story (the biggest most important story) of the day is changed to accommodate itself to the character of the story to be told;

"..the basic layout is not re-arranged. The rest of the page is insulated from the change."  
Evans, Newspaper Design p.74

### The Rigidity of Static Layout

The Telegraph is of static design, whereas the Observer has a design that is dynamic. What is it about each of the alternative designs, that prompts one daily newspaper to choose one and another daily newspaper to choose the other?

Consider this of static;

"..but no layout designed a priori can genuinely reflect the news values of each and every day and their relationship to each other. The world does not order itself as conveniently as that."

Evans, Newspaper Design p.75

again,

"At the extreme, static layout produces newspapers which shout in the same tone every day and newspapers which would treat the second coming as a routine event."

Evans, Newspaper Design p.75

Cries of 'too rigid', 'too inflexible', emphasis (through positioning, spread and weight) fixed before what is to be emphasised is known. A feeling of inevitable insensitivity to the story and a possibility of insincerity to the news. A failure to properly display news values.

However, having now considered the failings of static (which are obviously corrected by a dynamic front page, which can accommodate itself perfectly to each day's news); now consider the advantages of static that the dynamic front page cannot equal.

### The Controlling Calm of the Static Layout

"For a serious dignified newspaper, produced at leisure, or for features, these difficulties may not deter because of the attractions of symmetry in reducing the chaos of the world to a Palladian order."

Evans, Newspaper Design p.85

or for a grander claim,

"(The)...Times page one is a remarkable example of the sane intelligibility a leading serious newspaper with a static format can bring to a day's disordered events around the world."

Evans, Newspaper Design p.123



The whole world, its uncertainties, anxieties, crimes and joys - ordered, disciplined, contained and neatly displayed. Control of the chaos, events beyond the personal experience of the reader and most definitely out of his control, there in front of him, managed, calm and clear, maybe the world doesn't seem such a bad place after all, all that drama and excitement, but never so out of control that we cannot contain it in print.

### The Newspaper Identified by its Display

Don't think the point about the importance of the way a front page looks, too obvious and thus empty because things could not be any other way. We expect in our newspapers basically columns that are vertical and run horizontally, such seems familiar. But in Japan, think of horizontal columns with lines running vertically. Could you dare call that a newspaper?

The point is so obvious and the order so intrinsic, but without it our object 'newspaper' disappears. Accepting now how basic typography is to what we may make of what we read and the flavour it gives to our news, we are now told.

"A horizontal line suggests rest and repose."  
Evans, Newspaper Design p.81

"The vertical shape suggests energy."  
Evans, Newspaper Design p.81

Like a sleeping posture and a walking stance. Try it for yourself, a front page that has lots of vertical stories 'looks livelier', has more 'get up and go', than a page of horizontal stories which looks tired and sleepy. One can

only expect a lively page to tell of lively, exciting events and a sleepy page to tell of quiet, placid happenings. But can the typography of the design layout have such an effect on the 'flavour' of our reading? What effect does it have?

"The first is the razzmatazz effect of a typographical cocktail which may be suitable for a newspaper depending less on coherence and continuity and more on shock and entertainment and whose purpose is to dazzle and entertain." Harold Evans, Editing and Design; Book Three: News Headlines (London, Heinemann, 1974) p.65

Do we wish to be greeted each day by a calm, controlled, ordered world? Reassured that everything is as it should be as we pick the Telegraph off the door-mat in the mornings? Or, do we pick the spice and dazzle of the Sun to reassure us that despite all the gloom and despondency there's still a lot of fun and gaiety, light and laughter, slap and tickle. Either way, we are convinced by our newspapers that things can't be that bad. How this reassurance of 'drama under control' is displayed to its readers has more of an effect than to simply provide a flavour to the news; it identifies the newspaper itself. Could we call it a house style?

"Of course we have to recognise that what is right for 'Reveille' will not suit 'The Hindu'. Newspapers do have different attitudes and personalities to express and headline typography is one of the ways they can express it." Evans, News Headlines p.64

Everything is becoming mixed; typography, headlines, vertical and horizontal columns, display, design, layout, is the conclusion to be that they all determine a paper's own sense of identity? That all these tensions that exist between order and emphasis, coherence, consistency and flexibility, news and news values; and maybe it is in the

resolution of these different demands that a newspaper creates for itself a particular appearance, a sense of identity. Further consideration is necessary before that decision can be made.

### Constrictions of the Medium that Determine Newspaper Appearance

A newspaper has a set amount of information to put into its pages, carried in the type. This demands that there must be sufficient type to do that work, so the type-face must be small enough to enable a trade-off between, a print large enough to be seen to be read and small enough so that enough of it will 'fit' to carry the news. Given this and considering the fact that if a newspaper were printed like a book, print starting in the far left of the page and continuing un-interrupted (albeit for punctuation) to the right side of the page, row after row after row, then it would amass into one blurred typographical mess.

### The Necessity of the Column and its Implications

The column is called for (for the best of practical reasons) and it comes to the rescue of the readers who might drown in the sea of blurred black print.

"..legibility dictates some form of setting so very much narrower than the full width of the tabloid or broadsheet news sheet that the page has to be divided vertically into a series of columns."

Evans, Newspaper Design p.68

The most familiar aspect of the typography of newspapers, the rows of columns comes across as being the inevitable result of the task the newspaper sets itself to perform, tell sufficient news, and tell it legibly. But the column

width has convenient side-effects, pleasant bonuses.

"The page has to arrange a variety of news stories in a distinct order. The column whether it be 11 picas or 15 picas, is a pre-requisite for legibility but it is more than that. It is an indispensable aid for creating order, for enabling the priorities to be focused."

Evans, Newspaper Design p.68

Peter Palazzo (who re-designed the New York Tribune in the 60's) calls the column,

"..the 'automatic organiser'."

Evans, Newspaper Design p.68

The column also helps to give the tabloid its distinctive appearance.

"Possibly it may be argued that such a 7 column format is necessary for a paper presenting lots of short stories and wanting to give a visual impression of bustle, rich interest and story value for money."

Evans, Newspaper Design p.72

Not just a typographical necessity for a smaller tabloid news-sheet to print slightly larger but fewer columns than a broadsheet news-sheet. The tabloid does it to get maximum legibility, but somehow it is also in keeping with itself, indicative visually of the character it wishes to adopt, the 'type' of news it wishes to cover; what 'type' of newspaper it will be thought to be by its readers.

### Typography and Identity

Notice that when I am writing of the interdependence of the type typographical features and newspaper identity, I have to keep referring to the 'type' of thing I am talking about. The very logic of the word 'type' is already tied up with the printed form and a definition of identity. We can talk of type (printing) and type (sort) and how do we know which

'type' we are talking of? We don't, because the word at the same time gives echoes of both and we won't escape that feature, we cannot escape the language, we may only twist it around and talk within it. The ambiguity is part of the logic of the word 'type'. Typography and identity go hand in hand.

### The Newspaper as Non-Existent Beyond its own Display

However, to pursue this feature of type and identity further, let us return to the column. In design, a

"...backward step... has been the careless abandonment of column-rule and cut-offs which so usefully define columns and separate stories."  
Evans, Newspaper Design p.68

given that,

"Design must unite headline, picture and text and separate these as a unit from the others."  
Evans, Newspaper Design p.126

and,

"Emphatic organising force of a straight printed line."  
Harold Evans, Editing and Design, Book Two: Handling Newspaper Text p.81

with,

"Column-rule as a divider...and column-white as a unifier."  
Evans, Handling Newspaper Text p.81

We are then told,

"Communication at this stage is based on two elements: typographical style and the arrangement of type, illustrations and space on a page."  
Evans, Newspaper Design p.66

We have a message to communicate and we want to get it

across, let's play the journalistic game, it could hold a promise of going new places.

"A newspaper is a vehicle for transmitting news and ideas. The design is an integral part of that process. We begin with a blank sheet of newsprint and a mosaic of ideas we want to communicate and it is the function of newspaper design to present that mosaic in an organised and comprehensible way. To do this the newspaper designer uses text type, display type, photographs, line work, white space and a sequence of pages in the most fitting combinations."  
Evans, Newspaper Design p.1

The argument continues,

"Whereas printing is merely a matter of methods and materials, newspaper design implies a mastery of space. The problem is to communicate within the same physical context not one message but a series of disconnected messages of infinitely varying significance, and to do this with speed, ease and economy in a recognisably consistent style."  
Evans, Newspaper Design p.1

I am given a clue with the words 'within the same physical context'. It makes such as,

"The leader page speaks in a quiet, civilised voice."  
Evans, Newspaper Design p.112

...so misleading, our newspaper cannot speak at all, all our newspaper has is its own physical appearance. This is the only resource it can draw upon to do its task, all it can do is show.

If all stories 'exist in the same physical context', this assertion carries with it complex repercussions, for,

"A badly designed, sloppily printed newspaper inescapably carries with it the aura of sloppy journalism."  
Evans, Newspaper Design p.2

and,

"The leader page of a newspaper wishing to be taken

seriously (and most newspapers presume to be taken seriously here) should be orderly, clear, noticeable and have maximum legibility."

Evans, Newspaper Design p.2

A newspaper in revealing itself to our eyes, showing its stories, shows us not only what it has to 'tell' us, but also reveals the total extent of its existence. The thing we have to read, that we look at and travel through is the newspaper, the newspaper is nothing beyond. To show and display to us, is to show its total existence. If we lose the appearance of the newspaper (if we burn it, for instance) the newspaper is gone; or if we publish a collection of empty pages, we do not have an empty newspaper, we do not have a newspaper at all. A newspaper is its showing and telling.

### Identity, Display and Credibility

"..that a newspaper requires a typographical style to maintain identity."

Evans, Newspaper Design p.66

So important then, the appearance of our newspaper, that it must be careful for;

"..erratic typography imperceptibly but inevitably erodes the confidence of the reader in the standards of the newspaper."

Evans, Newspaper Design p.66

There must be the ability of the type-face to be able to 'show' the news and not just 'tell' it,

"It should be able to respond to a major event by increasing the type size of the lead or its weight and spread or both."

Evans, Newspaper Design p.12

The newspaper is the appearance of its stories, if these are ordered and calm, reflect 'news values', then the very

physical form of the paper has these qualities. Our newspaper itself becomes calm and ordered, sane, and as,

"The new clarity of printing carries overtones of credibility."

Evans, Newspaper Design p.2

believable too,

"One form is certainly best on the serious newspapers which wish to present a calm face for the same reason that one display family is preferred: a single consistent style emphasises the journalistic effort of the newspaper to produce some semblance of comprehensible order from the disordered world."

Evans, News Headlines p.9

All is brought under control in the creation of the display. Of specific typefaces we are told of their achievements,

"Caledonia has attractions as a display face for a quiet newspaper."

Evans, News Headlines p.71

and,

"Caslon is above everything an honest face. Peter Palazzo chose it for the New York Sunday Herald Tribune 'because of the instant impresssion of integrity it gives to the news'." Peter Palazzo cited by Evans, News Headlines p.67

There is, however, a limit to the power of the flavour that type brings.

"..Select a face and style that fit the wording as well as the theme. The evocative qualities of a face are a matter of judgement in the light of current aesthetic. It seems too as foolish to deny that type carries mysterious flavours of elegance, practicality, romance, and so on, as it is to say there is a typeface uniquely suited for each message."

Evans, Newspaper Design p.139-140

Type cannot do all, but it is the face a newspaper puts on; it can help to identify the newspaper both in itself and the way it arranges itself.



"A format for a serious newspaper dealing in politics and social reporting will not suit a metropolitan evening newspaper offering lots of 'spice'. It is impossible for the same combination of type, text and layout to express the function of both."

Evans, Newspaper Design p.2

Identity of the paper resides in its display, its type, text and layout, like patterns in the sand, wash them away and you do not have wet patterns, you have no patterns, take away a newspaper's display and you do not have a blank newspaper, you simply do not have a newspaper at all.

Design is not,

"...fancy packaging. It is part of the goods. What makes the **Daily News**, New York. The **Daily News** is not just the stories and pictures. If the contents were presented on a broadsheet dressed in Cheltenham display type, it would no longer be the **Daily News**."

Evans, Newspaper Design p.2

and identity through typography does much more, it helps to carry 'the message',

"The communicating newspaper will use typography to establish the underlying unity between pages of common purpose, to sub-divide space coherently, and to maintain values."

Evans, Newspaper Design p.66

### Identity, Display and Sincerity

That a newspaper's identity, display and sincerity to what is told must be in perfect harmony is a point that is raised again and again.

"There is a lot to be said for a change of family between sections of a newspaper, whether the sections are separately folded or not. Sport and the leader or feature pages have their identity emphasised by a different family of type (say Bodoni for news, Goudy for features and Sans for sport). And there is something disconcerting when the same type which has told you on page one of an earth shattering event is used elsewhere, with similar style and emphasis to headline a page of recipes."

Evans, News Headlines p.64

So now it is clear that a newspaper is, and can only do, what it looks like. But again identity is a more complex feature than mere typography.

### The Invisibility of 'Good' Typography

"This is the point behind the aphorism of Beatrice Warde of Monotype that 'printing should be invisible'. If the type distracts you it has hindered your reading and hence the communication of the message."  
Evans, News Headlines p.63

This is contradictory, how can it be that the most basic display of the newspaper, works best and indeed only 'succeeds' if it is invisible. If typography is identity and typography is invisible, how do we see identity?

This can be so, for typography is not what we readers look for, it is in the talk of the constructionists, it is the journalist's tool. If I were to approach a building I would not look at the bricks, I might see what colour they were, possibly the overall shape of the building, if it is tall, monolithic, or modern. Usually though my primary aim would be to enter, for what I might do once inside. This building in which I am writing now, is a library, I may work here or consult books. I fulfil a purpose I have in mind, I do not think about how the building is put together, to do that is irrelevant to my purpose. So too as a reader I enter a text with a purpose, to travel and read, and if, a good typeface is one,

"..that blends together to give a smooth whole."  
Evans, Handling Newspaper Text p.12

then I do not look at the letters it is made from. If I were a builder I might look at the bricks of the library, (from a

particular perspective) from professional knowledge and through professional interest, so too journalists approaching a text might first stop and glance at its 'building bricks' to see how it is done, to see the typography, for they have their own texts to build. It is a particular approach to be concerned with typography, it is the professional interest of journalists. It only becomes an issue to be concerned with when there are texts to be built, then its 'visibility' becomes problematic.

### Readers and Journalists Sharing Resources?

It is as well to remember that these five volumes of Harold Evans's are written 'in order that you might do journalism'. It is not my concern here to 'do journalism' I just wish to see if the way Harold Evans talks of 'becoming a journalist', seeing in a particular way, either strikes me as familiar or as an alternative way of 'seeing' what I may encounter as a reader. To compare his use of certain terms to mine. To ask whether our respective 'forms of talk' differ so much that they are incompatible; or whether there are points where we may touch in our talk, if there we share a common set of resources and to use these 'places of touch' as a viewpoint to spot our differences.

It is my belief that there are culturally available resources that Harold Evans may draw upon to 'make newspapers' and that I at the receiving end of the product of his artful work, at the site of the newspaper, also draw upon to read it, draw upon to 'see what was meant', to learn.

"Consistency in news values requires consistency in news display dress. Newspapers in this are no different from other crafts: 'In all great epochs of history the existence of standards, that is the conscious adoption of type-forms has been the criterion of a polite and well ordered society; for it is a commonplace that repetition of the same things for the same purposes exercises a settling and civilising influence on men's minds."

Turner, Berry, Johnson and Jaspert, The Encyclopaedia of Typefaces, (Blandford, 1962. cited by Evans News Headlines p.65

The terms are of 'consistency', 'criterion of a well ordered society', 'commonplace repetition', 'same things', 'same purposes', without actually detailing them. Harold Evans plays upon these resources, appeals to them and requires me to do so as reader also.

If the details of a 'hot news story' are not confirmed, but the paper must go to press, it is OK to print the story but with one allowance, something like;

"A BOAC Boeing 707 was reported to have crashed near the main runway, London Airport, this afternoon."  
Evans, Handling Newspaper Text p.184 (emphasis added.)

'Was reported' to have...? But doesn't a newspaper 'report' all its stories? Doesn't it employ 'reporters'? If we were to 'transport' a story we would take it en masse to a new location, so what do we do with a story when we 'report' it? What is concealed in this term 're-port'?

To answer this, consider the Russian State newspaper Pravda - truth. It does not give an 'account', for if you deal in truth there are no differing accounts; merely 'what happened', truth which is the version Pravda gives (but again, it is not a 'version' for that suggests the existence of alternative versions). It is no good I cannot find a word

for the 'text of truth' that Pravda gives, (the English language isn't built to take that kind of pure empiricism). If there isn't a word in English for texts that can express the equivalent of 'Pravda', then let me try to explain using many words.

If Pravda were before me I would have the events captured exactly as they happened only now in print and ink, not in actions. Straight from one medium to the other, through time, reduced from three dimensions to two, from colour to black and white - no problem.

I do not have Pravda before me, I have:

The Telegraph on the pay awards for top civil servants.

The Guardian on the pay awards for top civil servants.

The Mirror on the pay awards for top civil servants.

The Sun on the pay awards for top civil servants.

The Times on the pay awards for top civil servants.

Now I may be able to recognise them all as the 'same' story despite differing details given or emphasis expressed, points of view taken. But which best captures the event? Which has the superior hold on reality? Provides me with the best doorway back to the event? Which is Pravda?

Sat at the site of my newspapers how might I decide? This is my problem as a theorist, as Harold Evans had his concerns as a journalist that were not mine as reader, so now I have my problems as a reader theorising about newspapers that are not problematic for Harold Evans. Well if they are not a problem for him, how might he resolve my dilemma? He does

not talk about the event, or faithful reproductions of it, he does not become tied up in the issues of truth and reality, instead,

"..I have no doubt that (where) the main purpose of the paper is to communicate information clearly and authoritatively.."

Evans, News Headlines p.65 (brackets added).

Of all the versions before me (probably revealing no great secret) I would give credence to the version of the Guardian, above the others. This is a personal choice, a preference for the Guardian's way of telling things, and a matter of trust more to do with my 'overall world view' than any 'doorway' the Guardian has back to reality. It gives a version that is ordered, clear and authoritative, it says to me this is the Guardian's version and for me that is enough, it does not matter if it is not 'truth' (Pravda is a mythical enterprise), it only matters that I may find it believable, that I can accept that it knows what it is talking about, that it is authoritative, from then on it is a personal choice.

What in Harold Evans' words was starting to sound like a neat and crisp do-it-yourself journalism course, now begins to sound much less like a set of algorithmic 'rules' and more like 'intuitive hunches', dependent upon a reader's ability to 'follow'. Take the use of apostrophes, '''. They may be used,

"..when headlining new assertions which are not yet confirmed."

Evans, News Headlines p.94

"The quotes tell the reader to take care, the word is not

what it might seem: 'Arctic' schoolrooms will be heated."  
Evans, News Headlines p.94

where as well as being used as a 'hedge' the ' ' establish the word 'arctic' as a metaphor (I take it that he means schoolrooms so cold that they are like the arctic and not that I am reading a headline about a set of classrooms far away in that frozen expanse).

Then there is also,

"Occasional uses for quotes to reverse the meaning of a word: 'Missing' wife in hotel job."  
Evans, News Headlines p.94

to tell you that she is not missing at all, or,

"Quotes can bring into one unit two words which are needed to form an adjectival noun:

'Don't wed'  
couple  
missing."

Evans, News Headlines p.94

where they are used to unite words to be used as a description. I detect the air of outright confidence and authority coming from Harold Evans's voice. It seems that 'can be used to produce any meaning, if a journalist might be able to persuade a reader to be in sympathy with him.

Harold Evans has to rely upon the reader more than he likes to admit, although at odd moments he can be caught taking a quick reversal of roles, to see how things look 'from the other side'.

"When the page layout is completed I ask myself.. Does the reader know where to start and where to go next?"  
Evans, Newspaper Design p.142

and of spacing he says,

"Type is changed by white space. There are three places where white space can go wrong in headlines - between letters, between words and between lines."  
Evans, News Headlines p.85

He is concerned with the physical unity of words to lines, lines to paragraphs and paragraphs to stories, and again he must appeal to the journalist's intuitive 'feel' for his work.

"Spacing should not be uniform. It should be visually correct."  
Evans, Newspaper Design p.14

What he is saying 'between the lines' if you want to know how the readers will see this, how it will come across, then for a few moments drop your professional approach and become a reader.

"..always spacing should be judged visually. If it looks wrong, it is wrong."  
Evans, News Headlines p.85

So in cases of doubt, what the journalist sees as a 'reader', is the 'seeing' to which he should attend and not any constructionist rule. When we think of a possible libel suit, then the tensions between the text as creation of its journalist author and what he intended of it, and the text as an independent object to be made use of as a reader sees fit, become apparent and it is the reader who wins,

"What the writer meant the words to mean is irrelevant; it is what a jury can be persuaded to read into them that counts."  
Evans, Newsman's English p.177

The newspaper gains its independence as a text once it becomes the used property of a reader.



More and more the text goes on to be concerned with 'communication', with a message to get across. The idea of 'telling the news', providing a service for and reaching the reader. Look at this piece about the desk editor;

"To make this judgement he needs to know the background to the news item he is editing: if it is a developing story he must be fully aware of the previous developments and how other newspapers assessed the news point at their publication time. Unimportant details and subsidiary information are put aside, to focus on the real significance of the story. As he reads the copy, the deskman sums up the news in his mind and scribbles on notepaper at his side the sentence, words, phrases or ideas which are at the heart of the story."

Evans, News Headlines p.16

Leaving aside the rather romantic portrayal of the deskman as an ever brave battling (on our behalf) crusader, just look at the breadth of tasks he is required to do: he must know the history of the story and what other papers said so that if he is to reach a reader, he knows what they are already likely to know; he has a story which he must tell them, he must get at its 'very heart', tell them precisely the thing about it which they should know. What to tell and how best to tell for the reader, for

"Words are our trade. It is not enough to get the news. We must be able to put it across."

Evans, Newsman's English p.16

But what is this sudden concern with the reader?

"No matter how great the author's wisdom or how vital the message or how remarkable the printer's skill, unread print is merely a lot of paper and little ink."

(Herbert Spencer, cited by Evans, Newspaper Design p.vii

So if we may think of a newspaper not existing without its design, typography and layout, then we may also think of it, although existing when in print, not living till it is read.

A newspaper is only a product with potential, the same as an empty parked car is a marvellous feat of engineering design and mechanical skill, with an intrinsic potential to travel, to take people places, bought to be driven, indeed this is the very reason for its production; so too newspapers are marvellous feats of editorial design and journalistic skill, but effectively silenced never to have a voice if not used by a reader. Made to be used.

Perhaps now that this realisation comes to light, we should consider what role Harold Evans allocates to the reader and what repercussions this has for his method for 'doing newspapers'. To what extent does he bend to accommodate himself to the readers?

Start again at the 'unit' of the newspaper, the story and at the start of each story a headline, an inseparable partnership, headline and text. In the newspaper they are never apart.

"The headline writer must think hard on what single element in the story it is which makes it new, different, and worth space in the paper."  
Evans, News Headlines p16

Get at the 'newsy essence' of the story - the nitty gritty. This is the stuff of headlines, be exact, precise and to the point for,

"The modern reader scans the headlines and expects to be able to take in their message almost at a glance. He wants a signpost not a gazetteer."  
Evans, News Headlines p.6

I am a headline scanning reader, they are the bits which I go to first, to see what a particular story is 'all about'.

Then if I am interested in the 'topic' of the story as it has set for me by the headline; I will enter the text below and begin to read. Harold Evans knows this for he says,

"There is a double responsibility on the headline writer. He has to attract as many readers as he can into the text of the story; or condemn it to unread obscurity; but even where he fails he has an effect, for many who do not read the story nonetheless retain an impression from scanning the headline."

Evans, News Headlines p.13

This too sounds familiar, in what I might admit to as being my lazy newspaper habits. If somebody says to me, 'Did you see that the EEC is to sell all that butter to Russia at a huge loss?' I'll probably say something like, 'Yes, I did see something about that somewhere.' What I am glossing over, what I might have replied instead, could be something more like, 'Yes I did catch a glimpse of a headline in the paper a few days ago that said,

**RUSSIA GETS  
BUTTER MOUNTAIN  
AT A SNIP**

and I was either not interested enough to read on, or didn't have enough time to travel through the text, or felt that I had gleaned all that I needed to know from the headline alone, but, now I can understand that headline and what they are talking about now as being the same thing (now that I am called upon to do so), so yes, I do 'know' about it!

Exactly as,

"He has to catch the reader on the wing. In half a dozen words he has to inform him tersely and accurately of a shattering or confused event, or arouse his curiosity in a subtle manifestation of human behaviour."

Evans, News Headlines p.13

When confronted with a headline like,

## "FRANCE AND THE CONCORDE"

Well thinks the reader...what about France and the Concorde?...what the headline should be telling is what is new or significant about them."  
Evans, News Headlines p.26

Harold Evans's terms are becoming 'pithy' again. What exactly does 'what is new or significant about them' mean? What are these things?

"Accuracy, intelligibility and vigour are the requirements, and any newspaper which is careless with its headline writing is careless with its own purpose and vitality ... Where every headline goes unerringly to the point with precision for wit, the whole newspaper comes alive."  
Evans, News Headlines p.13

This is not clearer, it is worse. I get the feeling that headlines should 'tell the news', 'go to the point', 'bring the news alive', but the more I paddle around in the water the muddier it gets.

Perhaps if we work through an example and do as a journalist might do, to get to the point, we might be able to see exactly what it is that gets us there and what precisely the 'point' is. Evans uses such an example.

Assume I as a reader approach the headline demanding (or at least holding some of the following expectations), to find answers to questions like these;

"What is it that has happened to arrest my attention?"  
"What is it that is new and interesting?"  
"What is it that is different?"  
Evans, News Headlines p.16

then a headline like,

"NO DAMAGE AND  
NO ONE HURT"  
Evans, News Headlines p.16

does not answer them, it does not specifically tell me what it is talking about; it could be said of almost any event, it is not unique, or special, new or surprising. Harold Evans grumbles of it,

"It was undistinctive to the point of extinction; but it will survive in the pages as one of the finest examples of a headline that wasn't. The headline must tell the news."  
Evans, News Headlines p.16

### 'News' and the Reader

A headline that becomes 'something that wasn't', loses its identity for it fails. Existence comes only through correct appearance. Its correct appearance is to 'tell the news', but how?

**"BULLOCK DOES NO DAMAGE"**  
Evans, News Headlines p.16

Well again I suppose that most days bullocks do no damage, why mention it today? This doesn't tell the news either, and Harold Evans grumbles about it,

"It is not related enough to the events of the day. It does not tell the news."  
Evans, News Headlines p.16

Think of the 'news' as being as 'dogs' is plural to 'dog', so 'news' is plural to 'new', new things that happened, news. Then how might we tell the news?

"Clearly the headline will have to be built on the simple news fact of a bullock running loose, through shopping streets. We could write,

**"Men chase loose Bullock"**

or if there is room,

**"Nine men chase Bullock"**

or better still,

### "Nine chase Bullock in town"

or we could change the tone of the headline to emphasise that the news lies in the antics of the bullock rather than any heavy drama.

### "Prize bullock goes shopping" "

Evans, News Headlines p.16

At last I am told the news by the headline, the new thing that happened that is significant to warrant telling me.

First get details of the specific happening then condense, or economise on words, or phrase in a lighter style in keeping with the event itself. The headline becomes clearer albeit in Harold Evans's words,

"..the headline must sum up the news in the story it serves. It must distil the news. It must be specific."  
Evans, News Headlines p.16

to make a headline,

"...decide on the basic news point."  
Evans, News Headlines p.16

and a headline is a 'good' headline, it 'succeeds' if it,

"...meets all the requirements: it fits, it makes immediate sense, it attracts the reader, it tells the news."  
Evans, News Headlines p.17

So far then we have, 'tell the news', which are events which are new and are deemed significant enough to be 'news' by the journalists as they draw upon what they feel we might want to be informed of. But I as reader how do I get the news? How do these headlines that I encounter display the news for me?

It is in the presence of the headlines themselves (at the

site of the newspaper) that the news comes to me, not from the journalist himself.

What does Harold Evans's 'recipe for good headlines' say to me as a reader? Can I recognise his account as being about the headlines that I am familiar with? Can we talk of the same things, he as creator me as reader? Perhaps, to the extent to which the physical object of the newspaper text is the place where we share different universes, it is our place of touch.

"All good news headlines follow rules, in what they say and how they say it. What they say is the single most urgent news point (as the newspaper sees it) accurately, intelligibly, and impartially. How they say it varies much less than appears."

Evans, News Headlines p.25

At first, I'm feeling very reserved towards this. It seems to be saying that all headlines are the same; clearly (to me) they are not. He could mean that although they differ in what they say, that they tell these different things in similar ways. But I remain to be persuaded, so more of the 'good headline guide'.

"The headlines have used the present tense to describe events that have already happened."

Evans, News Headlines p.27

I must go further as he assures me there are good reasons for this,

"First, the present tense is active. It puts the reader in the middle of the action. It gives him a feeling of participation. Secondly, the event may be past, but it is recent past and the reader is learning of it for the first time."

Evans, News Headlines p.27

as it is 'news' to the reader, the 'first time' for him,

this reflects back onto the telling, makes it, its first time too, the moment in which it is going on, as Harold Evans says he puts it in the present tense.

Just as I begin to believe that Harold Evans as creator and myself as reader tread too disparate ground for our talk to be reconcilable, he begins to detail familiar things and our talk touches again,

"Vigorous, economical writing requires a preference for sentences in the active voice."  
Evans, Newsman's English p.23

like,

"Police arrested Jones."  
and not,  
"Jones was arrested by the Police."  
Evans, Newsman's English p.23

Now for Harold Evans the first version is better because it takes up less space (which is at a premium as all the news has to fit into a limited space), it is active, straight to the point, it does not delay the news.

But more importantly at the moment Harold Evans starts to write of things that I recognise, where he talks of preference for the first version, I may talk of recognition. I can see the first version as being more like the headlines I would expect to find in my newspaper, than the second version. For whatever reasons we now begin to talk of recognisably the same sorts of things. Look at these two headlines,

"Radio relay satellite  
put in orbit by U.S."  
Evans, News Headlines p.25

"Up goes 'flying post office'"



About the same event?

A comparison of the version of a serious broadsheet and a 'popular' tabloid? Could you recognise the two as that, and do you need to be told which is which? I was able to recognise them for what they were and I was right,

"The popular papers were trying to emphasise the personal, dramatic or romantic elements. But every headline has a single common characteristic - a verb. News is activity and a verb represents action."  
Evans, News Headlines p.25

Now while I see that he talks of not simply 'every headline', but rather he prescribes that 'every good headline' should have a verb; I do 'see' something in what he says. His version seems familiar, compare,

"He bowled badly"

and

"His bowling was poor."  
Evans, Newsman's English p.40

The first is 'better' (and more familiar), it has a live verb in a subject, verb, adverb arrangement; the second delays the telling and so is weaker because it is longer in a subject, noun, adjective arrangement. Again we go back to the way we are told, the appearance our news makes, rather than an appeal to its ultimate truth value or its grounding in reality that gives our news; because presumably both these have the same grounding in reality as they are about the same event. What is different is their way of telling. One gives us what we might recognise as 'news', the second is not so "newsy-a-telling".

So I accept the point that Harold Evans makes, that the

first version is better not because (as he expresses it) in the language of English grammar of subject, object, noun, verb etc.. but again mainly because I can 'see what he means'. The second version is slower, less dramatic, takes longer to read and it seems to me that I am much more likely to see the first version in a newspaper than the second. It seems more typical. He is talking about the things that I encounter: that which I might recognise as a journalistic way of telling things and as news is so affected by the way it is told I must conclude that 'news' at least partially (if not totally) resides in journalistic methods of telling.

### 'News' and Journalistic Methods of Telling

Now to the extent to which Harold Evans may direct me towards these 'journalistic ways of telling' and my, to me obvious (although unspecifiable) knowledge of these methods (which is demonstrated by my ability to recognise 'more' journalistic ways of telling things amongst other less 'newsy', less dramatic, or direct methods) we might proceed onwards to discover, if not what 'news' is, what appears as and is familiar as 'news'. We might even conclude that there is no 'news' per se (in abstract) but only its appearance, the creation of the news in its appearance and its maturity in the reading, but perhaps it is too early to say that yet.

If, in journalistic ways of telling, longer is weaker, that shortening the telling makes more emphatic direct news, compare the following,

"There were riots  
in several cities last  
night in which shops  
were burned."

"Rioters burned shops in  
several cities last night."

Evans, Newsman's English p.24

The style of the news becomes clear, we see the slow amble of the first version the direct thrust of the second. 'Tell the news', starts to take on new echoes. At first in Harold Evans's appeals to 'tell the news', I had the feeling that he was saying that beyond any words of its 'capture', some kind of 'objective' news existed and 'good' news copy 'caught' it in appropriate ways, while 'bad' copy trapped it in a messy, delaying jumble of words; for as he says here,

"All types of newspaper, local, provincial and national, have to cope with copy which obscures the news, which delays the reader getting the human facts the headline has invited them to obtain."  
Evans, Newsman's English p.17

Now 'tell the news' starts to reverberate with sounds like: 'good' copy alone captures the news because it creates the news, its appearance is the news. That 'bad' copy is not 'bad' because it misses capturing the news, but simply because it is not a 'newsy way of telling', no news is present not because the news is badly presented but because no news exists there at all through inappropriate telling. The journalistic ways of telling are the news. What are these 'more newsy ways of telling'?

"..the alternatives on the right are all generally crisper and shorter. They're not synonyms but they frequently express the desired meaning.

<u>Don't say</u>	<u>Prefer</u>
attempt	try
currently	now
dispatched	sent."

Evans, Newsman's English p.70-71

Even at the expense of not getting an exact synonym, these 'news words' are better than the others which are longer, more complex and definitely not the building blocks of a

'newspaper news telling'. As well as being more direct by being crisp and short, we must

"Be specific, then: but also be positive...there is nothing more deadening than a series of abominable 'No' headlines, which merely say 'No news today'.

NO CLUES REPORTED  
ON MISSING BANKER

MYSTERY OF MISSING  
BANKER GROWS

NO RECORD IN  
DUBLIN

SIMPSON 3.3. OFF  
RECORD."

Evans, News Headlines p.33

Look at the versions of the headline on the left, if there are no new clues, if there was no record why bother to read the rest? I, as a reader would assume if I saw these headlines in a newspaper that upon reading them I had gained all I needed to know about those particular events, making a trip into the text to get the rest of the story unnecessary, I would move on, the story would have lost me as a reader. Take the versions on the right, the mystery of the missing banker deepens - how does it deepen, what has happened? Just 3.3 seconds off a world record, how close can you get .. I bet the air was electric with excitement, what actually happened, let me read and find out. 'No' news really is 'bad' news, or rather, a non-newsy way of telling. To tell news is to tell something, if I am told about nothing, told about something that did not happen - told a non-thing I am not told news. Each of the two versions is about the same event as its partner, but only one of them becomes 'news'. If the event itself was the 'news' then any telling of it would also be the 'news'. Yet, the 'news' of an event does not somehow reside in the essence of the event itself, but its newness only attains existence in an appropriate

'newsy telling' of that event.

Now, reading Harold Evans's books, I smile as I read the headlines that he details, muse as I am told about 'good' ways of telling the news (or as I might prefer to say: muse as I discover about newsy ways of telling) because now I am told them, or rather directed to look in certain ways and at certain things that the talk of Harold Evans illuminates I see these things as so obvious.

I can see them now because I am directed in certain ways, pushed by Harold Evans words to see things in his constructionist terms. I see now as one who might produce a newspaper would see, I see the things that I would need to notice if I were to make a newspaper myself. But when I was 'just a reader' I did not see these things, simply because I was 'just a reader', I did not need to see these things for the practical task ahead of me, I did not need to be able to see these things to 'do a reading of a newspaper' I looked at the newspaper only as a reader would. Our focuses are different, Harold Evans's as a producer and I as a reader: I saw what a reader needs to see to read a newspaper, not what a journalist needs to 'create a newspaper'.

But, that I do recognise now without having to rush to my newspaper to check that these features 'really are there' to be seen, means I must have 'blindly taken them on board'; swallowed whole unknowingly all that I now see in detail.

The constructionist ways of the journalist must be, to a certain extent, present on the face of the newspaper, at

the site of my reading work, for now I may immediately recognise them for the 'work' they do, acknowledge them as having been 'there all the time', as background, perhaps. Useful now as an additional perspective to my 'reading as theorist'; an alternative 'slant' or 'flavour', but, not essential to my role as 'ordinary reader'. One does not have to be a journalist to read a newspaper; after all I managed to read my paper quite adequately before I knew these things.

But more of journalistic ways of telling,

"Avoid when you can, using parts of the weak verb 'to be' and 'to have' as the main verbs in the headlines. A headline gains strength when a stronger verb is used:

ISTANBUL HAS EARTHQUAKE

EARTHQUAKE ROCKS ISTANBUL

TORY IS OUT

TORY BEATEN

TOWN HALL (is) IN DANGER

POLICE (are) IN GUN DRAMA

(There is) BITTER MOOD IN PANAMA ELECTION."  
Evans, News Headlines p.27

That,

"Just as a sentence becomes difficult to follow when it is overloaded with separate ideas...so does a headline."  
Evans, News Headlines p.35

a solution is found,

"This is the device of the compound noun. 'Girl in pothole' becomes 'Pothole girl'."  
Evans, News Headlines p.18

So familiar.

Think what these two versions do:

"Pothole Girl saved  
after icy night  
Evans, News Headlines p.18

Girl in pothole saved  
after icy night."

OK the first is shorter, more direct etc..but also does the first version give you the feeling that you should already know about the girl in the pothole (from yesterday's paper perhaps?) what was 'girl in pothole' yesterday, today is 'pothole girl'. The girl is located for you as being one and the same girl; a shorthand way of saying, 'you know that girl in the pothole, that we told you about yesterday - well here's what happened to her.'

The compound noun is journalistically not done for this reason (or so Harold Evans informs me) but for reasons of economy of words, directness and space; but for the reader, it places the story as one within his knowledge, changes it from an isolated story to the second part of a serial.

But on again with our journalistic ways of telling, we must remove excess words,

"The theatre has seating accommodation for 600.  
The theatre seats 600."  
Evans, Newsman's English p.37

the first is,

"...stealing space and laying waste to living images."  
Evans, Newsman's English p.38

and more of living images, we must be concrete and not abstract,

"And everything should be related to human beings.  
The abstract is another world. It requires an effort of imagination to transport ourselves there."  
Evans, Newsman's English p.33

However, before we are carried away with the idea that the appearance of the news is the writing of words alone, consider this;

"WILSON; SMITH RIGHT  
OFF COURSE."

"HEAVY TAXES WILL GO  
ON BEER, WINE."  
Evans, News Headlines p.18

when we take into account the actual physical appearance of the news; we realise that news is not just its journalistic ways of telling with words, but also its journalistic way of displaying those words. In two examples, the words of the telling and the display of the telling conflict, we get confusion. But even when the words are in harmony the display of the telling alone can cause disruption and confusion; as in the following two, the words are the same,

"JUDGE GETS DRUNK DRIVING CASE"  
Evans, News Headlines p.18

"JUDGE GETS DRUNK  
DRIVING CASE"

but they tell different news. The first of a judge perhaps, returning to the courts after a long illness, getting a 'drunk driving' case as his first hearing. The second a judge caught driving while drunk, is himself appearing in court.

Appearance, that is all aspects of the appearance, the words and the way they display themselves is the news. The words do not dominate, but let us think for a while of the affect they may have.

"'How Helen did the housekeeping' is an acceptable headline on the feature text, but it does not tell us how Helen did



the housekeeping. It only holds out the promise that the text will. It does not inform. It tempts. The distinction of the hard news headline is that it always gives information." Evans, News Headlines p.25

we do not have,

HELEN TACKLES  
DIRT AND GRIME

or

HOUSEWIFE HELEN  
DIRT AND GRIME DRAMA

We now have more than one type of headline and 'any old' headline will not always fit its text. So journalistic ways of telling modify themselves to accommodate, to handle, to mould, to soften the aspect of the news; not so heavy, dramatic or urgent. Harold Evans says again,

"The Helen type of headline is more appropriate for the longer feature or news in depth piece, where the aim is not to give immediate information but to explore, discuss or relate a rich narrative whose ideas are too complex and diffuse to be done justice by a hard news headline focused on a single key point."  
Evans, News Headlines p.25

#### The Headline as a Beginning of a Journalistic Way of Telling

Different headlines that do different things. But also above all we are able to understand that a headline must be in harmony with its text, in fact Harold Evans says so much,

"The headline must be accurate in its details and true to the meaning of the whole report."  
Evans, News Headlines p.23

Headline and text go hand in hand.

So, if we not only have 'hard news' stories, but also 'features'. Features where its headline is not 'focused on a single key point', but where,

"The crucial thing is to provoke curiosity without satisfying it - to tease."  
Evans, News Headlines p.98

We establish a link between a headline and its text, a different headline, a different text; but why?

If the headline were just a 'what this is all about', like an advertisement for its text, we might simply stop at labels.

Accidents, offences, sport, law reports, latest intelligence etc., but we get much more. Much journalistic time and effort is devoted to the headline.

"Much of the time is spent on the headline and first few sentences which lure the reader, often these determine the way the story should be developed."  
Evans, Newsman's English p.18

The headline as a lure and also a 'start' of a story indicating 'ways' the story may go, the development that should go ahead?

"With the constant effort to render events concrete, vivid and human."  
Evans, Newsman's English p.18

### The Lead

The headline is a beginning of a way to tell a story. Are we now getting close to what some of these journalistic ways of telling are? Consider the following conversation (a verbal way of telling stories).

"'I saw a tremendous rescue at the wall today (the Berlin Wall), an American soldier dragged a refugee across. They were shooting at him all the time.' That is the germ of the hard news intro. 'Yes', your listener will say, 'and what happened to the soldier and the refugee? Were they killed?' 'The refugee was wounded but they told me he'd be all right'."  
Evans, Newsman's English p.89 (brackets added)

If we wait for chronological time we have to wait till the end of the story to find the outcome. Here, what are the features of 'good' news telling; what is an appropriate way of telling?

"If you had been telling the story chronologically, that piece of information would have had to wait till the very end of a long recital. Your listener (and the reader) would rightly grow very impatient."  
Evans, Newsman's English p.89

Chronology makes 'bad' news telling. We must not tell chronologically what happened but tell first of what significantly happened, we must,

"...bring the news point to the top."  
Evans, Newsman's English p.128

Think more about this way of telling. A 'good' thriller novel most certainly would not tell the outcome first, it would not reveal 'who killed whom'. If we knew that at the beginning, why should we bother to read? Part of the excitement is the journey to the end, that we might guess as each clue is revealed to us. Hard news stories do not tell this way, they do not 'keep us guessing'. They hold no air of suspense, they ensure that they tell us, that we might know right at the start, what is the most considerable event of the story is. The 'fun' of the reading is in the knowledge which is then gradually explained, not in the guessing. We now have the logic of the news-lead, we know that,

"Something has happened or may happen."  
Evans, Newsman's English p.128

Somehow the newspaper is operating a different 'telling rationale' to the novel. It is the lead that is all

important: yet I catch Harold Evans saying,

"...chronology is the master..."

but he immediately adds,

"Once the most dramatic items have been presented and only then we go back to the beginnings and build a sequential narrative."

Evans, Newsman's English p.111

Back to the lead again. What is the lead? We know what it should tell dramatic, urgent news, but what sort of news might count as that? It is up to the journalist, his decision (along certain guidelines of course).

"..(he) must ask himself this: How many readers will be induced to read the story primarily by the inclusion in the intro of the name of the man, or place? Is it significant to the readers of this newspaper?"

Evans, Newsman's English p.95

The news lead is expressed as a lure to read the rest of the text, yet, how can it do this, all is already revealed, the suspense is gone? We have writing for an audience. News is news, when we have the correct ways of telling in the correct ways of showing for the correct audience, that will be able to locate it as news. It must be relevant enough and interesting enough to act as the lure into the text that it is claimed to be. Here the guidelines float, but notice that they do not float entirely freely, there is still some restraint on the journalistic writer. What are these restraints and what might they tell us about the writing that is done within their boundaries?

### Following the Lead

"There is no set formula for the development of such a news story, only guidelines. The first is: substantiate the news

lead. The second: never run ahead of the reader's knowledge. The third: remember it is your newspaper's job to report the news impartially."

Evans, Newsman's English p.126

From the first point, substantiate the news lead. It is a rather odd fact that the more we are told something, in the greater number of ways, by a varying selection of people, that we tend to attribute the label 'true' to it. The logic of - 'well there must be something in it'? Being told again and again and again, the thing becomes more believable less easy to break down. News upon news upon news piles up like paper and we get buried beneath it. If I am told by the headline and then immediately the lead comes to its defence, lends its support, tells me again, well how many times do I want telling? I've been told twice by then, I'm no 'doubting Thomas', I believe it.

The second. Never run ahead of your readers knowledge? If you read of an event in a story, of Mr Green's death, for example, you learn of it as you read it. The reading becomes the moment at which you can say you have knowledge of it. How is it possible then (for this must be what Harold Evans's words are getting at) to read something and not be able to learn of it as you read it? Where the reading does not bring the knowledge, but that the reading is still somehow 'ahead of your knowledge'?

Is it possible to tell in a way, that makes what you are telling unknowable? Must we, if we are to tell news in a good way, always tell in knowable ways? What is a knowable way and what is an unknowable way?

To be a journalist and to write, 'The court case is to be held on Thursday at 9am'; if we have not yet informed our readers exactly which case it is we are talking about, for what crime, who is on trial, which Thursday, etc... is to run ahead of the reader's knowledge.

There are ways of telling that make it impossible for us to learn from them, they are 'bad' journalistic ways for they fail to inform. But how, why is it exactly, that we may not learn from them? Why is it difficult to 'take-in' what they tell us?

"With what colleagues called a 'clarion call' to party unity, Mr..."  
Evans, Newsman's English p.88

We are not told in a way that is knowable. As words come from people, we must have the person and then the words. It is difficult to have spoken words if we do not have a somebody saying them. Words do not utter themselves. We all know that we must have a person before we have words. To have otherwise is not sensible, is not able to be made sense of, or at best, is difficult to understand, till the speaker comes along. Dare I say, that as in life we have a person, who may speak (has the potential) before we have anything that they have actually spoken. Must the newspapers write like life? Are journalistic ways of telling the ways of life? But we are moving ahead too fast (saying things which are ahead of our knowledge..)

If we are told,

"If you are in doubt about where and how to introduce the background, remember that we learn by relating new facts to what we already know."  
Evans, Newsman's English p.144

Like when building a house, brick upon brick builds a wall so 'facts upon facts' build our knowledge of the story, and when it is added that,

"No pronoun should ever be used for an intro before the noun is introduced."

Evans, Newsman's English p.94

We know that we learn 'bit-by-bit' and that the 'bits' must arrive in a certain order, we cannot have the roof on our house before the walls are built, we cannot have spoken words before a person to say them. This is the way the reader understands the text.

"A speaker should always be identified early in the story by name and status..and later by location... Where there is more than one speaker, each new speaker should have a new paragraph, beginning with his name. There is no other way. If the name comes anywhere other than in the first line the reader will assume that the previous speaker is still on his feet."

Evans, Newsman's English p.62

Then, if I say, as we learn by adding bits to our knowledge, then to fully learn all the bits must be present. Exactly like a jigsaw to get a 'complete picture' all the 'pieces' must be available. What happens if they are not?

"They assume some carry forward of knowledge by the reader. The text must not make this assumption; it must always include a theme paragraph or sentence which makes sense of the whole series of developments to a man coming across the story for the first time."

Evans, News Headlines p.48

and if we do not know of the Turkish threat to invade Greece?

"A reader knowing none of this should still have been able to understand the story and relate the latest developments to his new knowledge."

Evans, Newsman's English p.133

A story must be complete in itself (somehow with an independence from the event from which it rises, now having an identity, a career of its own). It makes sense, gives 'the full picture', gives all the 'bits' in the right order, and not too many at once, select and fit one piece at a time.

"Declaring that it could not be opened till officially approved, Mr.."  
Evans, Newsman's English p.88

is difficult for the reader,

"If he goes on, he has to hold in his mind the jumble of words until he has read a second jumble of words."  
Evans, Newsman's English p.87

One's hand is only so big for holding all those pieces of the jigsaw puzzle, too many and I start to drop bits, forget a piece of information, can I manage to hold the number of pieces that I need to, before I can locate the first one to be placed and am then able to place all the others next to it in their respective places; or must I re-read the sentence again and again, practice at juggling the bits long enough to slot them into place. We've all read sentences like that.

But what are these pieces, and which is the correct order for them to come in? In a 'bad' piece of journalism, the journalist,

"..allowed the second event - the exhibition of the heads - to overtake the real news which was the actual beheading. Until the reader has realised that there has been a beheading he is not ready for the information about heads on sticks.."  
Evans, Newman's English p.102



All the threads start to come together, the piece that must come first, that is the 'bit' that must be located first that other pieces may be attached to it is the 'real news', is the 'newsy nitty gritty' of the story. It must come first;

"In certain feature and news feature reports... a chronological construction is appropriate. This is a clear narrative technique. It is quite different from allowing secondary details to creep into the hard news intro."  
Evans, Newsman's English p.89

The 'stuff' that the news lead is made of is the piece of puzzle that we need to place first. We have a piece of the story that we must learn of first if the rest of the story is to follow and make sense, to be locatable as a journalistic way of telling things. Now 'tell the news' starts to sound like tell the event in a way that makes it locatable, knowable and smoothly flowing.

Tell the news, tell in the order that we are able to understand journalistic events as happening in.

### Telling Like Life?

Does this bring us back to the idea of 'tell like life'? Is our way of being able to understand journalistic events, the order in which we are able to locate the pieces, determined by our knowledge of how 'those things happen in real life'?

Well certainly if we are reprinting a letter and,

"If parts of the letter are being omitted this should be indicated by sequential dots..."  
Evans, Newsman's English p.127

that is, if the letter is not how it was 'in life' before its appearance 'in text' then we as readers have the right to know that it differs from the 'in life' version. Why do we find it necessary to know this, are we really after what it was like 'in life' when we read our newspapers?

This touches upon my use of my newspapers texts: I go to them primarily to show me what has happened in life (or at least a version of what has happened in life). It is the purpose behind my use and it is my expectation that my newspaper will tell life (indeed if I felt it was not telling life, in that it detailed events that had not 'really' happened, then I would probably abandon the label news and call what I was reading 'propaganda' instead; or perhaps if I was feeling very lenient, and it was April 1st, I might allow it to pass with the label 'hoax' or 'practical joke' with no sinister undertones). When I leave my newspaper I aim to be able to say that I know what has happened in the world recently or at least the important events in my area of the world. I do not expect my newspaper text to be 'talking' of its 'journalistic telling ways' but to be 'talking' of real historical events, that I might see straight through its telling techniques (without noticing them) and be placed 'in touch' with what has been going on that day. In short I expect to read the news and that the newspaper 'tells it like it is'. (We must return to this 'telling it like it is' later). But for the present time: how far then does talking about life mean talking like life?

Earlier, I wrote of a headline being in harmony with its text,

"The headline wording must not only be accurate; it must have a sense of appropriateness for the story. Funny headlines do not sit happily on sombre events: it is wrong to indulge in puns when the subject is death, injury, physical affliction or religion."  
Evans, News Headlines p.23

for example,

"On a story of cemetery vandalism: 'Two youths given grave sentences'."  
Evans, News Headlines p.45

also,

"...there is inaptness about the way the Darlington Evening headlined the news that lung cancer is killing more people in County Durham every year:

'Durham smashes record for lung cancer deaths'.  
Evans, News Headlines p.23

As a reader I see Harold Evans's point, it is inappropriate. If I had seen this headline in a newspaper, I would think that the journalist could not have made such an insensitive slip had he been concentrating on what he was writing. However, as analyst, I must ask, why it is inappropriate, what is it about this headline that makes it 'bad' journalism? What silent rules does it break, what moral codes does it violate to be called 'bad'?

In a comic strip, to amuse and entertain us, fun may be made of death or injury. In fact, many cartoons are violent in their own funny sort of way, Tom and Jerry, for example. Usually we take it in 'good humour' (although if the boundaries of what may count as humour are breached, cries of 'bad taste' or the joke as having 'gone too far', are there to be brought into play). Display, that we will tolerate from cartoons or comic strip jokes, we will not tolerate from a newspaper's black on white text. Why?

## Telling Like Life and Credibility

Well back to expectations of the use of my newspaper. If I go to it looking for stories that I may use to tell me of life, and I see a joke made of death, the newspaper's credibility disappears; for it cannot be talking of a death that really happened, because death or injury doesn't happen in a 'funny' way 'in life'. There is more at stake in inappropriate reporting, than journalists being chided for not taking enough care in what they write. What is at stake is the newspaper's credibility, its ability to tell it like it was, to tell of the real events, its ability to be 'news' and not 'propaganda'. No funny deaths as a 'real' death would not be funny, and I am reading about a real death in my newspaper aren't I? Telling in the wrong way does not constitute wrong telling, it constitutes untrue telling. In a severe and irreconcilable split between story and event, my newspaper loses its synchrony with reality, that is if it loses its harmony between event, headline and text. Journalistic ways of telling must be sincere ways of telling. Not just for hard news stories either,

"Sport is vigorous and the headline should be vigorous."  
Evans, News Headlines p.52

and that as 'business' is a civilised occupation,

"Businessmen prefer restrained treatment of business news."  
Evans, News Headlines p.52

Synchrony, harmony, credibility maintained. We must not forget the internal harmony within a story.

"...the important concept that display should be proportionate to the worth of the story."  
Evans, News headlines p.1

Proportionate, yes, we should as readers be able to see that our newspaper has things 'in proportion', that there is not only order, but an appropriate order of things, sanity not madness. A 'good' sense of proportion, not as when a 'little' story is misplaced at the top of the page.

"The paper seems to be saying with one breath that it is important (because of its position) and with the other (because of its text type in that position) that it is a normal news story."

Evans, Newspaper Design p.156

Pulled in two directions - confusion, contradiction. When the harmony goes the 'logic' of the newspaper crumbles. As a reader who is able to believe in his newspaper we must have harmony and appropriateness within story, within page, and within the events. So, do we get the news told like life?

Well not quite. Earlier chronological time (time like life) was abandoned for journalistic time. Tell the news first, which was an essential compromise on 'life time', in order to be able to tell in a journalistic story-like way; so that as readers we may be able 'to handle' the information we receive and assimilate it, brick by brick to a comprehensible picture; and this means get the correct piece first, to locate the other pieces around, to fix them onto.

What we are talking of is 'telling in journalistic ways'. No going back to the event, no doorways back to reality, just the appearance of the newspaper. I write 'just' the appearance, but now we know that 'appearances are everything', there is nothing beyond the display, design and layout. That 'tell the news' means tell in a way that happenings are immediately locatable, able to be built upon

and with a life-like harmony. The words collapse and fuse together. To say 'tell the news' is in a way a curious phrase, for it says the same thing twice: for to tell is to tell in journalistic ways and so create the 'news', and the 'news'? Well that is the appearance (in all its aspects) of the telling.

The telling is the news.

### Footnotes

1. Throughout this chapter Harold Evans is used as an authority on journalism and its methods of making and telling news in newspapers. I take this expertise (at this stage) to be based upon his many years as both editor of the Times and the Sunday Times. Throughout the chapter I make reference to four of the five-volume collection 'Editing and Design', which was produced under the auspices of the National Council for the Training of Journalists.
2. For a more detailed account of the 'weighing' of news and expression of 'news values' see Tuchman, Gaye Making News : a Study in the Construction of Reality (New York and London, Free Press, Collier and Macmillan, 1978)

## THE TALKING NEWSPAPER TEXT

'Tell the News', a very heavy chapter, tight, tough work for the reader to wade through. I've had it described to me as 'relentless'.

This relentless, endlessly driving nature is an accident. I, (as author) did not intend it to 'turn out like that'; although I recognise it can be seen that way, it is a feature of itself and not my planning. Indeed, a text with a career of its own. Later it will become useful to examine this relentless aspect of the text to see a bit more clearly how it comes about.

It is a chapter with a journalistic attitude - how to make good newspapers. In 'The Journalistic Newspaper Text: Tell the News', we gain insight into constructionist terms; what goes into the making of newspapers. However, perhaps it is time to consider once more what it is to read newspapers. Was it possible for you to adopt a 'theoretical attitude' as you read 'Tell the News'? Did you consider my fact-making practices as I told you of the 'facts' of the Harold Evans' texts? Did you arm yourself as I warned you, in 'A First Text Breaker, A Word of Caution for the Reader'? Could you arm yourself as I warned you? Did you end up just reading?

If you ended up just reading, if in entering the text you were,

"overtaken by their undertaking"  
Morrison, Kenneth L., Readers Work, devices for achieving pedagogic events in textual materials for readers as novices to sociology(York Univ. Toronto. Ph.D. thesis 1976) p.87

then possibly you were just

"collaborating in the manual's effectiveness."  
Morrison, Kenneth L., 'Readers Work' p.87

Not a problem as such, but an inescapable, intrinsic feature of reading factual texts. We have met this feature before, it's the one that stops me from being able to talk about what I do when I read. It's the one that always makes reading - just reading and nothing revealably more. Do we at last talk of the inescapable, intrinsic features of reading, routine, familiar, hidden?

But, as Sociologists, these sorts of words are found in one methodology in particular. There is a method that would claim to detail for us such routine, everyday members methods for carrying out social life - Ethnomethodology. As Garfinkel has said,

"Ethnomethodological studies analyse everyday activities as members' methods for making those same activities visibly rational and reportable for all practical purposes, i.e. 'accountable,' as organisations of commonplace everyday activities."

Harold Garfinkel, Studies in Ethnomethodology, (Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, N.J. 1967) p.vii

So, if I want a mundane version of newspaper texts and what it is like to read them, then Ethnomethodology would appear to be the theoretical approach to adopt.

But, can Ethnomethodology be applied to texts? Can it be of use to me? It has been reasonably successfully applied in several settings,<sup>1</sup> but its strength remains always, in its ability to handle naturally occurring talk, conversation, improvised, creative, interpretive, but can Ethnomethodology



handle texts, specifically newspaper texts?

McHoul seems to have little doubt that it can,  
"Ethnomethodology and Literature: Preliminaries to a  
sociology of reading", is devoted to that very theme; he  
writes that, in his paper,

"..some initial ways of empirically locating reader's  
resources are given and conclusions are drawn as to what an  
ethnomethodological sociology of literature might look  
like."

McHoul, Alexander, Ethnomethodology and Literature:  
Preliminaries to a Sociology of Reading. Poetics 7 1978  
p.113

Although given that his initial focus is upon a sociology of  
literature I take this to be claimed in its broadest sense  
(literature as written material) for in later work his  
concern spreads to poetry and he gives an analysis of a  
newspaper text.

It does seem then, at last, I find a methodology which will  
examine how ordinary members routinely go about doing  
reading of newspapers - or will it? Obviously the claim is  
there,

"Clearly what we should be looking for is the way literature  
is most routinely encountered by persons in the social world  
and the way in which literary texts form part of those  
persons' social world."

McHoul, Alexander Ethnomethodology and Literature p.114

and again a bit later,

"So the topic of our investigation would invariably be the  
'accomplishment' of texts through the process of reading."  
McHoul, Alexander Ethnomethodology and Literature p.114

to look at 'readers resources' drawn upon in reading, at the

"methodical ways in which members go about making sense of the written traces of other men in society."  
McHoul, Alexander Ethnomethodology and Literature p.114  
(emphasis original).

This sounds so promising, to look at how readers make use of written material, more specifically for my purpose, newspapers, but exactly how might this be done?

McHoul makes great claims for Garfinkel's experiment where students were presented with 'what was said', in a conversation and were requested to give 'what the parties had talked about'.<sup>2</sup> Garfinkel's point was quite simply that description is inexhaustible, that the meaning of words cannot be tied down in a specific and directly representational way; but that emergent sense is always capable of itself being explicated and this gives rise to further description and explication that each utterance has an infinitely extendable 'et cetera' clause. Yet, McHoul interprets this in a slightly different way, in a way that later gives him a method to put into action. He says,

"The conclusion that can be drawn from the experiment is that we should not treat the 'words on the page' or the 'words emerging from the mouth' as signs which have referents. Each utterance, rather receives its sense from what the parties know about the ongoing flow of interaction and the location of each utterance as 'part of the flow'."  
McHoul, Alexander, Ethnomethodology and Literature p.117

He delineates this as leading to what he sees as,

"..a major task for reading analysis (is) the description of the ways in which readers decide 'what is being talked about' by a text from 'what is being said' by it."  
McHoul, Alexander Ethnomethodology and Literature p.116

The first thing to notice here is the metaphor McHoul

employs; texts talking, looking at the difference between what we can think of a text as 'talking' about and what we can think of it as 'saying'. An interesting choice of metaphors...

Beyond this I am uneasy with this development McHoul has made of Garfinkel's work. I begin to feel as if he wants to split an activity (reading) ongoing, rich and complete into some kind of content and message analysis. Content of the text and the message the reader gleans from it, content objective fixed in typescript and the message debatable, subjective in the mind of the reader; a decisive text and an impoverished reader trying to grasp the texts superior version of what may be known from it. Surely reading is an activity by a reader with a text and that is the extent of the split between them, each is necessary and each is identifiable but the reading 'belongs' to neither. Maybe I overstate the criticism with McHoul - possibly, but I feel he begins to tread unfirm ground if indeed his aims are still the same (to look at the accomplishment of the text through reading) if he interprets what Garfinkel did in this way. What was for Garfinkel, illustrative as to the nature of talk, description and language itself, has been taken too literally as an approach to analyse texts.

An attempt at the method is actually employed by McHoul in 'Telling how texts talk' (Alexander McHoul, Telling how texts talk (Routledge and Kegan Paul 1983). Notice the 'talking texts' metaphor appears again. In chapter 2, calling it 'Cummulex', separate lines from many poems are given to the reader and after the addition of each new line

the reader is requested to detail what they understand the poem to be all about. They have, like Garfinkel's students, to decide what is talked about from what is said, but unlike Garfinkel's exercise, the result is not just illustrative but indicative of reading practices. McHoul is surprised by the creative ability of the readers to make some kind of sense of what is essentially a nonsense construction made at random. I am not surprised at the obliging readers who merely did as they were requested and found a meaning in what some of them even declared to be a 'made-up' poem. McHoul was surprised that given the 'sense' of the first line, later lines were made to fit, despite all. I am not surprised that readers grasp at what they can to make sense of nonsense. But, that readers can do such things, play such games, does that throw light upon what they normally, routinely and mundanely do when reading? If the readers are adept enough to carry out a sense-making task, on what if routinely encountered would have been tossed aside as jibberish, does not reassure me that we touch upon their routine resources for reading. McHoul merely demonstrates that readers are obliging subjects in his experiment and good at playing reading games.

Is this all Ethnomethodology has to offer a sociology of reading? More encouragingly in 'Telling how texts talk', there is an attempt at an ethnography of a newspaper text, McHoul gives a commentary on taking a newspaper, selecting a story within it, reading the story and making sense of it. He tapes a running commentary of the undertaking and immediately adds a supplement of notes. This is then transcribed and in turn analysed. And what of it?

We are given a copy of the newspaper story that McHoul reads, although it is retyped in the same type as the main body of the text, there is no bold headline, no justified column edge, the article is displaced, no longer an article amongst others on a page but isolated. We are given the article, yes, in the sense that the words are the same (this is in itself significant, as we will see later) but other details of newspaper style are discounted as irrelevant, it is only the words, stark yet physically altered that are allowed to sail through from level sub 3 (the cited text). We are denied the text as it was. We do not see the text as McHoul saw it, despite efforts to convince us that we have been given it.

What clues to its sense did McHoul glean from its original presentation, relative size, position on the page, print size, surrounding stories; that we must take for granted, for we as his readers do not have access to level sub 3 (the original story as it appeared in the Canberra Times) but only to level 0 (McHoul's text). We must find his ethnography credible without opportunity to relive it to test its veracity. I do not think we are given the opportunity to 'see' its truth. McHoul obviously in his reproduction of the words feels that we are. For him to reproduce the words is for him to feel that he has given us enough for us to get the sense of the story. It seems to be an implicit denial that these omitted features played any part in his reading of the story. It is as if he gives us only the words because only the words featured in his reading of the story.

I am reminded here of Geertz's term "thick description" (Geertz, Clifford The Interpretation of Cultures : Selected Essays (London, Hutchinson, 1975) Ch.1). To give us just the words is to give to the text that the reader encounters (level 0) a thin description of the story as McHoul encountered it. As this notion stays with me it seems to apply also to the ethnography itself. Some detail, yes, but how little is made of it. For Geertz, the thick description grasps at everything, details and describes, discusses and dawdles, meanders and rambles, is particular in the extreme - is full. McHoul's ethnography of a newspaper text is simply competent... It is not full or persuasive.

But McHoul's has not been the only interpretation of what an Ethnomethodology of texts and reading might look like. Kenneth Morrison has made some very astute observations in relation to the nature of introductory sociology texts. He claims his work to be a following on from and a dedication to the late Harvey Sacks. If McHoul's account was capable but unconvincing, then look at the familiarity of the things that Morrison details.

My overwhelming 'problem' of ending up just reading is acknowledged. Although Morrison does not detail the problem as I do, he says in entering a text one can be

"overtaken by their undertaking"  
Morrison, Kenneth L. Readers Work p.87

so familiar; he adds that for such a thing to happen is not pathological or sinister, or incompetence but merely

"collaborating in the manual's effectiveness."  
Morrison, Kenneth L. Readers Work p.87

So ending up just reading, not a problem as such but an inescapable feature, intrinsic to factual texts (didactic or documentary). Ending up just reading, the feature that stops me being able to talk about what it is I do when I read, is in effect collaborating with the text, falling prey to its persuasiveness as a text. It is to do, what it is to enter, take on board and be a competent reader.

Now, my way of thinking is turned around and what was the problematic feature of the reading, now, is not a problematic feature but is the reading itself. So the nature of the undertaking has been evident from the beginning but I had seen it as, defined it as, a problem - the problem that stopped me being able to get on and analyse the reading. Yet now I see to examine the 'ending up just reading' is to examine the reading itself; it is the issue raised when undertaking a reading of a newspaper. So the emphasis changes, I now no longer wish to overcome a 'problem', but to examine its nature. How might I examine the persuasive, coercive nature of newspaper texts? What about Morrison's 'little phrases' (as I think of them), when I first read them they jumped out of the page at me, such seems their relevance. What else might his work have to offer?

He distinguishes between 'scanning' and 'reading' at the 'looking surface of a text'. (Morrison, Kenneth L. Readers Work p. 79/80)

"To read is to 'look in' and not to 'look at' the looking surface."  
Morrison, Kenneth L Readers Work p.91

I start to think of entering stories as opposed to wandering over them. Morrison says that,

"To know how to read then, is not to know how to think about how to read."

Morrison, Kenneth L Readers Work p.35

Reading, so familiar, so taken for granted, disregarding of its own intricacies, this is what I have found. Maybe all the conundrums that have faced me are to all be solved by this one author?

Here he is also noting another dilemma that has faced me. There is never any point asking fellow readers 'How do you do it then?' No reader normally, or routinely considers an issue such as this. He does not think about how he reads, or maybe because he disregards its skillful nature, he probably does not acknowledge that there is much to think about he just does it, always and especially, solely an activity.

Morrison has the phenomena documented much as I myself have discovered it to be. So, where does Morrison go from there, what is his resolution of the 'problem' of reading, how does he explore the nature of reading? He declares it is his aim,

"..to attempt to produce an understanding at the level of the work undertaken by the reader at the working site of the newspaper."

Morrison, Kenneth L. Readers Work p. 98

Readers work, no longer a producer's version, or a notion of a factual newspaper, but the activity of reading. But.. another text had promised the same. It had said it would



look at

"..the 'accomplishment' of texts through the process of reading."

McHoul, Alexander Ethnomethodology and Literature p.114

McHoul too had had great aims and promises but his fulfilment was paltry and disappointing.

The question remains how Morrison intends to fulfil his promises. How will he examine this 'ending up just reading'?

"..the approach will be so organised that in looking at it, one would be reading what the approach permitted access to."  
Morrison, Kenneth L. Readers Work p.40

We are talking of the physical appearance, organisation and structure of the text, what happened to the activity of reading promised? Again, (although elsewhere) Morrison declares he wants to look at,

"..the types of tasks being performed by the materials."  
Morrison, Kenneth L. Some Properties of 'Telling Order Designs' in Didactic Inquiry Philosophy of the Social Sciences 11 No.2 June (1981) p.247

(By the material and not the reader?)

and,

"..what they (the materials) might be seen to be doing."  
Morrison, Kenneth L, Telling Order Designs p.246

(In my experience the materials do not 'do' anything, they just sit very silent and very still, it is the reader who 'does'..)

Why has Morrison done this? Does an Ethnomethodology of

reading have to be an Ethnomethodology of texts? Why doesn't Morrison look at the reading itself like he said he would? Why does he make the move back to the text?

When I come across a phrase like,

"..a reader may have his use of the material constrained by the organisations it has built into it."  
Morrison, Kenneth L, Telling Order Designs p.248

I think I know why he does not talk of the reading, because he, like I, cannot. Despite being its feature and not its problem, 'ending up just reading' is equally unexaminable. Morrison's move is to try to examine it by its appearance in textual devices. Now there is a fundamental problem facing Morrison here (and probably all Ethnomethodologists wishing to describe reading) regarding what they want to examine and what their methodological approach allows them to examine. It is obvious that Morrison sees the scenario quite clearly, it is the activity he is after, it is the reading he wants, but, solipcism and subjectivism rear their heads. Ethnomethodology rising from the problems of Phenomenology rings warning bells for its practitioners. Yes it is the activity Morrison is after, but how?

And at the moment, more stringently, where? Where is the reading? Where does it take place? Well, it is the reader who reads so.. It is social? Does he read aloud? No, well does he read 'in his head'?

This step cannot be made, Morrison as an Ethnomethodologist cannot 'enter' the head of another to contemplate what possibly might take place there, his must not be the talk of

consciousness. Instead, the move Morrison makes, is to say that what the reader does is, what they may do because of the structure of the organisation of the text. So we have external, (and thereby guaranteed social and shared) boundaries upon what reading can be. Cultural, social resources fossilised in the structure of the text, and culturally available methods for using these employed by the readers. Readers resources for using textual constraints. Now, this seems reasonable enough, but I wonder if Morrison will be able to touch readers resources or will he be left solely examining textual constraints? There seems to me, to be an ambiguity here; a desire to talk of readers accomplishments, without ever talking of what a reader does in the presence of a text. I (for example) could talk about the twists and turns, dead-ends and access routes of a rat maze, but it doesn't let me know what the rat will do when introduced into the maze. It doesn't give me the actual use of the maze, how the restraints are managed, how the trip through the maze is accomplished. Likewise, surely, neither will Morrison's examination of textual devices for limiting and permitting access ever give him the readers accomplishment of these devices.

It can be seen in the following example: think of the game of tennis. Spectators do not go to see the structure of the court. (the structure of, or access limiting features of the text) or the rules of the game (those resources we draw upon) but they go to see the play that goes on, they go to see tennis (the activity of reading). then, the use of the court (structure) the attention to the rules (resources) all become apparent through watching the play (not the other way

around). So, if in my analysis I look at the reading all aspects of whatever else goes on will be apparent. The texts themselves will be alluded to insofar as they enter and shape the reading that is made of them. I will not split the whole to examine the bits.

Morrison's resolution of the dilemma of 'ending up just reading' is not, then, one that I would be happy to follow, yet, may more be learned from him?

Morrison claims that,

"..an accountable structure can be designed in such a way as to control when something in its organisation is knowable."  
Morrison, Kenneth L, Telling Order Designs p.247

This announcement comes along with the claim that an object of knowledge has to do with two features; firstly the sorts of sequences it comes in, and secondly in its being tellable in the first place and thus knowable.

It becomes clearer that we are dealing with organisation by the structuring of 'tellable' and 'knowable' events, and the ways they are revealed, indeed Morrison calls it,

"the organisation of knowledge events."  
Morrison, Kenneth L., Telling Order Designs p.245

He says,

"The approach organises the materials which it administers as things or items to be encountered in 'sets' or 'areas'."  
Morrison, Kenneth L. Readers Work p.7

At this point something again starts to 'niggle' that something is wrong, and further,

"..one can indeed have an accountable structure in which the handling of certain material involves at every step control over just when, in the telling order, it was appropriate to let a reader find out what it is one will have assumed he is not thereby, knowledgable about."

Morrison, Kenneth L, Telling Order Designs p.251

'Control' over when a reader finds out? One does not control a reader, a text is not produced that its reader is slave to it. I (as a reader) can enter a text and leave it as I please. I can enter in the middle, or skip a bit mid-sequence, if I don't find it interesting. There's a difference between competent adult reading as an activity and an activity like 'reading aloud'. To read aloud is to try to be visually and verbally faithful to every word of the text, to give to others exactly what and how the text gives it to you. Reading alone, reading in silence does not have to be like this, it is a solo action and it is not monitored or public and it is not always faithful to the text. It can be selfish and idiosyncratic.

Interesting, though, that Morrison's concentration on textual structure leads him to inadvertently define and restrict the role for the reader. What is it that Morrison does that makes him miss this feature of the readers freedom; that I might not repeat his mistakes, if I am to resolve the dilemma in a different way? When Morrison starts to explain the textual device of a

"skip sequence",  
Morrison, Kenneth L, Telling Order Designs p.250

I start to see where his resolution of the dilemma of 'ending up just reading' encounters its own problems.

Morrison claims that if the time order of use (of a knowable) is different from its sequential order of appearance that this is a skip sequence, that the 'answer occurs first'. (Morrison, Kenneth L. Telling Order Designs p. 250) It appears first in the text as a non-relevant (skip occurrence) then second in sequence ('historical to the skip') the question occurs, but in terms of being knowable it goes first. The answer itself is then reintroduced in a possible answer place. Sort of an answer-question-answer sequence, where although we are given the answer first (in terms of the text) we cannot know it as an answer till the question has been introduced, then when the answer is reintroduced it is this time findable as an answer.

His terms start to sound familiar - (like the work of the Conversational Analysts CA's), it is here the Sacksian influence is strongest; question-answer sequences, knowable and tellable sequences.<sup>3</sup>

Interesting here then, why at the point when Morrison begins his textual analysis does his work most closely resemble the work of the CA's on talk? What makes the talk and text analysis seem so alike? Because talk analysis has always been text analysis in disguise? This issue is worth further consideration.

CA has always claimed to look at and analyse talk; what they in fact do is analyse transcribed talk, indeed possibly they practise a very specific and original form of textual analysis. So, when they enter texts proper as Morrison has



done (that is texts that have no pretension of ever having been talk), it is not so much a natural step for them to take, to analyse texts proper, as hardly a step at all, for they have always been engaged in textual analysis. Yet, and this is why things become so complex: the transcribed talk although text still masquerades as talk. A text that pretends it still has all the qualities of talk and is analysable as talk. So when the CA's have analysed transcribed talk (text) it is under the guise of analysis on talk.

When these methods are applied to texts proper (texts that never were talk) maybe the methods will push the text proper to also be seen as talk? Will the terms and assumptions make the text proper as it did the 'transcribed talk text' out to be talk?

Now with the transcribed talk text, a reader may be willing to suspend certain freedoms; they have to pretend the transcribed talk text is still talk, for the sake of analysis. But with the text proper maybe readers will not be willing to give up their freedoms. This is not unreasonable for texts proper have no echoes of ever having been talk and no reason for seeing them as such. Is this so?

Maybe if CA has successfully managed to analyse texts (transcribed talk) as talk, perhaps talk and texts proper are not that different? If the same features, activities and resources are put to use, then it seems feasible that the same ways of seeing and describing them could be useful?

It is possible to ignore my above misgivings and pretend for a while that it is OK to do that.

The work of the CA's is on naturally occurring talk, but for the sake of their analysis they analyse transcribed talk, talk in print, that much is so far clear. Now, as we have said why not take their analysis and apply it to texts proper? But what about talk in print?

What difference does it make, printed or spoken, the same words after all just like McHoul's newspaper story, although altered in every other respect the words come sailing through, so too, now if you have the same words that's enough, isn't it?

Well (even ignoring the obvious loss of non-verbal clues in determining sense), think about what actually happens to the talk itself, when it is transcribed and printed. It freezes, its chronological time structure is taken and made physically synonymous with the order of utterances down the page. That one utterance is below another means (in the original talk) that, that utterance came after (chronologically) the ones above it. It was not available to the listener of the conversation before the time slot in which it is placed. They could not have known or used utterance 7 before say, utterance 2. In transcribed conversations (if we are still considering those involved in the original talk) the sequential order of the text is synonymous with the temporal/knowable order of the original conversation. But, for me (for example) as a reader of a transcribed conversation, or any other text. Utterance 7



can be known before utterance 2 - I do not have the problem of 'it has not been said yet.' All in my text is revealed at once, displayed 'all the cards on the table' effect.

Does Morrison want me to suspend this ability in reading newspaper texts to pretend that I cannot see down the rest of the page? I suspend this ability when reading transcribed conversation because I chose to, to try to be faithful to the way conversation made sense to its participants. I do so for the sake of analysis, because I know for those originally involved, the ongoing conversation was an event in chronological time, that they had no such choice in which order to use the utterances, except that of which they occurred and retrospectively.<sup>4</sup>

Things are different with texts proper. Texts occur for readers and not for listeners, any piece of the text may 'occur' when the reader sees fit. How many of us skip to the end of the murder mystery to see whodunnit? Naughty, we shouldn't read the end first - the end should be left till last. Should? The ending, and that piece last to be read and knowable only become synonymous when we read as if we were doing 'reading aloud' or doing talking; that is when we let time in the form of sequence or 'it hasn't happened yet' control what we may know and we don't have to do that with texts.

So maybe in an important (possibly vital) way texts and the reading of texts are not so like naturally occurring talk after all. Morrison in detailing time and time sequencing controlling knowables has lost sight of the co-operation of

the reader in agreeing to follow a set pattern of the texts.

It seems we have a reader who is free and yet co-operates. Interesting that although we never talk of a reader, we start to discover some of the things that a reader may be required to do. Texts are not talk, they do not follow the same rules, play the same game, happen the same way. However phrased, they are not the same sort of event, so the transmutation of analysis, one by the methods of the other would seem suspect; because it will be that the reader is not always willing to thus co-operate and see texts as always like transcribed talk.

But Morrison persists with this notion of a temporal progression down through the text. He claims that written events can only happen

"one at a time."

Morrison, Kenneth L. Telling Order Designs p.254

Even fellow Ethnomethodologists might want to disagree with him here, I am sure. Has he forgotten what Sacks called "Membership Categorisation Devices," that to evoke a category to apply to an individual in such a text as a newspaper story is not simply to tell one thing about them, but to evoke "Hearer's Maxims" and "Consistency Rules"? (Sacks, Harvey 'On the Analysability of Stories by Children' in Gumperz, J.J. and Hymes, D.D. (eds) Directions in Sociolinguistics (New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972) pp.325 - 345) That is to hear different bits of information as linked and belonging together as explanation and expansion of other terms. To read a story of a Vicar

(in Morrison's terms to have been told only one thing singly and sequentially) is rather to have had many other features of the story made pertinent (following Sacks' logic) that Vicars should be kindly and good, follow a Christian standard of morals etc.. Indeed a whole jumble of things we may know from the one term. Also to use another Sacksian term, if we appeal to categories we must also appeal to category bound activities. We know not only about the man but also the kinds of things he may be expected to do (preach sermons, give help to the poor and needy, comfort the sick and dying, baptise children etc..). Look, we have a mini plot for a whole story to build on here. Expectations of the sorts of things we might be about to read are there. It doesn't seem to me that I read one thing at a time; reading a text is more like ripples spreading in a pond, than water down a drainpipe, as Morrison's thinking might suggest.

Before I deny the power of structure altogether, it is reasonable to ask why should I ever refer back to 'the earlier part of this work', to 'previous chapters', if I do not hold some faith in the notion that before in sequence meant before in reading? But, not to discuss this at the moment, our concern is, at present with other things. I shall return to it later. Later? I do it again, using later as sequentially later and temporarily later, curious to deny the power of sequence and yet still to use it.

But for now, I accept there is a case for structure, to call a chapter, 'Chapter 1', and then to place a second chapter called 'Chapter 2' suggests a sequence, suggests that

Chapter 2 comes after Chapter 1. 'Comes after', meaning possibly stronger than that, i.e. requires reading after Chapter 1.

Ah, but this is the power of numbers, 1,2,3,4,5,6 etc.. Yes, but as statisticians should know, numbers sometimes make promises they cannot fulfil, think of classes of school children, we may have a Class 1 and a Class 2, that Class 2 is more advanced and consists of older children is suggested by the sequential ordering of numbers; but we cannot do with these numbers (and the children they label) as we might like. We cannot, for example, add Class 1 to Class 2 and get Class 3, you cannot add children.<sup>5</sup> The numbers make false promises, they carry suggestions that because they take the physical form of numbers that one might always be able to use them as one could any number, they carry echoes of more powerful numbers. So, as we have the same physical numbers, but with differing properties and natures and uses to which they may be put; so too, maybe with texts and words.

Talk is words. Print is words. The same words but with different properties and natures? Can we use one as the other? Is talk really like print or does it just look like it? Merely a visual similarity? So when the words come sailing through, is it simply an empty visual pun? Physically the same thing but definitely not the same sort of thing.

Maybe one of the greatest ironies in the comparison of sequencing within talk and text is that as the text is very

rigid and inflexible, its use is as a result very free and open, and yet naturally occurring talk although itself it is very free, flexible, fluid and negotiable, transitory - its use is very restricted and fixed; its participants being the 'bidders of time'.

But, why dwell on this so long? The importance of sequencing and the controlling of time is that if in a text we are not the bidders of time, what is it that prompts, guides or indicates where we should go and what we should do and what it is we should read next? In talk we have no choice about the order we set about things in, chronology controls that, in texts we do; but surely not totally free choice? No, in reading I see order and agreement not anarchy. But to deny that there is choice there to start as Morrison does, is to fail to see the phenomenon of 'directed choice' as an issue to deal with.

Text has different strategies for play, different features alluded to, probably not much like talk at all. So a methodology that is excellent at describing how we do talking might not have that much to say about how we do reading?

However, it is not just sequence that Ethnomethodologists have used as unproblematically interchangeable between talk and text. Let us come back to what I have mentioned several times but have never really dealt with.

The words themselves come sailing through, no problem in the Ethnomethodological analysis. Well, again maybe words in

print make promises of being like words in talk that they cannot in the end fulfil.

There is a characteristic difference between texts and talk that although acknowledged, I feel is made far too little of by the Ethnomethodologists. Let McHoul set the problem,

"When I read an individual utterance in a text, my understanding of it is based on its 'fitting' the pattern of what I have already taken the text to be about and that pattern is, in turn, derived from reading the previous individual utterances."

McHoul, Alexander, Ethnomethodology and Literature p.116

So far, so good, this seems quite sensible and quite familiar. Clearly a phrase like 'He went over to the bank', means different things, has a different sense in a story where the previous text told of boats and rivers and paddling in the water; than in a story about running short of cash in the High Street. Yes, this seems reasonable as Schenkein has said, sense is achieved through

"... retrospective and projective attention."  
Schenkein, JN, Towards an Analysis of Natural Conversation Semiotica Vol.V1(4) 1972

and of course aided by Garfinkel's notion that settings reflexively reinforce a way of seeing themselves; to think one is reading a story about paddling in the water and thus to see the 'bank' (or have the sense of the bank repaired) as a riverbank is to reinforce the definition that one is reading about paddling in the water. The scene already set, defines the emerging elements and these reflexively reconfirm the accuracy of the original definition. But then things become slightly more difficult, as McHoul goes on, the analysis starts to raise problems of its own,

"Quite manifestly, I cannot 'ask' a text 'What on earth are you saying?' I can only try to fit the 'anomalous' utterance into my present understanding of the text or wait for it to be cleared up at some later point."

McHoul, Alexander, Ethnomethodology and Literature p.116

Now it was Sacks et al (Sacks, H., Schegloff, E.A and Jefferson G., A Simplest Systematics for the Organisation of turn taking for Conversation Language 50(4), p.696-735) who detailed the natural turn-taking aspects of conversations and McHoul himself acknowledges this quality of talking when he cites Yngve,

"..the taking of turns being 'nearly the most obvious aspect of conversation'."

McHoul, Alexander Ethnomethodology and Literature p.115 citing Yngve V.H On getting a word in edgewise, in: Papers from the sixth regional meeting of the Chicago Linguistic Society, Chicago, Illinois p.567-578.

Why is this a problem for applying Ethnomethodology from conversations to texts? Well, let's first see why turn-taking is so crucial in conversations and then we may see what its absence does to texts and the reading of them, that any methodology must reflect.

When I am talking to someone, if they have misheard me, or taken what I have said 'the wrong way', I may want to correct them, we, in taking turns to talk, clarify the misunderstandings and sort them out between us. I adjust my words to their difficulties, they change their replies with my responses, we negotiate, we move and adjust our positions and stands. I am in the presence of them, they of me, both can monitor how things are going, it is a social process. Put quite simply it is an interaction.

That is what happens when we do talking. What happens when we do reading? What happens with a text? It presents me with ink on paper and I read. It cannot monitor the way I read. It cannot change what I read in the second paragraph because I have 'misunderstood' the first, in order to 'put me straight'. We do not have a turn-taking interaction here. What we have is a very different sort of activity. We do not have negotiation, we have use.

So we have a difference between the way talking and reading happen, but of what consequence is this? Does it make an Ethnomethodology of texts or reading not feasible?

Naturally occurring talk has the potential through face-to-face monitoring, turn-taking and negotiation to be a reasonably democratic process, each participant having the chance to have the floor and say their piece, and through listening to the resulting comments and in turn commenting on them, ensure they can clarify any arising difficulties. However, with reading a text has the floor, sole-speaker, as it were (or is it?). Not very democratic - despotic perhaps?

Not so, things are exactly the opposite to how they might appear. The text has the floor, but it is the reader who has all the freedom, how much to read and what to make of what they read. The text is helpless, powerless to determine what a reader may glean from what its presentation displays. See, words made visual are not like words made audible. Words carry false promises.

Yet, I do not say that reading is anarchy. We know that



this is not so. We may take the same text as another and agree to a large extent that we can make of it exactly what they can also make of it, there do seem to be shared ways of reading.

The crucial difference (so important to appreciate here) is that a competent reader uses his text he does not negotiate with it. If it is the reading, the shared and social ways of reading that we want to detail, then to try to capture this through an examination of the way a reader negotiates with a text, will forever miss it. The Ethnomethodologists have so successfully identified the way agreement and a sense of sharedness arise in talk through turn-taking and negotiation, through interaction, but in texts and reading, the shared ways of reading and making sense of texts do not arise through interacting with an inert text but through shared ways of using it.

It is these shared ways of use in reading that we should look for. In examining the way others have resolved the phenomena of 'ending up just reading', I do not extract a method for carrying out such a resolution, rather I begin to see more clearly what it is the resolution must consist of. The question now becomes: can a methodology that arose from the analysis of conversations and has at its centre the crucial role of negotiation through turn-taking, adequately detail the activities of a reader? I fear that we will be forced to see what is a culturally competent use of a text through the skillful activity of reading, through the strained metaphor of a conversation. To see a text as talking to its reader, and a reader negotiating with their

silent text. My misgivings are not quelled by the title of McHoul's book "Telling how texts talk".

It has been my initial feeling that the aims of an Ethnomethodology of literature were good: to examine the routine accomplishment of texts through reading. The interpretive approach was appealing, the ideas seemed sound and so convincing (reading being disregarding of its skillful nature, wandering over as opposed to looking in texts), so familiar; but now I become disheartened about where the work must go, the paths it will have to tread because its methods and terms are the methods and terms of the analysis of talk. Will this cloud the analysis of reading and not clarify it?

McHoul's own internal attempt at resolving this dilemma (that text is not talk); starts off quite promisingly. He likens face-to-face interaction with a game of catch, where participants both throw and receive the ball from over the top of a high wall. (Here to keep the idea of interaction alive as an analogy; text like talk in metaphor, if not in fact, a second analogy has to be made of a reader constantly receiving material from an unseen, unfamiliar fellow interactor. This immediately raises the problem of who is the other, the one behind the wall throwing the ball, the author of the text presumably? So this interaction going on in the text is a face-to-face interaction with the author via the smoke screen of the written word? So does the reader have an obligation to read the text as the author intended he should, readers freedoms start to disappear...)

Before the full blown implications of authorship are raised, McHoul attempts to stifle them. He actually uses the word 'authorship', showing his realisation of the problems forcing an interaction label on reading is about to cause him. He says,

"This does not mean that reading analysis would want to dismiss all questions of 'authorship' but rather, the question of authorship is only an issue where imputations of an author are made during the course of reading and used in the interpretation of 'what the text is talking all about'. Thus the relationship of author and reader is a 'relation in anonymity' which entails none of the 'checking' devices of communicative systems which have a turn-taking mechanism." McHoul, Alexander, Ethnomethodology and Literature p.116 (emphasis original).

Well, and so he hopes the problems of authorship and the author having a privileged say in the meaning of the text, and the consciousness of the author passing into the written text; are quelled.

The author is only relevant and present insofar as he is actually referred to in the text, or as can be understood as part of what the text is all about.

To demonstrate, in the terms given earlier, I as author can enter the text, make myself locatable at level 0 (the text itself), become for a while 'what the text is all about', by typing something like;

The house is quiet and dark, my children are asleep, and I sit alone with the typewriter, fumbling alternatively and ineptly between its keys and the liquid paper.

So for a while I as author am both present and relevant to the reading at hand. Otherwise, I am not present I am not relevant and because I do not feature as part of the

reading, I am in effect of no consequence at all. You as reader are in the presence of the text and it is the reading that is made of it that constitutes what is pertinent. The text has a career of its own, author independent, author irrelevant. Yet, having relatively successfully quietened and settled the argument of interaction in a text McHoul raises it again immediately;

"The beginning point of our investigation must then be the interactions that take place between readers and texts and not between readers and authors."  
McHoul, Alexander Ethnomethodology and Literature, p.116  
(emphasis original)

So, having persuaded us that we cannot interact with an author (although he is a person) because he is not present; McHoul then would have us believe that we can interact with the text although it is only ink on a piece of paper. Very curious, that one's very understanding of what constitutes an interaction must be so stretched, in order to apply the methods of talk to texts.

McHoul as a CA has no choice, the methods of analysing texts inherited through the way they have been used to analyse transcribed talk, force him to see the text and reader as talking, as interacting. Despite his attempts to dismiss this as a metaphor, the terms and discussion remain hauntingly literal.

Could there be no other interpretive way of analysing the reading performed at texts? Consider first other options open (at various stages) to the Ethnomethodologists that their methods cannot touch, and why other issues elude them.

There is the preoccupation with the words that they 'coming sailing through', that words verbal are like words visual. The notion that to commit words to paper does not alter their nature or what can be done with them at all.

Let us examine the role of the CA's in the transcribing of the talk in the first place. What might be called their lack of sensitivity in doing the task of committing words in talk to words on paper may highlight why the present attempt at an ethnomethodology of texts takes the form it does. But firstly a word from Goffman,

"The reproduction of a conversaton in the printed text of a play or in a novel or in a news account of an actual event satisfies the conditions of any body of print (all print is subject to the same rules even print of conversations) namely, that everything readers might not already know and which is required for understanding to be alluded to." Erving Goffman, Replies and Responses. Language and Society 5 1976 p.278

This I take also to be broadly the aim behind the Ethnomethodology transcribed conversations. To preserve as much of the occasion of the talk as possible in the print to leave in the 'umm's and ahh's' and not to dismiss them as mistakes, for they were present in the talk as a resource for use.<sup>6</sup> In short the hope is to give us the talk in print as close as possible to the talk as the participants heard it. This is reasonable.

But, before I go further, remember my point: the words come sailing through and this is an analysis of a collection of words (or should I call them utterances?)

So I am given all the textual requirements which enable me

to gain from the text what I might reasonably have gained from the conversation. Endowments in the text. How are the texts of transcribed talk endowed to 'repair the indexicality' of that talk. What does one have to do to those words in making them visual to make them readable as they were hearable in the naturally occurring talk? How do you capture the activity in the text? How does the talk come through? In several ways; we've talked about sequential order, in that later utterances are placed after (in the form of below) earlier (in time) utterances. the person to whom that piece of talk belonged (the person who spoke those words) is labelled at the side of what we may normally take to be the start of that utterance. Their words continue until we are given another name to indicate that another has the floor. Utterances of the participants do not float haphazardly over the page. They converge, we have what we might recognisably see as a dialogue, the very placement of the page, illustrates the event as it happened - this placement is the observation behind the 'finding' that there is turn-taking in conversation.

Jill speaks.

Jack speaks.

Jill speaks etc.. and there it is placed down the page, Jill, Jack, Jill etc. Look at the above, even before you read, a 'looking at' might lead you to expect to encounter a dialogue if you read and not surprisingly the expectation is reflexively confirmed when you begin to read.

Already it seems we are dealing with a little more than just words here; the placement of words (utterances) not just the words themselves also informs a reader of what sort of thing

he is about to encounter. This eludes the CA's; what an opportunity missed.

The sense of what was going on also has to be repaired within the text. In the transcribed talk, question marks suddenly appear at the end of what the transcriber (and hopefully the participants also) might have taken to have been a question in the original talk. Other punctuation appears too. A reader coming along to the text, loses the ability to hear the words as talk, they are no longer audible as they were to the participants in the conversation. Thus in the fixing of the words from talk to transcribed talk (text) these words lose their ability to be (for example) undeniably a question. This has to be replaced by a textual device; the ambiguity in the text has to be removed, for there was no ambiguity in the talk. The reader is helped to repair the sense. A question mark is placed at the end of the utterance and we as reader accept this to be a repair of the sense of the leap, talk to text and not a feature of the talk itself. Other such aids to the reader appear; commas and full stops for example, each helping the reader to chunk the sentence into 'as-it-was-said' bits. We read them as 'colouring' the words that come before them and not as part of the words that come before them. That is to say we would read;

"Did you see the leader in the Guardian yesterday?"

and not,

speech marks Did you see the leader in the Guardian  
yesterday question mark speech marks

one could even re-write this as,

open speech marks (so now somebody is beginning to talk) capital D in Did (this is the beginning) you see the leader in the capital G (proper noun the name of an object - yes, the newspaper) the Guardian yesterday question mark (so it was a question) and speech marks again (so that's all they said that time).

Well, this isn't very original, one could much more simply call it use of punctuation. Yes, but it is one way that readers make use of a text. Understandably the Ethnos want to break new ground, to see what it is each utterance does to the sense of what was said, but can one be so purist when it comes to looking at reading? As a reader I use whatever I can to be able to read quicker, or to grasp what I take to be the sense of the piece.

'Lack of sensitivity' I called it when the words are made visual in print from verbal in talk, maybe it could be better described as missed opportunities. The transcriber must use these same techniques in giving their readers a way into the texts, in their role as writer. The knowledge the transcribers have as readers informs them that this is the way these things are usually presented and seen, but these skills and considerations disappear from their accounts. Their role as authors constructing texts is ignored. What happens to words becoming visual changes them so much from words audible. Although the same thing they are made into different sorts of thing. In using the methodology of talk will these differences necessarily always be missed by the Ethnomethodologists?

Perhaps a more reflexive account of reading will be possible to take into account the nature of reading itself. Not an analysis of a transcription but a description of a



happening. The phenomena of reading?

### Footnotes

1. See for example Ethnomethodology used to describe happenings in a courtroom; Carlen, P. Magistrates' Justice (Law in Society series, Martin Robinson, June 1976) or as a method to describe a non-verbal activity Ryave, A.L. and Schenkein, J.N. Notes on the art of walking in Turner, R. (ed) Ethnomethodology (Penguin, 1974)
2. See Garfinkel, H. Studies in Ethnomethodology (Englewood Cliffs, Prentice Hall, 1967) pp. 38 - 42.
3. I do not wish to argue that the movement from the analysis of reading to the examination of textual devices and constraints that limit access is a feature of Morrison's work solely. Rather it is a feature of the methodological approach of the author, and it is a side-step that is widespread. See for example (of many instances) Schegloff, E.A. Sequencing in Conversational Openings American Anthropologist Vol. 70 (1968) pp. 1075 - 1095 or Sacks, H. Aspects of the Sequential Organisation of Conversation (Draft Manuscript) or again Jefferson, G. A case of precision timing in ordinary conversation: overlapped tag positioned address-terms in closing sequences Semiotica Vol. 9 (1973) pp. 47 - 96.
4. It is Schenkein, J.N. Towards an analysis of natural conversation and the sense of "heheh" Semiotica Vol. 6 (1972) pp. 344 - 77 who has argued convincingly that sense is achieved both prospectively and retrospectively during the course of an event.
5. Clearly this argument is not new, in statistical terms, I merely argue the difference between nominal, ordinal and interval/ratio numbers.
6. See for example Schenkein (cited footnote 4) or Jefferson, G. Error Correction as an Interactional Resource Language in Society Vol. 3 (1974) pp. 181 - 199.

## THE ESSENTIAL NEWSPAPER TEXT

### The Instability of the Text and the Rise of the Reader

"Roughly it can be said that theories of the arts differ according to the degree of subjectivity they attribute to the response of the percipient. Or, what comes to the same thing, they differ according to the extent of the objectivity they attribute to the work of art. Thus the gamut of theory stretches from subjectivism, where it is felt that each person will recreate the work in his own private way, to Absolutism, where it is felt that an ideal standard has been reached to which each work of art should conform."

Philip Hobsbaum A Theory of Communications (London, Macmillan, 1970) p.xiii

What is the case in reading? Do we have a fixed, stable (absolutist) text, ideal perfection dictating an ideal reading, or do we have a text that only exists through a reading, and any reading infinitely variable and equally valid?

Before this can be decided, we must look further at the assumptions made to be even able to consider the question. To be able to think about whether it is the text or the reader that determines the nature of the reading made, one must have already made the move of splitting the activity called 'reading' into three distinct (and able to be considered separately) parts. We must see we have firstly a text, secondly a reader and thirdly an activity that the reader does upon a text, called reading. The text, an object, a physical object in the world. The reader, a subject, a conscious agent and the resulting social action (of subjects work upon object) called reading.

A reader might claim a similar thing themselves, 'I (subject) take my newspaper (object) and read it (social

action), that's how it is, isn't it?' Perhaps this is so, but maybe it is not necessarily the best way to describe it.

What happens when we do describe it in this way? Somebody who claims neither to take an absolutist, deterministic view of the text, or a subjectivistic totally free view of the reader is Wolfgang Iser <sup>1</sup>; he claims merely to do,

"..an analysis of what actually happens when one is reading a text.."

Wolfgang Iser, The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response, (London, Routledge and Keegan Paul, 1978 English translation) p.19

I am drawn to this statement for it is what I wish to examine. Iser goes on,

"In reading we are able to experience things that no longer exist and to understand things that are totally unfamiliar to us;.."

Iser, Act of Reading p.19

He thus seems to reject subjectivism, for if reading were totally a result of the reader's disposition it would never be able to bring anything new to a reader. Yet, clearly reading can alter previously known 'facts', it can add information, change emphasis etc.. Indeed if we could not learn new things from reading, why would we ever read newspapers? Even academic study itself is to learn through the reading of texts.

Notice here how we have had to introduce the notion of the text (to talk of reading, we have to talk of reading something). What role the text then?

"Reading is an activity that is guided by the text; this must be processed by the reader, who is then, in turn,

affected by what he has processed."  
Iser, Act of Reading p.163

I am at this point unsure, guidance, possibly being affected by what is processed, does this seem stronger, more like determinism than guidance? However, other analysts seem to say similar things. The role of the text appears to be its part played in an unfolding process; for example Holub says,

"In short, the text is grasped in its becoming rather than as a fixed entity."

Robert C Holub, Reception Theory: A Critical Introduction (London, Methuen, 1984) p.149

So, it would appear an absolutist view of the text is denied, but Holub continues,

"The essence and meaning of a literary work do not belong to the text, but to the process in which textural structures and the readers ideation interact."

Holub, Reception Theory p.149

To be fair, these are not Iser's words, but look: 'essence and meaning of a literary work', 'textual structures and the readers ideation interact'. From a claim for a simple examination of reading other notions are clearly emerging - the role of the text, essences, meanings, guidance by the text, interaction between text and reader.

Leaving essences and meanings for a while, think of guidance<sup>2</sup> by the text. Think again of my analogy of a game of tennis. In playing tennis is the player guided by the structure of the court? The court may provide boundaries and restrictions to the moves he may make, but does it guide him? Doesn't guidance imply a slightly too active role to an immobile court (or to a silent and still text)? The same also with the idea of interaction. Does the tennis player

interact with his court, or does he just use it and move within it? The court itself (or the text) surely, doesn't do anything. This argument starts to sound familiar, like my disagreement with the Ethnomethodologists using words in print like words in talk, and calling reading an interactive process like talk.

But, Iser does not make this move, he stops there, he acknowledges that the text does not negotiate (like in talk) with its reader, when he borrows Goffman's concept,

"An obvious and major difference between reading and all forms of social interaction is the fact that with reading there is no face to face situation. A text cannot adapt itself to each reader with whom it comes in contact." Iser Act of Reading, p.166 (emphasis original) from Erving Goffman Interaction Ritual: Essays in the Face to Face Behaviour (New York 1967)

What does this interaction (or ideation to use Iser's words) consist of and how does it take place? Or, put more succinctly, what for Iser does reading involve? He uses the notion of the 'wandering viewpoint', he says of it,

"The wandering viewpoint is a means of describing the way in which the reader is present in the text. This presence is at a point where memory and expectation converge, and the resultant dialectic movement brings about a continual modification of memory and an increasing complexity of expectation." Iser Act of Reading p.118

What is becoming clear is that as the text disappears as a fixed, determining stable entity and reading is viewed as an unfolding interpretive process, we need the concept of a reader, who will actually carry out this reading work.

Here, Iser develops the notion of the 'implied reader'. He writes,

"The term incorporates both the pre-structuring of the potential meaning by the text, and the readers actualisation of this potential through the reading process."  
Wolfgang Iser. The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett.  
(Baltimore and London: John Hopkins Univ. press, 1974) p.xii

To see how Iser uses it and what hopes he has for it, turn again to the text-reader split. We have basically a dichotomy (but one that has three parts to it!). At the poles, a text and a reader and a mid-ground between them, the reading performed by the reader at the text. Interestingly look at this arranged alongside Iser's definition of the implied reader.

TEXT	"The term incorporates both the prestructuring of the potential meaning by the text
READING	and the readers actualization of this potential through the reading process."
READER?	

For a definition of a reader there is curiously no direct description of the reader, only his implied existence through his actualisation process. Hence (I suppose) his title the implied reader for he can never exist as such.

Why is this implication of presence but denial of existence so important? It is a vital notion for what Iser hopes the implied reader can do for him (remember here: he wants to look at the reading process, but to do this he has made the text-reading-reader split). He says,

"As text and reader thus merge into a single situation (reading) the division between subject and object no longer applies, and it therefore follows that meaning is no longer an object to be defined, but is an effect to be experienced."  
Iser Act of Reading p.9-10 (my addition)

Why is Iser so concerned that the implied reader via an analysis of reading (that only considers the text and the reading process) should yield a definition of meaning as an 'effect to be experienced' not an 'object to be defined'? What is wrong with having 'meaning' as a thing. Why does Iser go to such extraordinary lengths to avoid such a thing. Why invent an implied reader to do this?

If one has an activity such as reading, an activity, ongoing, flowing, complete and one stops it, splits it to component bits, separates the text involved and the reader involved and the reading that happens to be able to analyse them: the issue becomes, where (in which one, the text, the reader or the reading) does the resultant sense of the activity lie? The meaning, what it was felt to be 'all about', what was going on, where precisely does this reside? (Interestingly in the ongoing activity, deciding upon sense is non-problematic. Only theoretically splitting the event creates the problem of location of meaning).

Now that Iser has made this split can he look to the text to discover the meaning of the literary work? This is not possible, for he rejected this as we saw earlier, preferring the reader to play a more active role in what we may know of the text, so does meaning reside in the reader - no, Iser would definitely not want to abandon meaning completely to the discretion of the reader, also as we saw earlier. A dilemma faces Iser, as anybody who makes this Cartesian split, object (text), subject (reader). If the meaning lies in the text, then as Hobsbaum said we have a textual analysis (absolutism) the text determines absolutely what

may be known from it. But Iser wants to say that the reader has an active, constructive role. Must he assume that meaning lies within the reader, in his head perhaps, in his consciousness? The road to total subjectivism? That everything brought to the text/reading comes from the personal experience of the reader? This is not so, for Iser either, as we have seen previously he suggests that texts can introduce new material, indicating that what can be made of the text/reading is not the total domain of the reader.

Yet what gives sense, determines meaning. I dwell upon this issue yet the theme is crucial and Iser's handling of it illuminating for it shows that he is aware of the dangers that may befall somebody who stops the reading process, splits it to component parts and yet still wishes to sensibly account for the sense of the original event. In short, how can Iser adopt this way of seeing reading, apply this methodology and still hope to be faithful to the reading as it happened?

Initially we may consider, what would constitute being faithful to the reading as it happened. Iser has already told us that we are to look for the meaning of the reading. How then does Iser account for how this meaning is brought about. Iser sees the text as a skeleton of 'schematized aspects' which must be actualised, concretised by the reader, in practice this means that within the text is a series of gaps to be filled in by the reader. There are two main sorts of gap - the blank and the vacancy. Iser says,

"..blanks refer to suspended connectability in the text, vacancies refer to non-thematic segments within the



referential field of the wandering viewpoint."  
Iser, Act of Reading p.198

The blank then provides a gap in which the ideation activity takes place, I take this to be the reader's understanding of what is going on. His understanding of the text, its (for him) meaning. As later blanks come along, the reader is led to change his notion of the meaning of the text, as Iser puts it,

"The shifting blank is responsible for a sequence of colliding images which condition each other in the time flow of reading. The discarded image imprints itself on its successor, even though the latter is meant to resolve the deficiencies of the former. In this respect, the images hang together in a sequence and it is by this sequence that the meaning of the text comes alive in the reader's imagination."  
Iser, Act of Reading p.203

Image building in blanks and image rectifying in latter blanks. Curious to see how the building up and modification of images about the meaning of the text happens in the imagination of a reader, who has no identity, who does not as such exist.

"It is clear, then, that throughout the reading process there is a continual interplay between modified expectations and transformed memories."  
Iser, Act of Reading p.111

Can a reader who does not specifically exist as an individual have memories and expectations? More specifically at the moment it is the text that guides when and what blanks are brought about. This sounds to be some sort of guidance, not to be a gentle nudge, but the kind of guiding one would do if one were to lead a reader around by a rope. It is here fitting to include what Holub claims,

"Thus we are left either with an analysis of the text in terms of its indeterminacies, or with conjectures on how an ideal reader or interpreter is affected by, reads, or analyses the various authorial or textural strategies."  
Holub, Reception Theory p.100

Does this make Iser's work sound like a disguised version of 'the meaning resides in the text' or absolutism? Iser goes on,

"However, the text itself does not formulate expectations or their modifications; nor does it specify how the connectability of memories is to be implemented. This is the province of the reader himself ..."  
Iser, Act of Reading p.111

So, the blanks are pre-set within the text, but exactly how they are filled, with what images or memories is decided by the reader. For a definition of the implied reader that did not take account of any particular reader at all, the reader is still, in practice left a lot of work to do in bringing his images and memories to bear in his imagination to fill in the blanks in the text. For me, the implied reader starts to become a questionable entity. If we had a specific reader filling gaps, achieving blanks, supplying his memories, building his expectations, I would feel happier; but to leave all this to a theoretical construct, an implied reader? Does the implied reader represent, (more truthfully) an ideal reader. An automaton, who goes through the motions of filling the gaps, but in ways pre-determined by textual structures, i.e. no reader at all?

Always this ambiguity in Iser's work, about what gives meaning to a literary work; an ambiguity created totally by the way reading has been viewed and theoretically expressed. Iser's account seems to oscillate between the text guiding

forcefully what may be known from it. The text setting, in a rigid way, the occurrence of blanks and vacancies to be followed by later blanks and vacancies to push the reader to reject earlier images in light of later ones, and passages such as the following where we have an equally determining role for the reader when Iser claims,

"Nevertheless, this decision remains entirely the province of the reader, however persuasively he may be guided for the intention of such a text can only be fulfilled if the decision is ideated by the reader."  
Iser, Act of Reading p.190

Now, this sounds like meaning resides in the reader - subjectivism? Reader or text. Text or reader.

What does control what can be known in the reading process? Here I have used the word 'control' - is the meaning determined by either text or reader, has it indeed become an either/or situation? Why, as we have delved further into Iser's work, has the obsession with meaning of the text grown? We started, surely, as Iser claimed to look at the process of reading. Why do we spend so long exploring meaning and endless considerations of where exactly it is that the meaning of a literary piece resides? The answer is quite simply, we talk of such things, follow such pathways because this is where Iser's work leads us. Despite all Iser's attempts to resolve the subject-object split, the absolutism-subjectivism argument is an inextricable feature of this move. To talk in terms of this split and then hope to escape the implications of the split (object, text-subject, reader) by talking of a mid-ground, reading is impossible. We always end-up talking of the text and the reader, for these are the terms the theory is expressed in.

We always return to the notion of determinism of meaning and reading, first by one and then the other. It is, that to make the split of the activity of reading into text and reader, one is forced to see text and reader as instrumental in the activity as it happens because they are the things one's theory can touch - the entities its terms address. How one's terms address the phenomena of reading is then the only way one can name and locate the problem of reading, its elusive nature. Iser locks himself into the abyss of absolutism vs. subjectivism and the determination of meaning through the terms he uses to locate the very phenomena in the first place.

For my own project, exploring the nature of reading newspapers, it becomes clearer that what I will be able to locate will be forever bound in the terms used for its expression.

Determinism or Readers Freedom: the threat of the arbitrary reading.

In the passages above I linked two separate ideas. Firstly, the notion of only being able to express the whole, ongoing richness of the activity of reading through an examination of text and reader, because the theoretical leap of splitting the activity into text and separate reader had been made and secondly, the notion of determinism. Above I linked the two ideas, because they are linked within Iser's work<sup>3</sup> - but they need not be.

Iser twins them, in that they appear together almost inextricably in every statement he makes about reading, yet,

they can be considered quite distinctly. Iser links them because there are two dangers he wishes to avoid.

The first we have already identified; the fear of seeing meaning as a 'thing' residing within either reader or text. We have seen Iser's attempts to break out of this split (text-reader) by firstly in theory refusing to look at either, in fact, even to deny a particular subject, referring only to an implied reader such is the possibility of sinking into subjectivism, and never detailing a particular text, only texts 'in principle'. Writing of blanks and vacancies, such is the fear of absolutism. So, Iser never considers any real reader, or any actual text or any particular reading. His work is in abstract. Iser's second move to avoid talk of the two is to try to look at the interaction between the two, to examine only the reading. Yet in practice as we have seen to talk of the two of them interacting, is still to talk of the two of them and the determinism issue thus remains stubbornly unresolved. Iser's arguments swing from text to reader and back again. To give you an insight into the contradictions,

"..for the intentions of such a text can only be fulfilled if the decision is ideated by the reader."  
Iser, Act of Reading p.190

The freedom of the reader? Yet, now consider this extract,

"The manner in which he (the reader) assembles it is dictated by the continual switching of perspectives during the time-flow of his reading, and this in turn, provides a theme-and-horizon structure which enables him gradually to take over the author's unfamiliar view of the world on the terms laid down by the author."  
Iser, Act of Reading p.97 (my addition)

So, it is the text that determines the reading through the

author's intentions embedded in it? The task of the implied reader is to get the meaning the author intended? Again,

"The reader's images fill in the hollow form, thereby establishing his relation to the text, but this relation must be guided to a certain extent, if the reader is to be manoeuvred into a position commensurate to the intentions of the text."

Iser, Act of Reading p.213

If the order and the placement are pre-set, to what extent is assembling the correct pieces in the correct order really a freedom for the reader? Does the reader's freedom shrink to the size of freedom to make the correct reading. Yet, elsewhere the reader's freedom seems a more genuine concept.

"The fact that completely different readers can be differently affected by the 'reality' of a particular text is ample evidence of the degree to which literary texts transform reading into creative process that is far above mere perception of what is written."

Iser, Wolfgang, The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach, New Literary History p.283

But a statement such as this seems small and lost amongst the more prevalent contradictions,

"Whatever experience each individual reader may have, he will always be compelled to adopt an attitude, and this will place him in a pre-arranged position in relation to the text."

Iser, Act of Reading p.217

Why does Iser bother to construct a reader only to deny him any true function? Holub suggests that the implied reader allows Iser a certain sidestep around the determinism problem. Iser defines the implied reader variously as,

"..a textural structure anticipating the presence of a recipient without necessarily defining him."

Iser, Act of Reading p.34

and again as,

"..the implied reader as a concept has his roots firmly planted in the structure of the text; he is a construct and in no way to be identified with any real reader."  
Iser, Act of Reading p.34

To say such and yet still give this textual structure the title 'reader' according to Holub fulfils the following function for Iser,

"For defining the term in this fashion allows him to move to and fro from text to reader without ever clarifying the composition and contribution of either half of this partnership."  
Holub, Reception Theory, p.85

Iser need not bother about where the meaning of the literary work resides, or exactly whether it is reader or text that determines meaning, when the theoretical construct of the implied reader covers both. The implied reader is both text and reader. The implied reader solves the determinism issue, not by providing a final answer, but by allowing Iser to switch determinism from text to reader as it suits his purpose.

It seems curious though, why go to such length (inventing an implied reader) to avoid the problems raised by determinism, if it is so problematic, why talk of determinism at all? Why must something determine what kind of reading may be made; or to phrase it differently, why must meaning (for Iser) be determined? What is at stake if the determinism goes? Does it somehow keep Iser tied to the subject-object split?

Interestingly in Iser's account his (albeit) covert cling to determinism means a cling to determinism by the text.

Despite all his claims to look at reading as an ongoing activity, in the act of unfolding, it ends up being reading as an exposition of textual intentions. Why do determining textual structures persist?

Holub gives us a clue,

"Even if we agree that nothing belongs to the text, that it is ultimately not describable, as soon as we register similarity of interpretation, we are bound to admit something determinate, controlling our agreement in interpretation."

Holub, Reception Theory p.152

This illuminates Iser's position precisely. Iser starts from an undeclared observation that readers can and do agree in their understanding of a text; it is (broadly speaking) possible for us all to read the same story ('Treasure Island', 'Wind in the Willows' etc.). How does this happen? By accident or by accident again and again and again?

Iser cannot accept this, so what guides/controls/determines the reading so we can all at the end of the day (despite bickering over details) agree we read the same story? Three possibilities?

Something about the reader determines the reading (i.e. we are all similar sorts of people/readers, sharing common cultural experiences and expectations and thus arrive at the 'same' story. Something about what happens in the activity of reading itself stops it being haphazard. Or, something about the text determines/ensures/guarantees the same reading for all. Or, maybe all three?<sup>4</sup>



Determinism is so important because it stops reading being arbitrary and totally haphazard. Till now I have talked of Iser's work as an example of a Reception Theorist / Phenomenologist, but I too, do not wish to open the floodgates to the arbitrary reading. I too, recognise agreement and sharedness in the accomplishment of texts, but I am not sure of the nature of the sharedness; so this is a feature of reading I must resolve in my analysis. It is not my belief that 'anything goes' in reading. I do think there is agreement across different readers over what can be sensibly said of a particular text. (This is not to say that I believe that we cannot or must not play games; that today it would be wrong to read 'dog' for 'cat' or 'yes' instead of 'no', or only read every other line - this can be done my reader is free). But, what I observe is that usually it is not done, the freedom is abandoned. Usually my free reader, in some sense, choses to 'comply'. How can I account for this concensus? How may we 'share' a text on different occasions. How can we agree upon a reading? Back to three possibilities; firstly the one Iser selects.

### The Text Determines Reading

From the citations I have given, I am sure Iser would hotly deny this. He has variously talked of freedom of the reader to do as he please in blanks, the text prearranging blanks for the reader, the reader having to fall into line with the author's intentions or even the text's intentions. The determinism then is not a clearly defined and elucidated part of Iser's theory - again, he would want to deny it, saying it is the process of reading and not textual

determinacy that interests him. Yet, still it persists contradictions and all. To examine this contradiction in determinacy and where it resides, opens another contradiction and in so doing offers a solution. I wrote of the role the implied reader was asked to fulfil, making, merging and breaking images, filling blanks, matching reading to textual intentions etc. All this when they are only an implied reader, not an actual subject. Why give such a vital and central role to a non-entity or rather, why does Iser have to construct a reader if he is never bothered with any empirical reader. It is obviously a theoretical construct that does things other than pretend to be a real reader. Here I take my criticism of the implied reader far beyond Holub's observation of the implied reader as a construct to make reader and text interchangeable. It is possible to express the conundrum how we have seen it to be;

Q When is an implied reader free, but not free?

Ans When he is not a reader at all, but rather the perfect textual achievement of its intended meaning.

Q And why doesn't the implied reader exist?

Ans The implied reader never exists as an empirical/ actual reader at all, because he is the textual structure and its determinacy called by another name. Determinacy displaced from the surface of the text to the re-establishment of that determinacy in the guise of a 'reader'. The implied reader; a personified ideal reading.

My newspaper text does not control me, determine my reading. I defend mine and any other reader's freedom. Still, though I have to account for the enigma of the agreement over reading, how it is brought about.

But I have only examined one of the three possibilities.

Look at another.

### The Reader Determines Reading

What if the extent of the freedom of the reader is to determine the reading? This sounds like subjectivism, the reader totally free to make any reading, a totally haphazard activity?

This is not what usually happens, such an attitude to reading by a reader would not be recognised as 'doing reading' by others, but rather as being engaged in some other sort of activity ('mucking around' possibly?) Total freedom of the reader will not explain agreement in reading except if the reader determines the reading and all the readings are similar then all readers are similar? Logical - yes. Actual - possibly?

One theorist thinks so. Stanley Fish (Stanley Fish, Is there a text in this class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities (Cambridge, Mass. Harvard Univ. Press. 1980) is consistently anti-textual. He claims that we may only know a text through a cultural looking. He acknowledges that there is something on the page; but that these 'givens' are meaningless. We must first have a way of seeing them, that is able to make sense of them. Even to say simply that there are black marks on a white page is to see 'print' i.e. to view through an interpretive community. So, the text as an independent object disappears and is unknowable.

For Fish then, the text contributes nothing to the reading,

it is at best irrelevant and phrased more strongly, completely invisible. The reading is thus entirely dependent upon what the reader brings to it. Yet here is an ambiguity - brings to what? What exactly does a reader read, or for Fish - a critic interpret? What can Fish say here - nothing? In practice he must 'pretend' that texts exist in order that he may make statements about them. But the crux of the matter really emerges when we start to consider whether he has made any better a resolution of the object-subject, determinism problem that Iser did, by turning to the reading instead of the text? The onus of interpretation has obviously shifted. It is no longer pushed at the reader via textual signals, but is interpreted by the reader via intersubjective conventions.

Is this not just the same dilemma but expressed differently? How does Fish resolve the threat of the arbitrary reading? Not through determinism by textual structures like Iser but rather by determinism by cultural conventions. Giving a reader freedom over the text in itself will not solve the determinism problem, but merely locate it elsewhere.

So, in my analysis an appeal to a reader is no answer. What about the third alternative?

### The Activity of Reading Itself Determines Reading

All this obsession with determinism and where to locate it, really only becomes problematic when linked (almost fatalistically) to the object (text) - subject (reader) split. Earlier, I wrote that the link did not have to be

made. We do not have to resign ourselves to having to take on board both methodological assumptions.

This sounds optimistic, none of the theorists I have looked at so far, avoid one if they approach the other. Are they really two sides of one coin?

What if the determinism/sharedness/agreement issue could be tackled on its own; as an issue concerning how it is brought about in practice, not as a physical/geographical issue of where to locate it (text or reader). If it becomes linked with activity (the activity of reading), if it becomes a happening and not a thing, we should not go looking, expecting it to exist anywhere except as a facet of reading as it occurs.

Now, let's be clear here, what do I mean by happening? Do I mean accomplishment, no, not in the strict sense that Ethnomethodologists might use it as cultural achievement, which sounds very much like a move Fish would make and as we have seen locates determinism in the reader via his embodied cultural expectations.

No, rather I mean a reading that is determined in its sense and sensibility by the things that happen, that are included, that take place as it occurs. Think again of my tennis game analogy. It may well be the structure of the court, giving lines and boundaries that permit certain types of play (reading) to happen. It may be the player (reader), his knowledge of the play, its rules, knowledge of past games, expectation of events that mould the moves made. But

isn't it the play (reading), the intermix of court (text), rules of the game (cultural expectations), skill and expertise of the player (reader), his past experience, resources, memories and skills that make each game we watch unique and yet still make it recognisably tennis (reading)?<sup>5</sup> That make it the same thing and yet different? Isn't it the specific and singularly situated use of all the 'bits' that are there to be used, that allow us to all read the same story and yet all have different, individual even idiosyncratic interpretations of it. As readers we use what is available.

Surely then, if my argument follows the only way forward is to make an actual reading; attend to use, look at sense made, ploys used, tactics adopted, spot the boundaries set by the text, where if one oversteps them one is no longer reading but doing something else. Looking at memories and expectations brought to the event, see their role, think of reading for a purpose, with an attitude, for a reason.

Not an implied reader, but an existent reader, actual memories, expectations, experiences to bring to bear - not an extension of the perfect textual reading.

A typical reader? Can some readers be more typical than others, some readings more typical than others, some more idiosyncratic? How could we decide, but to refer to an objective external standard - which we have argued, thus far, away to a position of impossibility. So are all readings as credible as others? Think again of tennis. We may enjoy some games more than others, think players more

skillful in their management of play, in their responses to previous happenings in the game, tactics and surprises they bring to bear. Other games may be dull in the extreme or simply competent, or an event (if you play like I) so unskilled, such a sickly impoverished use of the resources available the game hardly warrants the name tennis. Do we have any trouble distinguishing between such games?

We have no trouble in distinguishing between rich and complex, or competent and sensible, or paltry, impoverished readings. It is a skill in recognising the familiar and there is nothing wrong with an appeal to the plausible and familiar.

With a text 'in general'? Rather with a specific, actual newspaper text. A newspaper story; no 'in principle' only 'in practice' happenings. Why should we settle for describing what might happen when we can investigate what actually does happen.

### Footnotes

1. Iser does of course draw heavily upon the work of Roman Ingarden, see for example; Ingarden, R. The Cognition of the Literary Work of Art trans. R.A.Crowley and K.R.Olsen (Evanston, Illinois, North Western Univ. Press, 1974).
2. For a more full discussion of the notion of 'guidance' see, Wittgenstein, L. Philosophical Investigations trans. G.E.M. Anscombe (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1976) ff 170 - 178.
3. It is perhaps unfair to highlight, only, the arguments of Iser as an individual; similar sorts of moves are made within the work of Georges Poulet, see for example, Poulet, G. Phenomenology of Reading, New Literary History 1969 Vol.1 pp. 53 - 68.
4. In fact there could be a fourth possibility, that agreement that we may all read the same story only occurs when we discuss such a possibility. In other words, that such agreement is situated in the negotiation that takes place in the talk about such a possibility.
5. That cultural expectations, resources, tactics may come to bear in the reading is accepted, but they do not structure the reading alone. Individual experiences, levels of knowledge and beliefs of the reader also may play a part. Accidental happenings may also occur in the activity, delays and pauses, idiosyncrasies. It is the event, displaying the actual intermix of that occasion that makes it the happening it was, gives us the sense of that occasion.

## A SECOND TEXT BREAKER: A VIEW FROM WITHIN

Do you remember the warnings I gave you?

I gave you a set of questions (suggested disbeliefs) with which you might have been able to adopt a 'distanced attitude'; that might allow you an edge to view my text as it progressed, in some of its ways. But, of course, how can you see my text's features, except at level 0 - the level of the text itself. You cannot see it at the level before the text became, because that level of access is not the privilege of the reader. So, maybe I (using my role as author) can highlight some of the sub 1 (the writing / construction of my text) or sub 2 levels (my reading of the texts cited.) (Those that I can spot), as they might come to you fossilised in my text. I suppose what I mean by this is, that as the person who has access to these 3 levels, I might be able to recognize features of level 0 (the text) the only level available to you as reader, and be able to locate them as viably similar/like/same aspects as features occurring at levels sub 1 and 2, that you do not have access to?

I am aware that now (at the moment of writing) I am able to see the text's ways as it unfolds. Aspects that it acquires as it comes into existence, not aspects of the happenings it details or features of the plan that prompts me as I write, but aspects of **what has to happen** to the words as they become visual and are committed to paper - textual features? Features that I could not avoid even if I might try, but features in which we might be able to see some repercussions for the text as a whole. Even if you did heed my warnings,



took my advice, armed yourself to suspend 'swallowing' all that you read 'hook line and sinker' - did it help? Probably you ended up just reading, it being sufficient for you to follow the arguments as they occurred. I thank you for your co-operation, it was what was needed from you as a reader.

But let's go back once again to the Harold Evans chapter, The Journalistic Newspaper Text: Tell the News - analyse it in a bit more depth. Consider the quotations on page 44.

Whose words are these?

I attribute them to Harold Evans,

page 44 HE BK5, p. 68  
HE BK5, p.126  
HE BK2, p. 81  
HE BK2, p. 81  
HE BK5, p. 66

and if you look at these texts of Harold Evans (try to gain access to level sub 3, the reference texts I use) you will indeed find those words on those pages. Well, such is not very extraordinary - I cite the work of Harold Evans, so what? This is the sort of thing academic texts do.

But, whose words are these?

Harold Evans was their author, they appear in his texts. But as they appear in his texts, they do so, in context, as part of his argument - 'in tow', along with and as part of the other words of Harold Evans (HE), to which they belong. I have removed them, taken them from their places in HE's texts, robbed them, of the position they filled there - robbed them of the work they did?

Look at the references again from BK5, p.68 to p.126 (that's

hardly continuity of HE's argument) then skipping 'back' to BK2, p.81, then after a short stay on again to p.66 of BK5 again. HE - his words, he was their author; but are they in another sense still his words? Haven't I just taken HE's words out of their place, out of tow, cited them out of context in my text to suit my argument, for my purposes?

When D Smith prepares to cite Marx she says,

"We might indeed re-write parts of his accounts to do some work for us. He says.."  
Smith, Dorothy, The Social Construction of Documentary Reality. Sociological Inquiry 44(4) P.259 (emphasis added).

Do I allow HE's words to do some work for me? (Have I just allowed D Smith's words to do some work for me?) How and why? Why not give the arguments in my own words, why use HE's words? When I admit that if one were to visit the texts of HE one might indeed see the words of his that I give but one would not see the arguments - one would not see anything like my text if one visited the texts of HE - then we realise that my text is not a copy, my arguments are not his. But I have used his words, and if I have not followed his arguments, might it be said that I have misrepresented him? Have I used his quotations to get him to 'say' something he did not 'say', have I twisted his words?

Why have I allowed his words to physically move from one text to another in the form of quotes? What does it do to my text and its relentless push (remember)? And what of the words of HE's - do they still belong to him, indeed do words ever belong to a person?

Look at the lines again. Look at HE's groups of separate words. Look at the quotes; they are stuck together with very little 'glue'. These little words are that 'glue':

page 44 'given that',  
'and'  
'with'  
'we are then told,'

For this part of my text is composed almost entirely of HE's words - does it become HE's text? No, I am still its author, in what sense then, am I the new author of HE's words. How do these words now belong to me? How do they form my text?

Well, 'looking back', I suppose I allow his words to (for a while) carry my argument for me. See what he has to say, decide I agree (on this occasion) and want to say the same thing - let him say it for me. Why? Does he put it more succinctly?

That is part of the reason, but if it were the only consideration, couldn't I just use the words, the succinct phrasing? Why place the words in quotation marks, why credit it back to HE?

Because it's 'only fair' he did write them, they are/were his words. His words again - but we've established that there is some doubt about that. We talked about how, for my argument, the place of the original site of the words jumps over pages and even between books. In a very important sense these are no longer HE's words, but can be better described as words that are part of my argument. So, again, why credit them back to him?

Because he did say (or at least write) them - it's only honest, we cannot pretend that I thought them up. Honest? A moral issue is raised. We must be fair, we must be honest. Honesty and fairness as human qualities usually give rise to trust.

Is this an exercise in trust? In what do we trust?

Well, if I take Harold Evans' words in my quotations and place them sequentially to 'follow each other' to make my 'argument follow', then you as reader must trust that although I have removed the quotations from their original context I had been faithful, fair and honest with the meaning, the sense of those words. That I have made something of them in their new setting that is in keeping with what could have been made of them in their old setting.

My text is honest and you trust it. You may read, although now my argument, in my order and in my setting, the words of HE because you accept that what can be made of these words in my argument is like what could have been made of them when they were truly HE's words. So, that they are now my words and not HE's does not matter, they are usable as his because they do similar sorts of things. They are made equivalences, this is what the " " and the reference do for you, and you my trusting reader do the rest.

But, yet why is it important to be able to use what are now my words, carry my arguments, as if they were still HE's.

Well, because it is very useful to do this. (In case I

start to sound manipulative - let me say again, these are features that I can as author see now, upon analysis of the text I have written; not as aspects of, or reasons for, the writing of the text in this way. It is in no way deliberate, it is just present in the character of the text for me now as its author become reader, analysing it at a later date.)

Not only do I use his words to carry my argument to get HE to say something I want him to say, but I can get him to say something I would want to disagree with, solely for the purpose of shooting down, once it is established. Let's look at these both separately and see to what use they may be put in the text.

To allow him to say something I would want to agree with, why don't I just say it? Well, we've raised the issue of honesty. Somebody else said it first, but also, who am I to say such a thing. A reader might want to argue with me about newspaper design or construction, for what do I know about such technical things but if the masterful HE (a compliment, sincere in intent) the editor for many years of the Times and Sunday Times, an expert, says these things - they carry more weight. The whole argument seems much more powerful. You, as reader, might think 'not only does the author of this text want to say these things but here's HE saying exactly the same thing - it must be right.' The persuasion is brought by fame and conviction of expertise. I, as author, become the most subtle of 'name droppers'. But here is another interesting feature - to call me a 'name dropper' is quite apt, although a 'name placer' would be more appropriate. I do not drop the name haphazardly, but

rather place it and its accompanying words exactly where I please. It is my text, my placement, HE's words, but words placed to suit my argument. I drop them into places that suit my purpose, hence the leap page to page, book to book. Clearly then (once and for all) what we have here is an argument that proceeds along and is given credibility by the fame of HE and the reluctance to disagree with his expertise; but what he argues and where (which quote is taken and where it is placed) is mine. HE is a powerful character, but I am the puppeteer.

Again, I start to sound manipulative - puppet, puppeteer, as if I 'pull strings' to bring about HE's words, but this is not how it occurred to me in writing. In writing it was more like, 'Oh well, this bit (quote) is like this bit (another quote) and look here he's saying a similar thing, but now he's linking it to so and so..' 'Bits' pop-up off HE's pages as being like other 'bits', 'bits' cluster, till I find myself able to identify what might be termed 'themes' and 'ideas' running through his work, these being reinforced as I find them again and again and I start to look upon them as central themes - a notion of 'what it's all about'. It is this basic appreciation of what was going on that provided a framework for the placement. In that way I hope, as author, I represent (literally re-present) accurately HE's texts, but, of course, I accept that another reader/author might interpret HE in another way. For my interpretation, what is pertinent is the relevance the work has for me, the purpose I have in reading it, how I think it might be able to help me in my project, what I look for it to do. Such things determine what 'jumps' up off the page

as being useful, relevant, usable etc.

But of course, a second use is to allow HE to say something I would want to disagree with. If my text were grossly contradictory what would happen to a reader's confidence in me as an author who knows what she is writing about. It would disappear, knocked, bruised and battered by the tangles and knots in the text. My text must flow and make sense, be smooth and continuous, help the reader to follow the argument. Indeed it must present an argument, have an 'all about', make sense and be sensible. If it must, because of the nature of contradictory material present confusion, it must somehow be insulated from it. Display the confusion, but not be part of it, so when page 45, line 22 displays,

"The Leader page speaks in a quiet, civilised voice."  
Harold Evans, Newspaper Design p.112

so misleading our newspaper cannot speak at all, all our newspaper has is its own physical appearance. This is the only resource it can draw upon to do its task - all it can do is show.

I know that all the time people (myself included) use of texts, phrases like, 'oh what did it say' and yet also I know that texts 'say' nothing. I must present that irony, that confusion of terms; to try to see why the text carries such echoes of talk, of saying things. If I were to present the argument myself, that texts speak and then say 'Oh no they don't', the whole episode would become farcical - 'Oh yes they do' - 'Oh no they don't'. I as author must remain

outside the argument, if it takes hold of me, the 'dispassionate' air of careful consideration of all sides of the debate disappears. The text loses its balance and probably also the trust of the reader. A reader who needs to suppose he has received both sides of the argument to enable him to make up his own mind.

So, I allow, on this occasion HE's words to carry the contradiction (interesting word here .. contra-diction..) and then I quite coldly and mercilessly point out the inadequacies of such a stance, and I as author come out as not confused in my thinking but totally au-fait with 'what's going on' and able to put HE right on certain aspects of texts. So, by enabling HE to express the 'quirks' of newspaper texts rather than myself I stop my text becoming a quicksand where I shift my viewpoint, eroding the confidence of the reader and on the contrary, I make my 'better-in-the-know' stance boost the confidence of the reader in his author, for then I seem to know better than the best.

Manipulation again..? Its easy to see how thin the dividing line between an honest representation (as I though I was involved in, in the construction of my texts) and propaganda (possibly how my texts can be later viewed). Does the reader trust the author/text to have been honest, to present it like it was?

To make a reading with a factual attitude (as one must when reading newspapers), we make a reading based on moral judgements. If we trust, we read newspapers as real world events. If we distrust we read propaganda. The decision is



the readers - not the texts. We are starting to see, however, that although the reader has this choice to trust or not to trust, he has his use of the text confined by the text itself (just as a tennis player cannot move the court markings to suit his purpose). A reader cannot feel a text to be relentless (as 'Tell the news'), if the text does not urge him on both faster and in a direction he is not sure of. We can now see how some of the credibility of 'Tell the News' comes about, both through the power of the quotations borrowing from the fame of HE and my use of them to say what I wish; but look again, I can show you other ways:

page 28, line 18 'my guess is correct..'

Did I dare to hazard-a-little guess, and lo and behold it comes to pass that my guess was correct. Now, it's really quite easy to guess correctly when I know exactly what is coming next. You, of course, do not. What does my little guess do to the text? Well, did it give you, the reader, the feeling that together, gradually we uncover a 'little gem' from HE and are led to certain conclusions (almost inevitably) - a path of exciting discovery. But try to remember I am not your fellow traveller in a journey through my texts. I am the one who set the course. I wrote the text. The text then appears, in becoming visual on paper, to acquire physical rigidity which can limit the reader's ability to be in a position to be able to make up his own mind - make his decisions about what the text displays.

Consider again page 44 lines 23 - 29.

"Column-rule as a divider and column-white as a unifier."  
Evans, Handling Newspaper Text p.81

We are then told,

"Communication at this stage is based on two elements: typographical style and the arrangement of type, illustrations and space on a page."  
Evans, Newspaper Design p.66

Look at the two references again, and then try to decide in what sense 'we are then told' after a quotation on p.81, of Book 2 Handling Newspaper Text, of a quotation on p.66 of Book 5 Newspaper Design. If we think of the sequential order of HE texts, we are not then told at all. We are only then told in my text. The 'are then told' that we read serves only my argument, gives my text push, it owes nothing to the HE texts.

This point I have made before, the placement is mine, but let me emphasise the point this time. It will illustrate just the relationship in which a reader stands with a text, and force us to consider again the issue of honesty.

I detail to you aspects of 'The Journalistic Newspaper Text: Tell the News', as I wrote it, and as I analyse it, you may read the text for yourself. Does it give you a view at different depths?

(No, we cannot start this argument here - we must go further back to see the extent of the 'trap' you have fallen into. I am about to reveal what it is I tried to get you to arm yourself against, what it is I warned you of.)

There is 'The Journalistic Newspaper Text: Tell the News.'  
Then in the 'Talking Newspaper Text' I made some initial

comments on the structure of the text, and here in a 'Second Text Breaker a View from Within', I have made a further analysis of 'Tell the News'.

When you read 'Tell the News' did it make sense? Sure, it was tight and relentless, but it held together on its own - you could make sense of it as a text. You needed no better handle on it, to understand it than that sense you were able to achieve in 'merely reading it'. But yet have you allowed the 'talking newspaper text' and also my analysis in this text to give you an alternative idea of what was going on, make you see things in a different light. Did they present a different version?

Did you alter your opinion of what you had thought of, or been able to make of the 'Tell the News' text after reading my later analysis? Isn't this a bit like the ironicising of experience described by Pollner; ( Pollner, Melvin 'The Very Coinage of Your Brain': The Anatomy of Reality Disjunctures. Philosophy of the Social Sciences 5 pp. 411 - 430) that given later evidence a previous experience is ironicised and discredited by a second version although both versions merely rest on the evidence of the five senses. The second no more superior than the first except it is sequentially later and possibly thus persuasively more powerful.

Iser has said of a text's ability to let this be done to itself,

"Each perspective offers a particular view of the intended physical object (it cannot be represented by any one of those perspectives). And while each perspective offers a particular view of the intended physical object, it also

opens up a view on the other perspectives."  
Wolfgang, Iser, The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response, (London, Routledge and Keegan Paul 1978. English translation) p.96

Well, if we read for intended physical object - simply 'text'. We see that this is the game played by all academic texts. To comment on a previous text and open 'debate' for other comments on itself and the previous text - versions of the original text do not resolve the original text, but simply multiply the versions of it. Later ones drawing upon earlier ones - much as I suppose this thesis has done. Think again about the title of this text 'A second text breaker..' - 'text breaker' I never explained that term when I introduced the first text breaker - let me do so now. A text breaker is simply a text that establishes as its aim the breaking of a text. It occurred to me that a way of demonstrating the features in print of 'Tell the News' text was to incorporate the analysis into the text itself. That the text be allowed to proceed, then when I noticed how it was working (or acquiring textual features) I could insert an aside to say how these were developing. But I could not make this arrangement work. I could not establish the 'Tell the News' as a plausible ongoing argument; when I was, every few paragraphs, highlighting the features by which it worked. I could not simultaneously text make and text break. The analysis destroyed its credibility, in breaking it physically into ongoing arguments and comments on the arguments, it broke it as a text, destroyed what it was able to do in flow. I had to let 'Tell the News' stand complete, whole to be 'taken on trust' and later 'on analysis', commented on and possibly broken.

You my reader have allowed a later text to comment upon and give you an alternative view of a previous text, but more, almost definitely, I would say you have done more. I would say you have allowed a later text to comment upon a previous text and how it might be understood but further, I fully expect that you allowed it to give you a 'better', 'closer', more clear view of what was 'really going on all the time'. Did you do this? Then you were not able to arm yourself adequately. We all want to use texts this way, to be able to use later texts, as better texts. We all assume later academic texts make liars or fools of previous ones.

But all judgements of texts are based upon readings. Why do we allow a later reading to discredit a first reading? Because we think that as we have a later text, a comment upon a previous text, it can somehow say more, or say clearer than the previous text. Do we get progressively more accurate accounts? What is it a second text can say more accurately or precisely? Charles Taylor has said,

"..the meaning confusedly present in this text or text analogue is clearly expressed here. The meaning, in other words, is one which admits of more than one expression (..) It does of course raise an interesting and difficult question about what can be meant by expressing it in a clearer way; what is the 'it' which is clarified if equivalence is denied."

Taylor, C., Interpretation and the Sciences of Man. The Review of Metaphysics Vol. XXV No. 1 (1978) p. 157

A meaning which admits of more than one expression, clearly an argument for versions - but an argument for superior versions? As Taylor says, what is expressed? The two texts are different, what is it that is present in the second in a superior way than the first; if it is not the same thing? Of a second text, Taylor says it,

"..lays a claim to make a confused meaning clearer; hence there must be some sense in which the 'same' meaning is expressed, but differently."  
Taylor, Interpretation and the Sciences of Man. p.166

Again we have a different expression of the same meaning, but, do we have a superior one? Nobody denies that second texts can comment on first ones, even to be taken as detailing the same things (even if differently), but wherein lies this ability to use one as better than another?

In my case are my text breakers able to tell us better things about 'Tell the News' than we could know when we merely read it - or do they just tell us different things?

McHoul has said,

"The text is in perfect order as it stands and that order cannot be established or disestablished by recourse to forms of re-writing 'what is actually saying or trying to say'."  
McHoul, A.W., Wittgenstein and Criticism : towards a Praxiological View of the Text. New Literature Review Vol 3, 1978, p.55

Here, then, a direct denial of better, more accurate later expressions. The text is in its own good order. What can this mean? How do we seem able to use later texts as if they get us closer, tell us better?

Well, think about your position as my reader, the relationship in which you stand to the text. What are you looking at now? A text. A text commenting on a previous text. Both texts, ink on paper, but this one claiming to be superior enough to comment on the other and 'break it'. Claiming to have a greater hold on what was 'really' happening to you, the reader, when you were at the site of

the previous text (even though you were not aware of it at the time!). This text tells you it can down-grade your original (although perfectly adequate) reading of 'Tell the News' as incomplete and insufficient. And you as reader, why have you allowed it to do this - why have you given this text more credence than the first? Why does the text breaker tell it better than 'Tell the News' told it originally?

Simply - it isn't better, it doesn't reach further, texts don't get better they just get different. Sequentially later does not mean academically superior. A later version should be allowed to stand as it is; an alternative version and not a superior version.

It seems we, in reading factual material demand an 'all about'. The urge to see later versions as the version is because we are reluctant to give credence to the possibility that the original event could have been 'all about' many differing and contradictory things, it upsets our sense of order about the way things happen, and indeed our very notion of what constitutes a happening, one definitive and concrete event.

And for you the reader of my texts, maybe you should let them all stand, not dismissing early ones as naive or confused - let them stand simply as different. Do not allow later texts to rise above previous ones. Think of it this way:

You are in the presence of a text. A text that claims to comment on the 'Tell the News' text. But while you are

present at this text, you cannot be present at the 'Tell the News' text - one text at a time. In reading this text, if it 'refers back' to the 'Tell the News' text does it really 'go back' to the 'Tell the News' text or do you still stay in the presence of this text, and this text alone? Is it simply that it and the 'Tell the News' text share some material/comments in common (this text quotes 'Tell the News'). Remember this text does not tell you better, it only tells you differently: so this text may tell of the same thing (differently) but it does not take you back to that text, you remain at the site of this text. Your reading, your analysis is only ever text deep. Text deep only and text deep always.

Does it raise questions on whether an equivalent meaning (wrapped in a different expression) also moves text onto text, except to the extent that in reading a text allows it to be seen to be so. We agree, as readers to use the material as if it were so, as if something went back, as if ideas progressed on through texts. Possibly the only things that move are quotations and they directly physically move (although they also at the same time stay exactly where they are). Yes, and they move to play an important and very different role as we have seen.

To see how absurd this notion of going back is, look at my texts. In 'Tell the News' you do not go back to my reading of the texts of Harold Evans (you do not have access to level sub 2) even though the text may claim to take you there. You never have the reading, you have only a textual feature detailing an aspect of the reading - you did not



travel back. Like the trailer of a film is neither the total story of the film, the scope of its coverage, nor the experience of its watching - it is a snippet, an appetiser, a flavour, an advertisement. It is not the completeness.

At the site of the text, your access to previous materials is limited. In a quotation, if I do this... and miss out a piece - if the material is unfamiliar to you, then at the site of the text you have no access to that missing material (to go and consult the appropriate text is to embark upon a different enterprise, than what we do when reading texts. It might be to do something like 'academic study', it would not be to do 'reading newspapers').

You are given a selected and limited account of previous material, you do not get it all. You do not get back to read in its presence, to make-up your own mind about it - you only get what the present text (in whose presence you are) gives you, no travelling back.

I was there, as reader (at level sub 2), I had full access; but all I did, as author was create another text (level 0). It is that text that comes to you; and of that text and texts like it, D Smith says,

"..there is a finalisation of a version of the text. Traces of how it came about which may appear in documentary form, its previous drafts, corrections, alternative wordings, etc., which provide for scholars of literature an inexhaustible mine of indeterminacies - all are obliterated. The text is stabilised. It has no apparent history other than that incorporated in the text (or in features of its frame) and does not acquire a history as a product of the various occasions of its use."  
Dorothy, Smith, The Social Construction of Documentary Reality, p.260

And yet, now, where do I stand? Into which corner have I argued myself? I have established that it is a folly to believe that we can do the very things that I do when reading newspapers i.e. assume that I get a version of events straight back to those events. Yet, I must believe that the events of which I read did actually happen; that I do in some sense get back to the reality of the event - so that I might believe that I read newspapers and not propaganda. But, I now realise that all we ever have is a text and work done upon that text in its presence. We, as readers, never go anywhere, my experiences as author have shown me that.

If I leave a newspaper text able to talk of Goose Green and the Falklands it is not because the stories take me back to the events, but rather that, I agree to, and am able to use the text as if I could do that. I have to adopt a factual attitude. We can see this more clearly if we stop reading the newspaper texts and turn to the cartoon. The factual attitude slips away. To be able to make of cartoons what we should be able to make of cartoons, it requires that we suspend this factual attitude - we do no longer believe that the event depicted happened and happened in that precise way. Similarly to read texts of fiction is not to want to see them as real world events; as things that happened, but to suspend this attitude, and interestingly when the factual attitude is suspended, so too goes the desire to see progression and development between texts. We do not think of one text of fiction as a superior text, because it is a closer or better expressed comment on any other text of fiction. And of course the texts themselves make no such

claim for themselves.

A final thought upon this. This directional push, that which makes us seek to regard a second text as superior (in whatever sense; clearer, more accurate etc..) than a first text perhaps it is 'time' that gives us this push. That a second text occurs after a previous text (both claiming to detail actual historical events) means that we as readers are able to regard a second text as inclusive of all a first text details plus all that has occurred meantime? Such we know, does not make a text better, but maybe it is what persuades us that we should be able to use a second text as better. The idea of 'time' merges with a notion of historical real world events when we consider that, for example, the name often used for newspapers - Chronicle, is defined as to give 'an historical account of events in time'.

Now I have described the status of versions, the claims of later texts, that analysis is only and ever text deep. No escape, if we cannot escape language as Wittgenstein has told us then we can no more escape the text. For what have we done in the last few pages, but to detail the non-sense of trying to better a text and the reading performed in its presence with a later text and a reading done its presence - but these last few pages? Another text. Have you done the same again? Given this latter argument, this latter part of the text, credence above the two - 'Tell the News' and the earlier 'Text Breaker'. You did it again. There's no escape for you as reader no matter how well armed.

Neither is there any escape for me as author, I only come to

you through texts. To tell you how one text tells of another text - I had to tell you through a text. We do not meet (author and reader) to talk within the text involved in academic enterprise. Both are trapped by the medium. We do not escape texts by describing them.

## THE PROBLEM WITH THE PROBLEM

In the beginning, at the start of this undertaking, I had an idea. An idea to see how one could make equivalences of the ink and paper of newspapers with what one could make of the real world events they detail. This idea rapidly became problematic. The problem being that all I could do in attempting to detail this phenomena was to 'end-up just reading' the newspapers. But the problem was to worsen - the harder I tried to resolve the problem, the more approaches I explored, the more elusive the task appeared to be. I did not get 'closer' to my original interest, or its resolution; I just got clouded with other issues. Attempts to solve the problem merely multiplied its problematic features. From a simple idea and the one problem encountered when trying to put it into practice - I had developed a plethora of emergent problems. The last few chapters detail some of those issues.

Consider again some of the problems that first problem created. It was all an attempt to overcome the silence created by my 'ending up just reading' when I attempted to detail what I do in the presence of the newspaper text; how I turned that ink on paper into (for me) historical real world events.

I had believed that newspapers detailed real world events but the 'Factual Newspaper' robbed me of this certainty - no news out there waiting to be found, but located in being created as news, events clustered into stories by journalists, more creative enterprises than raw facts.

Yet still, somehow I felt persuaded by this 'straight-throughness' of newspaper texts. How did I manage the 'factual' reading? It was not because I read 'facts' - so how?

This much, I decided was a positive move, that I could now at least ask questions, even pertinent questions. I could now see clearly enough of 'what was involved' to be able to frame questions about it. (That as Smith suggested, as in any factual account it was the framing of the questions that created the 'what really happened' - was irresolvable in itself and unavoidable.) (Smith, Dorothy *The Social Construction of Documentary Reality* Sociological Inquiry 44 (4) p. 257 - 268.) I tried to question from (where I was stuck) within. Yet still, only questions and not answers. I can do the reading but I can't specify how, I just end up reading, round and round.

If I couldn't talk about the doing, how did I know that everybody else (or indeed anybody else) did the same as me. From firstly, sitting in silence, I now started to disappear inside my own head - what I knew, what I could be sure of - solipcism loomed. Silenced? Maybe as Wittgenstein has said,

"What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence."  
Ludwig Wittgenstein, Tractatus Logico - Philosophicus (New York, Routledge and Keegan Paul 1961) ff7

But, newspapers didn't belong solely to me, and what's more they definitely didn't belong inside my head. They are a physical object, and in that respect like any other physical object, available in the world. But here

newspapers are special, they are culturally provided and thus culturally available physical objects. Not naturally occurring like stones or trees, but made by man for man - a cultural object in the world, available to us all. People read them everyday. They are part of our society and how its members may understand what that society is, what they may know of it and what is happening to it. I was pretty sure that even if I could never be certain that we did exactly as each other in reading newspapers that we could at least get a reasonable level of agreement as to what was doable. If (and this seemed always to be the crux of the matter), I could find the correct methodology, the right handle to go along to my newspaper and pick-up what was there to be found. The newspapers, in themselves, would not reveal how the 'news' appeared in their pages - they would not appear to me in theoretical terms.

Find the methodology. The escape from solipcism lay in agreement between readers / users about newspapers. What appeared to me was ordered, regular usage, not chaos, not anarchy. The reading of newspapers passed off without occurence, mainly a non-problematic activity to those involved, what I observed was social agreement, regularity, social order.

Obliquely then, what is raised here is the Hobbesian 'problem of order'. It was not as Hobbes predicted that 'unloosed passions' inevitably would lead to unavoidable social conflict, we are witnesses to orderly conduct, compliant actions.

Issues then that are being raised by the consideration of the reading of newspapers have been dealt with within philosophy / theory before. Building upon previous chapters it is perhaps time to consider in more detail the utility of previous approaches to my plight of being silenced as a theorist and ending-up-just-reading. To specify exactly what the problem with the problem is.

It was Parsons in the 1950's in America who sought to account for the 'problem of order'. His aim being, of course, to produce a grand theory of the whole of social order, or to systematically account for the basis of society on all its levels of operation or strata. (Parsons, T., The Structure of Social Action (New York, Free Press, 1968)) The reach of his theory going from the interpreting social actor through emergent patterns of behaviour toward structured wholes, units of explanation codifiable to a social system. A matrix of society.

Parsons starts with the components of the unit act. These he identifies as i) an actor, ii) a situation or environment of conditions (this including 'the other' to the action and their reception of it, how the action turns out is affected by both sides or as Parsons claims it is subject to the 'Double Contingency'), iii) goals and ends to be achieved and iv) a common mode of orientation towards the elements in the unit act. The last two elements emphasise the importance to the theory of the interpretive character of social action. It is the interpretive identification of criteria or grounds for defining situations in particular ways that is a pre-requisite for



the actors being able to select the appropriate means to obtain their desired ends. Parsons emphasises that it is this interpretive character that enables us to identify action as action and not instinctive behaviour. Further to this last point what facilitates or rather acts as a bedrock for this (the defining of goals/ends to be achieved and the mode of orientation towards the elements in the unit act) is the participation of both the actor and the other in a common culture. Thus when interpretation goes on, it happens for both with a common frame of reference.

The 'problem of order' is solved (or rather closed again). Mutual understanding, shared definition of situations, actions-orientated-in-common are accounted for by mutual membership of a common culture. In effect then the actor and the other are not so different, they 'see', define, act etc. in common.

Sharing a common culture also helps to explain why we do not get endemic social conflict; actors are tied to observing certain actions in order to achieve their own ends in the most efficient way possible we get 'motivated compliance'. The co-ordination of action enables both actor and other to achieve their goals. Purposeful cooperation facilitates and enables social life to occur.

In this uncomplicated picture of social action, events happen and understanding is guaranteed by a system of communication envisaged as a shared system of symbols. Like a sheet of clear glass, literally a transparent medium where messages pass without problem or distortion and

mutual understanding is guaranteed. Through language the world is rendered objectively available and maintained as such.

Several issues arise here that for my purpose already seem problematic. The assumption of a shared culture, that any other reader is basically a mirror image of myself. Such is a very unitary view of people and theory, I might already want to call for a more pluralist view of society, differing interest groups, simply different people, expectations, experiences, beliefs, life styles, or even an interactionist perspective. The interaction of divergent actors and their divergent situations throwing up an array of contingent factors.

One also has to question the view of language that is outlined - the traditional view of language as having solely a representative function. The meaning of a word is what it stands for, or to what it refers or corresponds to. Literally the correspondence theory of language. A neutral medium. The function of sentences is to express propositions or truth conditions. (Wittgenstein, L., Tractatus-Logico-Philosophicus (New York, RKP, 1961 ed.))

The implications of these two factors for my project are simple. If I accept them then I may make my reading of a newspaper story and know that any other member of my society would also make exactly such a reading. I would be justified in believing this for two reasons, firstly (as Parsons) I could assume that we both share a culture in common and so define, act etc. in a shared way. Secondly

the text itself, it would be a transparent medium, giving non-ambiguous, clear undistorted messages, factual representations of real-world-events passing with no 'noise' from sender to receiver. The Factual Newspaper Text casts doubts on newspapers as senders of undisputed representational facts and there are other reasons for wanting to discount the purely representational functions of language.

### Language as part of the Action

The ordinary language theorist Austin attempts to broaden our understanding of language as not merely a medium in which the propositions that can be verified or falsified have sense and those which cannot are non-sense; to an idea that language can 'do' as well as describe. (Austin, J., How to do Things with Words (London, Oxford University Press, 1962)) That language is not a transparent medium that gives us a set of terms that we can use as tools to describe the action that goes on but that language is part of the action. Sentences 'do' actions, they describe yes, but they can also (for example) accuse, justify, scoff etc. Here language does not describe the action it is the action. It does not merely tell us about what is going on, it is what is going on. When we talk of ordinary language we do not mean an abstract unique realm but more often conversation that people use to get particular things done in particular contexts.

In reading then it seems unlikely that language will give us a path straight back to the events it details because of

a reputed 'sterile' handling it can give to events it merely transmits, rather it seems, that the written word, the language, its setting will also be part of the action, will also feature as part of what is really going on. The feeling that one gets in reading of going straight-back to the real-world-event is not then due to a straight-throughness quality of the language. Language is not after all a piece of glass through which to gaze at the pure events, rather it orders, constructs, arranges to a display those events and as argued in *The Factual Newspaper Text* becomes an integral part of the story that it merely portends to display. We have yet to account for this feeling of straight-throughness experienced in the presence of a newspaper text.

#### The Actor as part of the Action

If there is evidence that language is active within its own displays then there is evidence also that the actor is not a passive consumer of that display. Numerous examples come from the literature of the psychology of perception.

Take the picture on the next page. If the perceptual system were really data-driven that is to say 'sparked-off', initiated by the data, to be received innocently by the actor, then such a picture will always be clear in what it reveals,

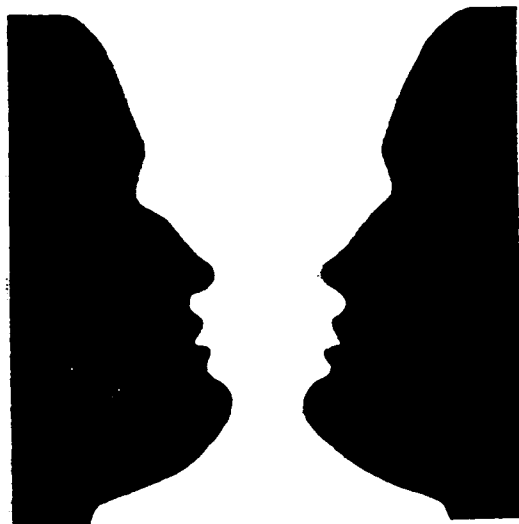


(R. C. James (Photographer) reproduced in Lindsay, P.H. and Norman, D.A., Human Information Processing (2nd ed. Academic Press, 1977) p.12

Yet there is the possibility that any viewer might see nothing more than dots and splodges until told there is a dalmatian in the picture (head downwards, facing to the left). Perception of objects is then, at least partially conceptually driven once you know what to look for (have expectations) you can find what you know to be there. You cannot recognise the object till you know what it is. Knowing the object is there, is prior to being able to see it.

Rosch (Rosch, E., "Universals and Cultural Specifics in Human Categorization" in R. Brislin, S. Bochner and W. Lonner (eds) Cross Cultural Perspectives on Learning (New York, Halstead Press, p. 177-206, 1975)) has argued that conceivably the human retina is physically capable of discerning 750,000 shades of colour or hues, yet routinely we distinguish between only 10 - 20 colours. When you walk into a wood think how many times you will have achieved the recognition and definition of 'green'. How many subtle shades do we accomplish as green, routine, unremarkably?

Sometimes even when we know what we are supposed to be able to see, the ambiguity in the object makes it impossible to reconcile the ambiguity. A definitive perception / version remains impossible. If we look at one version of the familiar Rubin figure, what do we see?



(Reproduced in Gregory, R.L., Eye and Brain the Psychology of Seeing (2nd Ed. London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1973) p.11

A central white vase or the profile of two black faces. The figure at-one-and-the-same-time allows for two alternative versions of itself. The sensory information presented by the figure remains constant, it is the way we attend to its details that gives rise to the different versions. Our familiarity with both objects (vases and faces), stops us deciding once and for all which is figure and which is ground. Here then we see (albeit a simple example of) a physical object that permits / sustains two versions of itself. Consider further how they alternate, we cannot perceive the two at once, each has its own time. Versions dominate one-at-a-time.

At other times one might imagine that expectations or strongly held beliefs might 'encourage' us to see one aspect as figure rather than another?



Boring, E.G., "A New Ambiguous Figure" American Journal of Psychology 44, 1930 pp 444-445

Do we see (possibly through desire) the beautiful young woman or the old hag (possibly through fear)? Think of the implications that this might have in reading. Our expectations, our fears, beliefs, prejudices, motivations pick out what we 'choose' to see, dismissing the ground in the figure, the aspects that have little relevance for us.

It is not just the case that these principles apply only to pictorial images, the role of expectation has also been clearly demonstrated in the written word. Stroop (1935) made it clear that what we see is very much affected by what we know.

Red

Green

Blue

(After Stroop, J.R., Studies of Interference in serial verbal reactions. Journal of Experimental Psychology 18, pp 643-662, 1935)

When there is a mismatch between what we see (The word R.E.D.) and the colour in which we see it (which we know to be green), it takes much longer to decide what the word says than if there is congruency between name and colour.

In essence then what we know of the world is much more than we would know if we were simply repositories of incoming data or sponges soaking up sensations. Sensations do not swamp us, rather we apprehend them. Perception goes beyond



sensation, it is active, selective, interpreting, deciding between alternative versions based on experience and generally it orders, or enforces an order upon incoming material to make it consistent with what is already known.

Yet more, above are only factors of individual perception. Perceptions are also affected by social pressures and expectations. The well known conformity studies by (for example) Asch and Sherif in the 1940's and 1950's investigating the role of peer group pressure on conformity rates and the judgements that individuals report.

Applying this to reading to what extent might we extract from texts what we know to be a popular version of a particular story (a dominant version?). We hear the news on T.V. and then from a friend and then we read it in a newspaper story. Do we select the items already outlined to us as the crucial elements in the story (by the T.V. broadcast or by our friend), relegating the other features to background / peripheral detail - is this how we accomplish consensus in reading?

Well possibly, it might be how we could recognise the story as one we had heard before (by its elements, already recounted to us as significant). However there must be much more to reading than this (or we only detail one type of reading - 'verifying an earlier story'), for we may read a newspaper story and construct a version of it without having heard a prior account of it.

## Evidence from Semiology

The accuracy / usefulness of viewing language as a representational system is also seriously brought into doubt by those in the area of Semiology (Saussure) or (alternatively) Semiotics (Pierce).

Based on the work of Saussure in his 'Cours de Linguistique Generale' (De Saussure, F., Course in General Linguistics (London, Fontana, 1974)) (a series of lectures given between 1906 - 11), the logical meaning and causal link of the sign to referent (or of a name and the thing it represents) is brought into question. The sign he claims is a 'double entity', not a name and a thing but a 'sound image', an associative bond between the united two. An image that has no direct, causal or logical reference to the real thing. The sign consists of two elements

The signifier 'dog' (in this case	
a sound or	together
letters d.o.g.)	they form
and the signified dog (which barks	<u>the sign</u>
and is furry)	

We are reminded by Magritte in his painting, "The Key of Dreams", of this lack of causal linkage between a sign and its referent.



(reproduced in Berger, J., Ways of Seeing (London, Penguin / B.B.C., 1971) p 8)

When we see a written word (signifier) next to its depicted object (signified) we 'see' the 'straight-throughness'. We assume that this is what is written/portrayed because that is what is, yet when Magritte juxtaposes t.h.e. w.i.n.d. and a clock, t.h.e. b.i.r.d. and a jug, we then clearly see that there is no such causal link, no straight-throughness only an assumption of such, an effect we ourselves produce. A straight-through viewing is one that is achieved or accomplished by special effort and through a particular attitude from ourselves.

We do not have to (logically or causally) call the animal

(example above); that barks and is furry, a dog. Others (for example the French) call it 'chien'. Thus the link between signifier and signified is arbitrary. The ways that words are used to chunk-up our experience of the world (as we know it) is not fixed in any a priori sense. In English we distinguish between 'sheep' and 'mutton' (younger and older sheep) for the French there is no such distinction only one general term 'mouton'. The world can be conceptually partitioned in endlessly different ways and at a multiple of depths.

Barthes himself distinguishes different levels of meaning, building up levels of signification within a culture.

(Barthes, R., Elements of Semiology (New York, Hill and Wang, 1964) and Mythologies (London, Paladin, 1972)) For example,

Lotus esprit  
(signifier)

Black sports car  
(signified)

These unite as the sign.

Yet this sign acts as a signifier to a further level of signification. The black sporty Lotus esprit signifies wealth, luxury, speed, glamour, it raises expectations of a particular lifestyle etc. This Barthes claims gives rise to cultural semiological systems, significations on significations, the birth of myth.

Consider what is being raised here. From within semiology, a different appreciation of language arises. I shall explain its significance in terms of the implications it has for my undertaking. From the traditional view of

language as a representational medium, a text has meaning (and even truth) because one can take its terms to be (so-to-speak) 'hooks' that real world events are latched onto and presented to us. A text has meaning (and may be true) because its terms depict things the way they really are (this may be told in terms of lies or truthfulness) it is its bedrock of truthful terms that gives sense / meaning.

Semiology's not inconsiderable contribution has been to shatter this literal view of meaning within a text. There is then no natural or substantive meaning within a system of signs; all signs are ultimately arbitrary constructions they do not have truth or meaning by the way they hook into reality. Meaning is only derived within the system where the sign is differentiated by and from all other signs. Saussure claims that what a sign means is its difference from all other signs. The most expedient way to explain the notion that language works by difference is to use Saussure's well known example.

"... we speak of the identity of two '8.25 p.m. Geneva-to-Paris' trains that leave at twenty-four hour's interval. We feel that it is the same train each day, yet everything - the locomotive, coaches, personnel - is probably different ... what makes the express is its hour of departure, its route, and in general every circumstance that sets it apart from the other trains. Wherever the same conditions are fulfilled, the same entities are obtained. Still, the entities are not abstract since we cannot conceive of a ... train outside its material realisation."  
De Saussure, F. Course in General Linguistics p 108-9

It is the structure that gives placement and meaning. We move subtly here from Semiology, which is a 'science' of signs, to Structuralism, more akin to a method of analysis, a placing of signs to a coherent system that locates and defines them.

Given that meaning does not arise naturally, is meaning a set of conventions and distinctions for decoding structures, actions and events? Saussure himself talks of 'felicitous conditions' under which signs operate meaningfully. Conventions, which we might be socialised into, a sort of unspoken normative code that social life proceeds by? Meaning at this stage then has shifted from a literal meaning behind the text in reality, captured within the text's terms; to meaning as the correct interpretive enactment of conventions for decoding structures.

Yet, at this stage, it is not at all clear that this is what is being claimed by all structuralists.

### Scientific Structuralism and Structural Linguistics

Structuralism is difficult to define such that all those in the area would be happy with the definition. The disciplines, areas of study are different and the aims are diffuse and have changed through time. (See for example Levi-Strauss, C., Structural Anthropology I (trans. C. Jacobson and B.G. Schoepf) (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1972))

There are those structuralists that have sought to use the notion of a system of signs/meanings to construct a scientific basis on which to understand all societies and cultures. (Shortage of space necessitates a crude and compact discussion of large areas of material, my aim is that my coverage is sufficient.)

Chomsky examines language and linguistic systems in his

model of Generative Grammar. (Chomsky, N., Aspects of a Theory of Syntax (The Hague, Mouton, 1965)) He distinguishes between competence and performance. Competence is the perfect form of the language, it corresponds to ideal cognitive structure that any individual needs to have to be able to communicate in that language. Parole, conversely, is the actual performance (on any occasion) of linguistic attempts. So (crudely put) a distinction is set-up between a perfect linguistic system (or an ideal language of grammatical rules) that generates talk and the actual talk it gives rise to. The talk itself somehow falls away or is corrupted by the setting and is often non-grammatical, but, according to Chomsky, one can still postulate the underlying rules that the individual must be cognitively aware of in order to be able to produce the language (even if not perfectly produced on all occasions).

So talk needs to be tidied-up, pronunciation, errors, hesitations are all 'baggage' and need to be removed as flaws in performance as against the ideal competence. The linguist John Lyons (Lyons, J., Introduction to Theoretical Linguistics (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1967)) produced a critique of Chomsky's work. He claims that in making this move (cleaning-up the performance, the actual occasion of talk), three things happen. Talk he claims is regularised, persuasive errors and self corrections are removed. (These seeming errors may be, of course, resources in themselves and thus part of the action and the meaning of the talk. For example, see Jefferson, G., "The Abominable 'Ne?'" : a working paper exploring the

phenomenon of post-response pursuit of response. (Univ. of Manchester Dept. of Sociology Occasional Paper No. 6, 1981)) Talk is standardised, pronunciation and accentuations are removed and finally talk is decontextualised, removed from the context of its production, objectified to itself. His interesting claim is that talk is the result of two (or more) people, their efforts and interests, a social episode, a phenomena in itself beyond the individual, not of a generative grammar in the cogito.

We will return later to the damage that might be done to a phenomena like talk by imposing theoretical categories on it. Damage done to the extent that in 'cleaning-up' the phenomena per se disappears. My present argument however focuses on the impact this theorising has on the location of meaning.

Chomsky's model serves to illustrate how a two-tier theory can dismiss situated particularities as not of interest in themselves but as only of interest in that they are different manifestations of the same underlying reality. To use an earlier example, we have a dog, it is warm and furry and it barks, a real world object. In this form of structuralism, the signified is given near-to-truth status. The dog only 'appears' in the sign (as picture, word or sound etc) but in the signified its presence becomes somehow more true. The idea is that the signified captures the real world event, because the real world event is present in it. The signified (like Chomsky's 'Competence' or Saussure's 'Langue') is a universal substructure for



mankind and flows beneath all cultures, such that for the real world event, dog, each culture has its own performance attempt at it (or signifier). We say dog, the French say 'chien', the Germans 'Hund', the Polish 'pies' and so on. To form a scientific structuralism all one has to do is to identify the universal element underlying all these different terms and then wipe away all the different terms (they are inconvenient, untidy, solely different terms for exactly the same phenomena anyway etc). See for example Levi-Strauss, C., The Savage Mind (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1966) and Structural Anthropology 1 (trans. Claire Jacobson and Brooke Grundfest Schoepf) (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1972) or Evans-Pritchard, E.E., Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1937) and Nuer Religion (Clarendon Press, 1956)). The process can be seen as the simple clearing away of insignificant superficial differences. The particularities of each term disappears, the general concept emerges. In this sense any linguistic system is translatable into any other, with no loss or alteration of meaning. The only purpose of different terms in different languages is to be signifier for the underlying substructure of the signified, whose universality is undisputed because of their presence in the signified and in the world.

It is difficult at this stage even to accept that there is no significance or meaning in the particularity of signs themselves. To use an example to illustrate this : in English we distinguish between a river (a large flow of water) and a stream (a lesser flow of water) in French this is not an existent distinction. The demarcation in French

is different. They may talk of a fleuve (water that flows to the sea) and riviere (water that does not flow to the sea).<sup>1</sup> The conceptual divisions are different. Different terms are not always dismissable as equivalences because they stand for the same thing. The relationship between signifier, signified and reality is not so clear-cut, the signified itself is demarcated by the terms used to locate it.

Yet do we still persist with the idea of truth in presence and say, 'Ah yes but whatever the terms, there is still water there, that much is real!' The answer to this is 'Yes, but what may we know of such a thing?' Our conceptual system orders and arranges - and it is only through it that we may know anything of such an object at all. In this sense the specificities and particularities of alternative expressions of 'riverness' seem most important.

Troubetzkoy (detailed in Levi-Strauss, C., Structural Anthropology 1 p.33) lays down four basic guidelines to a scientific structuralism. Firstly, that structural linguistics shifts from a study of conscious linguistic phenomena (e.g. dog, chien, etc.) to the study of their unconscious infrastructure (a cognitive representation of the warm furry barking animal). Secondly, analysis should not treat terms as independent entities in themselves. Rather, the true basis for analysis is the relationship between terms (i.e. your pet dog only has meaning because it is not (for example) a cat, or a chair, inherently in itself it is nothing). Thirdly, analysis should introduce the concept of a system (i.e. the system that places and

thus defines signs and their meanings) and lastly the analyst should aim at discovering general laws (i.e. what the general universal truth of 'dog-ness' is).

Such discoveries are made in terms of binary oppositions (Levi-Strauss). Behind one there is the other, for example matter hides the spirit, subjective the objective, behind the signifier is the signified, behind the veil, truth, behind the text, meaning, behind representation, presence.

Beyond text, meaning, beyond representation, presence, this theme continues, and we pursue it further. To recap, the structuralist method then assumes that meaning is made possible by the existence of an underlying system of conventions which enable elements to function individually as signs. Structuralism addresses itself to the system of rules and relations underlying each signification practice in order to produce a model of this system. Regularities, recurrent elements and their patterns uniting to a fixed model that will be an autonomous entity, independent of any specific elements and consisting of interdependent parts which place, locate and condition each other reciprocally. Particular details disappear, there are only 'slots' in structures, held and made meaningful by other slots, bound together.

Barthes has argued that it would be possible to make such an analysis of narrative forms. Barthes' work has been dedicated to the analysis of literary and cultural forms. In his early work he sees no difficulty in constituting a model of narrative forms. He writes,

"... so what of narrative analysis, faced as it is with millions of narratives? Of necessity, it is condemned to a deductive procedure, obliged first to devise a hypothetical model of description (what American linguists call a 'theory') and then gradually to work down from this model towards the different narrative species which at once conform to and depart from the model."

Barthes, R., Image - Music - Text, (trans by Stephen Heath) (London, Fontana, 1977, p 81)

Macherey (Macherey, P., A Theory of Literary Production

(trans G. Wall (ed)) (London, RKP, 1978) produces a powerful critique of the notion of the structuralist model. He argues that structuralist criticism seeks an interpretation from 'within' the work. That upon close examination the work will reveal its secrets, this he calls the 'myth of interiority'. The text is a veil that will reveal its inner truth. He argues that the Structuralists see the writer's production (i.e. the text) as solely appearance; the object of interest to the critics' gaze is located behind it or within it. The work is related to its 'principle' or in other words its ideal possibility. This ideal possibility is understood through analysis by revealing its structure in order to produce a simulacrum. So analysis is an ideal copy of the work in the form of a model, bringing into play also things previously hidden by the veil of the text's expression. Macherey also claims that this mode of analysis presupposes that meaning and signification are both transparent and are already in place in the text (although perhaps not explicit).

Derrida (Derrida, J., Of Grammatology (trans G. C. Spirak) (Baltimore, John Hopkins Univ. Press, 1976) questions where this 'myth of interiority' comes from or rather as he calls it 'logcentrism' or the 'metaphysics of presence'. Derrida

claims that Saussure privileges speech over the written word. Saussure remarks that it is a mistake to attach more importance to the written image than to speech (such a mistake being like thinking one learns more from a photograph than by observing a person directly). Writing then is seen as secondary, a falling away of thought or a feeble copy of speech (not a phenomena in its own right). Derrida takes Saussure's example and considers it. A representation in a photograph is not as good as being in the presence of somebody. The fact of presence, a consciousness in the world adds certainty / reality to the phenomena. Based on false Western Philosophy, like Descartes' pursuit of the pure self presence of the cogito - 'I think therefore I am' - certainty. Presence and present is true, any removal from this presence is distanced and therefore is paler and less true. Thus speech is privileged because it seems closest to the self presence of consciousness.

In effect Derrida uses Saussure to deconstruct Saussure. Saussure claims that language is constructed by difference. The sign always involves a silent play on 'spacing', that is to say the distance or absence of everything from which it is differentiated. Derrida plays upon this differentiation. The sign never literally represents what it signifies (the sign does not put us in the presence of the signified). As we have read above it is precisely because it is the sign for x that it implies x's absence. This is after all what makes the copy different from the original. Repetition is never exactly the same and never the thing itself. Thus representation (by signs) never

represents but always defers the presence of the signified. Derrida puts upon Saussure's term and calls this dual movement 'differance'. Signs always differ and defer literal presence.

Derrida's interest then is in this movement of passage. The deferring of the arrival of the signified. Meaning is in perpetual play, instability and drift. This is not an argument for polyvalence, not a plenitude of natural meanings or a covalence of reality. But rather,

"What opens meaning and language is writing as the disappearance of natural presence."  
Derrida, J., Of Grammatology, p 159

This is deconstruction of the text. Derrida has turned his attention away from structures and relations between signs to strange movements identifiable in language itself. There is no space beneath writing. The text is not punctured but ranged over. Language constructs and limits itself.

Therefore to deconstruct a text is not to search for its 'meaning', but to follow the paths by which writing both sets up and transgresses its own terms, producing instead "an asemantic drift" (derrive of difference).

We see initially working through the structuralists' arguments that although the link between signifier and signified is initially arbitrary it is also ironically unified. The composition of the sign (conventionally achieved) is clear, non ambiguous, there is no doubt about what d.o.g. refers to, or is about, or means.

Characteristically the Poststructuralist critique of this

is that if criticism is to recognise its own self as text, (remember I said, pp. 20 - 23, we do not get back to sub -1 or sub -2, we have and only ever have texts, level 0), then, the critics'/analysts' gaze may shift from within or beyond the text to the signifying surface of the text under scrutiny. The emphasis is shifted then from the text as an already constituted product endowed with meaning, to the surface of the text, meaning to be seen in terms of textuality - the interaction of reader and text as a productivity and further still the possibility of a multiplicity of signifying effects, so the unity of the sign itself is brought into question. Further still, this questions the view of communication as a closed system. Language itself becomes open to signification and competing versions of its signs. This, summarising the Post Structuralist argument, highlights the difficulties inherent in attempting to fix a unified theory of sets of structural relations.

### Evidence from Phenomenology

The argument seems to have drifted somewhat to an analysis of the intricacies of specific theories from a desire to see a basis of explanation for social order, agreement, shared-ness to enable me to account for the solo yet socially acceptable ways of reading.

We re-enter the debate with Phenomenological theories of order, meaning, truth. Husserl (see Husserl, E., The Paris Lectures (The Hague, Martinus, Nijhoff, 1964) and Cartesian Meditations (The Hague, Martinus, Nijhoff, 1960)) argues

that if we can reduce thought to the element of pre-consciousness we will encounter the pre-knowledge foundations of intersubjectivity. If we can only see objects as they really are without all the 'dressing' and 'interpretation' we add to them through our knowledge about them as objects, or about life itself, then we will see very simple objects in a stream of pure consciousness. These are the essential, the building blocks of all subsequent perceptions. They constitute our basis of knowledge of the world.

Existentialist Phenomenologists (e.g. Sartre or Merleau-Ponty) reject the idea of a pure stream of consciousness. They stress the interaction between consciousness and its object. Interactions with the world are contexted and 'interested' and this gives rise to meaning.

The Phenomenological reduction that reduces cognitions to elements of pure consciousness (Husserl) or elements as constituted (Merleau-Ponty) is not the same as Cartesian doubt. It is not doubt that is sceptical about the existence of objects that feature as part of our perception. For example it is not that I doubt the existence of the table on which I am presently writing; for in the phenomenological reduction I would not doubt its existence, for even if I did choose to doubt it, it would still exist. Rather it is that I doubt that it has an objective existence. It exists, but I also create its existence as the intended object for myself in my cognitions and ordering of sensations. What is under scrutiny is not the existence of this table as existent but



the role of cognitions in cognition. We know, for example (as social actors), that other social actors see the objects we see, differently. In a physical sense they see the object (table) from a different position, a different angle, and secondly they are likely to have a particular motivational viewing, seeing in different interested ways. Viewing from and for a different practical purpose. Yet we may both achieve a definition of the object before us as 'table'. Given that our sensory perceptions of the natural and social world are different how can we communicate about them? (Rephrased then, the Hobbesian problem of order.) If we recall Parsons' solution to this conundrum was to postulate that all actors share a common culture and so all see the same thing. However if we accept that we do not see (either physically or socially) the object in the same way as the other, how do we agree on what we do see between ourselves? For Husserl then agreement is based on the essential elements of the experience, common to all of us, derives from experience of these objects in their uncontaminated form in pure consciousness. For Schutz however the explanation of commonality is quite different. He argues against Husserl's position, he claims that full details of the subjective experience of the other is 'essentially inaccessible to every other individual'. (Schutz, A., The Phenomenology of the Social World, (trans G. Walsh and F. Lehnert) (Evanston, North Western Univ. Press, 1967) p 99) There is no Husserlian transcendental derivation of intersubjectivity, rather actors reconstitute an intersubjective world without ever necessarily being aware of their actions/efforts. It is Schutz's claim that no two people can ever have identical experiences of

anything (but that this denial of a common bedrock of truth and meaning is irrelevant) because individuals act as if their experiences were 'identical-for-all-practical-purposes'. For myself and the other, we act in common towards what we assume is an identical viewing of the table (or even an identical table). It is an act we routinely solve between us and put effort into maintaining a world in common. Intersubjectivity is an achievement.

This one very simple move frees us from so many claims that constrain our orientations towards objects and blinkers our looking at them. If, in reading newspaper texts, I am to assume as Husserl (or the Structuralists) that there is a commonality of meaning that we may find if we look in the correct places (wherever each theory assumes this to be), then we are doomed to search endlessly for where this meaning, this truth of the text resides and to describe it - the definitive version of the text. In the author's consciousness in the text (presence as truth, phenomenology). In the signifier in the world (Structuralism), or in the enmeshment in a common culture, a common mind (Parsons). In the language and the way it constructs and constrains all knowledge of the world (Post Structuralism). Rather we now do not see meaning as a thing (presence, essences, language) to be located and detailed, but rather as an activity. Meaning as an aspect of activity. Picture the actor in situ, in effect preoccupied with getting things done, going about their business. Yes, all aspects feature attitudes, goals, reasons, actions, understanding, meaning, etc. Yet these are not what is definitively going on, they are not the focus, rather they

are merely identifiable aspects of the activity in the flow, that locate, place, facilitate other aspects of the activity in order to get on and get done. They are aspects of the activity as it was in the flow that we can identify, label, latch onto now that we do not have action but history, an episode not in the flow but a 'still', a snapshot. Perhaps it is the case that we assume that identifiable constituents of the snapshot are crucial features of the activity and we end up assigning an asymmetric importance to these in our theorising. So thus far in looking at texts, we now seem freed from looking from the meaning of the text as a discernible, discoverable, true object with a specific location and form to an exploration of meaning as achievement (one of many) that are by-products of the activity and its taking place. Meaning, intersubjectivity are an accomplishment routinely carried out in order to get life underway.

If we consider again the Hobbesian problem of order, and critically examine the nature of social interaction we find that we do not solely get 'motivated compliance' as Parsons theorised; we also regularly get conflict, disagreement, disputes in personal encounters. Agreement and order are not pre-given but require effort/work to achieve and maintain them. Schutz argues that co-ordinated conduct is only possible insofar as the various differences between individuals are suspended as they go about their practical activity. Schutz describes how this world-in-common is achieved, how difference is played down. He claims that individuals make the assumptions about others. The first he calls the 'Idealisation of the Interchangability of

Standpoint', basically he is claiming that if we were to change places, I assume that your standpoint would become mine and mine yours. Secondly, that there is an 'Idealisation of the Congruency of the System of Relevances', that we assume that we both select and interpret actual or potential objects and features in common, that we apprehend the empirical world in a common way. Briefly then I assume if we change places I will 'see' what you see and see it in the same way. It is through these two processes that an assumed world in common is brought about. The world transcends me, myself and extends in a like way to you and that the assumption will stand as good enough, as 'sufficient-for-all-practical-purposes' till there is counter-evidence.

This is, for Schutz, the crux of the 'Natural Attitude'. The natural attitude is the suspension of doubt that things might not be as they seem. Individuals do not routinely test to see if things are as they seem, simply they just see them as so. A construction and typification of the world and events as being of a certain nature and understandable as such, takes place so that in most instances and occasions, social life passes off unproblematically as being like what we already know. As Schutz says, individual social actors assume "as they see things so they are". Such typifications of the world will stand as valid until counter-evidence arrives to 'rock' our assumptions. Then we may need to revise our constructs of what the world is like to accommodate this new evidence and then proceed on unproblematically till we need to update our knowledge again. To take a simple example. We tend to

think of friends / relatives in terms of their looks / features / age at the time we last saw them. This construct of the way things are stands unchallenged, is in no need of revision, till we next meet them (perhaps many years later) then we see the greying hair, the ageing skin etc. or as grandparents say of their grandchildren, 'Oh, haven't they grown!'. It is not that they do not expect the children to grow, or that they state the obvious, but rather the sudden realisation that their construct of 'grandchildren', what they are like, that has stood as sufficient, suddenly needs revision, the mismatch between a previous natural attitude of 'grandchildren' and present counter-evidence is so pronounced the exclamation stands as evidence for it.

Common-sense (what we know of the world in the natural attitude) then, is built up ad hoc, not in a logical systematic way but as a product of particular 'interested' engagements in the world as we live along. Social knowledge then is patchy. Schutz likens it to our knowledge of a city; routes we drive often we know well and in detail, other routes less well and some areas we only know of their existence but not their detail.

In summary, we have a world in common, intersubjectivity, not through the transcendence of universal truth or meaning but as an activity. Conversely, assumed, achieved, maintained. As individuals we adopt the natural attitude, assume (till counter-evidence) that things are as they seem (without testing) and that for the other, if we're in his/her position we could see what they see and in the way they see it and vice-versa (till counter-evidence). We, in

short, share a 'reciprocity-of-perspectives'. Our understanding of the world then is assumed to be held in common with others and yet by its practical nature and pragmatic acquisition is naturally schematic in places - patchy. When we read texts we do not find meaning, we achieve meaning and we assume that the meaning we achieve is what is there to be seen - this much is 'common-sense', the natural attitude. Further, we assume that others will basically see what we see, as we see it. We assume a text in common and yet the meaning we achieve is partly subject to our patchy common-sense view of the world (also to our purpose, our activity at the text, our interested engagement). In seeing through this patchiness which is built up through the possibly unique combination of our interested encounters we have previously made; it is possible that we might all 'see' a different text (a notion akin to each individual having different attitudes and beliefs) which is the fertile ground for different versions being achievable in the presence of the text and also allows for our 'seeing' of the text to be revised in the process of reading by the appearance of counter-evidence. Evidence counter to what, till that time, had been a sufficient common-sense version for all-practical-purposes. What will be allowed to stand as counter-evidence is a difficult question to answer. It is perfectly possible to assume that we could not identify it beforehand (as a category of thing in itself). It may be the case that we need to reach the point where our common-sense version of the world proves no longer sufficient to deal with the evidence before us, to know that we have reached that place. In other words what proves to be sufficient evidence

to demonstrate that our common-sense knowledge is insufficient is not identifiable till our common-sense proves to be insufficient. At that place the insufficiency and the evidence to prove insufficiency, mutually identify each other. It is not something in the counter-evidence per se that brings us to revise what we know, but its relation to what we do / do not know and what we may need to know on that occasion. What for one person, on one occasion can be deemed counter-evidence, could for another person (or the same person at a later time) be already a present typification and not be deemed counter-evidence or provocation for a revision of common-sense knowledge.

So evidence and elements in the text require the reader in a very active way to locate and define them as such, in order that they may count as such. Although pre-existent as an object in the world, they have no objective or prior existence as 'evidence' or 'elements' before this encounter. Their existence as such depends upon the achievements of the reader. We have a notion of pre-existent physical object but one which is only activated as a 'newspaper' (and all that that can mean) by a reader / user.

### Evidence from Ethnomethodology

What is needed if one follows this line of reasoning, is to look for ways in which social actors go about accomplishing everyday life. What precisely is involved in achieving a world in common in the creation of meaning?

Garfinkel as a student of Parsons sought to question the foundations of Parsons' Theory at the level of social action. He uses Schutz's work to question the 'given-ness' of this social world. For Garfinkel, it was not at all clear, that the things we do are obvious and unproblematic, always understandable or make sense as Parsons Theory seems to indicate. This was an unquestioned assumption in Parsons' work (largely contested by Schutz). I have already detailed that common-sense knowledge of society is for Parsons made possible by virtue of membership of a common culture. Such a world-in-common is objective and able to be captured in description and at the disposal of scientific method. Heritage writes of Parsons,

"In sum Parsons' approach to the problem of intersubjectivity involves the assumption that any social situation will display a range of objective features which are available for scientific appraisal and description. Where these features are so appraised, 'objective', and hence its subjective, knowledge will be generated as the product of the scientific method by all its users."

Heritage, J., Garfinkel and Ethnomethodology, (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1984) p 29)

Again we see the emergence of the notion of language as capturing (not creating or shaping) a world-out-there. A world-out-there (objective), present and thus the basis of truth and knowledge and meaning. The very notion of a world-out-there implies access to some clear-cut non-discursive realm to which discourse relates (after Cuff, E.C., "Some Issues in Studying the Problem of Versions in Everyday Situations", Occasional Paper No. 3 Dept. of Sociology, Univ. of Manchester, 1980). We have detailed the arguments concerning problems of language as a transparent medium earlier in this chapter. To use it as the basis of intersubjectivity and evidence of a world in common, is



directly counter to the arguments (above) of Schutz.

Pollner in describing actions involved in mundane reasoning claims that,

"... matters adjudicated in the courts, disputations in science, disagreements in everyday affairs, and so on can be conceived of as an ever-growing compendium of instances testifying to the fact that there is no 'same world'. The very conflicts which are mundanely regarded as a 'failure' in the perceptual process through which the world is observed and its features brought to formulation may alternatively be regarded as 'evidence' of the absurd and radical subjectivity of the world."

Pollner, M., "Mundane Reasoning Philosophy of the Social Sciences 4 1974, pp 35 - 54

It is not possible to presume a shared culture. Consensus is only ever achieved not guaranteed. The conclusion we are led to (given the evidence thus far) is that whatever sense we might find social activities to have has to have been produced for them, with purpose and through effort. If the social world is not pre-existent and is achieved by individuals orientated in a shared way to a setting, agreeing to suspend judgement that things could be otherwise, then Garfinkel postulates it should be possible to make this work (making social life) visible. Made a possibility if one were to breach the rules, refuse to go along with the settings requirements. What I detail of course are Garfinkel's infamous breaching experiments or investigations into the nature of trust. He proposed that one could highlight normative behaviour in operation by watching what happens in cases where such norms are violated. (See Garfinkel, H., "A Conception of and experiments with 'trust' as a condition of stable and concerted action" in O.J. Harvey (ed) Motivation and Social Interaction (New York, Ronald Press, 1963) pp 187 - 238.)

Various of his students began to breach expectations of 'normal' behaviour : acting like lodgers in their own homes; playing noughts and crosses (tic-tac-toe) by placing one's mark on the line or by rubbing out the opponent's mark; by refusing to take anything that anybody said as sufficient to gain meaning from it and asking always for further and further clarification.

From the other parties to the action, various responses were met. Sometimes laughter, the appreciation that the student was 'joking', 'fooling around', but the majority of responses were of anger. It is worth noting that when orientation to the common culture is ignored social order does not disintegrate as Parsons' theory predicts, people get offended, get uncomfortable but social life does not vaporise, the complete failure of mutual understanding does not occur. These actions, although unexpected, are not seen as totally incomprehensible (not other-worldly) but as still endowed with meaning and sense, still accountable. The sense repaired into them by most of the other parties was of action that was deliberate, motivated and a purposeful departure from the norm. What is the underlying assumption here is that anybody (any competent member) should have known what was being meant, so to not 'go-along', is to deliberately and wilfully choose to ignore 'what anyone could see'. This is to make a deliberate statement itself. Perhaps as a joke but more often taken as a snub against the other party. Garfinkel theorises from this that social life gives rise to moral expectations of the other party. We trust others to accomplish mutual tasks as a matter of (unspoken) moral necessity. We feel in

interaction that we are morally entitled to have our actions seen as having an intelligible character (others handle our actions this way and we in our turn do it for them). To have this trust (that they will orientate in interaction to the way I am willing to, to them) violated in seemingly wilful disregard is often therefore taken as a personal slight.

Further, Garfinkel observes that once there is a recognised breach, considerable work has to be done to repair the breach. The students were challenged, asked to account for their actions : what were they up to, playing at, how dare they do that (violating unspoken rules / conventions / mutually accepted ways of doing things)? So the expectations are that an action will set-up or be 'properly followed by' a range of second actions. These expectations are routinely silent while in place, unmentioned and unnoticed (till problematic) but can be rendered observable by watching the responses in the other when expectancies are (deliberately as they see it), flouted.

Two interesting concepts emerge then. In social life there is a moral obligation to adopt the natural attitude and Schutz's 'reciprocity-of-perspectives' and orientate towards social action as anybody 'decently' would. Secondly, as an analyst one can spot where unspoken expectations are violated because work is done to repair the breach.

Garfinkel's interest then is to document exactly what one has to do in order to carry out an action and exactly what

has to be done to produce and reproduce the regularities of social life. To the extent that social actors locate and identify social structures as constraining or determining factors in their interactions, the question becomes, not what are these social structures but rather, for the Ethnomethodologists, how are they made visible, objective, real in the social practices of members of a culture, in effect how are social structures/regularities accomplished in practice.

In other words, Garfinkel looks at Parsons' work, takes Schutz's theory and develops an empirical project - to examine the actual ways in which people make sense, create order and intersubjectivity. We do not deal here with essences of phenomena in consciousness or signs, but a phenomenon incarnate. People in the world, situated, doing. What is of central importance is sensitivity to the phenomena as it happened. Not to do damage to the phenomena in question by forcing it to comply to certain theoretical categories that one would (as a theorist) impose on it, but rather to look and see first. To see what is empirically there and to order and organise one's theorising with respect to the phenomenon as thus observed. As Sharrock and Anderson write,

"The way to investigate a phenomenon was not to begin from conclusions about what the study of it would yield, but to begin by examining the phenomenon itself to see what kind of character it has and what conclusions it could actually support."

Sharrock, W. and Anderson, B., The Ethnomethodologists, Key Sociologists Series (London, Ellis Horwood and Tavistock, 1986) p 64

It is Sharrock and Anderson's argument that Garfinkel's

purpose was to operationalise theory. They claim that one of Garfinkel's central concerns was to preserve the phenomenon under scrutiny, such that the theoretical viewing / investigation did not cause the 'animal to disappear'. They further write,

"... in Garfinkel's view, the requirement of operationalization is the preservation of the phenomenon in actual investigations. Studies should allow the investigator to 'follow the animal' as he (Garfinkel) puts it. If, instead, the animal keeps disappearing from sight and in order to make sense of the studies made one has to invoke what anyone knows about the character of the society we live in, then it is time to reflect on the relationship between theory and investigation."  
Sharrock, W. and Anderson, B., The Ethnomethodologists p 23  
(My addition in brackets)

The theories are sensitive to, and preserve in their details, what it is that is under investigation. Theories become not able to be evaluated by their explanatory power but as a set of instructions for doing social life. What needs to be shown are the regularities observed by everyday actors, routinely, mundanely, to show the pattern of social life.

Mannheim proposes a term for this particular form of reasoning in which the 'pattern of things' is under investigation. He calls it the documentary method, i.e. to document or evidence the presence of a pattern. Garfinkel uses the term documentary method in the Phenomenological sense. (See Chapter Three in Garfinkel, H., Studies in Ethnomethodology (Englewood Cliffs, Prentice Hall, 1967) He uses it to refer to acts of perception / recognition. Specifically within his theorising it fulfills two functions. First of all, he claims that successive presentations of an object (to use my earlier example) of a

table, go towards or help to constitute what can be known as the 'intended object' - the table (on this occasion). Successive images wax and wane in the course of inner time (or 'duree', (Phenomenology)). From this it is important to realise that time is a constituent feature of all objects. It is not the case that time is simply there, rather time is a resource, used by members and essential to them in order that they can constitute the social world as existent at all.

Secondly the documentary method is all pervasive. If one is to perceive the object (e.g. the table) one must do so through successive perceptions of the table. There is no immediate access to the table in general or a concept of 'tableness'. One is literally immersed all the time (in order to be able to perceive at all) in the documentary method. Contrary to Husserl there is no time-out, we only have documentary evidences of the world. Whatever passes in particular instances as intersubjective knowledge, however and wherever it is achieved, all become legitimate topics of investigation. Garfinkel develops Mannheim's notion of documentary method to show what it is that the analyst should attend to. He cites Mannheim first,

"According to Mannheim, the documentary evidence involves the search for '... an identical, homologous pattern underlying a vast variety of totally different realizations of meaning.'

The method consists of treating an actual appearance as 'the document of', as 'pointing to', as 'standing on behalf of' a presupposed underlying pattern."

Garfinkel, H., Studies in Ethnomethodology p 78

Actual occurrences become documents of, testimonies to particular situated instances, enactments of phenomenon,

phenomena in play. Actions, incidents, theory all become situated. Garfinkel claims that in order to act social actors have to manage the circumstances provided by the social setting. Actors will use the methods available to them as cultural resources, as members of the society to achieve or accomplish 'sensible' action or a world-in-common. To account for this acute role of the actor becoming the focus of attention, Garfinkel calls his theory 'Ethnomethodology' - literally people's methods. People's methods for doing social life. Likewise, in order to understand members in using resources available to them to accomplish social life in particular settings, one has to look at those settings as 'evidence for', 'as pointing to', an underlying achieved pattern of order.

If we recall one of Garfinkel's central concerns is to 'stop the animal disappearing', to remain true to, and not do damage to the phenomenon under investigation. In order to accomplish this in particular settings several important notions emerge. Firstly, actions / utterances are seen as only correctly understood with reference to the context of their production; against a background of who said it, when and what was accomplished in saying it. Garfinkel highlights the accountable nature of social action. Actions do not pass as instances of a general theory, but are held locally accountable for the things they do to that action as it takes place. Actions have meaning only when viewed 'in flow'. Secondly, actions / utterances are viewed as indexical. Literally indexed to the place of their production for example the meaning of (what can be understood by) the words, 'the table' is not

fixed prior to its use in a context. There is no sense in a general term of 'tableness', only a specific use to which the words 'the table' are put in situ. It will be the context that closes off, accomplishes what that term can be sensibly taken to mean in their context. So terms and accomplished meanings are (possibly) only situation wide. Thirdly, actions / utterances are reflexively constructed and maintained. In other words actions, utterances derive their sense / meaning from the circumstances in which they occur and in turn they reinforce the sense of the situation in which they occur. For example, that one may find oneself in a disciplinary situation adds meaning to the words, "... certain aspects of your behaviour have come to my attention.", that will be different to the meaning achieved if one were up for promotion. These words in turn reinforce the definition of the situation as justifiably being able to be seen as a disciplinary situation. Setting / context and action / utterance mutually re-inforce each other.

Heritage says,

"Specifically, it is assumed that the significance of any speaker's communicative action is doubly contextual in being both context-shaped and context-renewing."  
Heritage, J., Garfinkel and Ethnomethodology p 242 (emphasis original)

It is worth noting here that language is viewed as part of the action directly. Utterances are not identified as significant for the content or message (intrinsic meaning) they carry, rather utterances derive or achieve meaning by the action they bring about in the flow of the talk. What they do in terms of previous talk and the way they facilitate, or create expectations for future talk.



Garfinkel sees an inherent danger in the notion of reflexivity. He outlines it thus, as the choice between,

"... allowing the actor's view and thereby allowing the individual as a source of change in the system with the risk of indeterminism, or risk again indeterminism at the cost of turning the system into a table of organisation that operates as a set of impersonal forces that shove the individual around here and there, while taking it as a matter of factual interest that he is correctly aware or not of what is happening to him."

(Garfinkel, H., "The Perception of the Other : A Study in Social Order" (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis Harvard Univ., 1952) cited in Heritage, J., Garfinkel and Ethnomethodology p 33

It is respect for the phenomenon that propels Garfinkel to consider actions as reflexive, indexical and locally situated thus risking indeterminacy in what he is able to say. It is his view that exchanges do not suffer from, rather they depend upon, their indexical nature. It is only through a grasp of the circumstances / context of an utterance that those involved in the action are able to assign to the utterance a definite sense. Indexicality is thus a resource and in that sense part of the action itself. Sharrock and Anderson claim,

"The commitment to the primacy of the phenomenon should limit and override the requirement to objectivity, but not because it weakens a commitment to objectivity, for it is itself a form of commitment to objectivity. Its purpose is to place the requirement to see the object for itself, as it has been found in experience at the forefront and to provide an inhibition on the tendency to let a set of preconceptions take over, to let the methods be adapted to the nature of the phenomena, not the other way around. It would be unfaithful to the phenomenon if one were to seek to objectify something that cannot be objectified." Sharrock, W. and Anderson, B., The Ethnomethodologists p 109

To be true to the phenomenon, we must find ways of locating and accounting for indexicality, reflexivity and the situatedness of meaning. The centrality of these ideas and their role in the action cannot be overstated.

Several points emerge over the last few pages, that perhaps I should consider pertinent for my project. Sometimes, to be true to the phenomenon, to 'stop the animal disappearing', one has to first stop and look at the phenomenon and not try to impose pre-existent categories on it, in the assumption that we know, prior to examination, how it works. Rather, we first look and see, look for regularities / order / patterns. We see the phenomenon as a 'document for', 'pointing to' regularities. To look in a situated local way at accountable actions in flow, is to actually see social life coming into being. This detailed, careful, specific looking is paramount, then, and only then we can see what conclusions it will support.

If we consider what is said of turn-taking in the seminal paper of Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, they claim,

"... a turns talk will be heard as directed to a prior's turn's talk, unless special techniques are used to locate some other talk to which it is directed."

Sacks, H., Schegloff, E.A. and Jefferson, G., "A Simplest Systematics for the Organisation of Turn-Taking for Conversation", Language Vol. 50 No. 4 1974, p 728

In other words participants to the talk use the situatedness of that talk as a resource available to them through which to achieve meaning. Here the positioning of the utterance in relation to other utterances itself contributes to the sense that utterance is able to achieve. The time of its introduction in the flow of the action is accountable also as part of that action. Meaning is therefore able to be seen as intrinsically tied (indexically, reflexively and within the sequence) to the circumstances of the production of the talk.

Paramount also to my project is that to understand or even to 'see' situated meanings means to see them in flow, as part of a sequence in time.

### Evidence from Conversational Analysis

If we accept the veracity of the concepts of indexicality, reflexivity and time as situated resources available to participants to talk to assist in making sense of that talk, then we deal another blow to the traditional view of language (as an objective system or a system of unified signs). The language in talk is only closed (meaning accomplished) in the setting, reflexively and indexically, not set a priori, prior to the accomplishment of what it can be taken to mean in a context. To repeat (again) the earlier example, the word table does not have objective meaning (although it may have existence) before it is negotiated/accomplished in a particular setting, what it can be agreed that it will mean on that occasion. Perhaps though to establish this it is prudent to detail some of the main findings of Conversational Analysis.

If we return to the article by Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson. It is their observation that conversation has an obvious sequential nature, it is as the title suggests, an organisation of turn-taking. There are different contributors and their contributions to the talk seem to stand together (to those involved) in a meaningful way. It is the observation that as a 'general rule' only one person speaks at a time (there are overlaps, but one person will quieten to let the other have the floor). It is difficult

to claim for this finding, the status of a 'discovery' because mundane conversation is so routine and familiar to all of us, rather the finding is located as a central, ubiquitous characteristic of mundane talk. So for the analyst the focus is 'this is not a discovery, but it is a problem as to how it is achieved'.

No participant to a conversation is able to specify precisely or specifically what they will have to do/say in order to carry the conversation through to its completion. The conversation then is not pre-planned but 'worked-up-on-the-spot', a situated and improvised activity. This then is the conundrum of investigation for the paper : turn-taking happens in an orderly yet unpredictable way. The organisation of turn-taking must take place as the conversation is in progress, as an improvised yet organised and recognisable feature of the way conversations happen. What then are the systematics for the organisation of the taking of turns in conversations such that they are present in the act of conversation, but do not feature as observably (to those involved) as part of what is going on.

In this sense conversational analysis (C.A.) is much less concerned with talk as demonstrating a relationship between the people in that talk than with conversation as a relationship between utterances, such that the talk itself works-up its own organisation. Talk sets-up and sustains the sense of the utterances as they occur and alter / reinforce the sense of the overall action. Utterances are viewed as action in themselves, doing things to the talk. This is the realm of their analysis.

Here, as elsewhere, the data is allowed to both form the questions and provide the answers. Here I can only summarise what I take to be some of the central C.A. claims. For example, 'sequencing' and the notion of the 'adjacency-pair', as resources for sense making in conversations. The sense of a first utterance is locatable in a second utterance. The point is that whatever a first utterance can be taken to mean and indeed what meaning is allocated to it will be visible in the recipient's next turn at talk. Here, he / she can demonstrate that they can repair meaning (achieve an understanding / sense of what was said). This second slot in the talk that Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson call the 'next positioned linkage' is a resource for the first speaker also because they can then determine the sense / use that was made of their first utterance. Schegloff and Sacks write,

"... by an adjacently produced second, a speaker can show that he understood what a prior aimed at, and that he is willing to go along with that. Also, by virtue of the occurrence of an adjacently produced second, the doer of a first can see that what he intended was indeed understood and that it was or was not accepted. Also, of course, a second can assert his failure to understand, or disagreement, or delay in responding (indicating polite refusal) etc... Also inspection of a second by a first can allow the first speaker to see that while the second thought he understood, indeed he misunderstood. It is then, through the use of adjacent positioning that appreciations, failures, corrections, et cetera can themselves be understandably attempted."  
Schegloff, E.A. and Sacks, H., "Opening up Closings",  
Semiotica 7, p 297 - 8

Linked actions allow the conversation as it progresses to be monitored and modified (if necessary) by the parties to the conversation. What was said and what was meant thus moves between them, negotiated, improvised in flow.

The third position following this (the chance for the first speaker to speak again) as the first speaker's chance to renegotiate a sense of what was meant from what was said, to connect or repair any misunderstanding displayed in the second speaker's turn. Yet also third turns may be used to produce an utterance that can be taken as a forward progression of the previous two utterances. Here then this turn is useful for the speaker in the sense that it gives them the floor, but it is also a resource for the recipient (i.e. the second speaker). To hear in the third slot, onward progression is to hear that the second slot was received and passed over without challenge. This confirms the first person's acceptance of their (the second person's) understanding of that first utterance.

It is worth noting here that I present only a fraction of the material operated by C.A. This is not to denigrate their achievements in their careful painstaking analysis of talk but solely to be pragmatic. Their task is not mine and I detail enough of their central work to demonstrate our differences.

It may be the case that the C.A. work / observations / description of regularities will be very useful in any analysis of texts. If it is the case that in using talk and in using written language speakers / writers / hearers / readers draw upon the same resources (and it would seem not an unjustified assumption to suppose that they make use of the very same resources to do so), that common regularities will reoccur in talk and in text. Does the text set-up adjacency pairs introduce (for example) questions and then

later on (down the page) produce answers? Yet it is possible almost straight away to see difficulties with this. What we can note from the above is that the meaning, or sense of the talk, is accomplished between at least two people taking turns and using adjacent sequences to modify, repair, renegotiate what previous utterances had 'really' been all about. The talk is thus public. Understanding by one party is made clear to the other through their talk, monitored and challenged if necessary. Talk and its meaning, put simply, is negotiated through the use of sequencing of linked pairs of talk and the taking of turns. For my project then is this the case? It is not clearly the case (see 'The Talking Newspaper Text'). Even given that some have tried to establish the benefits to be gained from such an approach (see McHoul's claims pp 90 - 93). To list concisely some of the difficulties I find with this approach. Sense and meaning cannot be established in the same way in texts as in talk for there is no other person present to monitor, negotiate, modify my understanding of the text. The use of any third position (as above) is not possible. My response to the text (assuming a reader would be in the second slot) is not voiced or made public (made public to a listening / responding text?) as a 'next positioned linkage' in fact as a reader I am not aware of a first utterance / turn by the text. Reading is not characterised by turn-taking. A careful examination of the phenomenon first reveals this most clearly. When the taking of turns disappears, then the methods and observations of the C.A.'s (tied so accurately to the mastery of the taking of turns in conversation) lose their power. The sequence of turn-taking is not available as a resource, the relocation

of one slot as second in a pair, or 'next-positioning' applied over more extended sequences of action is not available (unless the text talks to itself?). Time as a resource also disappears or rather alters from the way it is used in conversation. I cannot know what is coming in talk before it happens, chronology constrains what I can at present say I know to be the case (i.e. thus far). A reader at a text can go to the 'end' of the story and read 'out of sequence'. The participants in talk do not stand in the same relationship to 'in-the-flow' as the reader of a text. I do not wish to suggest that sequencing, timing, in-the-flow may not be used as a resource to a reader, but rather that what will be known by 'sequencing', 'timing', 'in-the-flow' may be different from the sense of these terms in talk. Timing etc. may be achieved / accomplished in a different way, according to different situated criteria, observing different requirements of the local setting.

Perhaps what I observe is that it may be a mistake to think that words in talk are the same kind of phenomena as words in print and can therefore be treated in the same ways, by the same methods. Perhaps, we can only achieve them as the same, if this move is what the setting requires. The sameness of words in speech and words in print is however not pre-given, but an accomplishment. Perhaps we can deal with, handle, accomplish texts in a variety of ways.

#### Further Evidence from Ethnomethodology

We have yet to cover Garfinkel's notion of the et cetera



clause. It is a term he borrows from Schutz. Schutz claims, as detailed, that in the natural attitude, common-sense knowledge may be 'patchy', also by its very nature these typifications of what the world is like (that will stand till they need revision) are also indeterminate and reversible. As Schutz says, such concepts are open-ended, each carries along "an open horizon of undetermined content".

Garfinkel himself investigates this phenomena when he asks students to expand upon an utterance. Asking them to distinguish what was meant from what was said (see Garfinkel, H., Studies in Ethnomethodology Chapter One especially pp 25 -34 and 'Dana succeeded in putting a penny in a parking meter today without being picked up'). It is not possible to specify all the things that were taken to be said, but left unspoken. Terms understood and glossed over in common etc. There is always more that could be added, explained, clarified - what Garfinkel calls the 'et cetera clause'. (See Garfinkel, H., Studies in Ethnomethodology Chapter One esp. pp 18 - 25)

In another study at the U.C.L.A. psychiatric outpatients clinic, Garfinkel (see Garfinkel, H., Studies in Ethnomethodology Chapter One esp pp 11 - 24) was involved in investigating a coding system to facilitate analysis of the 'clinic career form'. (A career in the clinic designates the patient's progression through (or not as the case may be) various forms of treatment available in the clinic from the intake interviews, psychological testing, treatment, etc.) Garfinkel observes that coders often

encountered 'gaps' between what the coding instructions (categories etc.) allowed for and what was on the clinic career form i.e. it was not at all clear to what category particular information referred. In order to 'do the coding', the coders regularly bridged this gap. Filling in, interpreting, ad hocing, or adding an et cetera clause to the coding categories. They filled-in what they knew to be the case; that such categories were meant to provide descriptions of the clinic's procedures. So such and such a category could be seen to include this and this and this et cetera on a 'let-it-pass' basis, as O.K. till it proved to be not O.K. as a coding system. Heritage writes of this work,

"... this interpretive process ... is essential because the accomplishment of coding requires some closure of the interpretive gap between the 'words on a page' and what they mean. This gap is a familiar one. It is the one we have already encountered between 'saying' and 'meaning' in the previous discussion of mundane speaking and hearing." Heritage, J., Garfinkel and Ethnomethodology, p 162)

In the 'Dana' example and the 'coding of clinical cases' study, we see people routinely producing an et cetera clause for written materials. An acknowledgement that it will also mean (or be able to mean via an et cetera clause) more than it 'says'. It seems that as members we carry an attitude towards written material that we will let the looseness pass, fill-in, subsidise, resolve, even if only temporarily what the material means through an et cetera clause based on our patchy common-sense knowledge of the world. Written material often displaying an 'indefiniteness', so we as members fill in, close off, ad hoc, let-it-pass as sufficient for now till revision is required.

Evidence of this kind, that language is always able to be made to mean more than it specifies at any one time, does not just come from the empirical evidence of written material. In Weider's account of the convict code (Weider, D.L., 'Telling the Code', in R. Turner (ed) Ethnomethodology (Penguin, 1974)) there was always more to the code; (what a prisoner could or could not say or do), than any one prisoner could specify on any one occasion. Yet all recognised each occasion of its misuse or breach falling under the auspices of the rule. (So, 'not being able to specify completely beforehand', as a phenomenon, is not able to be explained away as simply a lack of knowledge.) The convicts could not specify beforehand but could recognise in practice via the application of an et cetera clause that, yes indeed, the rule did cover this episode and could be made to extend to this occasion.

What this means for me in my project is that any account of a reading that I may produce will always be capable of meaning more to me than it actually 'says' and that it will be a routine response in the face of an interpretive gap that I will fill-in/ad hoc or add an et cetera extension to what was actually written. Such 'looseness' is then able to be used as a resource by the reader. If such is the case then any reader will make perfect sense of what is before them as a matter of course, in a situated, contexted, interpretive way, but that this account will stand only till it needs revision. Accounts are capable of being produced and completed but not permanently closed off.

We are coming close to a theory that acknowledges the

activities of members as competent individuals, able to go about their social lives, unremarkably achieving and maintaining social life, social order and able to produce accounts (localised, contextualised) of these actions. For any sociologist a problem starts to emerge (and also for me in my role as theorist). The problem is, does all this mean that all we can know about social life is what people tell us - their stories? If one is concerned to be true to the phenomena, we could become concerned that we cannot decide between two individuals who give us different versions. How do we decide between them? Perhaps people will lie? Perhaps they are not able to specify the rationale of such familiar actions? As theorists we become impotent, either unable to proceed at all, or unable to proceed in the knowledge of sincerity to the phenomenon. Sharrock and Anderson address the problem, they claim it arises only through a misunderstanding. They write,

"... the recommendation is not to study people's accounts, but to study accounting practices. Rather than relying on what people tell us about their activities, we study the ways in which they organise themselves so that they can tell us about the things they do."  
Sharrock, W. and Anderson, B., The Ethnomethodologists, p 57 (emphasis original)

We do not have to be constrained to simply listening to stories (accounts) rather we can look at the ways actors organise, orientate to and manage their settings. Garfinkel writes that the focus of attention for theorists should be,

"... the activities whereby members produce and manage settings of ordinary everyday affairs (and that these) are identical with members' procedures for making those settings 'account-able'.  
Garfinkel, H., Studies in Ethnomethodology, p1 (my addition in brackets)

The methods members use for locating sense, understanding and defining their setting and their methods for constructing, maintaining and accomplishing those settings are the same. There is no sense of meaning that is extractable as separate or as a commentary on events beyond the involvement in those events. Understanding and meaning and accounts and accounting practices are all part of the action in the setting. So to look at the methods by which the action takes place is to locate the ways in which those involved gain their sense of what is going on, is to locate and document their situated understanding.

If we, for example, take the work of Sudnow, (Sudnow, D., Ways of the Hand : The Organisation of Improvised Conduct (London, R.K.P., 1978) to observe how a stream of music is produced and recognised as jazz music, is to document the action and the sense together in flow. Producing and doing jazz, is demonstrating that one understands what it means, in action.

So, in reading texts then, the actions, production and maintenance of a particular reading is endowed with meaning. I should examine how such moves are accountable to me as a reasonable course of action (in that setting). What are the important aspects of that setting that count (for that time) as critical features that I orientate to. Any moves made are thus endowed with very good locally situated reasons for their production. Theorists therefore look at what counts as a reasonable fact. How a reasonable fact is worked-up in the situation. How those involved determine to their satisfaction how things really are. This is an

interesting aspect of lay theorising. Earlier I said, as theorists, what can we do, how do we know if individuals lie to us in their accounts? Well, theorising in this attitude really steps outside this problem.

Consider, actors in situations, members in the 'natural attitude' going about their affairs, routinely, unremarkably. They proceed in an almost entirely pragmatic way - they proceed in order to get things done satisfactorily, proceed according to the requirements of the setting. If we observe these procedures, the 'actions-in-order-to', then we cannot be observing a lie, for such would be a failure to accomplish/maintain the situation or the setting, it would not meet the requirements of the setting - it would not get things done. In a sense, it is possible to observe what we may take to be 'doing-something-else', but not a 'not-doing'. Actions are always accountable they cannot be lies (and we look to the situation to see what is the case, how does the action / utterance pass off, what does it do to that action as it proceeds?) Further to this, if we describe what is taking place, then we are true to the phenomenon and its situated meaning.

Do I, at last, reach a methodology that will enable me to approach a text not solely as a reader, but will enable me to locate my actions in theoretical terms? A methodology that will account for the situated ubiquitous nature of the phenomena of ending-up-just-reading, without letting that aspect of the reading disappear?

An Ethnomethodological approach looks most promising. I feel progress has been made identifying interesting, useful, pertinent aspects of the different theoretical positions, yet still I feel most of the theoretical positions encourage the animal to disappear, by doing damage to that animal. We are forced to see aspects of texts as things that the categories available in the theories allow us to see. We are led to enforce structures on texts without looking first.

In this chapter I have in effect taken 'time-out'. Taken time and words to detail some of the theories that might have been available to me, to enable me to 'get-on', to undertake and accomplish my task. After all this, still we ask the question, 'How do we make equivalences of 'ink on paper' with the real-world-events it details' (without making the central characteristic of 'ending-up-just-reading' disappear from the account). How am I to detail this? In this sense my question is not answered.

This time-out has been instructive. A viewing or consideration of the nature of language grows, we see it as non-representational but situated, contexted, indexical and as part of the action. Of a systems of signs not grounded in reality, of meaning not coming from beneath the text in the real world, not transported there by the language and its referential systems of signs. Of the meaning of a text as the ranging over of its surface, the movements in language of the active role of the reader in perception, in closing off signs, in achieving meaning in flow.

Yet in the final consideration here, what do these theories allow me to do? They do not allow me to read newspapers, I can do that already. What they do is to allow me as a theorist to locate the meaning I derive (anyway, prior to their enforcement, without their help, meaning accomplished unremarkably, routinely) in their terms. They allow me a structuralist viewing, a phenomenological viewing etc.

So, in my project, if I now read again, I can say, 'Here a structuralist would say that what I am doing is ...' or, 'A conversational analyst would account for this action in this way ...'. At best, this type of theorising at the text, constitutes something of the nature of a verification/validation process for these theories. A sort of, 'Yes, the structuralists have got it right, because here ... yet here, a post-structuralist notion of signs is more accurate', (for example). My reading of a newspaper text could quickly degenerate into a competition, a battleground between which theory fared best, proved most accurate in allowing me to account for my actions.

Yes, but some (I am sure) will say, 'Yes, but that's what theorising is all about (and maybe it is) but, is it what being a reader of newspaper texts is 'all about'? (What about my role as reader?) Such a version of a reading, would it be recognised by an 'ordinary' reader as a competent reading? I think not. I think it is more likely to be recognised as doing something else, like, 'Looking for evidence to support various theoretical claims as to how we read' or 'Doing a sociological exercise in order to produce a chapter to get a Ph.D.'!



Would it,  
Quietly,  
Sadly,  
Cause the animal to disappear?

Can we not envisage a reading of a newspaper text that is true to its phenomenon? Like the kind of experience we have in the presence of our newspaper at the breakfast table, and yet still have a version that is theoretical, that is doing sociology?

For Garfinkel, documenting particular settings, describing the constituted action is to point to meaning, is to show an underlying pattern of social life as it happens. Reading a newspaper story - one little occasion of social life, social order as it happens? Can we have theorising in the mundane attitude?

#### Footnotes

1. I borrow this example from Potter, J. and Wetherall, M., Discourse and Social Psychology, beyond attitudes and behaviour (London, Sage, 1987).

## FROM THE PROBLEM TO A SOLUTION - AN EXPLANATION OF METHOD

The idea as you will remember was, 'how is it possible to make of what is solely ink on paper, equivalences of the real world event they detail'. The solution I had decided resided in examining what happened in reading to make this possible.

The problem was 'ending up just reading' newspapers; the inability to create or maintain a distance from the material. I was engulfed by the undertaking. The doing was possible, the description of, or accounting for the doing was elusive, eternally a reader and not an analyst. The roles of reader and theorist seemed to engage me in conflicting activities.

The problem with the problem became that as I employed various methodologies or analytical techniques to help me introduce some distance between myself and the material in order to be able to analyse the reading of newspapers; I did not obtain a solution to my problem but merely multiplied the problematic features of the undertaking. The problem, so to speak, became more problematic.

Now, I have found a way of moving over and within a newspaper text that enables me to capture some of the richness of reading. While this solution is detailed in the last two chapters, 'A day's journey' and 'Am I travelling in the Right Direction', some preparatory remarks are necessary.

I have not found the solution to the problematic nature of reading. I have only constructed a solution. The distinction is both deliberate and significant. I have as the title suggests made the move from the problem to a solution. This is not to suggest any personal failure or inadequacies, or omissions from the work itself, it is simply a recognition of the nature of the phenomena. This is an acknowledgement that no single, true for all time solution is possible. It will always be possible for an et cetera clause to operate, and this is a recognition that in the very nature of texts themselves, is their openness (or looseness) to be used as evidence to support many different even contradictory interpretations of themselves.

Differing and yet totally adequate versions of texts exist as situated readings. Versions are the results of actual readings and as such their justifications lie in the occasion and situatedness of the readings. To accept this is to see that although I have found a practical resolution of some of the issues involved it does not mean that I have found a permanent solution, because of course, a permanent solution would have to pre-empt all future readings and actions and terms in which these might be expressed, it would in effect amount to the same kind of thing as crystal ball gazing.

This then, in general terms necessarily limits the claims for my solution. On a more specific level, within my solution itself there exist certain tensions, which, for what I see as good reasons I have resolved in certain ways. What follows represents my recognition of these potential tensions and can be seen as an account of those good

reasons and an explanation of why the solution took the form it did. It is of course for my reader to judge my success and the adequacy of my solution.

Previously, I had attempted to enforce solutions by applying various methodological techniques. Yet, I did not end up with an account of the way we may all read newspapers; but rather an account of what must be done to the material in order to be able to see it in terms of the theory. How the activity, its situatedness and richness must be altered to make it fit what the various terms of a particular methodology could locate. How the animal disappeared. That, which I knew and recognised in reading always seemed untouched. These chapters therefore became not solutions to the problem, but an account of how the various theories failed to capture or detail that rich activity we call reading. They became accounts of their inadequacies, as I saw them.

I had said that Ethnomethodology looked most promising. Yet in a curious way Garfinkel's work (even despite his empirical studies) reads as almost an abstract theory. It is not of the same nature as (for example) experimental method. Very clearly, under the auspices of experimental method I should have definite actions to undertake : identify variables, consider experimental design, control the independent variable, collect results / data etc. By Ethnomethodology's very nature (of looking first, being true to the phenomenon), a pre-prescribed set of actions to carry out, like a recipe, on all occasions of social investigations, would be anathema to it. So for the would

be Ethnomethodologist, exactly how to proceed is not made clear. One is certainly given orientations to the material (look first, be true to the phenomena etc.), aspects of the setting to attend to (action as accomplished and accountable, reflexive and indexical, situated, subject to the et cetera clause etc.). We have what seems to amount to, virtually, a perspective, a specialised sort of sensitivity to events / actions, a particular kind of viewing.

I have previously documented my misgiving with conversational analysis, feeling sure it would do damage to the particular situated nature of reading. Indeed when Sharrock and Anderson detail the achievements of the C.A.'s, they add that they do so,

"Not because it has provided some general method of sociological inquiry. Nothing could be more mistaken than to think that the key to sociological understanding is to be found by tape-recording and transcribing talk in all kinds of social settings in the hope that by doing so one will have found the method of determining how social settings organise themselves."  
Sharrock, W. and Anderson, B., The Ethnomethodologists Key Sociologists Series (London, Ellis Horwood and Tavistock, 1986) p 80 (emphasis original)

The methods of the C.A.'s handles, extremely successfully, the material of conversations, but it is a mistake to think that they may stand as the empirical methods of the more abstract and theoretical Ethnomethodology per se.

Within an Ethnomethodological framework others have tried to account for actions as activities not talk.

Ryave and Schenkein (Ryave, A.L. and Schenkein, J.N., Notes

on the Art of Walking p. 265-277 in Turner, R. (ed.)

Ethnomethodology (Middlesex, England, Penguin 1974)

attempted an analysis of an non-verbal activity, which does not produce a version of events which robs the participants of their obviously skilful ability to manage the task.

Maybe I could proceed like this also? So how did they do it - would I do the same? They made video-recordings of people walking, and watched the ordered and regular patterns and ways of walking. The walkers orientated themselves to 'walking together' or 'walking alone', speeding up, or slowing, changing direction etc. in order to manage space to achieve this.

For me? Follow their method? Could I video-record people reading newspapers? Well, yes, but what would be the quality of the data produced? Would there be anything to 'work upon', to analyse?

I have no verbal data, no-one could produce protocols, as such, but also I had no action that I could record either. Reading isn't an activity like football, its actions are not openly displayed, watchable. For all intents and purposes, in reading, there is observably nothing going on. I have a mainly silent and still activity, a video recording would produce me little data of any kind. There was some activity going on, there was some action, a page turned, an occasional look of surprise, frown or chuckle; but I, as all readers, knew there was much, much more to it than this. But, again, how could I tap into it - how could I reach it, retell, so that others might know of its nature?

I looked back to the Ethnomethodology literature for other studies that might suggest ways in which I could proceed. Heritage writes of the studies of work material,

"The task of the studies-of-work programme is to develop descriptions of these competencies as they manifest themselves in specific courses of conduct which are accountable as distinctive occupational work."  
Heritage, J., Garfinkel and Ethnomethodology (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1984) p 294

Reading as occupational work, considered as competent accountable behaviour? Heritage also writes,

"At its most basic the studies-of-work programme is directed to analysing the specific, concrete material practices which compose the moment-to-moment, day-by-day work of occupational life."  
Heritage, J., Garfinkel and Ethnomethodology p 293

Mainly concerned with aspects of scientific activity, the work explores the possibility of being able to see, in someone's activities, how science is actually, really, normally, properly done. Put differently, how do the activities of science embody the nature of science? One could perhaps directly substitute the word reading in here. How do the activities of reading embody the nature of reading? What for example does one have to do to make a scientific inquiry (Garfinkel, H., Lynch, M. and Livingston, E., "The Work of a Discovering Science Construed with Materials from the Optically Discovered Pulsar", Philosophy of the Social Sciences 11, 1981, pp 131 - 58 ) or retrace a mathematical proof (Livingston, E., "An Ethnomethodological Investigation of the Foundations of Mathematics" (Ph.D. Dissertation U.C.L.A., 1982) (Unpublished)) or (for my purpose) a competent reading of a newspaper text?

Within these works (See also the collection in Garfinkel, H. (ed), Ethnomethodological Studies of Work, (London, R.K.P., 1986) the focus is not solely on conversation but on the specific situated action. Work activities are under scrutiny in the expectation that they will disclose situated textures of practice and in so doing they will expose the culturally created transcendent objects (pulsar, mathematical facts, scientific facts) via their embodied, situated activity, the situated construction of 'to-all-intents-and-purposes' non-situated products.

As Sociologists we may talk of the Sociology of Work (of Religion, of Education, etc) but do we know what these occupations/jobs consist of (for example, the sociology of work, we talk of the workers' relation to the means of production etc. not, for example, what a steelworker actually does, day-in-day-out). Heritage writes,

"The gap in the social science literature on occupations consists of all the missing descriptions of what occupational activities consist of and all the missing analyses of how the practitioners manage the tasks which, for them, are matters of serious and pressing significance."

Heritage, J., Garfinkel and Ethnomethodology p 299

In my project, what does a reader actually do? The answer to this question is sought within the contexted setting. The ordinary activities are thus examined for the way they display competent work practices. A preoccupation with 'local production' and the observability in practices of reasoning.

What I understand in these studies is the possibility of doing interpretive sociology true to the



Ethnomethodological orientation, yet doing work with words and texts that does not resemble conversational analysis. I think we must cover this issue again. I have argued that C.A. uses methods suitable for the analysis of conversation but the usefulness of their extension to other areas of material is doubtful. Everything that gives C.A. its power to cope with conversation (the organisation of conversation through the taking of turns) is absent (in that sense) from texts. Even the realisation that C.A. has always represented the talk under scrutiny as a text does not change matters. They only consider it to be, treat it as, transcribed talk. They suspend belief that what is before them is no longer talk. Their methods have proved so fruitful because of their care with the phenomenon. They took care to see what was there, drawing out regularities, patterns, only as they proved to be, not as they were presumed to be. Their methods grew out of the phenomenon and this is the secret of their success - precisely because their methods were tailored to cope with talk.

Sharrock and Anderson argue that,

"Hence to go about things in the same way that conversational analysis does is not to mimic its specific methods and modes of analysis but to undertake to articulate for one's elected phenomenon, the very modes of investigation it requires." Sharrock, W. and Anderson, B., The Ethnomethodologists, p 84 (emphasis original)

Fidelity to the phenomenon is paramount. Sharrock and Anderson continue,

"Consequently the methods that conversational analysis identifies are ones which are specific to conversation; they will provide for an orderly taking of turns at talk but they will not enable one to (say) play a game of major

league football, pilot a 747 (...). If one wants to inquire into how mundane activities other than conversations are conducted then one will have to follow conversational analysis's own example, by making a fresh beginning, putting one's own phenomenon first."  
Sharrock, W. and Anderson, B., The Ethnomethodologists, p 84 (emphasis added)

The sense of the account is located in the setting itself and in those practices brought into play within it as legitimate, locally accountable competences. Let us be clear here what we are detailing. In doing this we also close off a concept left open from earlier. What we could be talking of here is, (like with the concept of language as an arbitrary non-unified set of signs, closed off in practice and endowed with meaning through and by) conventions. A normative system of expectancies, conventional usage, actions etc.

No, Heritage is very clear that in his view the Sociology of Work programme is not about this,

"Occupations are thus understood, not as the products of normative socialisation, unstated conventions, beliefs or tacit assumptions (cf. Lynch et al, 1983 p. 208) but primordially as self organising domains of recognisably competent work practices which 'compose themselves through vernacular conversations and the ordinariness of embodied disciplinary activities' (ibid.)".  
Heritage, J., Garfinkel and Ethnomethodology, p 302

We do not understand settings by describing them in terms of the conventions at work in them (more widely available in society) or the beliefs and assumptions that are brought to the setting by the individual as representations of a wider culture. Rather, we understand from within. Norms, conventions do not regulate or cause our activities.

To see the behaviour within situations as merely the

enactment of a convention, is to do grave injustice to the richness of the situation. Reasons for actions are brought into being by the action in flow not by the automatic application and following of a convention. What goes on in situations cannot be explained away by a convention 'in general'. If, in a situation a convention seems to be at work, it is because that convention, on that occasion has been worked up and orientated to. To achieve a conventional outcome requires work too. There may be a conventional (normative) way of acting in setting (for example, on a bus, standing up and letting a little old lady have your seat). And if this does not occur? Is the analysis, expressed in terms of faulty socialisation, or moral outrage and selfish motivations, in short seeing the outcome / version of events as defective because they do not follow the normative / conventional pattern? Or rather does one do as the Ethnomethodologists and not compare the behaviour / events in any one setting against any alternative (and supposedly objective) setting to see what should be done - to see if this behaviour / activity / utterance 'makes-the-grade'. Instead we simply take what happens in that setting as accountable and competent, if this is the way the actors involved orientate to it. We get different versions (You don't stand on the bus because you know, and dislike the little old lady or because you are sick and she is healthy or simply because you are chatting to your friend) that are seen in situ as competent actions bringing off, making evident competences in that situation as defined. If the old lady brings into play the convention : 'Why don't you give me your seat. Can't you see that I'm a little old lady?', then that convention enters the action

as part of what is really going on. If not, then a conventional explanation is profoundly useless and silent because it is not part of the action as it went on, as actors orientated to the action. It is not observable in their actions, deeds, utterances etc. It is irrelevant to the sense of that setting as it happened.

### The Consideration of Action in Settings

If meaning is achieved and observably located in the way local actors achieve, maintain and orientate to the action as it happens, how then, as a reader and as a theorist, am I to 'capture', 'detail' or 'document' these actions? How do I know that I have located the significant actions or located them in their totality? Heritage writes,

"... the boundaries of specific located ordinary actions, their 'units' or 'segments', the determination of adequacy in their description or representation - all of these questions and many more pose problems which cannot be resolved 'in principle' but which require solution in the context of practical engagement with descriptive tasks." Heritage, J., Garfinkel and Ethnomethodology, p 30 (emphasis added)

Just as action is located as meaningful only in settings, so descriptions, theoretical accounts are only found to be adequate within the setting to the extent that they detail the action as observable and orientated to. Theory only in practice not in principle.

Should I, therefore, as a method of analysis, enter a text and read and describe in ways, observable, the situational factors by which that action becomes accountable? Is this, arguably, theorising in the mundane attitude? I 'do'

theorising by seeing as theoretical what I do as routine; by detailing to what I orientate, constraints I see, or possibilities for action, the situation as it is worked-up, achieved, maintained, repaired so as to constitute an adequate (on that occasion) version of what is really going on. To theorise in the mundane attitude is to document my observable achievement of routine-ness, given the organisational problems open in that setting. To detail quite literally how I am able to 'see', 'justify', 'account for' that reading on that occasion.

This much, certainly would be an Ethnomethodological perspective, yet would it be Ethnomethodology? Sharrock and Anderson comment,

"It is a real possibility, then, that Ethnomethodology must be a pursuit which constantly makes new beginnings. It is not a discipline of new beginnings in a once-for-all sense, but possibly one of perpetual fresh starts. A major change in its topic of inquiry may involve a new beginning, a search for the appropriate and distinctive methods for the apprehension of the phenomenon."  
Sharrock,W. and Anderson,B., The Ethnomethodologists, p 82

So, Ethnomethodology allows for new approaches / methods. Will it allow for my method in reading? As Zimmerman and Pollner (Zimmerman,D. and Pollner,M., "The Everyday World as a Phenomenon", in J.Douglas (ed) Understanding Everyday Life (London, R.K.P., 1971)) raise, I would be faced with the 'topic / resource problem'. That object which features as the topic of analysis (reading) is also the analytical resource I must use in order to recover the object, (I will read), in that sense my mundane theorising would require me to do precisely the things I am seeking to document because of the doing.

Within other disciplines this shift (the use of topic as a necessary resource in order to proceed) is also occurring. There is a growing recognition that one, as a member of any culture / society cannot step outside that culture, outside what we know, to be able to see it more clearly. Given this is so, perhaps we should study this phenomenon. Potter and Wetherall write,

"As Social Psychologists we have our own representations of the world and we use these as a resource in our analysis, but our research topic is the nature of representations themselves. The methods we adopt to make the research possible are the very thing we should be studying."  
Potter, J. and Wetherall, M., Discourse and Social Psychology beyond attitudes and behaviour (London, Sage, 1987) p 143

I rely upon my ability to put these resources into practice in order that I may be able to locate the very objective under study, through these resources. There once again arises the fear that I will be untrue to the phenomenon before me. Will I do injustice to the nature of reading by merely on one occasion making a single (idiosyncratic) reading? How am I able to justify that I have the right to propose my reading as an adequate competent reading of that text, when I admit firstly that there can be other versions and secondly when I admit that I must rely on the competency of my reading practices? How do I know that my reading practices are competent?

When proposing a version of how descriptive accounts are necessarily indexical, Garfinkel argues that the sense of descriptions in talk is indexically achieved. It rests on the hearer's ability to make out what is meant from what is said. This proceeds according to methods relied upon by both speakers and hearers. He further argues that these

methods are under the continued potential revision by the common-sense knowledge of those involved and the context and the contextual requirements to be able to make definitive sense of what 'is going on'.

Yet, if it is as I have argued, that common-sense knowledge is patchy, will there be a vital gap in my common-sense knowledge, thus a deficiency in my reading practices, resulting in an erroneous version? How silly, for this doubt presupposes that there could be a definitive version against which to compare all our versions, relegating them to the status of mere attempts at reading. No, rather we all come to texts as readers, this conundrum faces us all (even the person attempting the definitive version). Yes, each version is as a result of schematic, patchy common-sense knowledge and readers' reading practices and is situated in time - and that is all we ever have. If on that occasion whatever action passes as part of what is deemed to be required by the situation, is so worked up, accountable as what the situation requires then reading proceeds and is made sensible. Action is self organising, whatever passes will be accountable. Stops, starts, misreadings all endowed with a place in the proceedings and shaping that version as it happened. This is not a metaphysical problem, it is simply the way differing versions of the same text come about.

It would seem then, that I can see an argument for an Ethnomethodological perspective being extendable to encompass a descriptive account of a reading of a newspaper text. One account, my account, valid because it details how

its own reasonableness is observably accounted for. However, is what I am really arguing for, a step back to Phenomenology? What I can know, my version, one occasion? Thinly disguised solipsism? Is my account all in my head? I can see how this notion arises. As part of what the setting requires I may be required to 'fill-in' the interpretive gaps in the reading by adding an et cetera clause (see above). I will fill-in with things that I previously 'knew', take to be so, aspects of things 'pass-able' on this occasion - in short I rely upon my common-sense knowledge of the world, schematic and patchy. Others might express this by saying that I come to a text with a set of expectations, attitudes, beliefs, memories. What I end up with could be an entirely personal version of the text (perhaps, although there is no reason to suppose that all my attitudes, beliefs, views and memories will be totally different from everyone else, or, that such differences as do exist determine what reading is made (i.e. the stuff inside my head causes me to produce a certain version)). What I am not convinced of is that the methods by which I arrive at a personal version will be entirely different from the way another could arrive at a different version. Given like settings / constraints - i.e. presence at a text, opportunities for moves I am sure will be closed off in similar ways, even if the understanding they give rise to is more varied. Locating reader's resources and practices and seeing how on this occasion they give rise to meaning I am sure will be within the scope of my investigation. If these are the different aspects of reading (considered prior to that occasion), the focus of investigation is better expressed as : 'How will these



aspects occur, interplay, come about and to what end, in practice in that reading?'. .

The invocation of meaning must be made publically observable. I should detail why certain moves were possible, required, able to be achieved, later revised, detail my organisational problems when situated at a text and how they were resolved on that occasion, in order to make that reading.

Understanding is, of course, more than a mental state. It is publicly observable and located, this takes the 'animal' out of my head and locates my theorising as a social phenomenon. Potter and Wetherall write,

"... that although cognitive processes are clearly going on, and people without a brain certainly do not understand, this is not a sufficient condition for understanding. Understanding is assessed by public criteria and practical tests. The term understanding is properly used when these criteria can be, or have been, satisfied, not merely when people have a certain experience."

Potter, J. and Wetherall M., Discourse and Social Psychology, p 180 (emphasis original)

In this sense although alone in my reading, my theorising in the mundane attitude, in making that reading accountable, is most definitely socially available to any of the readers of my version / text.

### Accounting for Regularities

Documentary method (as I wrote earlier) is a 'pointing to' or 'document of' regular patterns of social life. If I account for my actions, orientations in reading and I detect regularities, how might I express these? (What is at

stake here is an argument that goes something along the lines : if we, as members, all share common reading practices, then, given the same text we could all enact the appropriate techniques / methods / resources and achieve the same version of the very same text. I could be making the readers' resources a causal factor in my theory, giving rise to a definitive meaning / version of the text again.)

If we follow this argument through, we can investigate whether this is the case. How might I detect regularities? One way would be to see how many times I do a certain thing - pause at a full stop, read a headline etc.. If I were to count-up, add together like features (use of punctuation, direction of progression across the page etc.), then I could pick out regular common occurrences by demonstrating that they often occur. This is the very simple basis of statistical methods - counts, the use of the normal distribution curve. Adequate ways of proceeding under the auspices of such an approach would be to do many readings, to reduce the potential 'biases' of any one reading, to gain a typical picture, to build up the numerical value of 'n', to be able to say one has considered a representative sample.

Yet, can we not detect regularities in other ways? Do I have to consider / count a large number of examples in order to prove that a feature happens often, is a regular occurrence? Take an example here. I go to New York (I already have common-sense knowledge about the kind of place New York is, it is 'known-of' territory). I walk along a street, there are many, many people, traffic solid in six

lanes across the road, fumes in the air. What am I to make of these features, are they regularities? Is New York routinely busy, crowded, clogged with traffic jams, choked with pollution? Must I observe day by day to see if this is so? No, absolutely not, I look to the behaviour of those in the setting, how do they respond to these features? Is there shock, horror, cries of outrage, fear or disturbance or, do we notice in the orientation of those involved, nothing remarkable? Do we see that the native New Yorkers mundanely with 'nothing out of the ordinary' getting on with life? Do we see in the way that they hardly seem to notice (what we see as a stranger) that these events are commonplace? So familiar, hardly noticed anymore. In short we see in the observable orientation of those involved that these events are regular occurrences. Participants demonstrate regularities by the way they maintain either a routine or a non-routine definition of the situation.

I can identify regularities in reading by observing my natural response to the features of the setting. The point of this example is to show that it is those events in reading that I orientate to in the most mundane routine taken-for-granted way, that are the most regular features of reading for me. Routine and hardly seen. Wittgenstein writes,

"The aspects of things that are most important for us are hidden because of their simplicity and familiarity."  
Wittgenstein, L. Philosophical Investigations trans G.E.M. Anscombe (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1976) ff 129

Events that 'stand out', that I am likely to notice, I do so precisely because they are out of the ordinary. Non

routine, non regular occurrences. The less easily spotted, the more central the characteristic.

If, however, I do manage to spot these regularities in reading, how (still) do I locate them in my theorising? I could say that in those areas of commonplace regularities we achieve reading by following a rule of reading. Are reading practices a series of rules for application to texts? This area has been widely debated (the place of rule governed behaviour in the social sciences - see for example Barnes, B., "On the Conventional Character of Knowledge and Cognition" Philosophy of the Social Sciences 11, 1981, p303 - 33 and Taylor, C., "Interpretation and the Sciences of Man", The Review of Metaphysics Vol 25, 1971, No 1).

Garfinkel claims that what may seem to be rule governed may be more appropriately seen as rule-orientated behaviour. For (as I said earlier), even if abiding by a rule is the definition of the situation as it happened, this very same definition of the situation has had to be worked-up as any other. The specificities of the rule (how it will apply, what it will be allowed to count for on this occasion) have to be situationally decided on or closed off. The rule is in Garfinkel's terms applied for 'another first time'.

Barnes, in summarising the 'gist' of Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations (especially ff 143 - 242), says of rule orientated behaviour,

"... that proper usage (of a rule) is developed step-by-step, in processes involving successions of on-the-spot judgements. Every instance of use, or of proper use, of a concept must in the last analysis be accounted for separately by reference to specific, local, contingent determinents."

Barnes, B., T.S.Kuhn and Social Science (London, Macmillan, 1982) p 30

So, where I spot regularities in my reading by what I take is my orientation to an unspoken rule, I should recognise that this is a recognition and that this application of this rule is an achievement in itself. Perhaps also though it is possible to consider this matter from a different perspective.

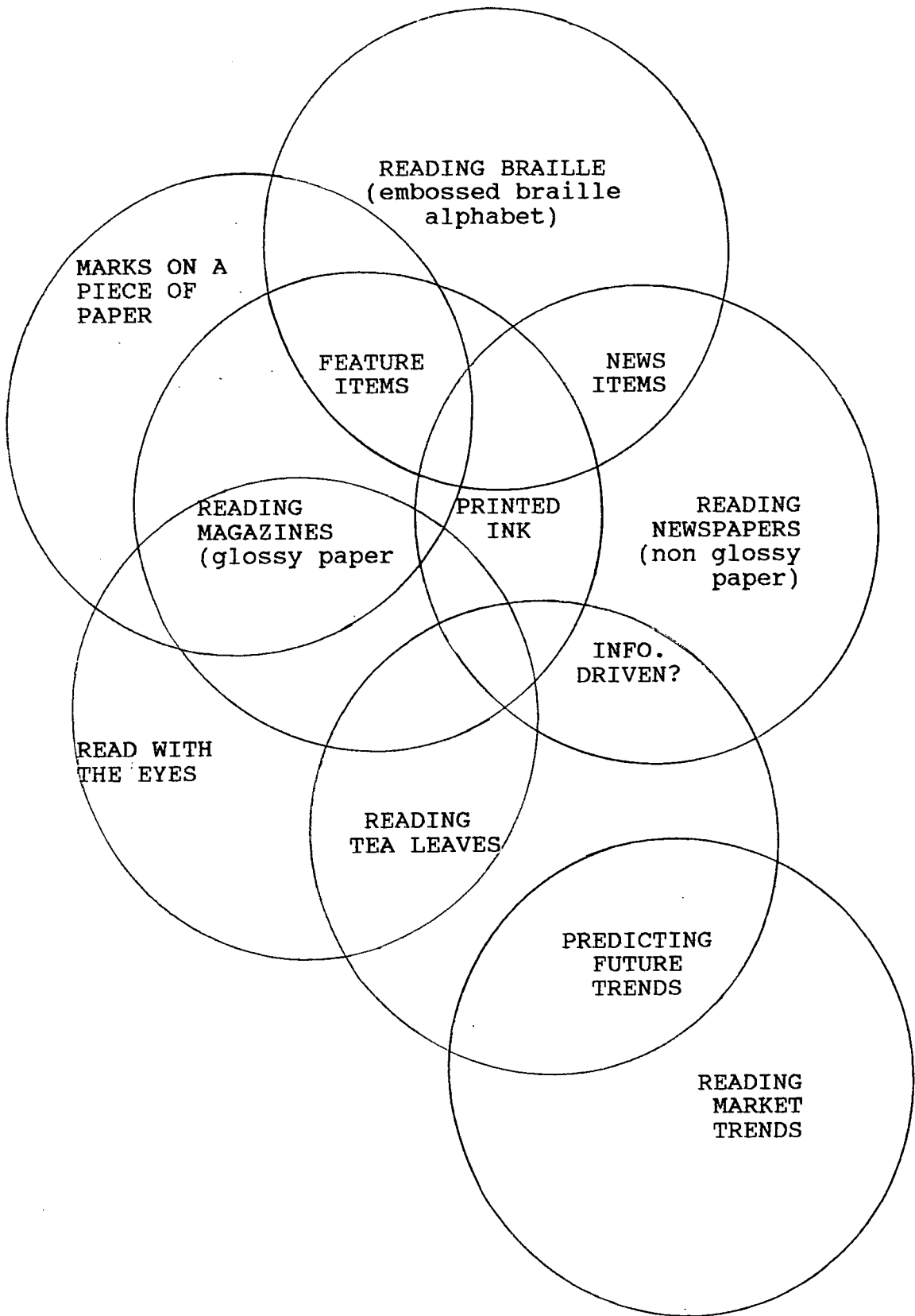
We start at the point (from Schutz) that language is inherently typifying. Through language we are encouraged to describe the commonalities in objects. To re-use an earlier example, a wood is rich with a multitude of green, green leaves, grass, stems, mosses, algae, etc. Greens, that are so varied, plants so divergent (not only in colour, but also texture, species, locale and shape). Yet in effect we close off this unmanageable uniqueness of the world to the manageable terms - 'green plants'. A shorthand gloss. (An example from Rosch, E., "Universals and Cultural Specifics in human categorisation" in R. Brislin, S. Bochner and W. Lonner (eds) Cross Cultural Perspectives in Learning (New York, Halstead Press, 1975) pp 177 - 206)

Is there a rule at work here? Something akin to 'If it is 'green', alive yet sessile and cold, see it as a green plant'. Or is there something rather different going on? In seeing 'green plants', do we merely attend to (to borrow Wittgenstein's notion) 'family resemblances'? In all the objects before us there is no definitive factor able to be located as the element they all share in common. (Instead, it is like a family and their physical features. There is the 'family nose', mother's eyes, granny's dimples etc. No one family member has all these features (and so amounts to

an ideal type), neither is one feature necessarily common to all members (no essentially true defining characteristic) for the members to be recognisably related to each other and for us in our language to be able to sensibly extend a gloss and call them 'the Smiths'.)

Apply this example to reading. It may be the case that different types of reading are like the different family members. Reading novels shares a textual base with reading newspapers, comics, etc. Braille, still based on a textual surface yet no longer the printed word, but still a form of words. Music (still on a flat surface) yet now with musical notation. There are nuances of similarities, resemblances, alterations, differential applications. Think of reading a person's expression, reading tea-leaves, reading market trends, reading the fashion scene. The word reading itself is not closed off, but can be opened / closed off in different settings, worked up to sensibly mean different things. What we seem to describe is not the simple application of a rule or even the more complex orientation to a rule, but rather a particular matrix of circumstances, intermeshed, woven, a texture of applications. A matrix of circumstances. Like a fabric of social life.

Like sets and subsets of common and non common features. Our earlier example might look something like the diagram overleaf.



Reading Braille shares a common feature with reading magazines and newspapers - done in the presence of a piece of paper (although not always!). Reading newspapers and reading magazines both involve the usage of printed ink (not extendable to Braille). Reading tea leaves and magazines and newspapers are all done with the eyes (not so Braille or reading market trends. Reading market trends shares a feature with reading tea leaves - prediction of future events etc.

The point of putting this example in a visual form is twofold. Firstly, it illustrates that although we have reading braille and reading market trends, glossed over as like activities with the same term. This does not necessarily indicate that such activities will inherently have much (or indeed anything) in common. Secondly, it illustrates the strengths and weaknesses of rules. Rules can sensibly, reasonably be applied to account for the structure of this diagram (e.g. if your reading activity involves reading printed ink, then you could be reading a newspaper or a magazine (or a book, letter, etc. if the diagram were more complex) and if the ink is printed on glossy paper, understand what you are doing as reading a magazine. So actions are located by their similarities and differences from one another (as both Structuralists and Post Structuralists might suggest). Yet, where rules fail us is in their omissions. Although you may now understand your action as reading a magazine, it still does not detail precisely what you are doing. The detail, the richness, the complexity, the situated uniqueness of the happening that make it the event that it was is lost. The strength of the



rules is their ability to gloss and generalise social situations as category types but they destroy variance.

Garfinkel has stated that rules and the et cetera clause (that makes the rules able to be brought into play sensibly in varying settings) are,

"practices for burying monsters ... for refusing the existence of exceptions."

Garfinkel, H., oral contributions in R.J.Hill and K.S.Crittenden (eds) Proceedings of the Purdue Symposium on Ethnomethodology, Institute Monograph Series, No. 1, Institute for the Study of Social Change, Purdue University, 1968 (Cited in Heritage, J., Garfinkel and Ethnomethodology p 125)

This is not pathological action, in practice it is simply done in order that the action in flow may be worked-up as rule analysable conduct. Yet, (given my very particular project) to see the sense or meaning of a text as worked-up in one situated unique setting as the very result of that setting, then only to describe the setting in terms of rules is to gloss over situatedness, typifying and silencing variance, in order to make that setting seem like all other settings of readings. (I would merely be describing the places of intersection between the sets and be unable to touch the areas they do not hold in common. We get half a description, picking up the family resemblances with the rule and miss the family member.

Rules guide us towards extractable essences of a reading in common, not the particularities of a reading in practice. They make every occasion of reading explicable, understandable and meaningful in terms of every other occasion of reading (as being of that category of events)

not to detail how local meaning and understanding is achieved in order to bring that event into existence.

So a reading of a text that theorises the activity as a local account of the event as it was seen to proceed should not include rules as explanation / theoretical devices to account for actions per se, for these stop us seeing their particularities. Rules can feature as part of the description to the extent that they are part of the ongoing definition of what was really going on. Rules are perhaps not best used by theorists to explain away action but as resources used by participants in order to achieve that action. We look to the phenomenon to see first before we decide that reading as rule orientated action is going on, or whether reading is happening by some other locally explicable means. To get a full description is to detail / document all the circle (on that occasion), not merely its common features with other circles but its totality of sense and action at that time. The complete picture.

### The Role of the Reflexive Theorist

Potter and Wetherall, as discourse analysts, transcribe their data (often the data of ordinary talk), then they code the resultant body of transcribed text into 'manageable chunks'. They write,

"The first thing to note regarding coding is that it is quite distinct from doing analysis itself. The goal is not to find results but to squeeze an unwieldy body of discourses into manageable chunks. It is an analytic preliminary preparing the way for a much more intensive study of the material through the selective coding process."

Potter, J. and Wetherall, M., Discourse and Social Psychology p 167 (emphasis added)

The reading of the data, and the achievement of meaning in that reading process, counts only as an analytic preliminary distinct from the doing of analysis itself. Their roles as readers, interpretive, identifying / creating the 'later-to-be-worked-on-more-intensively' manageable chunks or coding categories is disregarded. In becoming analysts of texts they as readers disappear. Another skillful practice that passes uninvestigated is the action of transcribing. (It is not fair to single out Potter and Wetherall as sole 'guilty parties' in this matter; largely the role of all C.A.'s in transcribing talk to text is unacknowledged (I refer to more than just the conventional coding system as outlined for example in Jefferson (Jefferson,G., "Caricature versus detail : on capturing the particulars of pronunciation in transcripts of conversational data" Tilburg Papers on Language and Literature No 31, Univ. of Tilburg, Netherlands, 1984). What I refer to is the interpretive work that goes into achieving these sounds on this tape as bound by, recognisable by and able to be located within these categories detailed in the conventional coding system).

Potter and Wetherall write (citing Stubbs),

"The idea that transcription is 'simply putting the words down on paper' is very far from reality. Transcription is a constructive and conventional activity. The transcriber is struggling to make clear decisions about what exactly is said, and then to repeat those words in a conventional orthographic system (Stubbs, 1983)."  
Potter,J. and Wetherall,M., Discourse and Social Psychology p 165

The skilled nature of the activity is not denied. It is accepted that it is interpretive and accountably more than

simply putting words down on paper. Yet it remains undocumented as an activity. Why I draw upon this example is to show that there is a high level of analyst involvement (doing interpretive analysis and work at the text) prior to that text appearing as data to be considered or worked upon properly by the analyst. With these theorists this aspect of their analysis is invisible. This prior work is excluded from investigation.

It is not that such issues (I am sure) elude Potter and Wetherall for they write,

"How should we deal with the fact that our accounts of how people's language is constructed are themselves constructions?"  
Potter, J. and Wetherall, M., Discourse and Social Psychology  
p 182

Rather, I feel it is a choice they make to focus on the talk as detailed in 'transcribed talk texts' as data at the expense of their prior to analysis / work on the talk / text data in their mundane role / activities as hearers / readers. They choose to become analysts and not theorising readers / hearers of talk.

It has been my original situated aim to investigate my various roles as reader of newspaper texts, analyst of those texts and finally writer of another text (the one in which this account comes to you as a reader) this text. It is not that I think I have the space to do justice, in detail, to what is richly involved in all aspects of these roles, but rather that I can highlight (as I see them) the different demands these roles make of me. The different situational demands they create, the different orientations

or purposes with which I have to approach them and the particular and significant effect this has on the shape of the final product (this text). It is my desire not to disappear from the text as it appears in its final version (by the denial of the interpretive work that went into its construction) but rather to detail and allow these aspects to remain (as far as it is possible). This may serve to remind any reader now at my text of the active, involved, 'for a purpose' readings this text has involved throughout its history - how this may have shaped what the reader may take to be the text as they have worked it up to be. A glimpse at a text prior to the text?

To achieve this always the analysis will be turned back on itself. Forever asking - for what reason is this move made, by what assumption, contingent factors, guided movement or creative and playful? The solution to the problem adopted by Potter and Wetherall, is not as above, they suggest that,

"Most of the time, therefore, the most practical way of dealing with this issue is simply to get on with it, and not to get either paralysed by or caught up by the infinite regress possible."  
Potter, J. and Wetherall, M., Discourse and Social Psychology  
p 182

Their solution is basically to ignore the phenomenon to appear only as analyst of ordered data. They do, however, in the above quotation illuminate the two inherent dangers in being a theoretical reader. Firstly, paralysis, not being able to say anything. Either not knowing how to proceed 'for the best', or how to see what is involved as it happens (as I have detailed it thus far, ending-up-just-

reading). Secondly, (the other danger) the infinite regress, the recognition that one, in analysing or reading, merely creates another version (how could one do anything else). This in turn can be read again, creating another version and so on. The mirror reflected in the mirror. I read, I devise a text, I comment on that text, a further text comments on that text and so on. Infinite?

Potentially, but only in the same way as all social action is sufficiently open to allow for differing versions and alternative accounts of itself. (Even so-called 'experts' often give contrasting professional opinions.) This is a characteristic of perception and interpretation, so why should we reserve this 'problem' for reading alone?

The infinite regress also becomes unproblematic in practice. If my analysis is to take the form of a situated description of an action (reading), its observable accountableness, and the reasons for its production that make it the sensible occasion that it was, then the account is complete in itself. Any further version only opens another account, for itself. We only have, as I have stated earlier, one text at a time. If there is no progression in subsequent versions, there is also no regression. Texts do not get closer (or further away). They are merely distanced in time and get different. Not the mirror reflected into the mirror but all flat pictures on a wall, side by side. Nobody could state this more clearly than Pollner,

"The choice which culminates ... is a choice among experiences which by virtue of their intending the same world are capable of discrediting one another's tacit claims to objectivity. That is, which experience of the world is to be treated as having grasped reality and which is to be treated as faulty is assured by neither the

experience per se nor by any of the reasons offered in support of a particular selection. Neither of the competing experiences can authorize themselves as definitive because any competing experience can be used as grounds for discrediting such an attempt."

Pollner, M., "The Very Coinage of your Brain" : The anatomy of reality disjunctures, Philosophy of the Social Sciences 5, p 416

Analysis and versions do not go forwards or backwards they are simply different.

### A Description Complete in Itself

How can a description be complete in itself? Surely this sounds like determinism? All that I may know of a cultural object is pre-placed, there, merely waiting to be seen / read / heard? So, (following this line) what I may know of a text is what the words on the page detail? Yet, I do not mean this at all, I do not mean the text is complete in itself, I mean the description (the meaning / sense-in-flow) is complete in itself. Consider this quotation from Wittgenstein,

"It seems to us as though we had either the wrong pieces, or not enough of them, to put together our jigsaw puzzle. But they are all there, only mixed up; and there is further analogy between the jigsaw puzzle and our case. Its no use trying to apply force in fitting pieces together. All we should do is look at them carefully and arrange them." Wittgenstein, L. Blue and Brown Books : Preliminary Studies for the Philosophical Investigations (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1969) p 46 Emphasis original

All the pieces are there, but the pieces are not all necessarily on the flat page (in reading) before us. Some of the pieces may be our attitudes, beliefs, expectations, memories that enter the action (reading) as happened on that occasion. Other contingent factors like background noise, playfulness, mistakes, specific purpose for reading

also may feature as part of what really went on and so become pieces of the jigsaw. The jigsaw is the total occasion, the complete circle, unique perhaps, idiosyncratic perhaps.

I (as any other reader) always have all that I need present at the setting to accomplish an account of a reading. Even to create an account where I feel I do not have all the pieces (e.g. 'This newspaper story isn't telling me the full story') is to create locally situated meaning. Here on this occasion then, the meaning, the sense would be of a story incomplete, however even the creation of an account of an incomplete story has itself been accountably (for reasons, observable, through work) worked-up to locate this account as incomplete.

So my description will look at how that reading is able to come into existence. How as a reader I answered the requirements of the setting. How I identified (on that occasion) what needed to be done, and how I was able to carry that through and what aspects of the setting (all present aspects of the setting not just the textual surface) I had to bring into play in order to be able to do so. How I identified, maintained and orientated to the action as meaningful and having a particular sense as it happened.

### Reader's vs Analyst's Approaches to Reading

In conversations those within the talk are bidders of time, they have to wait for sense to emerge through time and



specifically through time as detailed in the sequential flow of the conversation. Analysts of transcribed conversation have the privilege of taking 'time-out' to view the total conversation (up and down). They are not subject to the same 'it hasn't happened yet' constraints. Participants do not have the opportunity to 'play back' or review previous conversational items. These items are gone for them - they are too busy carrying along the task as it proceeds. Without wanting to detail what effect this 'stepping out of the in-flow proceedings' has upon the analyst's ability to make something different of those proceedings than could reasonably be made from within those proceedings (although this could be an interesting project) what I do want to suggest is at its most simple that the analyst has the opportunity to view aspects of the setting differently from the participants. Not necessarily a privileged viewing but certainly, arguably, a different viewing.

In reading? Am I as theorist, able to view differently to an ordinary reader? I can stop and read and re-read certain aspects of a newspaper story but so can the ordinary reader. I can stop, and start, skip to the end, cross reference to other stories but so can the ordinary reader. All those privileges afforded to the Conversational Analyst as special viewers of ordinary talk are available to all readers as techniques / resources. Does the theorising reader not see in any way differently from the ordinary reader? Are there no moves that are not common to both?

It is my concern that as a sociologist with knowledge of

sociological theory, knowledge of theories of reading, it will not be possible for me to 'see' or accomplish a reading that will be naive of these perspectives. A concern that I will no longer be able to read newspaper texts as ordinary readers do?

In advance, it is difficult to say if this will be a 'problem'. If, in practice, however it does occur, it cannot be a 'problem', it can only be by definition a feature of my reading as it was able to (and did) proceed. I shall, however, attempt to detail / document the places where I see this occur.

What might create this difference between my account now, as an 'informed sociological theorist' and a prior 'ordinary reader's' account? The answer is simply, the terms of that account. The theoretical terms, names of devices and concepts will not be available to the ordinary reader whereas they may be available to me now. The ordinary reader will only be able to account for their actions in lay terms and not in recognisably theoretical terms.

Language can therefore accentuate the difference between my role as ordinary reader and theorist. To use the terms of the ordinary reader is to give an account as an ordinary reader, to theorise by describing in the natural attitude. Yet (again we return to the inevitable question) will I (as before) end-up-just-reading. Again, beforehand, it is difficult to say if I will end up just reading, as a description of this just reading will be theorising, will

be doing exactly as I want to be able to do; theorising, giving an account of mundane reading activities in the natural attitude.

Yet, perhaps the realisation remains that to be a theorist some of the terms that the description is located in will have to be altered to make strange the phenomenon under investigation to be able to see it at all. We maybe have to, as Garfinkel suggests, become like a stranger in one's own land, to be able to see those aspects of the phenomenon most hidden because of their familiarity.

So, do I become an explorer, discovering previously undiscovered aspects of reading? Perhaps not, for the ubiquitous nature of reading is certainly a strong feature. So, in any exposition on reading, I would not be addressing a naive audience. Nothing I might claim could have the status of a 'discovery', there could be nothing 'new' or 'original' in that sense. It could only be at best 'familiar'. It became obvious that this must be a major consideration - for my audience - would my account be recognisable, would it remind them of their reading practices? Could I be persuasive? Persuasion and familiarity were at the heart of the solution. Indeed it is Wittgenstein who has argued that at the basis of everything is persuasion.

"I said I would 'combat' the other man - but wouldn't I give him reasons? Certainly, but how far do they go? At the end of reasons comes persuasion. (Think of what happens when missionaries convert natives.)"  
Wittgenstein, L. On Certainty trans by G.E.M. Anscombe & D. Paul (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1977) ff 612

## Competing Descriptions: the conventional and the unconventional description

An example:

think about what we may call a 'reflection', and then think about it again as a child has described it, 'a shadow, but it's in colour'.

We could raise issues about which is 'true', but such a debate would be vacuous, both seem to be well supported by the physical phenomena. They can both be seen as true. Consider what Richard Hoggart writes in the foreword to Goffman's 'Gender Advertisements' about Goffman's Classification system,

"I could also have made my own groupings, based on say "class" issues, or on the implication of exposed teeth. These would necessarily be conflicting interpretations; they may be parts of compatible multiple interpretations. For any cluster of material there may be a great number of coherent patterns; and all may be in certain senses "true". This does not mean that they are all necessarily of equal importance or significance; nor have we broached that harder problem of how one judges between them.  
R. Hoggart, Foreword in Goffman, E. Gender Advertisements (London, Macmillan, 1979) p. viii

How to judge between competing descriptions? If we cannot judge by truth value, let's find an alternative. If we return to my example, what do we have? A reflection or a shadow in colour? Rather than ask which is true or more true, what might be a more pertinent question to us is; 'Which description is more usual, more conventional?' It is more usual to call what I see in a mirror, a reflection and not a technicolour shadow. So one description wins in terms of convention. It is more useful in certain circumstances, in a conversation for instance, if one wanted to be unambiguously understood, the word

'reflection' would be better. Instantly accessible to the hearer of the talk and so more appropriately suited to the purpose at hand. But, think again of 'shadow but it's in colour'. Yes, a reflection is like a shadow it follows analogously the outline of my figure, but it is not blank and black like my shadow, it shows my details, shades and depth. An analogous outline of both my boundaries and my surface.

See what has happened by permitting a competing (and unconventional) description to stand for a while. We have opened out the term 'reflection'. That occurrence that is glossed over, unseen through habit by the word 'reflection' is thrown open to be viewed. We have permitted access to that which was hidden by its familiarity, and we may understand a bit more about what a reflection is like.

Conventional terms allow us to dismiss too easily those things we routinely encounter. Arguably this is their greatest function and value. It is what makes them 'better' descriptions in certain circumstances - as a shorthand way of summing-up shared experiences. But the power of seeing and describing unconventionally, to enable us to see afresh, has been demonstrated. It gives us the distance, so for my purposes a better description will be an unconventional way of seeing.

It seems that I advocate a system of judging between competing descriptions on the basis of appropriateness in the situation and usefulness to the purpose at hand. This I will allow to stand for a while, for the following

reason. If one cannot judge between the terms 'reflection' or 'shadow in colour' by anything inherent in their nature as one could not, between say (to use a familiar analogy) a hammer and a screwdriver (a hammer is not inherently better than a screwdriver) it is just more useful, appropriate, suitable and thus able to be judged a better choice in certain situations (i.e. a hammer is better at placing nails than a screwdriver). In reading also, for the assessment of descriptions, the criteria of appropriateness and usefulness, as defined by the purpose at hand, will stand.

#### Anarchy in Reading Practices vs. Permissible Moves

But, this does not open the door on anarchy. It is not a situation of anything goes. Consider what Coulter says,

"There may be a limitless number of possible classification systems but there are only a finite number of actual conventions operable in human societies."

Coulter, J. Decontextualised Meanings : Current Approaches to Verstehende Investigations. Sociological Review Vol. 19 1971 p. 313

Here, I have no easy answer, as to why this is so. It seems that even in unconventional descriptions certain boundaries exist. It might possibly be that to pick a description that was too different, would oustrip the knowledge of the audience. Something that is completely new is something that is alien. So an unconventional description must be like (or at least must be able to be likened to) some knowledge/resources available to the audience. They must be able to see what you mean in terms of what they already know. We cannot step outside the

familiar. The best sidestep we can hope for, is to be only like the familiar. In this sense an unconventional description ultimately rests upon metaphor. We must be like what we describe.

In reading I accept (although there is no logical reason why I should) that readers may take a text (say 'Robinson Crusoe') read it, independently and then agree (to a large if not total extent) that they have all read and understood the same text. Put another way, reading is practised by individuals but it is not an individualistic phenomena, its practices are socially shared. I must attempt to account for this in any solution I produce.

#### The Validity of my Solution - a privileged reading?

Having admitted the validity of many possible solutions to the problematic phenomena of reading; the question becomes what status do I ascribe to my solution. Is it in any way a better, more accurate solution than any produced by the methodologies I earlier dismissed. It must be in some sense more preferable for me than they, for I dismissed them in favour of it. I do not want to set it up as better, a superior solution amongst inferiors, a privileged reading, but, rather as an alternative version. I prefer it above others because ( applying my criteria for judgement) it suits my purpose more adequately. It is in that sense, not privileged just particular. In fact I would wish for it to be "extraordinary in its particularity", like Geertz writes, I hope it would be,

"An elaborate venture in, to borrow a notion from Gilbert Ryle 'thick description'."  
Geertz, C. The Interpretation of Cultures : selected essays  
(London, Hutchinson, 1975) as argued in Ch. 1

Situated, rich, detailed, as full an account as possible.  
I hope that for an occasion of reading it will delimit,  
specify, focus and contain the event as closely as possible  
to the way in which it happened.

For the solution to be like this, it must follow that it  
takes the form of an actual reading. A reader, situated  
with a text, the activity reading, in the flow,  
accomplished "thick", and unique. So the solution (for me)  
as it presents itself; is a reader and a reading of a text.

Yet, people do not talk as they read, observably there is  
little going on. So, for this data to be available I must  
use myself as reader; attend to what it is I am doing,  
outline those moves I make, the reasons for them, and  
consequences of them. In short I shall produce an  
ethnography of a reading of a newspaper text.

However, Richard Hoggart, again outlines a well known  
objection to this approach,

"Your analysis of the meaning of that habitual gesture by  
that old woman was interesting in its way but, so far as I  
am concerned, it is a private gloss. I don't see why I  
should not interpret the gesture quite differently." - if  
that happens, one has to recognise that it is a fair  
response. Like the novelist, but without the support he  
gains from received aesthetic conventions, one can only  
hope to build up over length of time a kind of  
'convincingness'."

R. Hoggart, foreword in Goffman, E. Gender Advertisements  
p viii



But, what now the status of my account? A one-off reading of a single newspaper text by one reader? Who is to say that the whole account will not be an idiosyncratic accident. In what ways might we be convinced that it captured the activity of reading as it occurs for others also. In other words might there be any shared aspects of reading to be gleaned from it? Or is it a 'private gloss'.

If one looks at this question, it is in many ways silly and ill-thought out. Is one really to suppose that on this one occasion of reading, I shall suddenly invent totally new methods of reading, create a new understanding of the English language, abandon every usual move I would make in the presence of a text? Even if I were able to do these impossible things, why should I? Remember we talked of persuasion (as Hoggart talks of 'convincingness') such an account would neither persuade nor convince anyone, it would not be familiar or even metaphorical in being like what we already know. It would be a nonsense.

That my account because of its situated uniqueness cannot explain everything is no reason to suppose that it cannot explain anything. I must be regarded as a typical reader producing an account of a reading that we might all have shared.

### The Nature of Sharedness

Let's pause for while and consider some of the ways in which we might be said to have shared experience.

Consider another example: two children watch a car transporter laden with cars go by. One says, 'Wow look at that.' The other replies, sulkily, 'No I don't want to.' The first responds cajolingly to his brother, 'Go on, we'll share it - you look at the top half and I'll look at the bottom.'

This is a fundamental misunderstanding of the way the word sharing may be sensibly applied in this case. To share the looking, the boys would both have looked at all of the car transporter, a complete sharing of the whole. Yet the term sharing can be applied in an almost exactly opposite way. If there were a cake before us and you and I were to share it. We would share the cake before us, but my piece and yours would be different pieces. You could not eat the bit of cake I did. Sharing in this sense would mean sharing parts of the whole that were completely different and mutually exclusive.

In the first case both share the total experience. In the second case each has a completely separate part of the whole experience. Yet both are shared experiences, so we may say that we have shared the whole or only part of it to say that we have an experience in common.

Yet again the term 'sharing' may be differently applied. For example, if somebody asks you if you have travelled on the Orient Express, then even if you did not share a journey with them but have travelled on this train at some time, you could justifiably claim to have shared the experience with them. A shared experience although you did

not partake of any part of their journey, a sharing distanced by time. At some time you did the same thing.

Yet more distanced still, one may share in a metaphorical sense. If you have not travelled on the Orient Express but have done a similar long distance train journey, you may still feel justified in some senses to say that you have shared such an experience, because at some time you did the same sort of thing.

I do all this to illustrate that there are many sensible yet very different ways to consider correctly that an experience has been shared. In my ethnography of a reading a newspaper, possibly some of the events that I detail will be shared in the very strict way, - the first sharing, the sharing of the whole event at the same time, or sharing more loosely construed as in the other cases of some of the descriptions I give, it might only be reasonable to say that one has a notion of sharing the reading in only a metaphorical sense - that at some time you did something similar when reading. There are many levels on which my solution could be plausible. What is typical, and what is shared are not closed terms but are themselves open to interpretation. This means my solution will mean different things to different readers based upon their own reading experiences.

### Trapped Within a Text

If I claim that my problem as analyst/theorist is that of ending up just reading, then for you as my reader there

also exists a problem. It is the problem I have already tried to detail in the 'text breaker' chapters, and it will become especially apparent as you read through my solution. My ethnography of a reading, will claim that it is just that, an account of a reading (and in some senses it is). But be careful it is not that reading - it is another text. You as reader do not escape level 0 (the text - see p 20) but only have access to it (the text) and not my reading, or indeed the text I read. This is a problem - I have no solution to; it is a constriction of the medium within which we operate - the printed word.

However, in a curious way your problem as reader offers me a solution as writer/theorist, to my problem of producing a convincing, persuasive description. It is a solution that has been present all the time and one which provides the key which makes the last chapters work. It brings it to life.

All the pieces are there. The solution is present in the problem, if we turn the pieces around to our favour.

If we cannot escape the medium, if we always and only, have a text - then exploit this fact.

Let me detail it again. Any explication of reading comes to my reader through a text. The reader has only my text and not my reading. I am actually building a text here and at this point not doing reading. So, any solution comes through my text to my reader. I must expose the practices of reading to my readers, while they are using reading to

recover the expose. How can I get a text to detail to a reader what is done in reading?

By making the reader do the very same thing in their reading as what they are reading about. My solution must at one and the same time describe and initiate what it describes. My reader will have to operate those very practices that he is reading about in order to be able to read about them. In this sense the reader will recover my reading as detailed in my text, by re-activating these techniques in his own reading. The artificial distance created between my reading as an activity, and as an object embodied in my text is closed. The difference between saying and doing is repaired in the activity of my reader, no dualism, just an activity once more.

### Sharing Metaphorically

It would perhaps be worth spending some more time elaborating the way sharing in a metaphorical sense develops in the last two chapters that represent my solution to the problematic nature of reading. It hinges around the following phrase,

"We are not the same, but we differ in similar ways." <sup>1</sup>

It is a difficult phrase, whose meaning always seems to elude one at that precise moment at which one thinks one has grasped it. It for me, captures the way metaphorical sharing works. It encompasses not the things that are the same but things where the differences between them are similar sorts of things. Think again of the Orient Express

and the long train journey (say Paris to Rabat [Morocco]); they are not the same thing the difference between them being (possibly) primarily the route; but the route is similar. It is long and arduous, passing through several countries and requires several days' travelling. In this metaphorical use it is in the difference between them that the metaphorical similarity lies.

But more generally we are opened to the wider question of what is it not to have presented before us the same things, but the same sorts of thing, and also the converse of this, to have things that are the same thing but not the same sort of thing. Take the first:

Not the same thing, but the same sort of thing.

Unlike things made equivalences through usage. For example, a pen and pencil are not the same thing, but through usage they are made equivalences, they are both used as writing implements. Another example might be, an icy road and an ice rink. An ice rink and the road, not the same thing, but while the weather is frosty the same sort of dangerous thing. This is how one might think of metaphorical expression as usually proceeding, the comparison of two non alike but similar objects. In my last chapters I compare the reading of a newspaper to a physical journey, never the same thing, but the similarities are illuminating.

Now the second:

The same thing, but not the same sort of thing.

Here we have like things that are used differently, so

their equivalence is denied. For example, coal and diamond, both made of the element carbon, intrinsically the same thing, but definitely an equivalence denied by usage in our society. Or, a Skoda and a Rolls Royce both cars but not quite the same sort of thing. It is the comparison of things that are supposed to be like each other because they are the same thing but when this turns out not to be so, we again gain insight. Elsewhere I have argued that talk and print are supposed to be equivalences, because they are the same thing (made up of words) and yet their equivalence is denied in practice, in usage they are definitely not the same sort of thing (see p. 107 - 111).

One final word upon this last section. It is intended to reveal some of the ways in which I see sharing in the metaphorical sense working in the last chapters (and elsewhere), if one were to read those last chapters as an analyst to see the techniques they employ. The last two chapters may be read as a reader simply to see my ethnography, my detail of reading a newspaper text. This last section merely provides a possible alternative way of viewing those last two chapters - it is not what they are 'really' all about.

### Metaphor and Pretence

My use of metaphor is designed only to be transient. The metaphors are not constructed to become entrenched into the way we think of reading. They remain while they serve a purpose - to illuminate hidden practices etc., but they are just a game we play, a game of pretend that we are at

will to suspend.

Consider another example from the wisdom of a child. The child holds a toy car. Into the driver's seat they have rolled up and placed a small piece of paper. They point to it and say, 'Look here's the driver.' You reply sympathetically, playing the game, 'Oh is that the driver?' 'No, don't be silly', they reply, 'it's a piece of paper.' And they remove it to show you, to prove the point.

And that is what metaphor is like in the last two chapters. Do not be fooled that I really think that reading is about the terms which metaphorically describe it. The child did not really think the piece of paper was the driver. Reading is reading, it is not a journey. Textual devices for agreement are not snares it is only for a while interesting, to consider them such, but, basically I am pretending and sometimes the metaphors are fragile. Reading is much more than a whole host of metaphors can contain.

### Reading as a Creative Achievement

Reading is above all else an activity. Bounded, regulated, undertaken through conventions, yes, but each time it occurs it is a situated accomplishment and as such it is unique. Each occasion of reading will have individual idiosyncratic emphasis, perhaps mistakes or playfulness, innovation, drifts in concentration, interruptions maybe, that all play a part in that particular happening, that instance of reading. How then could we set down the



process of reading as if it followed a set of rules that readers followed in strict observance each time. How might we know in advance precisely how reading will take place?

"We are unable clearly to circumscribe the concepts we use; not because we don't know their real definitions, but because there is no real 'definition' to them. To suppose that there must be would be like supposing that whenever children play with a ball they play a game according to strict rules."

Wittgenstein, L. Blue and Brown Books : Preliminary Studies for the Philosophical Investigations (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1969) p 25

We cannot say in advance for certain what will happen, because it has as yet not happened. Accounts of reading must necessarily be historical accounts, to look at what did happen. The part each distinguishable factor played towards the whole, making it the event that it was, is possibly locatable, even if it had not been predictable. As Wittgenstein has said,

"Seek not the elements in order to understand the whole, but seek the whole (the context) in order to understand the elements."

Louch, A.R. Explanation and Human Actions (Oxford, Blackwell, 1966) p. 119

In summary then, what of my methodology? Although not describing a Methodological approach, Geertz's observation seems to touch upon the tensions my methodology attempts to contain. It is,

"..a nervous and nervous making style of interpretation in the social sciences that mixes a strong sense of formal orderliness of things with an equally strong sense of the radical arbitrariness of that order."

Geertz, C. Local Knowledge : further essays in Interpretive Anthropology (New York, Basic Books, 1983) p24

#### Footnotes

1. This phrase originally comes from a Vaudeville sketch by the comedy duo, "The Two Ronnies", in their TV series for the BBC by the same name.

## A DAY'S JOURNEY

So I begin to look at my newspaper. What does 'look at' involve, do I turn my head and look at where they are laid in a pile, gazing at them? No, 'looking at' involves more than the use of the eyes, there is collaboration between the arms and the hands helping the eyes looking. They bring the newspaper to the body, to the eyes' range, hold it still and upright to be read, turn the pages, but their role is unrecognized. One would not say, 'Oh, I'm just going to handle the newspaper.' It sounds bizarre, or 'I'll hold the newspaper when I read it.' Of course one could read the newspaper with it flat upon a desk or squat beside it on the floor not holding it, but what happens when something 'catches your eye', what happens is that it does not capture your eye at all, but your hands capture it for your eye. They seize the story bring it close, captive for the eye, the rest of the page hanging bent back distorted, out of the way. Held fast till it is consumed, used, then it is released and taken away. Yes, my looking is different from, say, the looking done in art galleries. We all see them, the odd people with the jerking oscillating head syndrome, some of them nearly manage to turn their heads upside down trying to look at the details of the paintings, to see this angle, to see that angle. With my 'looking at' there is only one angle, my angle, my comfortable sitting relaxed angle and the newspaper via the hands work accommodates itself to that, being rotated and tilted on demand, a manipulated object.

So what is it that I am 'looking at'? I have said so far

'newspaper', hoping as a familiar object you will let the term pass - you know the thing that covers your fingers in print when you read it. However, I cannot be looking at the newspaper in its entirety at any particular moment, can I? I must be looking at just a part of a newspaper - which part? The term 'newspaper' outlives its usefulness, I must give you new words to allow us to go further. All I have is the document's surface. I shall call the spread of the newspaper that is presented before me - by the hand for the eye to look at, the looking surface. However beyond this it becomes difficult for me to talk of what is on the looking surface. I shall demonstrate. We can talk of pictures and text, but what of 'pictures', do we mean photographs? Do we mean line drawings as in the advertisements? Do we mean cartoons? What of 'text'? Do we mean blocks of print? Do we count headlines or captions under photographs or the writing in the ads, the horoscopes or the agony column as text? Should we talk of 'story'. Do we mean a 'news' story, an editorial, a feature, a gossipy ad? It becomes clear that trying to specify in advance shall not facilitate my reading, I must wait and so must you to find what is on my looking surface till we get there. What also becomes clear, is that now having understood why I cannot specify what I shall see till I see it, we at least agree in our expectations of what we might be likely to see. You let me use the word photograph and cartoon and accepted my affirmation that the two were different and yet both sorts of picture. We ambled together through the differences between a news story and a feature editorial, while at the same time I was saying that I could not specify those differences - yet we did agree

that they were different. I cannot always tell you what exactly it is that I am talking about but this does not matter for you already know. In following my argument and understanding my terms you showed that you knew what it was that I was talking about. You have become my collaborator, filling in the gaps between what is do-able and knowable through our newspaper reading competence and what is sayable and writeable in my analysis. I shall use that competence and make you use it. I shall not tell you about reading newspapers we shall agree. And so I read my newspaper, but what do I mean by 'read my newspaper'? That is, what I am doing when I read it?

Initially I examine my newspaper from what we might call my normal point of access. I called it the looking surface. Yet I do distinguish between looking at my newspaper and reading it. Should I call it the 'reading surface'? But first why do I make the distinction? Is reading a special type of looking? I know that for me reading must involve a type of looking, although reading need not always need looking. (If I were blind and 'reading' Braille, I would not 'look'.) Yet back to my looking and reading, is it like the difference between merely hearing a sound and listening for it. Looking somehow more generalised, reading more purposeful, more directed, structured? But using our example, hearing is not general or naive, a tune floating through the air does not come to us as discrete, atomised sound waves, but delights us as a bird's song, as we might picture the bird perched on a branch, the hearing is a social accomplishment not a physical phenomenon. Both complex and structured, so too with looking, traffic lights

on red are not just light waves that our eyes register in some haphazard way, but compacted with compulsion for our car driving and ours and others safety, or full of opportunity as a pedestrian it is our chance to cross. So we are no nearer to deciding why I persist in distinguishing between looking at and reading my newspaper. Yet I must persist for I do not read the bird's song I hear it, and I do not read the traffic lights I look at them. I do make the distinction between looking and reading. Let's move on in the confidence that early morning fog tends to clear as the day passes and the journey progresses.<sup>1</sup>

But what do I see on my looking surface? One thing I see most clearly moving between the Guardian and the Express, the Mirror and the Sun is the blackness of the pages, call it the density of the print to start with if it helps you to see what I see. I see the way a printed page presents a characteristic appearance. My Guardian appears much more black, solid, dense than does my Sun. If someone were to swap titles and logos at the top of the front pages of these two papers, I would not be fooled. Each like a page of one's own handwriting has an appearance that belongs just to itself and is overwhelmingly familiar. I see on the looking surface, areas which are blackened with print and areas which are left white. I see between my newspapers their order and different organisation of the white spaces and the white space blackened. Why don't I say black spaces - because I don't just see black spaces. I see blackened areas that I might wish to call text, blocks of typeface, letters to words, to lines, to paragraphs all that sounds familiar but all that leads us

into the old ways of talking. I see also black and grey areas with white within their boundaries, would we want to call them photographs? I note that what makes a good photograph on my looking surface, its grey areas. The subtleties of shading which merge the black to the white spaces makes very bad blocks of text, the blackened areas must be black not greying into its white spaces. In the text it is not the democratic coverage of the looking surface that we see in the photographs where the black, white and grey areas share the looking surface, rather in the text, the black dictates, it sits on the white, prominent, controlling, foremost the white space is allowed to cover the looking surface only as background to the black, and the grey space is banished. In the text we stop in awe of the black, it stands out in its control of what may appear on the looking surface with it, we are forced to take notice. In the text we see only it, goodbye to the white and the grey.

We do sometimes acknowledge the white. "It must be true," we cry, "I saw it in black and white." Black and white, clear cut and truthful, what more can we say? What about where things are not so 'black and white', where those grey areas creep in? Yes, I do give less credence to the photographs. When the black on white tells me that the striking miners picketed the Llanwern steelworks yesterday, I believe it, incorporate it into what I know about the picketing during the strike and alongside when the black white and grey show me the event, I might still take the black on white's word for it, but I feel the black, white and grey could be showing me any group of men gathering

outside any factory-like building, maybe men awaiting the night watchman to be dragged from his bed as he has gone home with the keys and they are locked out, not picketing miners at all. Although both appear equally on my looking surface the grey robs the black on white of its ability to convince me without question.

Very interesting, you might say, but why do I still want to distinguish between looking and reading on my looking surface? Are we any nearer an answer?

I think I would want to say that I read the black on white while I look at the black white and grey. Why? Well what have I said above, and in these words what am I saying again now?

"..the black on white tells me.."

"..the black white and grey shows me.."

"..take the black on white's word for it.."

"..what have I said above.."

Black on white cannot 'tell' me anything, it is silent, it does not have a 'word' for it, the black white and grey cannot show me anything, it is inert. My looking surface is profoundly dumb, silent and still. It is me that does the looking, the reading - yet why do I attribute my work, my use, manipulation of the looking surface onto its distinct features? Why do I claim it talks to me?

Why do people say, "What does that story talk about?"

"What does that headline say?"

Have you heard a headline talk? Now here is your clue.

The answer to this question, reconsidered, has to be, 'Yes, we've all heard the black on white talk,' but the question now becomes what do we mean by 'heard'? Let's consider the way the black on white may talk and how we might hear that talk. You see, "write away.." and take it as an advertisement to send for a free holiday brochure. You see, "right away.." and take it as a command to set about one's tasks at once. But what do you hear? I think probably you, like I hear them as the same. We hear them as we read them and we hear them as the same. We hear for both of them something that might be spelt, 'rite away'. It is the looking that makes them different and the hearing that makes them the same.

Our reading appreciates the looking and the hearing. We are able to distinguish between the two, the hearing does not dominate and make our two readings the same, rather we consider the looking and decide on the appropriate reading. We decide to give favour to the looking this time, yet we can still pun on the two words 'write' and 'right', our reading can still use its hearing ability to see the two words as the same, given that this is its task at the time. Here the looking won the confidence of the reading, but in another case

"wind up the clock.."

"the wind blew.."

Now the looking makes them the same and the hearing makes them different.

The reading is much more discerning than to be dictated to in any situation by either the looking or the hearing, it



attends to them but it is also aware of context and appropriateness of the words and their settings, it is a wise action.

So what might we say it is that we do when we read our newspaper? We see our looking surface and in those special black on white areas we look and we also hear the black. But before our present 'it is like this' carries us to claims that we cannot point to the newspaper to support, let us be careful to consider what kind of hearing we do when we read. It is not like the hearing done in a conversation where another person talks to you, it is not like the hearing done when present to the sounds of a radio. It is not a hearing done with the ears. It is a hearing done with the eyes. It is a hearing that does not always have sound for us and never a sound for others. As children learning to read, we are taught to read aloud, so that others may hear our reading with their ears and may correct our mistakes, or aid us when we falter. Then as the reading lesson becomes too noisy the teacher yells, 'Read in your heads.' The classroom goes silent and yet reading still goes on. Now try as I might, I cannot make my neighbour hear my reading anymore, I can try shouting in my head the words so that they may hear them, but the words become no louder - they have no volume. Without the co-operation of my mouth the words are not for my neighbour's ears. My task is impossible, the sound that I make belongs all to me, it is the voice of my eyes that nobody else has ever heard. The scientists make great claim 'for the fact' that the way we 'hear' our own voice is not the way that others hear it, because we hear the voice that our mouths

make not just through our ears but we hear it through the vibration of our jaw bones. So if we may say that the 'voice that we hear with our ears and jaw bones' has its own unique sound for us alone, what can we say of the 'voice that we hear with our eyes'? We might start by saying that it does not have sound or volume - we cannot make it louder. I can make my eyes voice echo around my head. I can hear myself think or hear myself read, but it has no sound it is not the same kind of thing as the sound appreciated by the ears. Most of the time, when I am not doing 'thinking in my head' I do not even hear the echoes, the eyes do their work silently, I do not hear my reading and yet the eyes may still appreciate the work of their hearing, I am still able to read 'the wind blew' and 'wind up the clock' as different, the eyes 'hear' the difference, I do not. The looking and the hearing are theirs, their action, not something that has to happen 'inside my head'.

Thus I move along, seeing, hearing as I read, but my language betrays me. I may 'move along', or 'backtrack', 'skip' a page or two then 'carry on', or 'go onto' something else when my attention 'shifts', looking then to the story 'above' or 'below' or 'to the side'. Although I may sit perfectly still when I read, my language of reading must be the talk of movement. Why is this? I cannot avoid it, I cannot express myself in any other way. Not only do I locate my reading in terms of movement but this language fixes the orientation of the newspaper itself for me, makes it a stable, solid, non moving object, it gives a 'top' of the page and things that are 'below' or to the 'side' of it, gives me left and right and with the forward march of

the black on white, I know which is forward and which is backwards. But you may ask, "aren't these things fixed already and I merely orientate myself and my movement to their rigidity?" To say this is too simple a consideration, it is more like a 'my fixing of their fixing me' or a little more expanded like the planet Earth in space, if we ask is the North pole really at the 'top' of the world or is it something to do with those clever people at NASA rotating the pictures from their satellites to place the North Pole at the top and put the world the right way up? I could be wrong, perhaps the universe really sits in space on a particular line of axis? I play, maybe we are just talking of convention and ways of seeing orientation correctly.

So having conventionally fixed my newspaper angle I move across its surface. If I must use the language of movement then I shall use it and not fight it, we may even come to understand a little why we have to use it.<sup>2</sup>

But my movement is not aimless, I seem to have a particular destiny in mind. A way to go, not like undirected wanderings, more like a journey, with a start, a direction, an aim to travel and see and to discover as we go, encountering things we did not know of before - an expedition? No, no expeditions are to unknown places with unfamiliar scenery and places to see, essentially the newspaper and its territory are known to me as places to go, routes to follow. In an unknown land I must rely upon a map or a guide who knows the landscape well, in newspapers, alone, I would be unable to travel, to meander

haphazardly if the surroundings were totally alien to me. No, it is not like an adventure to an unknown, undiscovered landscape but more like a journey to an as yet unknown but not undiscovered or unfamiliar place, more like a trip to Scotland than the Amazon jungle.

So I talk of a journey through places that we do not yet know but that we do know of their 'type', for instance we know that TV pages are the kind of places that menus are, a selection of choices.

So I know what I might encounter on my journey but what sort of journey is it? It's not the sort of journey that might give me blisters on my feet or make me work up a thirst, perhaps for the moment we might say it is more like the journey we are engaged in when we say when suddenly interrupted, "I was miles away." or "Oh sorry, my thoughts are wandering."

I may make different kinds of journeys. We all know the A to B journey, by the quickest route very definite, purposeful, hurried aiming to get to its destination, achieve its goal of arriving and setting about its task at hand. Compared to the Sunday drive by the scenic route, leisurely, relaxed, slowly cruising, taking in the surroundings, soaking up the landscape, noticing things we do not often get the chance to look at as we hurry past. And the searching journey, we know we have a place to find, we are told to look for a particular article, we turn the pages, into certain streets - wrong, out again, visit a headline, no, not it, turn off again, read the first

paragraph, find a dead-end, reverse out, do we consult a fellow traveller, stop him at the side of the street?

"Do you know where the Dolphin Centre is?"

"Where was that article?" I know that I can look forward to the way ahead and I can look back, revisit, I can look around at the places 'by the side' and as I am on my way to the Dolphin Centre and I pass the large church with the pleasant gardens I might think, 'Oh I'll go there next', so I pass from article to article, noticing and travelling, planning my next route, reading as I go. But how do my journeys come as particular, purposeful routes, take on the form of articles?

We set off in a particular direction and the sights that we encounter tell us we are still on the right track, following the same path, in the same sort of place. Places we expect to see together, that belong together, the church, the duckpond, the smithy, we are in and travelling through a country village one may not have seen before but that is familiar, and as we travel through a murder story we expect to read of a victim and their fate, a scene of the crime, a murder weapon and a suspect. The landscape, the notable places to view make the story, a murder story, what we find in it is what this place is. Of course all villages don't have duckponds, all murder stories don't have a suspect, we are not talking of essential features, we are talking of places that tend to appear together on certain routes that we might travel as we read.

The church and the smithy are frozen as significant

landmarks on a journey, I have isolated them as markers for you to use my example. In the same way in the newspaper's telling of a story, significant moments are frozen and retold while the mass of the others sink to forgetfulness. Who are we to ignore these landmarks that are so carefully selected for us? Activities that are presented as discrete and linear, neatly separated by these points of reference. But our journey is much more subtle than this, we are not propelled along a particular route and given to see just particular items alone, we do not just see the church, we see its stained glass window and conclude the village is/was an affluent place, we see its general state of repair and in that we see the patronage of the local villagers to their church. In our newspaper we do not read of a car but a getaway car, its role in a robbery, that it was a Porsche not a Lada, affluent criminals with money, or a car stolen for its speed but hardly its inconspicuousness. So things in our journey as in any journey do not unfold one at a time, we are wise travellers, our journey is not just a series of landmarks, but a social web, a kaleidoscope of many colours and facets, we read their significance. We know that to use a landmark like, 'Now I can go on', as Wittgenstein (L Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations 3rd Ed. (Blackwell, Oxford 1953) ff183) does is to use one sense of a word in its language game by the contrast to its other uses. We know that the words mean 'Now I can go on' - I have time, not in this instance I feel strong enough or (for example) thanks you have dropped me off close enough to where I wanted to go. Our landmarks need our seeing of them in their settings, on their routes and our

considerations of what our journey is like for us to see what they mean, for us to read them. And what may we say of the physical appearance of our landmarks?

The way our landmarks appear tells us how to use them, indeed what to make of their appearance. On an Ordnance Survey Map a red dotted line displays itself to us as a footpath and in its appearance shows us how to use it, in showing us what kind of landmark it is. What about the appearance of landmarks on our looking surface? Does showing betray use? A landmark that appears as d.o.g. in the black on white is manipulable with its surrounding landmarks as 'mans best friend', but the 'dog' that appears in the black, white and grey becomes suddenly more solid, suddenly despite knowing that it is not furry or warm that it cannot bark and that, poor thing, only has two dimensions instead of three like the rest of us, more real. Closer to the Fido that we know and love than the black on whites d.o.g. was. How can this be? If we liken our looking surface to the screen of a VDU then all that appears are dots of light, white if the light is on, black if it is off, with a few lights on in an area grey is given, all lights have equal reign on the domain, a black is not worth more than a white, nor a white, black, and the grey stands its ground as a resulting compromise of equal stature. Yet somehow on our looking surface such is not the case; all we have still, is a splattering of black and grey on a majority of white, but the equality is gone. Let us consider what has gone and what has arrived. Somehow, as we have said when black appears alone on white, its word, its presence becomes truth, what is readable, what is

knowable and now we are saying that when a landmark appears in the black, white and grey it is 'closer to a real world object' and yet there is no definite difference in display of the two regions, black dots and white dots all are equal. Their inequality derives from our use. The appearance gives the utility, the placing the use. Our journey on the looking surface is given substance by the situation of the landmarks that we find, human action is given form by the placing of gestures.

Where do I go? In my movement amongst the landmarks of the black on white. I may encounter certain directional indicators, telling me of a place to go next, like 'continued overleaf' which may take me on an irritating detour, others like 'however' or 'although', may cause me to swing around and realise that I am not following the path that I thought I was. Yet other landmarks DISPLAY THEIR IMPORTANCE. But consider another aspect of the placing of landmarks, it not only gives use, but it also gives time as a quality to the looking surface, to encounter a place on my movements is to visit there at a particular time. We must ask ourselves, whose time? Is the time should we call it the temporal structure of my looking surface a geographical thing due to the order of its physical presence on the page? Like the buildings in a village; the village shop is after the large white house and that follows that quaint little cottage where the two sisters live - but stop, how could I know such a thing, unless I were to visit, traverse the path in a particular direction, pass the buildings one after another, but what if I were to 'turn off' down the track by the little



cottage? Then the garage run by old Joe would come after the cottage not the large white house. So now what does my 'come after' entail? It seems to have two echoes, the one that landmarks are physically placed next to one another on a journey, come after is a movement in the time of my journey - the place that is encountered next. Now what if somebody were to say 'Hey by turning down that track you've gone the wrong way, you should have carried on to the large white house and the village shop.' Are they saying that I do not follow the 'correct' route - that I am not reading in the proper way that I do not arrive at the intended version? I as traveller, simply would answer, "Why this is a way to go, a place to encounter landmarks, there is no reason why I should follow one particular route instead of another?" Then our friend might answer, "But if you don't go this way you'll miss the village shop." Here is our clue, a journey along a particular route means encountering certain landmarks and missing certain others that lie on other routes. Although the 'clock time' of my journey may fluctuate, that is I may pause, or even cease my journey to return later, my stopping and starting may delay my journey but it will not affect the landmarks that I see, old Joe's garage will still be there at 11 am or 3 pm, clock time does not affect my journey, the sort of journey that I have. It is 'journey time' I hesitate to call it sequence, a time that gives landmarks a placement in my journey by encountering one after another particular landmark, and it is the landmarks that give me my particular view of the journey, and it is the route, my physical movement that presents certain landmarks as encounterable as opposed to certain others. I read and traverse the black on white in

a certain way, alight upon certain landmarks and enjoy a particular journey, might we say we emerge with a certain version of the text, finish my journey with a certain idea of the type of journey I had just undergone, of what I had found there and what it was like?

But not only are there many routes and paths in the black on white there are also many ways to move amongst these paths and routes. Consider how we might listen to a child's first words, we might mouth them with them, excuse stumblings and stammerings, allow for the mispronunciation, we aid the talk, we listen in sympathy. So too a journey, a reading might be a letter in a readers column that we agree with, we accept not argue with its claims or the fight it is to read a political speech of the opposite persuasion to ourselves, the reluctance with which we drudge along the path the thorns of the brambles that catch us as we pass, the struggle to finish the journey. All those who write talk of their drafts as a rough copy. Rough? Yes, what a bumpy, stumbling up and down, stop and start journey it gives, compared to the finished copy, the 'polished version'. Polished, how has it stopped being rough and become polished? Its landmarks do not 'jar' us, no pitfalls or ramps, but a smooth polished surface that one glides along, no fight to read it; and how polished things shine, so nice to look at, so pleasing to the eye and we could not forget that a 'polished performance' is a professional performance - every good black on white's aim when it grows up...

Even following a particular route, we use our landmarks in

a particular way, we may even choose to see some and not others. We have all seen the holiday brochures that show the golden beach and smart hotel, happy people sunbathing and yet when we visit the scene our eyes alight upon the local tip to the left of the hotel and the all night nite-spot to the right, but in our turn we might only picture the hotel and the beach to present certain sorts of landmark in our snapshots to show our friends upon our return, 'This is what it was like' we say and they like us originally are only able to move amongst the landmarks that we present them with. Our landmarks are few and our selection amongst them fewer.

Being a reader or knowing what it all means. I talk of journeys, routes and paths, landmarks and placings, do I leave my account of a journey at the level of typographical features? What does it all mean?

Consider the different ways there are to be lost. If you are abducted in a car, blindfolded and then dumped in the 'middle of nowhere', you could say you were lost. So you wander along the road and come to a town, there you ask a man sat on a bench by the road, "Where is this place?" "Wymondham", he replies. So now you know where you are if somebody asks, but, do you know where you are? Being honest, you must admit that although you know where you are in that you can name the place, you are still lost. Knowing where you are means more than knowing a name. "Where's that?" you ask. "Norfolk", he replies. Norfolk, you consider, thinking "now that's the bit of land that sticks out below the Wash, above Suffolk and Cambridgeshire and

Essex and London - ahh London." Now located with reference to a place that you are familiar with, you are no longer lost, just stranded.

Finding and knowing a place, recognising it when one is there is a matter of knowing its place amongst other places, how one might get there; knowing one's 'way around' is being familiar with the place, that is knowing what to do when one gets there. Words like 'local knowledge' or knowing use which we might call 'skill' or 'competence' come to mind. As Sudnow says of playing the piano the competence simply lies in knowing where one is on the keyboard, the places to go and what to do when one gets there and where to go next, the skill lies in being at the right places at the right times. (Sudnow, D. Talks Body (Dallas, Penguin, 1979) p 10 - 11) Instead of simplifying our picture of placements and encounters within a journey time, we complicate it, we introduce the notion of skill. Use of the newspaper as a looking surface resides in always knowing where to go and how to use it when one gets there, what to do and then where to go next. That we all have this skill, this competence is what makes our journey among, as I said, unknown but not unfamiliar landscape, not an expedition into the unimaginable; we know the sort of places and what we can do there.

And of the meaning? Well what does a 'table' mean? If we could recognise one when we saw one and know how to put it to good use we could claim to understand a table's meaning, so too the black on white's landmarks are recognisable and usable. But what of something like 'Wednesday', what does

'Wednesday' mean? Well it means the day that follows Tuesday, in the way that the village shop followed the large white house as a place to go or that 'scandal' follows widowed Mrs Brown losing her Social Security payments because one of her children started a paper round, as a landmark that was recognisable as what came next. And Wednesday means the things that I do on a Wednesday, and a place on the black on white means the things that I do there; at Mr Scargill and Mr MacGregor in deadlock at secret talks to end the miners' dispute, I know the compromise is a difficult thing, I know that I am being led to see the issues of the strike in terms of personality clashes between the two leaders, I know the 'secret talks' were not secret, these are the things that I know when I am there, it is what the place means to me because it is how I can use it.

The construction of the meaning is the physically active encounters with the landscape features, the doing and the getting to know, finding, reading and using is being a reader; and if you say that because I may say that following A.B.C.D.E. 'F' is the next in sequence, that I have expectations. Then yes, I knew where to go next, but only by being at and using the place A.B.C.D.E. the place in use is the action giving the expectation. We are not able to imagine our reading in advance, it is the seeing that dictates the places to go.

Now words like, 'the text directs readers to bring into play resources not present at the text'. Come to mind as being familiar in its claim, am I saying the same thing?

But stop, think, what is present at the text? I may use the black on white as an example of something of which its words do not directly tell, like the 'butter mountains' of the E.E.C. being an example of bureaucratic madness, or I may fill in details, that Sunderland met to play at Roker Park, as not all of Sunderland's inhabitants went to go and play on the swings in a local park, but that it was Sunderland's footballers who met to play football at Roker Park because that is their home ground. I use the black on white in ways that its words do not tell, I fill in, pad-out my black on white with my experience. These skills and my use of them I do not dispute, what I ask is what is present at the text? I am present at the text with the landmarks of the black on white, it takes me to recognise them. It takes a reader to see d.o.g. as usable as dog, or to see the grey outline of a four-legged object as a dog. It takes the reader to make anything out of what is present on the looking surface. His skill in knowing the 'letters', seeing the 'words' from the letters, separating the 'paragraphs', acknowledge the different blocks as different 'stories.' The looking surface might as well be a child's dot-to-dot book, scattered pieces of black on white, random and open, without the reader to take those placings, make them out and make them work. All reading depends upon the knowledge and competence of the reader. If a landmark is missed out of a particular route, say the meaning of the word 'mercenary' is not known, then it is not part of the journey, the version, the reading is completed without it, it is not there.

Now we face the question, 'What is there?'

Is it nothing but my ability to understand and use what is there? Do I create my looking surface? Wittgenstein uses the example; say the numbers one to twelve out loud, now turn to the face of your watch and read the numbers off the dial, one to twelve; what was it that you did second time that made it reading - what was different?

When I read I feel a kind of influence the letters have upon me, as Wittgenstein says; in saying 'read this', the seeing reading and saying are connected, whereas if we were to say 'hello' when our eyes passed over \*@;/& we would feel the seeing and the saying were separate and that we had not read the word. (Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations ff 156-178) Partly, then, we have covered this ground, it takes my skill and competence to make anything out of the placings, to see them as landmarks, to put them to use, to act upon them. Yet still when I look at my watch, and think of the difference between reading and reciting, I feel the influence of those numbers, and reading back over this as I write it, I can feel that the letters are the reason why I read such and such. If somebody were to ask me why I read 'dog' instead of 'cat', I would point to the letters d.o.g., the word 'dog' to justify my reading, I would not say because that how I know how to use it, I would claim that the letters guided me.

Let us examine this notion of being guided for a while. Wittgenstein (Wittgenstein, L. Philosophical Investigations ff 172-178) talks of being guided, he says when copying a doodle we notice nothing very special we have merely looked, made a surface, drew a line, and yet later when we

have finished and we look back, we see the similarity and say we must have been guided - but what do we mean by guided? Guiding is an inessential process; there are many types, many ways of being guided. We can be force-led, we glide around as a partner in dancing, or we may follow railway tracks, or talk to Mr Smith as we accompany him on a walk, meandering along in his direction. My looking surface still remains a physical entity, not a reproduction of some reality beyond, but a reality in itself. My looking surface, my newspaper is a physical object, I can roll it up and swat flies with it - THUD. So my looking surface comes to me not just as about something, a cognitive exercise, but as something, a solid object and my reading is my activity. What makes my reading specific then, different from reciting is the physical movement with the text. That my eyes move over the surface one to twelve, I encounter the landmarks in action. So my journey is not like 'my thoughts wandering' or 'being miles away'. It does not happen inside the confines of my head, but on the looking surface, an actual encounter - the eyes with the looking surface and its landscape.

But would I still want to talk as Wittgenstein does, of guidance and the 'feeling of because'? My saying and reading one to twelve is no coincidence, not merely simultaneity, there is a connection. So, must I conclude that reading is an essentially guided action? Maybe a clue lies in considering what a guided action is like. If we had a pattern and we placed tracing paper over it and carefully drew a pencil along the lines, then the completed drawing would be a faithful copy of the original, we would have



been guided very closely by the lines of the pattern. But no, think of our journey on the looking surface. If we walk along a road are we guided by it, or do we merely traverse it? If I were to take the A167 northwards from here I would end up in Newcastle, and you could say that's where I got because I walked that road, but surely it doesn't guide me, in fact I doubt if it would do anything at all, just like the looking surface it lies silent and still. It is I that traverse, walking along a road just seeing its sights, no compulsion just encounters.

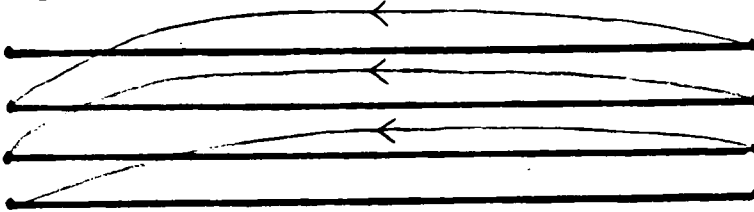
I have said that reading is like a journey, a physical encounter with the landmarks on the looking surface, we have considered what that journey might be like but what I also said was that reading was above all else an activity, did you believe me? Shall I say more, shall I convince you?

When I read I am aware that my eyes pass along a line of black on white and that at any particular place where I may be said 'to be reading at that moment', my gaze hovers and then I look on. 'Look on' being within the orientation of my looking surface, a movement of the eyes to the right. I am not usually aware of the letters, only words, except if a word is mis-spelt and then my eyes 'hit a brick wall', a sharp reminder that reading had been occurring at quite a pace, they stop, staring at the offending mis-placed letters. I see them as I might notice a foreigner in a crowd, out of place. At other times the letters make themselves obvious by grouping within a word that I do not know, then I must take them on board one by one till my

word is complete, and then gradually my mouth stops its pathetic silent shaping of oo's and ahh's as it sticks on the letters, finally my mouth dismisses the letters as it accomplishes the word, g's go back to being silent and vowels collapse into each other. The letters are constantly re-occurring like well known faces, just the pattern changes, the word is the pattern like ones signature, no-one reads the letters like when checking a cheque card against the signature on a cheque, even the name does not have to be readable, the 'Smith' that disappears to a squiggle, the pattern is the same, the signature allowed. We know it is proper for the letters to disappear, for an overfamiliarity with the letters breeds contempt. Read the word 'please', yes, familiar, acceptable, now read it again and again, stare at the letters it starts to look very odd, loses its sense becomes meaningless, like saying the same word over and over again to oneself it becomes just a sound - the word 'please' becomes just a sight if the letters become too familiar.

I can skim along the lines or dawdle, but always my pace is not constant, I grab hold of the first word of a line as a place to settle my eyes, to orientate them to the line that is to follow, then provided my letters stay invisible my pace steadies across the line till the last word when I apply the brakes, to ensure that my eyes stop with the end of the line, I actually alight on the last word before I pass onto the next line. Now if my reading takes place in a 'forward' direction, in my case left to right along the line, I also traverse that line from right to left, except that now I never read it. My left to right direction was

horizontal and paced to my reading, my right to left direction rises above the line it has just traversed, but now it does not see the words, or encounter the landmarks, it just follows the line to ensure itself of its place in the many layers of lines, till nearly back at the beginning when it darts below to grab the first word of the 'new', meaning the 'next' line, like this;



I trace my eyes path. But lest you should think it is just the eyes that do the reading, my mouth can co-operate, when I read aloud, or my 'eyes voice' when I read 'in my head', or my eyes hearing, when I read two words as different because the voice hears the 'sound' as different even though the letters are the same. Sometimes in my reading even the eyes refuse to co-operate, you know when you get to the end of a paragraph for the second time and you still couldn't say what it said. You were sure that you were reading the words but somehow the eyes have 'shut' themselves on you and the words just don't 'sink' in, don't 'register'. Our eyes become vacant, and although they follow their path, the reading disappears, we need the eyes co-operation. Once gone it takes a great deal to bring the eyes back, a cough, a re-adjustment of posture in the chair, a deep breath, a hard blink of the eyes to wake them and even then it usually takes the 'voice in my head' to help them through the first few words again.

This is interesting because although I might 'follow the

motions' of reading, I know that I am not reading. I am not encountering the landmarks in the black on white, I am aware that somehow my actions are false. Is this what defines reading, that it is an activity that one is consciously aware is taking place? Alas no such easy definition for us. Often we think 'yes I read that somewhere', without even being aware that you had till you were asked to recall it, and of subliminal advertising, when you might swear that you had not even see the frame of the film, let alone read it, yet everybody rushes off to buy 'Coke' the next day. As I might drive down the road and then suddenly realise that I cannot remember doing so, I was not aware or conscious at the time of doing it, but obviously I have, and I must have been attending because I passed through traffic lights and crossed a roundabout, the traffic was heavy, I must have been driving competently to have prevented an accident; although my awareness was absent, my skill remained. I need not be conscious of my activities to do them competently, reading is an activity like this able to proceed under 'its own steam'. As long as we have an actual encounter, eyes with landmarks, fingers with Braille dots - we have reading.

However, I have talked of reading in the way that one might talk of, say, the Tower of London, a definite thing but an important difference is present. There is only one Tower of London, while perhaps there are many types of reading. Consider the way one reads differently the page of an unknown manuscript, slowly with care, to a page of rough draft that one has written. Present at my own draft in re-reading, I can hear my voice, I can remember where I was

sat while I was writing it, what I was wearing, I remember many things, the reading is a social event, this time it holds many memories - for me, for you present at a strange manuscript, these rays of light flashing are not present. Reading this familiar material pulls me along, I read faster, perhaps I in part am reciting as I read, my looking becomes lazy, as Sudnow says,

"..the sights no longer serve as instructions so much as reflections of my own voice."  
David Sudnow, Talk's Body p.95

He says it is not like reading but watching one's voice on the page.

You might say that this is an aspect of re-reading, but re-reading is still reading. It is just that reading is not one thing alone.<sup>3</sup> The word 'read' is applied differently when we speak of a beginner and a practised reader. I may read Tolstoy's 'War and Peace', a child may read 'Janet and John' we are both reading, but the sense of the word is different. My reading is not like his, but also my reading is not one thing - the reading of a practised reader need not be the same on different occasions, consider the purpose of reading. Something that we are interested in is read differently to another piece that we just read to re-tell the story later to someone who we know will be more interested than we are. In my newspaper the way I read a story to see if it is the same story in two different newspapers is different to the way I would read one story on subsequent days, to find out 'what happened'. My reason for reading plays a part in the type of event that reading is, it places a coloured filter over the looking surface to

alter the 'light' in which the journey is taken. In different circumstances we may apply different criteria for a person to count as reading. To try to specify what these criteria are is a useless task as Wittgenstein says like stripping the leaves off the Artichoke to find the real Artichoke - to discover the real reading just to find that the Artichoke disappears, all we have are instances. (L Wittgenstein, The Blue and Brown Books (Blackwell, Oxford 1958) p.125). Like the difference between the word 'compose' and 'decompose' is not the same kind of difference as for example between the words, 'structure' and 'destructure'. Reading is too sensitive to destructuring, take it too far and it starts to decompose instead. As water put under the microscope to be examined soon evaporates under the heat of the lamp, soon there is nothing to see at all.

Our analysis, our words, this new looking surface which grew out of many other looking surfaces is not the activity that the reading was. I worry, do I just use language's ability to ruminate upon itself, to be picturesque and maybe a little too verbose, to use metaphor? In doing this that you see before you, am I writing, not reading? I console myself two ways. It is not just language that I talk of when I consider reading, for one may read a music score as well as a newspaper, although perhaps we should be wary of how we are applying the word 'read'. But secondly you are my consolation, the reader of my looking surface. The activity that I detail does not belong to me it is not an individual action, although I enact these movements you too have done all that I consider above, and in the same

way, for you to have followed my account this far, you have given me a sympathetic reading, you have found mine a familiar route, a well known journey. When you read my account, do you remember what it is like to read a newspaper? If my readers 'remember', then we display our belonging in our activities - that you have done what I have done and you are doing it now as your eyes encounter my black on white landmarks. Sudnow talks of playing the piano along, and then in company with other musicians to be monitored and modified, pace altered, crescendo checked by the others. He says to be available to the others to hear means that

"Having the sounds on makes matters social."  
Sudnow, Talk's Body p.77.

Take care how I use his example for his movements along the keyboard are his activity while his music, recordable and reproducible is his product, like talk as a doing and the conversation, heard and transcribable - the product is the 'social bit'. My reading is my activity, my product - what? Understanding, meaning? To be able to do is to understand, to use is to know the meaning. I know that your activity on my looking surface, your use of it, shows you, (as I, understand it) - the meaning. The account is not mine it is ours. Your reading makes the event social.

## Footnotes

1. If we consider the derivation of the word 'Journal' (commonly used as a name for newspapers) we see;

"Journal: A, diurnal (service book), itinerary, daily record of transactions; record of events; daily newspaper. B, part of a shaft or axle that rests on the bearings, sense B is first recorded from R. Buchanan's 'Shaft of Mills' and 'Millwork' in which journey is given as synonymous."

Onions, C.T. (ed) The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1966)

What we can note is the merging of the concepts of a daily record of events and the concept of a journey within the term journal.

2. Again drawing upon the theme of journal and journeys. If we consider the derivation of the word 'journey' we see;

"Journey: Day's travel; spell of travel, especially by land. Day's work (hence in journeyman, orig. one qualified to work for day's wages; amount produced in a day's work. (mod. journee day, day's work or travel)"

Onions, Dictionary of Etymology

We start to see a logic in the occurrence of the words journal, journey, recording events, travelling and working being tied together in the talk of newspapers. We seem to be naturally bound-up in a metaphor of newspapers with travel and movement rather than being the creator of such an analogy.

3. I am reminded here of

"And in the same way we also use the word "to read" for a family of cases. And in different circumstances we apply different criteria for a person's reading."  
Wittgenstein, L. Philosophical Investigations ff 164



AM I TRAVELLING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION  
(OR HOW MIGHT WE ALL HAVE OUR 'OWN VERSION'  
OF THE SAME STORY)

...And so to an account of my voyage, well all journeys have to start somewhere and mine is no exception, so shall I start at the beginning?

The front page (actually, correctly speaking, the beginning was prior to this) it began with the selection of this newspaper to read amongst the many on my shelves, I flicked through them, like the way one might run one's fingers along the sleeves of books on a shelf and I selected the one on which my fingers stopped - a lucky dip.

No this was not the actual beginning, strictly speaking the beginning was prior to this also, it must have been to have seen my newspaper as an object amongst others that I could select for a particular use - the beginning is my familiarity with newspapers - jolly old pals? But where and when did this acquaintance begin; at what point did I start to get to know newspapers, to learn to use them?

Enough, this going backwards does not take us forwards; rather it takes you as reader onwards down the page (me also as writer) but it does not mark progression into my journey, take my ideas forwards on the particular route I had wished to travel. It has led me astray to traverse an unwanted route, and for the moment where I go, you go, you cannot go anywhere without my being there first to silhouette it in my words, but you know what has happened. This unwanted route we have been led down - we have been

side-tracked. So, if we cannot make a beginning, let us simply make a start.

The front page, the first page, the cover page, all the same thing, it is the wrapper that the rest of the newspaper comes wrapped in, in it marks the front and from the behind the back of the newspaper, so it gives orientation and direction as it wraps itself around the other pages. It is also the first page, this is slightly more problematic.

First...? Do I mean merely the first to be seen, or do I mean the first to be encountered, undertaken as part of a journey? If I mean the latter does that suggest that this front page should be the first to be read, encountered, do I advocate a particular order of reading, an intended use? It's like starting at the beginning, usually one does and the front page marks the physical beginning of an actual object the newspaper, but the beginning need not be the place of starting. I had a choice like at the beginning of this chapter not to start at the beginning, but just to start. I could turn a few pages and start elsewhere in my newspaper. I make a start I commence the act of reading, I begin to use my newspaper, to encounter landmarks in the text, but I need not do so at the beginning that is the physical beginning of the newspaper - the front page only becomes the first page when the start of reading is confused with the beginning of the newspaper. When starting becomes beginning, we use the front page as the first page. The confusion of the 'to start' as 'to begin' is habitual, and aggravated by those who author the

newspaper constantly telling us that they put the most important news on the front page, its urgency requiring that we encounter it first, that we start to read where this most important news is. Starting and beginning become corrupted into one. Do we listen to them? Do we collaborate to use the newspaper as its authors' intended? We shall see...

This time I do agree to collaborate. I regard the front page and see the title (ah, but newspapers have headlines and not titles). I see the headline <sup>1</sup>,

# Just William

I see it is in thicker print, bigger and blacker than the rest of the page, and if my journey is to proceed top to bottom of the page and I make a start at the beginning, then the headline proceeds the rest of my encounters.

I assume 'Just William' is to be meaningful to me, as I accept that I am to be moved by certain images suggested by the headline. Just William, I remember is a fictional character in the 'Just William' books, later to be made into a TV series, William a lovable but incorrigible horror, a mischievous boy. But almost simultaneously I encounter, as my eyes wander a picture (or more correctly a photograph of Prince William). Just as they appear together on the page, so I feel justified to use them together as different landmarks but part of the same journey. Is Prince William

to be seen as being just like the lovable horror 'Just William'? It is as the landmarks appear, where the journey takes me. Don't be fooled I am not without choice in taking this route to regard along its paths what I wish, not necessarily solely those landmarks most prominent. I read irony into the words of the headline, for the newspaper is dated June 13th 1984 and I read it again now on 1st May 1985 and now there is not 'Just William' but also Prince Harry born 8th September 1984. Here is a pathway not available to me at my first reading back in June 1984, yet opens itself up now and I take it as a pathway presented to me by the text in its words 'Just William', but if the black on white headline presents it to me now in May 1985, why did it not do so in June 1984. The newspaper itself has remained static in the intervening time, its print has not rearranged itself to open up this new pathway. The answer to why the newspaper presents it now and not then is that the newspaper does not present it at all. The newspaper offers me a landscape over which I may move, but where I move and how I move remains a choice of my own, depending (if you like) on current knowledge and interests of mine. The newspaper is landscape, the journey is mine, the interaction, the encounters - what is read is ours, the black on white and the other landmarks and what I can make of them, my use. The headline remains static, 'Just William', my journey the views I see, the encounters altered, the reading is changed, this time I notice different things in the landscape, we have a different version of essentially the same text. Would you really expect me to emerge with the same version of the same text every time I read it? Simply because it was the same text?

No, second, third or fourth time through I see things I missed the first time, or I see things in a 'different way'. I read on my eyes stop at;

By the  
left, he  
sets  
a right  
royal  
teaser

I stand at a crossroads with many paths suggested - which should I take?

'By the left..'

a military phrase, do I go on to read a story of some tale of the military forces?

'he sets..'

who is 'he'?

'..a right royal teaser.'

right royal - meaning first class, a top rate sort of teaser.. or literally a royal (regal) teaser.. and what is this teaser?

Like those puzzles that appear in magazines, a mouse at one end in front of four routes ABC and D and one leads to the piece of cheese, the rest are dead-ends and go nowhere, all the mouse has to do is to select the correct route to the cheese and the prize is his. His choice and yours to solve the puzzle is trial and error. Mine is to proceed

tentatively in the hope that I might see through the 'darkness' and in the conviction that the correct route has a 'light at the end of the tunnel' and that eventually in taking that route I will 'see the light' that 'all things will be made clear' that my puzzle will be solved.

I do proceed carefully but my plight becomes worse. Now I find that I am dealing with three levels of confusion, what is the 'right royal teaser' - the text as yet offers me no answer.

● **WELL, what's all this about?**  
The quizzical look by Prince William at his royal photocall yesterday left the rest of us scratching our heads over this vital question:

Prince William's confusion at the press conference yesterday and the rest of us scratching our heads, at what?

I really am not clear what I might understand this story to be 'all about'. What sort of route am I travelling? What can I make of the landmarks that I see. Landmarks need the overall sense of my route to give them their significance, to provide their placement in my journey. A set of gallows gives me one understanding through their placement on a journey through a public execution and another in a journey through a history museum. Why is the text remaining misty like this? I am getting annoyed, I feel I am being deliberately 'left in the dark'...

But this is the clue, the confusion of Prince William at the press conference and of the other spectators there is mirrored by my confusion as reader of this text. Mirrored? Am I ready for the consequences of using this word? Just

as the spectators felt confusion so I am left with a right royal teaser, I do not yet understand why they were confused and I am confused myself as to what the whole thing is all about.

Confusion in the real world event and confusion in its reporting and confusion in my reading. Event, style of reporting and reading (to use more familiar phrases) become isomorphic, is this how my landscape tries to provide me with some of the reality of the event it seeks to detail? It enables me to recreate it in its pathways? Am I talking of a mirror?

There is a special quality; I give credit to the sensitivity of my black on white, I cannot separate what might be termed style of reporting and what is reported. For me here, the landscape becomes a mirror the black on white a reflection of a real world event. Now, one cannot separate a reflection from that which it reflects - both must be present at the same time. If the reflection allows that which it reflects to escape, then it too disappears. I stand and gaze into this mirror and at the moment that I feel this confusion the reflection appears and I know for the reflection to be present it must be in the presence of the real world event that it reflects, and although I cannot see that real world event (I was not at the press conference with those people scratching their heads) in the moment that the confusion is real to me and the reflection and its real world event align, I glimpse at it and then it is gone. My landscape and its landmarks lose their quality of looking glass and become like shadows, empty, flat, grey

and distant.

So I have a mirror in those special moments, but a word of caution, looked at through a certain angle the black on white mirror might just reflect oneself. Maybe what I see in the mirror when I see the black on white as mirror is myself, my commonsense understanding, my use reflecting back at me. I must try to remember my black on white when it becomes mirror just might be showing the reflection of my use while in its presence, my reflection and that which I take to be a reflection of the real world event is not so. That the text has no ability to reflect real world events as they are gone, finished, it may only reflect what it is in the presence of at that moment, my particular usage. The folly arises because part of my usage is the desire to see the real world event reflected (rather than simply my own use reflected) and no self respecting newspaper text would admit to deceiving us, so they go along with this folly, leaving me feeling as if I am in the presence of a real world event.

I can see that this is one way in which the text appears to report real world events to me; another way too is becoming clear to me. I have been unable to talk of the 'story' without talking of the story. I cannot split (as literary criticism attempts) main character, plot, moments of light relief, characters acting as catalysts to the action etc..). What I can only do (yes, I suppose that 'only' does carry a feeling of failure, if inevitability) is talk of what I encounter in the landscape of the text by detailing things I see there, that are part of it, that



constitute my journey, put a more conventional way - I must use its words. Its words encompass me, the journey that I am undertaking at the time is, for that time, my whole world, reality for me. To talk of it is to do so on its terms, using its details. However, back to my newspaper. Then, re-entering the confusion, I encounter the words,

Is  
William growing up left-handed.

Suddenly the confusion is gone, as the previous lines reorganise themselves, I have a 'what the story is all about', my dithering at the crossroads is a thing of the past, I have scurried down one of the routes; encountered placements of landmarks on a particular route. The reporters' confusion was whether William was growing up to be left handed, William's confusion is the puzzled face at their confusion as he scratches his head with his left hand. Now I can say I know these things. My topic (William's left-handedness) provides a theme for the journey, provides me with an explanation of what sort of journey it is, becomes the nexus, like the hub of a wheel from which all other aspects of my journey radiate like spokes, derive support from and are given their placement by the hub. Left handedness is at the centre.

# By the left, he sets a right royal teaser

Again I look at the headline, 'left' becomes the core, 'right' wraps itself around, in opposition closely with 'royal teaser', which is Prince William's potential left-handedness.'

By the left', a military phrase to link the pomp and circumstance of the royals and also Prince William could be 'By the left' and 'teaser' is to show uncertainty as yet, as to whether this is actually the case.

I read on,

● During his meeting with the world's Press, William kicked a football with his left foot and pointed at cameramen with his left hand. And before leaving to return to his nursery, the Prince gave a left-handed wave of farewell.

● If he does become a left-hander, William will be the odd man out in the Royal Family. Prince Charles and Princess Diana are right-handed, as is the Queen and Prince Phillip.

Lines 7 - 13 make me feel uneasy, but I don't know why.

...the photo session and left-handed theme are linked and also it is wondered if left-handedness is inherited because both Prince Charles and Lady Diana, the Queen and Prince Philip are right-handed.

I carry on again becoming less and less interested in my

journey, closing my eyes to the landscape, like travelling on a long and boring bus trip. I might not do as I would on the bus trip and fall asleep, but it is likely that I will stop reading and prematurely end my journey.

Then the text moves, it has gone back to the event,

● What was obvious at the photo-call was just how quickly William is growing up.

What do I make of this? Surely no one person grows up any quicker than any other? A day is a day, 24 hours whether one is a royal or not, days pass to weeks, to months and years, I had thought that we all pass through them at the same rate. I had thought that age was measured in chronological time and that chronological time was a stable feature of our reality - was I wrong?

He will be two on June 21, and already has quite a vocabulary. William casually mentioned "tractor" and even "ant." And of course, "Daddy."

Alas the text has no answer for me yet, I am tempted to say that I shall have to wait for an answer, but if I were to do so, an answer would never come my way. Answers will only 'arrive' if I proceed through my landscape on my journey and locate them. So in reading one proceeds to an answer, one cannot wait for it to arrive. So, I have been cajoled into proceeding...

● A leading psychologist gave this advice last night: "Accept left-handedness in a youngster exactly as you would accept the colour of his eyes."

On again. Back to left-handedness. A quote from a leading Psychologist (although they remain anonymous). Now look again, the newspaper is trying to play mirror again for me. It has placed what I might take to be his 'actual' words in "speech marks", but this time I am not fooled, I do hear these words, the Psychologist is not before me at this very moment uttering them, I have not magically gone back to the real world event - did the black on white think that I would? The obviousness of the technique is so transparent that I was hardly likely to have been 'taken in' (to its reality), or 'fall for it' (stumble, making a mistake as I travel). Maybe the black on white realised this, so why does it quote the Psychologist? There must be a good reason.

My overall assumption about newspaper reports as opposed to other forms that the black on white may take, is that the newspaper and its black on white or its black, white and grey is truthful; that what I may encounter there, even if not the actual real world event itself, is, given the distance in time and space from the original event, as truthful an account as possible. Readers recognise most of the black on white as 'stories' about a particular event, journalists who author these stories prefer to have the title 'reporters' giving 'reports' not wanting to be known as 'tellers of stories' (a phrase which has infamous links with the telling of lies) but as those who to the best of their ability merely 'indicate' the event, they report and not in any way construct it. Newsrooms too have the same desire to be thought of as factual. A story that has not yet gone to print, but has just been committed to black on

white by a reporter is called a 'copy' - a copy of the real world event? However the game is given away by my story itself: it proudly in large print tells of its author, Ashley Walton and the photograph is in its turn authored by Arthur Edwards. I think I will stick with the word story, it has no pretensions of being something other than what it is. One may have true-life stories, or fictional stories. The term is flexible enough to allow 'movement' in the newspaper story without its overall definition being broken. So, 'copy' no, creation yes.

The quote from the Psychologist then I take to be a journalistic attempt at getting me to believe the facticity of the story. How can I deny that any Psychologist would say such a thing, for here is one before me uttering those very words. A newspaper does not have the physical ability to record those words for me, so that I might actually hear them; or film them so that I might see them spoken; but, given the restrictions of the medium on the black on white, its best effort is speech marks. On this level I can accept that this is the best it can do. It cannot convince me that I am in the presence of that Psychologist uttering those words, but I will agree to let the 'quotation' pass as truthful.

Now I have reached the end of the page. Does the end of the page mean the end of the story? The finish of my journey? For you as reader of this text it certainly does not, you have assumed that it will be necessary to turn subsequent pages to continue your journey. Can my newspaper rely upon its reader having that assumption? I

think not, for when it does become necessary to 'continue overleaf' in a later place, it gives directional instructions to ensure that the reader knows that they have not reached the end of the story upon reaching the physical end of the page. It tells them where they may continue on their way. I am told,

## **WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR - Centre Pages**

These words appear not in black on white, but white on black - a deviation to attract attention, much like I suppose Punk Rockers with their pink or green hair.

I take this as part command, part invitation and part advertisement, one thing however, is clear the black on white certainly believes that there is more of the same kind of thing, a continuation to my journey on the centre pages - so who am I to argue? In fact I would have rebelled, not usually interested enough to follow this story up (follow because I go where it guides me) but for the sake of this chapter and academic interest I go on.

But before I go, I realise where I am, I am at the bottom of the front page, only now does it become obvious to me the distance I have travelled; actually I have not moved from my seat but I have traversed the newspaper from top to bottom - travel without movement.

Enough delay I go on to the centre pages. Just as the front page was the one on the front of the newspaper, so the centre pages are the sheet that is folded upon itself

and lies at the centre of my newspaper. Both defined by their geographical position as part of the object 'newspaper'. Not so all the pages the sports page or the TV page or foreign news, these are defined by giving them a name but they provide no clue as where they may be found. Identified but in hiding.

I turn to the centre pages; straight to the headline. The thought that crosses my mind is 'what is this all about?' (I assume it must be 'all about' something, and not just disconnected words or sentences). I expect this landscape to be much the same kind of landscape as the front page provided. The headline <sup>2</sup>,

# William the Conqueror

confirms this and I proceed understanding as I go that, like a species of moth attracted by a certain frequency of UV light (that these particular landmarks give off). I am now drawn by the lure<sup>3</sup> of the headline - that this story is about a particular thing. Think again about our poor moth fluttering around the light bulb, it has no choice, it is drawn by compulsion. Trapped. Am I too trapped? Does the story ensnare me? Am I forced into its way of seeing things? I have assumed already that the following story will tell me something about 'William the Conqueror' - outline ways in which William, the young prince is like the historical figure of William the Conqueror, so not only do I have an 'all about'. But I enter the landscape looking

to it to do certain things, to contain certain things, so I do not start my journey naive or blank, but I set off looking for particular things, perhaps willing to see whatever I find there as fulfilling in some sense the expectations I have. I am not an explorer into some unknown and uncharted landscape, totally ignorant of what I might find on my journey; rather I am like a shopper entering a supermarket, not just to select at random items from the shelves, but armed with a shopping list; these are the things I look for, and select when I get to them, in fact to obtain them is the entire purpose of my visit. So too then, in this reading of the centre pages, on my 'shopping list' is the expectation that it will be full of things like the front page and that it will display how William could be seen as William the Conqueror; if I select the correct items. Do I detect that I am being directed to a particular use? Am I now travelling in the 'right' direction according to the newspaper? We are set up to be believers, the headline has seen to that. Taken out of context, now, while I am writing this, I can see that Prince William bears very little resemblance to William the Conqueror. He is a child, several centuries his junior and the label 'barbarian' does not make any sense applied to Prince William at all. But at the time of reading, while encountering that headline, I have no choice but to accept its assumptions, reading it is walking into the trap, a fly to fly paper - stuck in the moment of contact.

The headline presents me with a scenario: William as William the Conqueror, to read this is to read William as the Conqueror in the words 'William the Conqueror' - so by



reading I have already entered the conspiracy, repeated that of which in the cold light of day I might have chosen to dispel, but I am trapped into affirming it in the act of reading it. Thus having obtained my acceptance without question, the landscape starts to provide landmarks for my viewing, and as I now look out for them specially. As evidence to support the headline - I find them and so my acceptance of the headline is justified. I begin to think of the headline as a truthful landmark and the black on white landmarks as its faithful support.

But as I see what is happening here, I break my pact with the headline and the text. Having momentarily broken free, I see other things on the page, there are a number of pictures, all of Prince William, there is a border round the whole story so I may see it as typographically as well as thematically distinct from the advertisement on the far left of the page. I see the 0 which marked the beginning of a new paragraph on the front page is now replaced by a crown. For the moment I have seen all that interests me, I return to the black on white and begin to read again,

# How they came, saw and were bowled over by the Royal tornado

By **ASHLEY WALTON**



PRINCE WILLIAM put on a non-stop show yesterday. As soon as he discovered a new set of playmates in his garden at Kensington Palace, it was all systems go.

It's written in terms of adventure, all systems go, about the discovery of a 'new set of playmates' in the garden. I understand that these playmates are the same people as the 'world's press'. So why call themselves playmates? Presumably Charles and Diana would have somewhat different names for them. I can only assume that the reporters here name themselves by the name William would have for them, and this strikes me as odd because as I believed reporters are at pains to report 'the facts'. The story is of Prince William and to capture the essential 'facts' of the situation requires that we enter this reality (or what one might imagine his reality to be) and see things as he sees them - that we in this report share the world of that 2 year old. Again the black on white tries to be a mirror reflecting William's excitement, adventure and games. I

cannot separate what might be called the topic of the text and the style of reporting. To tell you here what my journey through this landscape was like I can only do so by describing its landmarks, using its words, bringing that adventure to you. I cannot go beyond the words. I cannot tell you of a story about Prince William without talking of Prince William. It is not as if I have a topic to write of and then a set of words as tools to write with. The words are the topic, the topic the words.

On a theoretical level I know that I have free choice over what I may read, I can select, re-read, pause or go on to another piece, but in practice while actually reading a particular piece that choice seems to dwindle to such an extent that it almost disappears. I am not the first to fall foul of this malady generally known as 'the intended version'.

I am always struck when reading any black on white that I assume there is a particular thing it has to say, and I look for something I can glean from it - otherwise why read it? Why put books on a reading list for students, unless you work on the assumption that there is a 'message' in those books that upon reading the students will find, a 'message' essentially similar to the one you found upon reading, that they might know why it was that they were directed to those books. Even if we adjust the phrasing of my words slightly, and we say that the compiler of the reading list may direct his students to these books in the hope that they can use them in such a way as he did, to make a particular point, as he did, as part of an overall

course. Even if we move from the old idea of content to the new idea of use of texts (or even to the idea of journeys through landscapes) essentially we provide no difference either way. We have an idea of a text whether 'read' or 'used' or 'traversed' that can support the same reading or use or journey for more than one person - an intended reading?

At the same time. I know that in any one situation there will be many versions of it that can be called 'truthful' even when they are different versions, possibly even contradictory. For example, a Doctor examining a Muslim woman at an ante-natal clinic; the Doctor's version - the twentieth such examination he has made that morning, and probably the tenth before lunch. The woman's version, an assault, violation of her Purdah to her sister accompanying her, confirmation that the British do not understand or care about the ways of the Muslim; to the Nurse confirmation that Muslim women are 'behind the times' and should be made to do as we all do now they are British citizens.

Which is true? How can we decide, we can find no criteria to discredit one in favour of another as they all stem from and take evidence and support for their version from the same event. In any situation to try and decide 'truth' based on experiential evidence is hopeless.

In my newspaper I want to highlight the traps that exist, the places where upon reading the black on white one enters an enormous hall and while swept along by the crowd end up

Would it,  
Quietly,  
Sadly,  
Cause the animal to disappear?

Can we not envisage a reading of a newspaper text that is true to its phenomenon? Like the kind of experience we have in the presence of our newspaper at the breakfast table, and yet still have a version that is theoretical, that is doing sociology?

For Garfinkel, documenting particular settings, describing the constituted action is to point to meaning, is to show an underlying pattern of social life as it happens. Reading a newspaper story - one little occasion of social life, social order as it happens? Can we have theorising in the mundane attitude?

#### Footnotes

1. I borrow this example from Potter, J. and Wetherall, M., Discourse and Social Psychology, beyond attitudes and behaviour (London, Sage, 1987).

William is nothing like a 'mini-tornado'? We cannot, we can only be silent.

It becomes difficult now (nearly impossible when reading) to ask questions like, 'Do I believe this account?', 'What makes me believe/disbelieve it?' We only have evidence for belief (partially found in the reflexive support the text has for itself). What might cause us to disbelieve? I have no more credible access to the real world event than the one provided by this 'story'. It has been emphasised that aptness of the name 'mini-tornado' which in turn makes these the appropriate events to record,

As well as delivering his first public speech, William happily showed off his versatility. Here was no one-act Prince.  
A game of football? Certainly. A turn on the swing? Of course.

Consider this, what if the rest of the time of the photo-session William sat quietly by his parents, I still would have no access to these events, they are gone, all I have is the black on white. If it was 'biased' in its selection of the events for a particular purpose, I could not tell, I am trapped within its version. I may make different things of what it tells me but I have no evidence to go beyond what it does tell me. I have no version beyond the black on white's, no other account to believe.

Even at a shade under two, he knew how to make the most of the Roay spotlight.  
He displayed an interest in horticulture, kicking his football into a manicured flower bed.  
Then there was his knowledge of the insect world. Pointing to a patch of soil, he declared: "Ant."

As I read of the young Prince's 'interest in horticulture' and his 'knowledge of the insect world' I am reminded of that piece on the front page that I was uneasy about (lines 7-13) where it said that Prince William was growing up quickly for his age. In the light of these 'vast' skills (now I too have my 'tongue in my cheek'). I decide that what is meant is; that for his chronological age of 2, Prince William has a greater range of skills and experience than one might expect for a child of this age, i.e. socially he is older than he is chronologically.

I stop now at the end of,

His father  
obviously impressed, observed:  
"He is an expert on insects."

and observe the black, white and grey. When do I look at them? Too easy to say when the text frees me...I also viewed at the beginning when the headline accidentally lost my trust, and for my analysis I shall go on to view at the end.

At the beginning I felt that the black, white and grey stood as some kind of advertisement for what I might expect to find in the black on white. Now in the middle of my journey I see their role more as providing proof of the fairness and truth of the black on white. But again, that is too simplified; to claim that the black, white and grey stands in only one sort of relationship with the black on white, that it only exists to add another dimension to the black on white.

At the start of my journey the black, white and grey lends

support to the black on white to lure unsuspecting travellers to take its path, to enter the blackness of the print. At a freeing space mid-journey the black on white makes a claim and quickly (once again) the black, white and grey is there to lend support. But, if the display given by the black, white and grey is lost to us (if we do not recognise the person that it shows) then it is the black on white that supports the black, white and grey. If when we see a photograph we say, "Who is the man in that photograph - why take a picture of him?" The black on white steps in with a caption...

"Mr Fred Bloggs, Harefield Hospital's 1,000,000 heart transplant patient leaving Hospital today."

The black on white helps the black, white and grey out, but nothing is for nothing, in return, at the same time, the black, white and grey provides evidence for the Black on white phrase which describes it in the first place (you've been told about Fred Bloggs, well, here he is). Like the game that children play where one person stacks his hands alternatively on top of the others, the person whose hand is on the bottom pulls it out from the bottom of the pile and places it on top again, then the other person does the same, and then the first person again and so on the game getting faster and faster; so too with this mutual support of the black on white and the black, white and grey, who is on the bottom supporting the other? As I think of that alternatively they change. We call it mutual support, perhaps a better phrase might be 'quickly alternating support of the other' (but it is a bit more of a mouthful).



But there are so many black, white and greys..at least three quarters of the page is under their command. I examine them more closely, what are they? But first a word of caution...



SWINGER... with a helping hand from Dad

Both the black on white and  
the black, white and grey need  
my co-operation, that I will  
agree to see,

and 'Prince Charles'

and 'Prince William'

as being the same thing.  
These are two different  
displays, they are not alike,  
the black, white and grey's  
version of Prince Charles is  
in its manifestation nothing  
like the letters of the  
alphabet that make up the  
black on white's  
configuration. 'Prince  
Charles'. But what a friend  
the newspaper has in me that I  
will let this pass  
(unnoticed). Always I agree  
to co-operate, collaborating  
in its effectiveness.

To the black, white and grey then,  
they are;



WAVING. The picture is cropped to show William's hand and arm, in fact to show his hand and arm waving. (It strikes me that William's legs are not shown because they have no relevance to the action of waving). Waving.. that is what I was told I would see by the black on white caption, and that is indeed all I see, (even though ironically enough William's arm is quite still, immobilised in the photograph.)

WAVING . . . Is he left-handed ?



SWINGER: A father and son shot, the black, white and grey are categorised (with the help of their black on white) on the basis of who is shown in them and what actions they are shown doing. The black on white insisting on what I look for in them..Swinger? Well yes, William is on a swing with Charles pushing him. The word 'swinger' conjures up pictures of frivolity, light heartedness, carefree fun (as of the image of the 'swinging sixties') I suppose William is having a good time, a fun time and he is literally swinging. So I agree, collaborating again, gently persuaded - trapped.



The black on white 'ACTION MAN' evades me; it evades me because basically (no matter how I try and my overall concern is to try), I cannot make it 'fit' the picture. I cannot make it describe Prince William or anything that he is doing; there is a football beside him, but he is not kicking it - he appears to be motionless, I cannot see that he is doing anything at all and I see no feature integral to his physical form that would make him an 'action man'. Yet I cannot abandon the black on white's caption 'Action man', or think that

**ACTION MAN...having a ball**

it really refers to another picture, or that it is a spelling mistake, that it should read 'Close up of smiling boy' or 'Prince William on a sunny day', or that it was accidentally placed there. No, at all costs I do cling onto the conviction that there is a reason for this black on white's placement beneath this black, white and grey, that the two have a meaning for each other. It must be just (alas) that I cannot find it, a failure of mine, not wanting in the text. Yes I really do trust my newspaper.

The large black, white and grey (overleaf) I find more interesting.



**NEWSHOUND . . . showing his inquisitive nature as he gets a close-up look at a TV camera**

I see,

William looking at the TV camera.

The camera man showing William the camera and watching him look.

Prince Charles watching the looking of the other two.

Although given 'Newshound.. showing his inquisitive nature as he gets a close-up look at a TV camera'. Now I need no words to describe what I can see in my black, white and grey - it is self evident (might I add self reliant, needing no black on white for support?) We say of photographs like this that they 'speak for themselves' (precisely, they need no black on white to do it for them). And, if they need no support are they stronger than those black, white and grey that need their black on white caption? Yes, I think they are. I know how to look at these pictures I know the characters William and Charles, I can deduce that the other is the camera-man. The weaker photographs rely lazily on their black on white words, they do not 'work' on their own. Think of plays and mimes. A mime has no words only actions - yet we may understand it, indeed we might wish to ascribe the word 'brilliant' to a Marcel Marceau mime, a whole slice of life in itself, no props (props to hold it up?) just a man and his actions. I gave myself a clue there, I said Marcel Marceau needed no 'props', meaning other physical objects around him, scenery for example but 'props' also meaning something that holds something else up. Would the black, white and grey reliant upon its black on white caption collapse without it? Are they propped up by it? Yes, the prop the black on white gives to it provides its placement on the landscape, its

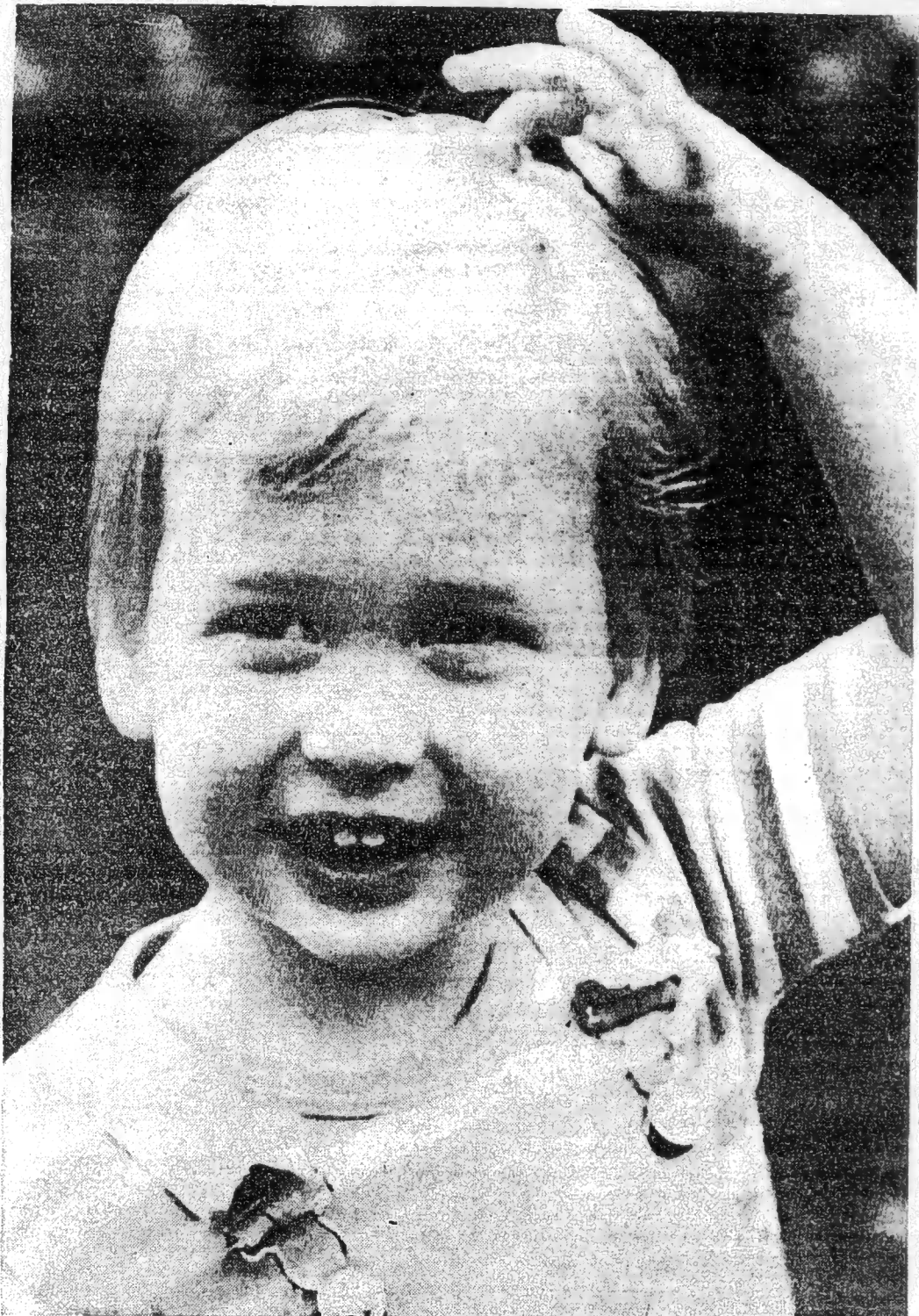
significance in my journey - tell me what I may make of it. Going back to plays as opposed to mimes. What would we make of a play that had lost its words, performed in silence, it would be nonsensical, we could not derive any sense or meaning from it, so too the plight of pictures that need their black on white and are left without them, or that are given a black on white that is nonsensical like 'action man' black on white, it does not prop up its black, white and grey and thus leaves it without placement on my journey - empty and useless.

However, let's return to the black white and greys themselves. Why am I shown these views of some person doing some action (that sounds empty and cold) rather, in these pictures, I see familiar faces, I see who I take to be, Prince Charles and Prince William and together in the same frame I cannot believe that they do not stand in some relation to each other. I do assume there is some reason for being presented with this photograph, but to place it as a landmark on my journey it has to become meaningful to me in relation to my journey as a whole.

I have said how both the black on white and the black white and grey provide mutual support for each other but the subtlety of the support goes far beyond this.

Let us see how...





Playful William in the garden of Kensington Palace yesterday

Picture by ARTHUR EDWARDS

The black, white and grey I understand shows me an event in progress, here is Prince William scratching his head and here is the black on white telling me that he did.

'Playful William in the gardens of Kensington Palace yesterday'. But I'm not really fooled am I? I do accept

the picture as a genuine picture (not a photocomposite fake) because I understand the nature of a 2 year old that he might laugh so and scratch his head; that the actions William is engaged in can be seen as typical of his age - it is a plausible thing to have happened. So yes I agree this event could have happened, that it did happen, that we have an historical record, but that in itself does not lend support to the black on white. It tells me of a photo-session at Kensington Palace yesterday and so for this black, white and grey to be part of this story to have a placement in my journey, it is not enough to say that I accept that this view of Prince William that I am presented with what actually happened to him, I must also accept that it happened yesterday, at this particular press conference (it's what the story is all about after all). I must believe all the claims that together the black on white and the black, white and grey make for themselves. The photograph not only has to have a reality in that it is physically here before me (and you) that is not enough, the black, white and grey has to have authenticity. This time the black, white and grey to be truthful must display an event that happened at a particular time and place. The black on white senses that if a doubt about this crosses my mind it will seriously jeopardise its truthfulness, stop me from 'taking on board' (gathering landmarks as I travel) what it reports - the version. The black on white and the black, white and grey must all stand together to bravely put a face on as we pass them on our journey, their placement and relationship (of mutual support) must remain constant for others to see and travel the path that I am at present travelling. So to ensure that I and others that

follow and regard this black, white and grey in a particular light, establish its authenticity, its truthfulness thus in turn allowing it to support the black on white to be seen as truthful - we get a caption. Look at the caption we have here:

**Playful William in the garden of Kensington Palace yesterday**

I am assured by the black on white of the authenticity of the black, white and grey before I even have chance to doubt it. The question 'was this picture actually taken at the press conference yesterday?' is answered before it even has chance to obtain the status of a question. Protest snapped in the bud, silenced, trapped. OK, my doubt is quashed before it is doubt, but how is my acceptance obtained? The whole process depends upon my acceptance that the photograph itself is a genuine photograph and not some sort of composite effort. The black on white relies upon my acceptance of the black, white and grey as a truthful recording of a real world event (given the restrictions of three dimensions reduced to two, colour reduced to monochrome) so that all it has to do is place the black, white and grey in time and space and allow it to take up its placement on my journey. Here I was not snared in a trap, I jumped into it. When first I accepted the photograph it was downhill from then on, trapped.

I remember starting school and being taught the alphabet (the raw ingredients of the black on white) and then I was taught the relationship between the black on white and the words of speech - I was taught to read. But of the black, white and grey, I was not taught about pictures or

photographs. I had reading lessons I did not have picture lessons. We take the black on white and we read it, we take the black, white and grey and what do we do with them? There is no equivalent word that stands to the black, white and grey as reading does to the black on white; no word for the action of encountering the black, white and grey as reading is the encountering of the black on white. Why? Let us turn the question around, not to ask why there isn't a word to stand for the 'reading of pictures', but to ask 'Why there is a word to stand for the encounter with the black on white - with the text?' Why does the black on white need a word like reading, when the black, white and grey can manage without.

Consider,

Black on white

Black, white and grey

Small dog

Large dog



The black white and grey to indicate a large dog after a small dog actually increases its dimensions, it is bigger. A change in what the black, white and grey indicates is marked by a similar change in itself.

But look at the black on white's large dog as compared with small dog, the 'large dog' is no bigger than the 'small dog' (the same number of letters, print size, etc.) - just different words. We could talk of 'symbolic vs. analogous representations' but I doubt if that would take us anywhere new. Rather let's say the black, white and grey accommodates itself to its display, becomes its display,

moulds itself to that which it displays, like a comfortable old slipper wraps itself around your foot, so comfortable that you forget that you have it on, a second skin. No gap between object and its display. The black on white however remains aloof from that which it indicates, not seeking such intimacy. Still, it indicates its subject but it does not alter its form to do so, rather its subject must compromise itself only appearing on the black on whites terms, in its form. Our black on white is, basically only and always composed of 26 characters (excluding punctuation) of the alphabet. But our black, white and grey in its multitude of possible accommodations for its subject is infinitely varied.

They each gain and they each lose. The black, white and grey can accommodate itself so closely to its subject it can almost obtain harmony with it (today's technology aims to enhance the black, white and grey here and holograms increase its ability to display by seemingly increasing its two dimensions to three dimensions) but the black, white and grey loses its ability to distance itself from its subject; it is overwhelmed by it, totally taking on its character. As Sol Worth has said

"Pictures can't say ain't."  
Worth, S. "Pictures can't say ain't" in Studying Visual Communication (Philadelphia, Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1981) p.162

That the black, white and grey can only display something that is, it cannot tell a lie. We can have a false black, white and grey, like a composite picture of an MP in bed with a prostitute he has never even met; the result of the

merging of two separate black, white and greys, so thus a black, white and grey can display something that is not true, but it cannot deny it while displaying it, it can only silently display. For example, the black on white is perfectly able to rise above its subject and in its aloofness, where it loses some of its intimacy with its subject it gains the ability to negate. For example,

'Mrs Thatcher did not go to the Commons today.'

No problem for the black on white, but for the black, white and grey an impossibility, how could it indicate this? Does it show Mrs Thatcher's empty seat in the Commons? Or show Mrs Thatcher ill at home in bed? It can display something that is, an actuality, a positive event, but it cannot display something that did not happen, it cannot show Mrs Thatcher not arriving at the commons.

Meanwhile back at the story..

Even at a shade under two, he knew how to make the most of the Roay spotlight. He displayed an interest in horticulture, kicking his football into a manicured flower bed. Then there was his knowledge of the insect world. Pointing to a patch of soil, he declared: "Ant." His father obviously impressed, observed: "He is an expert on insects."

I read that William is nearly two and that already he has quite a vocabulary. That he has an interest in horticulture, he has mastered the word 'tractor'. That he has knowledge of the insect world - he can say 'ant'. I take these to be 'tongue in the cheek' to make me understand that here we have a little boy, who for the afternoon is playing at being 'all grown-up' and doing

things that adults do. Somehow though, again as with the 'mini tornado', I have a most uneasy feeling. I feel trapped again - but how?

Still I carry on,

Before the game of football with Prince Charles, the young Royal routed photographers.

The black on white retraces time back to before the game of football, the Prince ran the cameramen around. Again that feeling of uneasiness - suddenly I know why, I've spotted the trap.

He raced around so much

I reply,

"Did he really?"

"What makes you say that?"

"Is that so, how?"

"Where's your proof?"

A stifled protest emerges. But the wise old black on white has encountered this sort of rebellion before, in the very next few words,

that they had a job keeping him in their viewfinders.

This is the evidence. First a statement about the behaviour of the Prince 'out of the blue', and then before I can raise a query as to its truthfulness or question whether things might have been seen differently, the full weight of the black on white is upon me. It presents its evidence, its 'back-up' and leaves me defenceless. (Of course if the cameramen couldn't keep the Prince in their

view-finders he must have been racing round) - it's so silly my acceptance of this sentence as proof for the truthfulness of the first sentence, it in fact has a no more valid status than the first sentence. Both just sentences in my black on white. Yet I do accept it as evidence.. trapped.

To explain, let's pretend to start with that there are three stages that I look for in reading my black on white. The actual event, that, I assume is the starting place of all things, that fuels, composes what comes later. Then, here I am given an observation by one of the participants at the press conference; that Prince William ran the cameramen around, but before I can ask anything about this - did it really happen that way or is it just the idiosyncratic way this individual (the author) had of seeing it, the black on white bullies in with 'hard' evidence to verify the observation (as the cameramen had a hard job keeping Prince William in their view-finders he must have been running circles around them, so I was correct in observing this and reporting it to you). Protest, disbelief, the building of an alternative version vanished without trace.

Round and round again, trapped in this version, snare sprung, trap complete, protest silenced before it was begun, the black on white rallying to its own defence. How can anything get away with using itself to verify its own good name? 'I'm a jolly good chap because I say so'. Such is absurd, but when such is invisible, melted in innocuousness by my reading, it becomes just a landmark to



encounter on my journey, not a trap to ensnare me into a certain way of seeing things and indeed what things to see, its intended version?

It is the black on white's process to cement itself to the real world event, it merely moves in a circular grounding, its evidence does not justify its reporting by tying it to any external reality but it just reflexively creates good excuses for its own self appearance.

And while this goes on, I have, if I spring the traps, no room to move.

Now my analysis interests me but any interest I had into the 'storyline' has gone. If not for my ulterior motive in undertaking this journey, to examine the journey itself I would have stopped, finished, left this story for another. I encounter a sub-heading (a little headline interrupting the flow of the black on white) I use it to give myself breathing space and rest, probably because the desire to go on is slight and I dawdle.

However, to proceed, to go on and forwards on my journey is to go down the page, to do so I must read the sub-heading, proceeding is only done by reading.

### **Curiosity**

Or, 'this next bit will be about 'curiosity' in some way, so read on if you want to find out how', a reading 'between the lines', the black on white does not say so much itself, 'in so many words'. No, my version exists only between the

lines encountered as I pass over the landmarks through the black on white. It is also deniable by the black on white at any time as being a quality of my own mind alone and its 'wanderings' and not the product of the black on white. I do muster some curiosity and proceed.

Why am I presented with something such as,

Princess Diana, expecting  
her second baby in September,  
tried to prolong the game by  
pushing the ball towards him

From the assumption that I am given meaningful landmarks, I am confused as I find this one totally irrelevant, how has Diana's pregnancy any bearing upon her desire to prolong the game? I'm going to conclude that it hasn't any relevancy to the game, but that my initial hunch was correct that the landmark is purposeful, that it does have meaning (even if not one directly for our story). What could that meaning be? What use may it be put to and by whom?

It makes me feel part of an audience. I said that normally I would not have travelled this far along this journey, but I have and now I feel accompanied by fellow travellers, who have continued their journey because of interest and not from any desire to study the voyage itself, as I. The black on white knows that now it really has those that are committed to it, its loyal and faithful followers. It recognises and acknowledges its traveller's interests, they are 'fans' of the Royals. Their ardent and faithful adorers, who would read anything and everything about royalty, so it gives them selected views (not strictly part

of the journey undertaken today) but one of the landmarks to be seen in the distance, on a route to be travelled another day - the coming birth of a new royal. The black on white telling of Diana's first child certainly creates for those devoted enough to attend, a relevance for the telling of the coming of a second child.

but curiosity got the better of William.

Diana shook her head and smiled as he ran away from her and round to the back of a line of photographers, as though he thought they were hiding something from him.

Well here is the promised bit about 'curiosity'. I feel a bit cheated now that I reach it. Was it worth the journey? Like going to the sale at the big DIY superstore which claims 'Massive 50% savings, prices slashed', only to find when you get there that the prices slashed were only 20p to start with, so the 'massive 50% saving' is 10p. Not a lie, but what a let-down.

"You are meant to stay on this side," said Prince Charles. Then it was briefly back to the game.

Pressmen were left wondering whether William would be the odd man out, a left-handed Royal.

He waved goodbye with his left hand. He also knocked his football with his left foot and pointed at cameramen with his left hand.

All the leading members of the Royal Family are right handed.

It may be too early to say if the Prince is going to be left-handed. A Buckingham Palace spokesman said: "We just do not know whether the Prince is left handed or not."

It is only now as I reach the end of my journey do I 'see' what has been the slightest and quietest, most sly of all the traps baited for me.

What was (line 4), 'a new set of playmates', becomes (line 8), 'his friends', and (line 8 again), 'the worlds press', I encountered them all as the same landmark, saw them all

as those people who authored the route that I am travelling. But, how subtle the change in the black on white to present that landmark as the same but different, now clearer, more elaborated, from a different angle. Do we appreciate its subtlety? Let's think of it this way; if we are engaged in 'doing algebra', and we have an unknown quantity 'X'; then (through our calculations) we discover the value of 'X' we can substitute that value for 'X' every time it appears in the formulae. So 'X' has the same shape, value and form every time it appears. Newspapers do not work like algebra, and it is in this difference that the trap lies.

Consider, in a story about a robbery, we read of,

'the getaway car'

'the Ford Cortina'

and 'the stolen vehicle'.

In different parts of our journey we see the same landmark. In its regular re-occurrence its facticity is reiterated, it is presented again and again as a knowable. I said represented not repeated (not like the same value always being substituted for 'X', repetition) but as it appears, each time it discloses more of itself to us, it appears again, but appears again differently.

What was the 'getaway car' in the next encounter with it becomes a 'Ford Cortina' (never a question raised as to whether there are two cars - we read it as the same vehicle, but now we can say we know more about it). For a third time, the 'stolen vehicle'.

"..so they used a stolen Ford Cortina to make good their

escape."

The conclusion you reach, the 'feel' of the journey you have just undertaken, yet the black on white did not tell you that, you yourself made much of the configuration and display of the landmarks. All the black on white did was name the car in different ways, you swallowed the bait and did the rest yourself. Did you know what you were doing? or did it catch you unawares - simply one of those things that enables you to say; "Yes, I'm familiar with that particular story, it's the one where they stole a Ford Cortina to.." or "Yes that's a story about Prince William at the royal photocall.."

Slowly, quietly, unnoticed our choice is engulfed in little traps that eat at our freedom, like water placed on a saucer, gradually it evaporates till it is all gone; so, we are silenced. We give up our freedom to the black on white till we might all agree that we have read the same story.

Did it frighten you what I said, about such little freedom within a text, did you think you were in control and now uneasily you consider that perhaps you are not? Don't worry, your choice to leave the journey is always there; and if you choose to remain, there are places where you may be yourself and 'read into' the text what you will and others where you can only be like everybody else. In this, reading is surely no different from any other form of social activity. And although I sprung the traps for you to see, they did not catch me, I managed to escape and look back and regard their nature. Perhaps now you may do the same. But a final word of caution. What about the traps I

might have sprung unknowingly, if I have fallen foul of these snares, and am trapped, unable to detail the nature of my entrapment, then; trapped means taking something so much for granted, its familiarity engulfs you, it is left invisible and you are left silent. What of the snares in my black on white for you? Have you been trapped and left silent?

Are you silent now?

### Footnotes

1. The following article was the front page story of The Daily Express, Wednesday, June 13th, 1984. It is reprinted here in the original typeface and with the accompanying photographs by permission of Express Newspapers p.l.c. (Oct. '89). This is so, with the exception of the photograph on the cover page by Arthur Edwards which is reproduced by permission of News Group Newspapers Ltd. (Nov. '89).
2. Here, I too am trapped by the medium; for example in order to make this particular headline fit in, it has been reduced to 70% its normal size and placed over two lines instead of the original one line, see appendix for a copy of the article as it originally appeared.
3. Where I write of the lure of the text others have written of the allure of the text, see for example Barthes, R., The Pleasure of the Text trans. by Miller, R. (New York, Noonday Press, 1975).

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

Reading is not a haphazard activity, yet neither does it proceed according to strict deterministic rules. Versions of a text are not separable from the reading event as it happened. The 'sense', the 'meaning' or (as such a concept may be rephrased) what it is 'all about' is best understood through that latter term. The event is about, what it is all about. To split the event and assign asymmetric importance to one of its aspects (for example, the deterministic text or the practices of the reader) is to miss the subtlety of the occasion.

It is the intermix that is the sense. A feature selected here, a factor omitted there, dynamic and creative almost certainly, idiosyncratic and playful, perhaps. The directing of the selecting being fuelled by the purpose for the reading. Agreement amongst versions exists not because of adherence to guiding principles that determine possible moves but through common purposes in reading. A desire to put the event to similar uses informs what is a permissible, plausible and appropriate omission without violating the decision that it is reading that is taking place.

Given these situated happenings, how could one specify beforehand the nature of the outcome? One may only describe the undertaking. Examining reading becomes a historical enterprise.

If we are not then able to detail a set of strict

guidelines by which reading proceeds, will the agreement in reading pass us, as theorists, by? Quite manifestly no, if similar purposes and uses in reading give rise to similar versions, then we may describe these likenesses. In having a description and comparison of like events, we have a metaphorical account.



**APPENDIX**

WIN  
£1m  
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DAILY

EXPRESS

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THE VOICE OF BRITAIN



# Just William

By the  
left, he  
sets  
a right  
royal  
teaser

By Ashley Walton

● WELL, what's all this about? The quizzical look by Prince William at his royal photocall yesterday left the rest of us scratching our heads over this vital question: Is William growing up left-handed?

● During his meeting with the world's Press, William kicked a football with his left foot and pointed at cameramen with his left hand. And before leaving to return to his nursery, the Prince gave a left-handed wave of farewell.

● If he does become a left-hander, William will be the odd man out in the Royal Family. Prince Charles and Princess Diana are right-handed, as is the Queen and Prince Philip.

● What was obvious at the photocall was just how quickly William is growing up. He will be two on June 21, and already has quite a vocabulary. William casually mentioned "tractor" and even "ant." And of course, "Daddy."

● A leading psychologist gave this advice last night: "Accept left-handedness in a youngster exactly as you would accept the colour of his eyes."



Playful William in the garden of Kensington Palace yesterday

Picture by ARTHUR EDWARDS

WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR—Centre Pages

# William the Conqueror

How they came, saw and were bowled over by the Royal tornado

By ASHLEY WALTON

PRINCE WILLIAM PUT on his royal boots yesterday, as soon as he discovered a new set of playmates in his garden at Frogmore Palace. It was all his friends, the world's Press, had a tough time keeping up with little William, as his father King, well as delighting his first playmates, the world's Press, showed off his versatility. Here was a royal prince—Prince George, a turn on the swing?

Even at a shade under two, the prince showed a keen interest in the game of the Royal polo. He had a ball into a mauling tower. Then there was the horse-riding. "He is so expert on horses," said Prince Charles, the prince's father, "that he is being so much more than in their 'retainers'."

### Curiosity

Princess Diana, expressing her second baby in, expressed curiosity about the ball, toward the prince. She was seen for the first time yesterday, when she was seen in the garden of Frogmore Palace. She was seen in the garden of Frogmore Palace, where she was seen in the garden of Frogmore Palace. She was seen in the garden of Frogmore Palace, where she was seen in the garden of Frogmore Palace.



ACTION MAN...having a ball



WAVING... is no left-handed?



NEWSROUND... showing the inquisitive nature as he gets a close-up, look at a TV camera



SWINGER... with a helping hand from Dad

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