

# **Ethnomethodology, indexicality and history**

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# Synopsis

- Indexicality and meaning – Psychology and ethnomethodology
- Managing the context
  - Hearing voices: psychiatry and meaning
  - Structured immediacy and psychotherapy
  - Contextualising in political discourse, The idea of dialogical networks
- 9/11 Dialogical networks
  - Original (exophoric orientations)
  - Revisited (historical indexicality)
- Ethnomethodology and historical psychology
  - R.G. Collingwood
  - Historical Psychologies – France: Febvre, Meyerson
- Conclusion

# *Structured immediacy* in psychotherapy

## **(10) Settings 1 (0:00–0:23)**

- 1. ST: Come and sit down and choose a place**
- 2. ((the children are milling around and sitting down))**
- 3. KB: >come=and sit down<**
- 4. ST: the big chair's for me because I'm >bi(h)g=and fat<**
- 5. and I need a big chair**
- 6. (0.8)**
- 7. ((everyone is seated apart from ST, KB and Lucy))**
- 8. Sand=we need >two people to sit over that side.< ((points**
- 9. to the other side of the table)) (0.4)**
- 10. ((to Gemma)) Sorry, can I just push through? ((ST squeezes past Gemma**
- 11. to her own chair))**
- 12. (4.0)**
- 13. Oh:::::ah ((ST sits down)) (0.4) there we are (0.4)**

# Dialogical Networks

- Forms of communication which typically occur in the mass media (but not only there)
- The participants are not co-present; the contributions of individual participants are distributed in time and space,
- An individual's contribution can be multiplied

# Network Cohesion

- Sequential structures
- Argumentative resources
- Lexical resources
- Category organization

# Sequential Structures

- Claim - Denouncement, Dismay
- Demand - Rejection
- Summons (for support) - Response
- Appeal - Response/No response
- Invitation - No response
- Threat – Counter-threat

# Properties of Sequential Structures

- Several actors often react to the first part of a sequence
- The second part in a sequence is often a reaction to several tokens of the first part
- The connection between the parts of sequences is often mediated by journalists

# **(1a) Klaus rejects Sudetan demands (Rudé Právo** **12/1/1993)**

1. Prague - On Monday Premier Klaus described as unacceptable for the Czech Government
2. the demand to cancel the so-called Beneš decrees, on the basis of which after the war
3. Sudetan Germans lost their property and had to leave Czech territory, as well as the
4. demand to compensate them.
5. “The starting point of the government is that the conditions which were created after the war in
6. agreement with the victorious powers and strengthened over almost fifty subsequent years
7. cannot be changed without disturbing the basic rights of the current citizens of Czech Republic,
8. without shaking legal certainties, and as a result of this seriously destabilizing the political
9. situation in Czech Republic,” said Prime Minister Klaus in a reply provided for ČTK to the
10. question regarding the demand of the chairman of the preparatory committee of the Democratic
11. Party of Sudetenland J. Blümel. “The government is obliged by valid legal norms, including
12. in the first place the restitution laws and by its own decree of June of last year, in which it
13. undertook to prevent any change in the legally set limits on restitutions. The creation of the
14. region ‘Sudetenland’ would in present conditions be completely not organic.
15. The opinions of the chairman of the preparatory committee of the Democratic Party of
16. Sudetenland Mr Jaroslav Blümel are for the Government of Czech Republic
17. unacceptable,” states the Prime Minister. (emphasis in the original)

# Theoretical Points

- Dialogical networks (DN) are not inventions of the analyst
- Participants themselves orient to DN
- The concept of DN respecifies ‘intertextuality’ as a members’ phenomenon that is locally accomplished, recognised and produced

# 9/11 Dialogical Networks

Public addresses made soon after the attacks

- by Bush, Blair, Muslim MPs, bin Laden
- by Blair, Muslim Council of Britain, Muslim MPs

# On Doing History

- Participants' as 'practical historians'
  - Garfinkel (1968), Sacks (1968)
  - Lynch & Bogen (1996); Lynch (2009)

# On Doing History

## Garfinkel (1968)

**Society's members act as 'practical historians' who reflexively orient to history while reproducing it. (Formulated by Lynch and Bogen, 1996)**

# On Doing History

Lynch (2008)

Garfinkel and his research team aimed to conduct a specific variant of the documentary method – to derive an organized pattern from a body of documents. However, rather than simply illustrating the interpretative flexibility of retrospection, his reflections about clinic records suggest that such flexibility was anticipated and to some extent *prospectively* managed when the records were written and assembled in patient files. This was not simply a way of talking about the hermeneutic circle, because it involved complex, organizationally distributed, temporally-articulated, interactions among various (sometimes unknown) parties. The raw data (the clinic files) for the sociologists were themselves anticipatory social productions, but just how they were produced was only partly, and perhaps deceptively, revealed in those data. [...]

I believe there is an affinity between historians' and ethnomethodologists' respect for documentary detail and concern to recover local, contextual orientations expressed in and through documents

# Our perspectives on Ethnomethodology and History

- We are interested in how people do history and use it in accounting or arguing about who somebody is, what happened etc. (What are the recognizable devices for managing historicity in our everyday lives.)
- Is historical accounting optional or obligatory - do some participants refuse to think historically when other participants deem it appropriate?
- The third point (following from Garfinkel and Lynch) is: do people think historically by anticipating that what they do now may become a matter of interest in the future and so they act with this possibility in mind?
- And the last thing is: are our own analyses something that should be thought of historically? Is an analysis ever finished or does it change as new knowledge and new interests and new orientations and new capacities of the analysts come in?

## **On Doing History – Bush's ahistorical and essentializing formulation (in extract 1)**

- 28. The search is underway for those who are behind these evil acts. I've directed the full**
- 29. resources of our intelligence and law enforcement communities to find those**
- 30. responsible and to bring them to justice.**

**Comment: In some respect this account is essentializing – the acts are constructed not in terms of historical links but in terms of transcendental characteristics of their perpetrators. Yet there is a prospective historical element - the so formulated deed will be a historical grounds for particular future reaction, that is, the future activities will be contextualised in its terms. But history starts with 9/11 and its perpetrators formulated in just this way. (See extract 2 for essentialising account of the attacks and attackers.)**

**On Doing History –  
Blair’s ahistorical and essentializing formulation  
(in extract 3)**

**11. As for those that carried out these  
12. attacks, there are no adequate words of  
13. condemnation. Their barbarism will  
14. stand as their shame for all eternity.  
15. As I said earlier, this mass terrorism is  
16. the new evil in our world.**

**Comment: The attacks are set up as a historical object in the same way as in Bush’s account. They are not situated historically but formulated as a historical antecedent of the future assessment (lines 13-14). Again, and more explicitly, history starts with the attacks (lines 15-16). See also extract 5, lines 6 to 8, 12-14.**

**On Doing History –  
Blair’s ahistorical and essentializing formulation  
(in extract 4)**

- 124. Terrorism has taken on a new and frightening aspect. The people perpetrating it wear**
- 125. the ultimate badge of the fanatic: they are prepared to commit suicide in pursuit of**
- 126. their beliefs. Our beliefs are the very opposite of theirs. We believe in reason,**
- 127. democracy and tolerance. These beliefs are the foundation of our civilised world.**
- 128. They are enduring, they have served us well, and as history has shown, we have been**
- 129. prepared to fight, when necessary, to defend them.**

**Comment: Note again that history starts with the attacks – the attack is specifically formulated as something new (line 124). Our readiness to defend our self is situated in a minimally historical way by citing unspecified historical precedents (lines 128-129).**

**On Doing History –  
Muslim Council of Britain  
(in extract 7)**

**29. Terror makes victims of us  
30. all, it is beyond reason. Terror on  
31. this scale must not be compounded  
32. by knee-jerk reactions that would  
33. make victims of other innocent  
34. peoples of the world. This would  
35. only add to the devastation caused.**

**Comment: This is again a prospective historical formulation – the attacks are to be formulated so that in the future they are not to be historical reasons for victimizing British Muslims**

**On Doing History –  
The Muslim News, Editorial  
(in extract 10)**

**68. September 11 will doubtlessly go down in history**

**...**

**74. It is certainly a pivotal moment in history and we can only hope that Blair has been using his influence to moderate plans**

**75. and encourage them to act with reason, rather than being a ‘cheer-leader’. Our biggest fear is that**

**76. events tend to gain a momentum of their own with unknown consequences**

**Comment: The present happenings are formulated as historical moment (line 49) that in the future could become a historical precedent for disastrous consequences (lines 57-58). So it should be formulated in such a way that such consequences will not arise.**

**On Doing History – The Muslim News,  
Outpouring of Muslim grief  
(extract 9)**

**36. Warnings about the likely  
37. repercussions were made in virtually every  
38. statement issued by Muslim groups. Both  
39. the Muslim Welfare House and Council of  
40. Mosques in Tower Hamlets referred to the  
41. 1995 Oklahoma bombing and called on the  
42. need to resist the temptation to scapegoat  
43. the Muslim community.**

**Comment: In this account Muslim News refers to the backlash as something that is now happening and it sets it aside with reported historical parallel**

## **On Doing History – Mohammad Sarwar (in extract 8)**

- 9. There can be no**
- 10. justification for this vulgar terrorist**
- 11. atrocity, but we cannot be blind to the**
- 12. plight of oppressed people who look to**
- 13. Europe and the USA for support. As a**
- 14. former colonial power we have a**
- 15. special responsibility.**

**Comment: Mohammad Sarwar situates the 9/11 attacks by aligning them with the plight of oppressed people, which is in turn aligned with British actions in history. The 9/11 attacks thus receive a partly historical account. Note also that Mohammad Sarwar forestalls this historical explanation being understood as an excuse (line 9-11)**

## On Doing History – Osama bin Laden (in extract 13)

2. I have received with great sadness the news that some of our Muslim brothers have
3. been killed in Karachi while expressing their denouncement of the forces of the
4. American crusade and their allies in the Muslim lands of Pakistan and Afghanistan.
5. We ask God to receive them as martyrs and may they become like the prophets, the
6. believers and good people who were chosen to become God's companions, and may

Comment: The lexical choices by Osama bin Laden tie the conflict into history

**On Doing History – Osama bin Laden’s historical formulation of the conflict (in extract 13, as in extract 14)**

- 11. It is not surprising for the Islamic nation to rise up in Pakistan in defence of Islam.**
- 12. Pakistan is considered to be the first line of the defence of Islam in the region as was**
- 13. the case with Afghanistan in defending itself and Pakistan against the Russian**
- 14. invasion more than 20 years ago.**

**Comment: The conflict in Pakistan is situated historically as continuing defence of Islam, paralleling that in Afghanistan**

# Project for historical psychology

- Collingwood's critique of psychology
- Historical psychologies
  - Germany: Wundt
  - Austria: Freud
  - Russia: Vygotsky and Luria
  - England: Bartlett, Barbu
  - Lucien Febvre, Ignace Myerson,

# R.G. Collingwood on psychology

The mental scientist, believing in the universal and therefore unalterable truth of his conclusions, thinks that the account he gives of mind holds good of all future stages in mind's history: he thinks that his science shows what mind will always be, not only what it has been in the past and is now. ... Not the least of the errors contained in the science of the human nature is its claim to establish framework to which all future history must conform. (Collingwood, 1936, p. 21).

The sixteenth-century proposal for a new science to be called psychology did not arise from any dissatisfaction with logic and ethics as sciences of thought. It arose from the recognition (characteristic of the sixteenth century) that *what we call feeling is not a self-critical activity, and therefore not the possible subject-matter of a criteriological science.* (Collingwood, 1940, p. 109, italics added)

Unlike any kind of bodily or physiological functioning, *thought is a self-criticizing activity. The body passes no judgment on itself.* Judgment is passed on it by its environment, which continues to support and promote its well-being when it pursues its ends successfully and injures or destroys it when it pursues them otherwise. The mind judges itself, though not always justly. Not content with the simple pursuit of its ends, it also pursues the further end of discovering for itself whether it has pursued them successfully. The sciences of body and mind respectively must take this difference into the account. (Collingwood, 1940, pp. 107-108, italics added)

knowing oneself is historical - It is only by historical thinking that I can discover what I thought ten years ago, by re-reading what I then thought, or what I thought five minutes ago, by reflecting on an action that I then did, which surprised me when I realized what I had done. In this sense all knowledge of mind is historical. (Collingwood, 1936, p. 19)