

Texts, Entextualized and Artifactualized: The Shapes of Discourse

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A SOCIAL SCIENTIST'S VIEW OF COMMUNICATION

My field, linguistic anthropology, is devoted to the sociological and anthropological goal of giving an adequate account of how we “do things with words” and with other modalities of interpersonal behavior, looking “upward” and “outward” from particular events to the framing sociocultural structures that give meaning and value to event-bound particulars. In the course of the mutual coordination and calibration we experience as the very processes of social life, individuals inevitably relate to one another as self-identifying and thus mutually identifiable social beings, not as cognitions in the abstract; because this is universally the condition of communicative life, individuals are likewise engaged in the everyday business of sustaining the wider, presumptively shared sociocultural reality in which they feel their interactions are immersed and from which they derive their purpose and significance.¹ For the most part communication is not, then, a matter of conveying logical propositions and their presuppositions and entailments; people are, rather, coordinating as socially legible beings without necessarily knowing they are doing so, nor, certainly, knowing the details of how they do it. Those matters are what we try to figure out.

Communication is—to use a Frenchism—*événementiel*; it occurs in spatio-temporally characterizable, contingent events (even on the Web, or even as we engage a print artifact). The event characteristics of language manifest as those of discourse-in-context, and to the degree that discourse is doing its sociocultural work, it precipitates for the interlocutors an organized or structured trace, one

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that is an interpretative conceptualization both of “what is said” and of how it counts as “what is done” in the instance. It emerges, in other words, as what we term *text* in a duplex condition. The process of coming to textual formedness we term *entextualization*; the process of how discourse points to (indexes) the context which seems to frame it we term *contextualization*. At any given moment over the time-course of interaction, individuals inhabiting the role of Sender of a message and of its Receiver, sometimes in metrically alternating fashion in a regular back-and-forth, cocontribute to the fashioning of whatever text is precipitated in-and-by their acts of communication. Such metrical alternation is indicated in Figure 1 by numbering the turns-at-talk of the momentary Sender, though both participants at every moment co-contribute to at least one gradually precipitated text that serves to mediate their interaction with one another. At any given moment those interacting may operate on the basis of variant interpretations of what text has in fact come to mediate their interaction, and more than a small effort is sometimes required to bring the parties into alignment on a more unitary understanding of what text they have been, and understand themselves to be, contributing to. *Text*, thus, is an arrangement of elements of discourse according to organizing (or structuring) principles that unfold—always subject to revision—in the course of a communicative event such that at each significant phase of a discursive event the textual structure precipitated up to

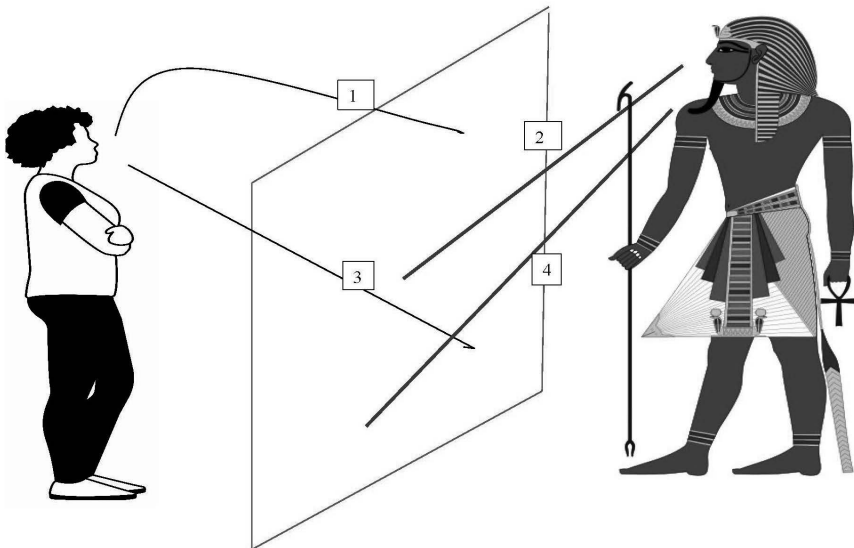


Figure 1: Metrical alternation of talk

that point serves as part of the context—more specifically, as prior *co-text*—for the current contribution.

We have come to understand, then, that such organizing principles are of two fundamentally distinct though not unrelated sorts, one characterizing how stretches of discourse contribute to an emergently coherent (or at least non-incoherent) *denotational text*—“what has been/will have been said” in-and-by discourse in the way of communicating propositional or representational meaning—and one characterizing how such stretches of discourse contribute to an emergently coherent (or at least non-incoherent) *interactional text*—“what has been/will have been done” in-and-by discourse in the way of relevantly consequential social action. The “meaning” of any stretch of discourse—let alone that of a complete discursive interaction—includes both, of course, and the two kinds of meaningfulness are intimately related and governed by criteria of how denotation projects into interaction in determinate ways, the discovery of which is one task of linguistic anthropology.

SOCIAL IDENTITIES IN DISCURSIVE INTERACTION

For interactional texts, to be sure, are in the first instance all about social identities: how one presumes upon and establishes and ratifies social identities as relevant to an interaction in-and-by how we use language and other behaviors as the mediating codes of social coordination. The specific forms of discourse at any moment thus make salient what might unproblematically follow in the way of individuals’ social rights and obligations to interact with one another on this basis, including the transformations thereof—think of ritual performatives—that consequentially happen in the course of discursive interaction. Here, in Figure 2, is a case in point, a transcript of an event exemplifying that the most carefully intended or strategized purposive acts of an individual—here called A—can go astray in all kinds of ways because interactants like A and B are not already coordinated as mutually presupposable social types. The transcript also reveals that as interaction proceeds between A and B it can be, as it were, recalibrated through further discourse as alternate, remediating coordination of interlocutors’ identities.

Here is the scene behind the transcript. It is after hours in some organizational headquarters—a suite of departmental offices in a college or university, for example. B walks into A’s office in the evening at the time when office-cleaning regularly happens; A is staring at a computer screen in a corner of the office. A verbalizes turn (1) without looking away from the computer screen: “There’s some more trash to take out under that table over there.” B: [surprised, incredulous facial expression, frozen body stance] A [delivering turn (3) after turning to

-
- | A. | B. |
|---|---|
| (1) “There’s some more trash to take
out under that table over there.” | |
| (2) | [surprised, incredulous facial
expression; frozen body stance] |
| . . . (2.0) . . . | |
| (3) “Oh, sorry!

I thought you were the janitor!” | |

[Note the status term, *janitor*, a so-called *noun of agency* that names an occupational and frequently organizational status by its habitual or institutional functionality]

Figure 2: Transcript of an interaction

take in B]: “Oh, sorry! I thought you were the janitor!” Note the status term in A’s utterance, a so-called *noun of agency* naming a status by its habitual or institutional functionality, an identity A has presumed, now revealed in a discursive metacommentary reacting to the previous interactional segment. In this sector of the American English cultural community, it counts as an “apology-plus-excuse” for A’s prior turn-at-talk—turn (1)—that reflexively recognizes it as a social faux pas of misrecognizing B on A’s part and thus invites closure of the interactional segment (a unit-segment termed an *adjacency pair* the second part of which—turn [2]—is B’s bodily reaction) based on A’s misconstrual and a reset of further interaction.

Note especially the “hint” in A’s original turn-at-talk—denotationally a statement of contextual fact in A’s first interlocution that counts interactionally as uttering a command (a *directive* in the interactional text putting B in the position of either complying with its terms or not). A’s misguided usage has, however, precisely conformed to Susan Ervin-Tripp’s empirical finding, summarized in Figure 3, that such hints occur in the register of either talk among intimate familiars or to someone expected to conform to routine role expectations of a job or similar circumstance.² (Think of a household with many routinized

and allocated tasks, where one can “hint” to another household member that it is opportune for them to do an assigned task: “We’re out of eggs,” said to the individual who normally does the grocery-shopping [and note the generic verbal noun here of habitual routine!]; “The dishwasher is clean,” said to the individual normally charged with putting away dishes and cutlery.) So in Figure 2, it is important to recognize that A is not simply reporting a state of affairs under an office table as an interactionally irrelevant denotational text—as B *certainly* recognizes, taken aback in the framework of this particular interactional situation by what they take, with justification, to be a directive issued by A under a presumption of mistaken identity. A had been presuming upon the temporality of what goes on in the organizational site, including the habitual organizational functions like office-cleaning; knowing only that someone has entered their office, A’s first utterance appears to rest on presumption of B’s stipulated role within the organization’s structure of statuses; A’s presumptuous utterance indexes this understanding of the prediscursive social context as the operative framework. Since A and B apparently share discursive-interactional norms of the kind Ervin-Tripp identifies, B has interpreted what interactional text is a-building in-and-by A’s utterance, and hence B performs “surprise” or even “shock” at A’s misidentifying presumption in uttering the hint-as-directive. B’s bodily communication is in effect a commentary on A’s ascriptive boo-boo. And A’s following apology-plus-excuse is in effect a responsive commentary on that nonverbal commentary in response to the directive, justifying it by revealing A’s incorrect presumption of the role-relational facts of the prediscursive context.

B’s first, nonverbal turn is, as we term it, *metapragmatic* in character, signaling something about interactional signs themselves and the emerging textual structure. Though nonverbal, the bodily freeze display (rather than scurrying for the trash under yonder table) declines the identity that A has presumed was B’s, and thus it effectively though implicitly—with no denotational language—calls into question what A seems to have done, ordered B to do the office cleaner’s job, in mistaken ascription in the first turn. A’s second apologetic and explanatory turn responds explicitly at that metapragmatic level, ratifying and justifying B’s nonverbal and thus implicit critique of A’s attempted—but failed—directive to B. At least A apologizes to B, with an excuse as well, an attempt to repair or reset the social relationship, perhaps to be followed by an appropriately calibrated greeting ritual based on actual identities and role relationality, to put everyone on the proper footing in a postworkday collegial encounter framed as “dropping in to a colleague’s office after-hours” (“Good you’re here, B! I was meaning to ask you about your new journal article but didn’t get a chance earlier.”)

It is very important to see that even in this brief exchange, there is a social context presumed upon (indexed) by the particular forms of the utterances,

Types of syntactic formulae that count as "mands:"

Need statements, such as 'I need a match'.

Imperatives, such as 'Gimme a match' and elliptical forms like 'a match'.

Imbedded imperatives, such as 'Could you gimme a match?' In these cases, agent, action, object, and often beneficiary are as explicit as in direct imperatives, though they are imbedded in a frame with other syntactic and semantic properties.

Permission directives, such as 'May I have a match?' Bringing about the condition stated requires an action by the hearer other than merely granting permission.

Question directives, like 'Gotta match?' which do not specify the desired act.

Hints, such as 'The matches are all gone'.

Distribution of mand-types by indexically presupposed social context [institutional place; organizationally or other-derived status of Sender/Receiver dyad; role-relational normativities *modulo* site of uttered mand:

TABLE I. *Summary of Directive Types*

Directive type	Neutralized form	Discourse constraints*		Obvious†	Social Features
		Comply	Non-comply		
Need statements	yes	none	excuse	yes	subordinates
Imperatives	no	none	excuse	yes	subordinates or familiar equals
Imbedded imperatives	no	agree	excuse	yes	unfamiliar or diff. rank task outside role or territory expect compliance
Permission directives	yes	agree	excuse	yes	superiors(?) or unfamiliar
Request questions	yes	answer + inference	answer (= excuse)	no‡	non-compliance possible
Hint	yes	(reply +) inference	reply	no‡	non-compliance possible or familiarity or routine roles

* Normal expected verbal response which might be appropriate in these social conditions to an adult, accompanied by compliance or non-compliance.

† Obvious directives are those which are routinely understood as directives under these social conditions (= on-record, Brown & Levinson 1974).

‡ Some questions and hints have become routine directives though they retain the neutralized form.

and that the social context is transformed as a function of the time-bound co-contributions to an emerging duplex text—both the what-has-been said text and the what-has-been-done text. Second, it is clear that discourse in this turn-bound manifestation is not structured merely like beads strung along a chain. There is a complex chunking of segments of text, for example by a higher degree of interrelationship as a metrical adjacency pair, as well as a hierarchical relationship of turn contributions as text and meta-text, the latter for example commenting on the former under a particular interpretation (sometimes explicitly announced) of what was said, who said it to whom, and what it presumably counted as in the way of an interactional textual segment (for example, a misdirected “order” via an offhand “hint”). So any account of textuality has to deal with segmentation at multiple orders of functional structure. Indeed, the architectonic of discursive interaction manifests a poetics of what we may term *metricalization*—the division into measured denotational and interactional units, such as adjacency pairs in the most elementary of interactional forms—corresponding in an unfolding text to experiential phases of co-participation by interlocutors. And the flow of turn-based contributions to an emerging textual structure can operate at several nested functional levels, bespeaking the possibility that the structure of such contributions can itself become a matter of characterization, evaluation, and even dispute. (“When you said, ‘X,’ did you intend to Y?” “Well, why did you do that, then? You aren’t my [relational status term]!”)

INTERACTION AND INSCRIPTION THEREOF

One must not forget that the components of such a textual structure are themselves spatio-temporal occurrences, though in our ordinary work as investigators of textuality we try to freeze-dry these occurrences in their co-textual and contextual framings by interpretatively rendering a graphic transcript that can be studied and further analyzed at leisure. Such a transcript, inherently the beginnings of an interpretation of the text immanent in discourse, can even be printed and circulated as a type of what we call a *text artifact*, something objectual and seemingly less evanescent than discourse on-the-fly, subject to being “read” in the visual channel so as to communicate the (or at least *an*) interpretable text seemingly immanent in discourse, closing the communicative circuit, as it were, with those who read the transcript in the role of Addressees of the transcriber and Overhearers (Monitors) of the original. Note how the creation and circulation and “reading”-reception of a transcript is thus the objectual channel via which we can engage in a meta-communicative event presuming upon the occurrence of the communicative event so transcribed.

Hence it is a matter for some serious reflection just what about an event of communication is to be graphically represented in a transcript, and how the behavioral flow of discourse plus whatever else accompanies it is to be rendered in some suitable visual form in a text artifact. Linguists, to be sure, have a whole toolkit of conventions for a graphic metalanguage of articulate sound (“phonetic” symbols), just as we have systems for representing and annotating the parsed morphological and syntactic organization of utterances as denotational forms. Text-artifacts employing such disciplinary conventions look rather different from the average nondisciplinary representations of verbal material in conventional orthographies that also use conventional visual chunking of phrases, clauses, sentences and even lengthier chunks of discourse appropriate to genre conventions. For internal sentence divisions, punctuation such as commas, semicolons, and colons have emerged in modern times; at sentence boundaries, we have capital alphabetic signs to mark the beginning and a period or full-stop to mark the end.³ (Among European languages, Spanish indicates the nondefault modality of a sentence—exclamatory or interrogative—with a diacritic punctuation at both initial and final endpoints.) For thematically or semantically chunked segments of discourse, we use visual “paragraphing” with some conventional system of otherwise unused graphic space, an indented first line or a line left blank, in common usage. Scripts for discourse to be realized in staged performance respect as well the assignment of speaking turns to particular characters and generally indicate a change of configuration of interacting characters on the stage (a “scene”) as well, sometimes with directions about the places on a stage from which the characters speak. In the silent film era of the early twentieth century, snippets of script critical to plot advancement were intercut with a tableau-vivant—like stretch or segment of mimed discursive interaction; note how subtitles—for example, translating a language foreign to the viewing audience—achieve simultaneity of transcription of discourse in a visual scene in a film and how this technology has been adapted in live theater and opera with the running projection of graphic supertitles above a proscenium. All of these graphic devices indicate, at best, a few of the most basic features of denotational textuality unfolding as the organization of words and expressions into functional units. The reader, attuned to genre conventions, must projectively develop an understanding of the interactional text thus implied.

TEXT-ARTIFACTS IN LITERACY PRACTICES

In literate cultures, then, there are abundant “naturally occurring”—that is, culturally ubiquitous and significant—text artifacts, objects that circulate (or to which potential readers circulate). When encountered in the relevant social

framework, such artifacts stimulate genre-specific textual reading as at least one way in which people normally engage with them as inscription and transcription. For graphic and print text-artifacts, the two visual dimensions of the geometric plane stimulate reading as a systematic representation of words and expressions of one or more verbal denotational codes, and the design characteristics of the individual elements of the orthographic medium, for example typeface choices or font treatments for alphanumeric, contribute to shaping overall textual interpretation by virtue of their own culturally coded context-indicating significance. (I will make use of such dimensions of contrast for my own purposes of revealing textual organization later.) So salient is the “reading” of text artifacts as verbal discourse in literate cultures that it becomes a kind of template for the “reading” of iconic—pictorial—representations like paintings graphically organized by color, texture, relative position, perspective, and so forth in the two visual dimensions of the plane (as also in photographic derivatives), “readers” thus decoding them with a representational “story” with événementiel characteristics on analogy with reading a visuo-graphic representation of contextualized discourse among, say, characters in a narrative. It is an interesting question to think about such cultural text artifacts as primary—if visuo-graphically mediated—communicational affordances, and here, the contextual calibration of the “reading” of such text artifacts in textual and metatextual events, as I will detail further on, is central to the primariness of their status in such cultures. As analysts of other peoples’ cultures approached through social communication, we push the boundaries of reading by constituting ourselves not so much the addressees in a communicative event as the audience or monitors of others’ communication, trying to figure out how the Senders and Receivers of such graphically mediated communication have engaged, engage, or are likely to engage with each other by creating, disseminating, and “reading” such artifacts.⁴ Can one learn to “read” another culture’s text artifacts the way members of that culture have done or would do?

There is, needless to say, much in common in print-based text artifactuality with the professional work of making transcripts of discourse, save that there is, as we noted, a whole sociocultural dimension of selectivity in artifactualization, culture-specific ways of rendering one or more (but likely not nearly all) text-inducing aspects of discourse in a graphic display made available for reading. Studying kinds of graphic artifactualization can tell us much about the diversity and contextualization of genred communicative formations these artifacts mediate and can illuminate the various ethno-foci and ethno-occlusions of text-artifactual genres. Think of such conventions in our own close-by world of circulating graphics: how do “titles” and other visually set-off headings of monologically produced text artifacts (or paintings), whether fictive or not—in-

cluding this one—function in relation to the “reading” of the artifact afforded to/accomplished by the addressee? How do conventions for type variation—note those in this article—highlight both the “said” and the at least intended-to-be-“done” features of whatever texts a reader derives in-and-by the event of reading?

ENCOUNTERS WITH TEXT-ARTIFACTS

It is also important to study how a reader is brought to the event of reading, for example by the production and circulation of an in-theory unlimited number of available commodities like books and magazines, newspapers and flyers, the unmarked norm of modern print culture in the broadcast mode for some time. Contrast monumental inscription, where in order for a reading encounter to take place, the addressee(s) must go to a specific spot, frequently an elaborate built environment, replete with complex design turned to social purpose. Think, for example, of the monumental landscape of Washington, DC, in which temples propitiating the memory of great figures of the official national past—Lincoln, Jefferson—are arrayed in a commemorative configuration on the land, and within each such temple the visitor finds quotations incised in marble along with realist representational statuary depicting the figure so quoted—as though the spirit of the great figure is speaking still to the readers, pilgrims to the very sacred spot, in the ritual framework of national eternity. Inscriptions in stone in and near statuary in the ancient civilizations of the Eastern Hemisphere—also of Mayan Mesoamerica—have much in common with these North American practices, and are, perforce, very much the model for them. For they all function as the vehicles for ritual participation by readers in feeling the assertions of power over an imagined social universe, a cosmos framing and anchoring the polity, whether such power emanates from a biographical individual as ruler or from a ruling collectivity of some sort, for example, “We, the people.”

PAINTING PICTURES IN-AND-WITH WORDS

To be sure, denotation—referring and modally predicating—is, as Edward Sapir notes, the “official function” of language all around the world. But, as such monumental inscriptions show, that does not mean it is the only function, or, indeed, the most important one from the point of view of how we “do things with words”—in the instance, artifactualized representations of words—and other objectual semiotic material. Nor, moreover, because the forms of denotational text are relatively easily brought to consciousness—and have been the obsessive focus of all disciplined practice and study of discourse in the post-Enlightenment West—does this condition of transparency to metasemiotic consciousness allow

us to conclude that this is how discourse functions in social life, even when mediated by visuo-graphic artifactualization. It is merely ideological metasemiotic bias that drives the default tilt of textual interpretation to denotational function, concentrating in the first instance on “subject matter”—a theme, a storyline, an event description—even for plastic and graphic aesthetic artifacts, sculptures and paintings and drawings and such. To be sure, what we may term the *denotationalist ideological tilt* of the Enlightenment began as an anti-Catholic liturgical negation of verbal trope, of ritual metricalization, that joined forces with other antipapist theological insurgencies of Reformation Protestantism. By John Locke’s time, language itself was ultimately theorized as the crucial cognitive instrument that could be refined—for example, through empirical experiment among the brethren of the Royal Society—so as to achieve a “true” representation of the cognizable universe of our experience, an optimal quasipictorial reliability of discourse properly deployed to the end of representing entities and states-of-affairs upon the existence and occurrence of which speakers of a language could come to agreement.

So we can understand the ideological optimization of written and printed denotational discourse as best when picture-like, in effect an evaluative criterion of “painting a picture” of what one is talking about in words, and the discourse-like optimization of representational plastic and graphic arts as inherently ekphrastic, capturing a moment caught in a story line otherwise verbalizable, bring these artifactual modalities to expectations of easy cross-modal translatability. How much of the teaching of techniques of expository prose or pedagogical surveys of art history depend on this ethnosemiotic complex! (How frustrated and rendered problematic are such understandings of plastic and graphic by Abstract Expressionism and its successor visual experiments in direct interactional textuality supervening any denotation.) In both modalities of text-artifactual production, people have experimented with using the techniques of the one for the ends of the other. Observe, for example, how “concrete poetry”—from George Herbert’s “Easter Wings” (reproduced in Figure 4) to May Swenson’s “Fountains of Aix” (Figure 5)—crosses a representational icon of theme or subject matter with a denotational text through the unexpected arrangement of the words and expressions of the denotational text into a recognizable outline shape with detailed particulars (such as the printed word *water* caught in its upward leap in a fountain). From the other side, recall René Magritte’s various painterly experiments of creating scenes containing arrangements of biomorphic shapes labeled with captions for what we are conceptually to reconstruct in some particular position in the scene, as though a substitute for an iconic representation in his brilliantly precise draftsmanship.⁵ Both kinds of experiments operate against the backdrop of expecting easy crossmodal denotational intertranslation.

Lord, who createdst man in wealth and store,
Though foolishly he lost the fame,
Decaying more and more,
Till he became
Most poore:
With thee
O let me rise
As larks, harmoniously,
And sing this day thy victories:
Then shall the fall further the flight in me.

My tender age in sorrow did beginne
And still with sicknesses and shame
Thou didst so punish sinne,
That I became
Most thinne.
With thee
Let me combine,
And feel this day thy victorie:
For, if I imp my wing on thine,
Affliction shall advance the flight in me.

Figure 4: "Easter Wings"

Fountains of Aix

By May Swenson

Beards of water

some of them have.

Others are blowing whistles of water.

Faces astonished that constant water
jumps from their mouths.

Jaws of lions are snarling water
through green teeth over chins of moss.

Dolphins toss jets of water
from open snouts

to an upper theater of water.

Children are riding swans and water
coils from the S-shaped necks and spills

in flat foils from pincered bills.

A solemn curly-headed bull
puts out a swollen tongue of water.

Cupids naked are making water
into a font that never is full.

A goddess is driving a chariot through water.

Her reins and whips are tight white water.

Bronze hoofs of horses wrangle with water.

Marble faces half hidden in leaves.

Faces whose hair is leaves and grapes
of stone are peering from living leaves.

Faces with mossy lips unlocked

always uttering water,

water

wearing their features blank

their ears deaf, their eyes mad

or patient or blind or astonished at water

always uttered out of their mouths.

Figure 5: "Fountains of Aix"

A TEXT ARTIFACT OF DUPLEX ENTEXTUALIZATION: AN EXAMPLE

But, let us return to our theme of the duplex character of entextualization, how discourse comes into formedness in two semiotic functionalities. Above and beyond what has willy-nilly grown up in the socio-historical cultural conventions of printing, we should contemplate what one might then want to see incorporated into transcription/visuo-graphic artifactualization adequate to capturing key aspects of both denotational and interactional textuality. I propose working through an example to illustrate the difference, comparing the usual printed version, reproduced in Figure 6, of a narrative monologue offered in response to an interview query, with a graphic representation that represents the split consciousness of the current vs. recuperated selves in play in the interaction, as laid out in detail in Figure 7. But would a publisher print this and let the interviewee's two selves so vividly interact with us? Here are the circumstances of this stretch of discourse and its entextualization.

A then-young linguistics graduate student, the late Deborah Schiffrin (1951–2017), was part of William Labov's University of Pennsylvania research team doing sociolinguistic interviews in and around Philadelphia in the 1970s for data on the sociolectal differences in the English spoken in this urban and suburban population. The research team focused on eliciting samples of speech from individuals, the phonetic characteristics of which would be correlated with multiple descriptors of the speakers along relevant demographic dimensions of their lives, such as birth cohort, sex, ethnicity, place of residence, education and occupation, and so forth. One of the key moments in a Labovian interview is asking the interviewee to recall and recount an instance of a near-death experience, an incident where the individual thought themselves in danger of death or harm. (The idea is that this would yield "vernacular" pronunciation patterns unattended to and hence uncorrected by the speaker in the direction of the standard—however dubious a presumption it turns out to be that the features of such a narrative provide a transparent window into an individual's "true" articulation.) So shown in Figure 6—in standard English orthography—is a swatch of discourse, a "Danger-of-Death Narrative," that was, on such an occasion a second adjacency pair-part offered by a young woman in response to Schiffrin's first pair-part question, "Can you recall a time when . . .? Tell me about it." This is, of course, the conventional printed way of reproducing a denotational text in a text artifact, an object which, when semiotically encountered, stimulates the "reader" to reconstruct a denotational text. But lurking inside the way we understand or model or interpret it—choose the verb with which you are comfortable—as a denotational text about some past high affect occasion that caused the narrator to experience terror, there also unfolds role-relational com-

So we were in this car, an' we were in Allentown, it's real dinky, an' it's like real hick town off o' Allentown, right around there in this factory. We just pulled into this lot, it was just in this lot, and all of a sudden the buzzer sounds, and all these guys come out, and we didn't know what t' do, cause we were stuck. So we asked some guy, t' come over an' help us. So he opens the car, and everyone gets out except me and my girl-friend. We were in the front, we just didn't feel like getting out. And all of a sudden all these sparks start t' fly. So the girl says, 'look, do you know what you're doing? Because y' know um ... this is not my car, an' if you don't know what you're doing, just don't DO it'. And he says, 'Yeh, I have t' do it from inside'. And all of a sudden he gets in the car, sits down, and starts t' turn on the motor. We thought he was taking off with us. We really thought he was, he was like rea - with all tattoos and smelled, an' we thought that was it! But he got out after a while.

Figure 6: Narrative monologue

plexity via a metrical structure that we can lay bare so as to reveal the complex interactional function of the material.

First off, note that the interview took place in a white working-class neighborhood in northeast Philadelphia, Schiffrin herself a Philadelphian as interviewer and the same for the interviewee. Thus, shared consciousness of Allentown, Pennsylvania's third most populous city (after Philadelphia and Pittsburgh) with—for Philadelphians—a negative emblematic loading could be presumed as a dimension of the interactional context. And it serves as a geographical landmark, note, in setting the scene of the “there-and-then” of the frightening occasion the interviewee was asked to narrate. Note how the narrative begins: we—“first plural” deictic of person, Speaker-plus-some-one-or-more-others—were—“past” deictic of tense on the predicator be- (with mark of “nonsingular”)—in this car—“presentational” use of the “proximal demonstrative” deictic in the singular [contrast plural these in the paradigm of the category of “number”], introducing for the first time a narratively relevant denotatum, an automobile (performatively/interactionally: “addressee, pay attention to what happens to this!”).⁶ It is already clear that the speaker is speaking vernacular nonstandard American English, where the form that is used to introduce the denotatum, this car, indexically contrasts with the decidedly persnickety form, a (certain) car, that belongs to our standard or academic register. Already a vast amount of identity work has been performed in-and-by beginning to locate the narrated event with

respect to the conditions of the current event of communication: two youngish white ethnic Philadelphians in conversation about something that happened in-or-around—eww!—Allentown.

So added to the fact of the Speaker and consociates being somewhere in an automobile, we now learn in a parallel clause formation, that the “we” of the story—narrator and others—were located in Allentown. But, as it turns out, using Allentown as a now-explicitly-referred-to landmark, the narrator communicates a more precise location in an interpolated segment of strikingly parallel metrical units that vividly recuperate her reaction at the time and in the place being narrated about: *in the present tense inflection*. Note the use of such deictic transposition in the grammatical form, contracted *is* of the predicating verb,⁷ the “vividness” of recuperated memory of the narrator’s self in reaction to circumstances, thus at this point performing the individual consciousness of the narrator/character-in-the-plot at that time and place, quasiquoted cognitive and affective state in the contextual envelope around whom the denoted entities and predicated happenings erupt. To be sure, it is an evaluation of “dinky”ness that may very well still hold true for the narrator at the moment of narration to Schiffrin, that is, this could well be a nomic utterance for all time—the “hick town” was “dinky” then and remains “a dinky hick town” now—but as we move further into the narrative, the deictic transposition into two *origines* becomes clearer and clearer as perceptual events—the recuperated consciousness of hearing a factory shift-ending buzzer; seeing a mass of workers coming toward the narrator sitting in a stuck automobile—line up through the use of figurational (deictically transposed) “present”-tense forms and figurational “proximal/proximad” locators as parallel episodes inducing now-recalled anxiety and even terror as percepts, people, and danger came ever closer to the narrator and her chums, unable to move from where they were stuck in a vehicle. Thus, the dense complexity of deixis in this seemingly monologic narrative and the way that deictic transposition creates two represented subjectivities, two *I*-like points-from-which—*origines* [sg., *origō*]—the denotational information is anchored, a then-and-there *I/me* and a here-and-now remembering *I* in the conversation with Schiffrin. In this way, the narrator is skillfully re-presenting the context-as-experienced by the then-and-there *I/me* at this earlier time just as, at other moments in the narrative discourse, she is representing it with a mere *me* (or *us*) description.

The denotational text has multiple kinds of obvious explicit metricalization through formulas of syntactic repetition at several structural levels of the organization. Connectives like *so* and temporal phrases like *all of a sudden* as well serve conjunctively to join whole entextualized segments, reinforcing the parallelism of episodic form. Within episodes, the unfolding of semantic paradigms like *she said . . . > . . . he said*, in parallel one to another serve to demarcate metrically same

but contrasted units of interactional adjacency pairs recalled by the narrator, the use of this metadiscursive frame introducing quotation and paraphrase of what was actually said on the occasion. All these work together to yield a rich, doubly deictically anchored role inhabitation of the speaker as current narrator and as recuperated self. Let us point out the major features of the entextualized discourse represented in Figure 7.⁸

The narrative begins with scene-setting, using the predicate *be-*, so as to introduce the sedentary state or circumstances in which the crew found themselves: in an automobile in a dinky hick town outside of Allentown and, in particular, in the (expected) parking lot connected to a factory building. Each specification of location, including the vehicle as an enclosure, uses the recurrence of the deictic form *this* which, as noted, is the vernacular American English presentational form. Thus situated with the narrator and her chums, we are prepared for the action to follow.

So we were in THIS CAR
 an' we were in Allentown,
 it's real dinky,
 an' it's like real hick town
 off o' Allentown
 right around there
 in THIS FACTORY.
 We just pulled into THIS LOT,
 it just x was in THIS LOT,
and all of a sudden the buzzer sounds,
 and ALL
 THESE
 GUYS come out,
 and we didn't know what t' do,
 'cause we were stuck.

 So we asked
 SOME
 GUY t' come over
 an' us x help.

 So he opens the car,
 and everyone gets out
 except me
 and my
 girlfriend.
 We were in the front

Continued on next page

Figure 7: Interactional text

Figure 7: Continued

and we just didn't feel like
getting out.

[And all of a sudden THESE SPARKS start t' fly.]

So the girl says,

"Look, you x do know what you're doing?
Because
you know um ...
this is not my car,
an' if you don't know what you're doing,
just don't do it."

And he says,

"Yeah, I have t'do it from inside."

[And all of a sudden]

He gets in the car,
sits down,
and starts to
turn on the motor.

We thought
he was taking off with
us.
We thought x really
he was,
he was like rea—

with all tattoos and smelled,

an' we thought ["]that was it!["]

But he got out after a while.

Percepts burst into the consciousness of the narrated *I/we* as they sit stuck in—as it will turn out—the nonfunctioning vehicle. All of a sudden the factory whistle for end/change of shifts sounds and masses of workers exit the factory and come toward the crew stuck in the automobile. Present tense, of course, proximal deixis of the verb *come-* as these obviously causally connected, but apparently, to our protagonists, unexpected events transpire in their contextual envelope.

At this point, the scene-setting and rather static state-of-things, in the past tense, resumes: the crew “didn’t know what to do” inasmuch as they “were stuck.” The narrator is explaining the predicament to Schiffirin, as much as narrating a

story, motivating the affective state of increasingly apprehensive helplessness, and thus the past tense is useful at this point in the interaction.

Beginning a new episode with “So,” the crew stuck in the vehicle asked a favor of some random one of the workers exiting the factory to get to vehicles in the parking lot, denoted here by “some guy,” a variant form of *this guy* that would equivalently have introduced this new focal denotatum.

Yet a further episode, now something that is perceived to happen to the remembered *I/we* at the transposed *origō* is that this fellow “opens”—present tense—the car door causing almost everyone to flee, save for the remembered *I* and one female friend, who remained in their seats in the vehicle. Observe the past tense describing their—as expected—static situation at this point, not feeling the urge to flee, like the others. But, as with the earlier static situations of being-in-the-vehicle, all of a sudden sparks begin to fly, narrated with the by-now-expected present tense of deictic transposition for this experienced flash that interrupts things.

Then we have a new episode, a discursive exchange in adjacency pair form, quoting the narrator’s female chum, with a metadiscursive frame in the present tense—“the girl says”—an overheard message quoted thereby, followed by the intruder’s reply, also quoted with a present-tense metadiscursive frame, explaining what is required to get the vehicle to operate.⁹

And all of a sudden to the reanimated consciousness of the current narrator, the would-be Mr. Fixit “gets in the car”—present tense—“sits down”—present tense—and “starts to turn on the motor”—present tense. Things are now threatening indeed!

The thoughts of the narrator’s remembered self and her female friend are described as the static and somewhat helpless context of the sudden actions of the intruder: they “thought”—past tense—that they were going to be kidnapped, especially because they judged him to be a criminal type with tattoos—this was an encounter in the 1960s or 1970s, recall—and the body odor of someone who had come from a full shift of manual labor. They thought, “this is it”—note, relayed here not with a quotation so much as with indirect discourse reporting thought that shifts the deixis in characteristic ways, so that “that” (substituting for *this* in the purported original) “was” (substituting for *is*) “it.” (Note the absorption of the subordinator *that* in the construction as delivered.)

But “he got out,” narratively concluding the incident in the canonical past tense anchored in the interaction with Schiffirin, “after a while.” Relief and a release of tension and a return to the interlocutory self of the interview.

The interactional dynamic here has something in common with the telling of a ghost story or similar tale of horror designed to frighten empathetic interlocutors. In a ghost story, all kinds of sonic stylizations are used to capture

narrated perceptual experience; an encounter with a ghost is re-presented through perceptual terrors. So also here, the reanimated first-person whose later avatar is sitting together with Schifffrin characterizes such moments of perceptual suddenness that, coming closer and closer to the claustrophobic front seat of a stuck vehicle, build to what at the time seemed to be a personal assault by a smelly, tattooed stranger. One can reflect with admiration on the skill of the narrating interviewee drawing Schifffrin in to co-experience, to mirror the affect of the reanimated moment with which the narrator is as much in dialogue as in the interview situation she is with Schifffrin. That, it seems to me, is a central feature of this snippet of interview discourse considered as an interactional text projected from the extraordinary organization of its forms as they unfold precipitating denotational text.

So here is the important point about text-artifactualization of this discourse: so far I see, this is a reasonably minimally perspicuous way of representing this narrative so as to recapture something of both the denotational and the interactional textuality building in the interview context. Might we be able to transform the conventions for graphic representation in text-artifacts so as to reveal what actually happens in the entextualization, the coming-to-textual-formedness of discourse? In this era of pixelated screen display, we would not have to worry about wasteful use of graphics on a paper matrix, so I see no reason why. At least for the ebook version.

NOTES

1. Though directed from a Marxist perspective, Raymond Williams's concept of "structures of feeling" revealed in literary and other production of cultural text artifacts seems to suggest as much, notwithstanding the absence of any careful sociolinguistic analysis. See Williams and Orrom; Williams. Filmer traces the shifting employment of the term in Williams's oeuvre.

2. In an empirical study of American English usage in-and-around Berkeley, California, in the 1970s, Ervin-Tripp and her students discovered six fundamentally distinct kinds of utterances at the syntactic level, each of which, however, equivalently counted as the issuing of a "mand" or demand/order/request under particular relational social conditions that describe the context in which the mand was (successfully) communicated. They also discovered that in response to such a first adjacency pair-part utterance, each syntactic type normatively triggers particular verbal and other behavioral responses in the case that the addressee of the mand fulfills or declines to fulfill its terms. A careful consideration of the data in the table in Figure 3 will reveal that the dimensions of variation parallel those of the classic case of use of second-person deictics such as French *vous* and *tu* and that indexically contrast two situational dimensions: speaker presumptions of an addressee's identity-based entitlement—or not—to relationally paying deference, and the speaker presumptions of informal "in-group" intimacy of the individuals in the speaker—addressee dyad. Roger Brown and Albert Gilman used the terms *power* and *solidarity* for these dimensions in their now-classic paper written in a social psychological rather than semiotic and interactional idiom.

3. See the charming popular histories of manuscript and print graphic punctuation by Keith Houston and David Crystal.

4. Note how the fictive social universes of literature and the socio-space-times or *chronotopes* immanent in their plot lines also need such analysis in relation to one's own social universe, an approach urged on students of literature by Mikhail Bakhtin and his Circle. This is especially salient a problem for interpreting the "voicing" of realist fiction on which Bakhtin focused, fiction in which the population of a narrated universe in which characters interact is continuous with the universe of narration in which writer (or writer's narrating surrogate) and readers live.

5. Magritte's various other experiments include witty ones inspired by Freud and those very much in the idiom of surrealism. He paints detailed, realist images of common items, each verbally labeled with its likely "dream significance," as though a standard "Freudian symbol" (e.g., cigar = penis). And he plays with the very semiotics of realist representation in his lifelong series of paintings captioned "Ceci n'est pas une . . ." ["This is not a . . ."], starting from his 1929 image of a pipe in "Le trahison des images" ["The betrayal of images"] and including a series of spectacularly hyperreal apples.

6. For readers unfamiliar with the terminology, note that paradigms of *deictic categories* presume upon the momentary characteristics of the context of discursive interaction and denote a referent or anchor a predication in relation to those characteristics. The most elementary forms, such as "distal" *that/those* versus "proximal" *this/these* in English in effect locate a denotatum in relation to the experience of distant-to-close relation to it of Speaker (and the text up to the current moment), *that* located outside a topological boundary, and by implicature *this* inside one. Deictics are universal in language and ubiquitous in both grammar and discourse. They anchor all the semantic content of discourse to the conditions in which it occurs, and, importantly, as they unfold in metrical patterns in discourse give shape to the segments of denotational text as a framework one can project into the interactional text. In the narrative to hand, note how the "presentational" *this/these* and the simple "present" tense inflection (not a true "present" in English, note!) recur throughout for eruptive, anxiety-causing perceptions, reanimating the remembered consciousness of the narrating interlocutor in the interview event as a counterpoint to the expected use of distal deixis for events recounted from long ago.

7. This is misleadingly called by nonlinguists the *narrative present*, but of course it indexes a past event, one decidedly distal to the temporal interval in which the narration takes place. Were it a real present-tense form in English, it would have the aspectual marker of *progressive*, [*be-* + *-ing*], as for example in I am typing this now for you to read whenever you get to it.

8. In my transcription in Figure 7 I employ the two-dimensional organization of the printed plane to advantage, the vertical dimension representing discourse time, the horizontal dimension used to align parallel units of the metrical structures that emerge from repetition-with-variation and other ways of creating text-based semantic relationships. When the occurring syntactic order of words needs reversal to maintain the columnar representation of parallelism, I use an italic *x* to indicate that the transcript reverses the actual uttered order of forms so as to preserve the columnar vertical order of structure. Additionally, I use font, special typographical effects, and color to pick out particularly interesting metrical recurrences central to the organization of the text within the major flow of segments that organizes the narrative plotline and thus the interactional stance of the narrator in relation to the interviewer as here-and-present versus recalled-and-yet-now-reanimated.

9. There is a strong statistical association in American English vernacular narrative of meta-discursive frame with present-tense inflection before actually quoted content, an association that carries over to innovative vernacular metadiscursive frames such as *be-like* and its variants, such as "So I'm like, 'What's going on here?'" or "He's like, 'What the fuck!'"

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