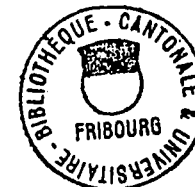


# Studies in Social Interaction

*edited by DAVID SUDNOW*

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, IRVINE



1972

THE FREE PRESS · NEW YORK  
COLLIER-MACMILLAN LIMITED · LONDON

One such modification consists of the ceremonial transformation of one environment of real objects into another. Such modifications occur in play, theatre going, high ceremony, religious conversion, convention going, and scientific inquiry. A second modification consists of instrumental transformations of environments of real objects such as occur in experimentally-induced psychosis, extreme fatigue, acute sensory deprivation, brain injuries, prefrontal lobotomies, and the use of hallucinogenic drugs. A third transformation consists of neonate learning, which quite literally entails the growth of a world and is directed to the production of objective features of the persons' environment that "any competent member can see." The growth of the world is necessarily accompanied by the progressively enforced and enforceable compliance of the developing member to the attitude of daily life as a competent societal member's way of "looking at things." A fourth set of modifications is involved in adult socialization, distinguishable from neonate learning by the absence of radically naive expectancies. Other modifications are those of estrangement, which must include the various phenomena intended under the currently popular theme of "alienation," as well as the phenomena of the cultural stranger, of the major and minor forms of mental illness, of the degradation that accompanies charges of criminality and the fates of social incompetence found in mental retardation and old age. Modifications occur through mischief, playful and serious; through the subtle psychopathic effects of aging as one comes to learn that one may sin, cause others harm, and not "pay"; and through the discovery that the common societal orders that in adolescence appear so massive and homogeneous not only have their interstices but depend for their massiveness upon persons' continual improvizations. Finally, there is the modification that consists in the discovery and rationalization of the common sense world through the growth of social science as a social movement.

I have been arguing that a concern for the nature, production, and recognition of reasonable, realistic, and analyzable actions is not the monopoly of philosophers and professional sociologists. Members of a society are concerned as a matter of course and necessarily with these matters both as features and for the socially managed production of their everyday affairs. The study of common sense knowledge and common sense activities consists of treating as problematic phenomena the actual methods whereby members of a society, doing sociology, lay or professional, make the social structures of everyday activities observable. The "re-discovery" of common sense is possible perhaps because professional sociologists, like members, have had too much to do with common sense knowledge of social structures as both a topic and a resource for their inquiries and not enough to do with it only and exclusively as sociology's programmatic topic.

## *An Initial Investigation of the Usability of Conversational Data for Doing Sociology\**

1.0 Among the basic resources we need in order to describe the materials we have collected are some *collections of membership categories*.<sup>1</sup> Our aim, which is to construct a description that provides the reproduceability of the conclusion a suicidal person may reach<sup>2</sup>—I have no one to turn to—involves us in attempting (a) to locate the collections of membership categories in terms of which the search for help for suicidalness is formulated, and (b) to describe the ways such collections are used to determine whether there are

\* The materials used in this essay are almost entirely from transcribed telephone conversations between or on behalf of suicidal persons and staff

(Notes to this selection will be found on pp. 430-431.)

eligible persons available (to give "help")<sup>3</sup>.

1.0.1 The above formulation of our problem of description was arrived at in the course of the researches we are reporting here. Since that is so, and since we are explicitly introducing a way of doing sociology, it is appropriate to indicate how the formulation may be arrived at. Showing that will involve us in indicating the important sense in which this paper is necessarily a study in the methodology and relevance of Members'<sup>4</sup> activities of categorizing Members.

1.0.2 We may proceed to show how the formulation of (1.0) may be arrived at by developing a way of showing, first, that the task Members face of categorizing Members is completely general, and, second, how important this latter fact is.

1.1 It seems that the simplest way to show the generality of the categorization problem is by showing that no uncategorized population may be specified such that only one *categorization device* is available for categorizing the population's personnel.

1.1.1 By the term *categorization device* we mean that *collection of membership categories*,<sup>5</sup> containing at least a category, that may be applied to some population, containing at least a Member, so as to provide, by the use of some rules of application, for the pairing of at least a population Member and a categorization device member. A *device* is then a *collection* plus rules of application.

1.1.2 It is our task to show that for any population N (where N is equal to or larger than 1) there are at least two categorization devices available to Members, each of which (devices) (a) can categorize each Member of the population N in such a way that one does not get for any members of an emergency psychiatric clinic. Transcriptions of the materials are collected in the appendix. In such transcriptions (C) refers to caller and (S) refers to staff.

The materials were collected and partially analyzed during the year I was a fellow of the Center for the Scientific Study of Suicide, Los Angeles (1963-64). I am greatly indebted to that institution and particularly its director, Dr. Edwin Schneidman, for financial and other support. The various drafts were written while I received financial support from the U.S. Air Force, AF-AFOSR-757-65, Harold Garfinkel, Principal Investigator. Acknowledging his support is a seriously synecdochal expression of what is a largely unacknowledgeable, merely pervasive impact on me.

A very much shorter version of this research was presented under the title "The Search for Help: No One to Turn To" in the collection *Essays in Self Destruction*, edited by Edwin Schneidman (New York: Science House). A more discursive version, also with the latter title, was submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Ph.D., to the Department of Sociology, University of California, Berkeley.

L. Churchill, E. Schegloff, D. Sudnow and D. L. Weider read and commented extensively on each of the various drafts the paper went through. Sudnow and Aaron Cicourel were especially helpful during the final stages of the work.

Finally, I should like to note that the draft here presented was completed in June of 1965. Without apologizing for it I do want to emphasize that it was an initial attempt to deal with conversational materials and is not directly representative of the state of work that I am now engaged in.

Member of the population the pairing (population Member + no category member), where (b) no member of either device is a member of the other.<sup>6</sup> Any device that satisfies constraint (a) will hereafter be called a Pn-adequate device, type 1.

1.1.3 While many devices that are categorization devices by reference to (1.1.1) are not Pn-adequate ones, it is perfectly obvious that there are at least two Pn-adequate devices that Members do have available to them and do use. For example, there are the devices whose collections are (1) sex (male, female), and (2) age (young, old).<sup>7</sup> There are of course others.<sup>8,9</sup>

1.1.3.1 The conclusion of (1.1.3) is of course not news. Our aim in developing it was not the assertion of a proposed piece of news. It was to show how an intuitively obvious fact might be established so as to secure a base for indicating what is news—the import of the conclusion.

1.1.3.2 Sociologists frequently treat some categorization that Members have done as providing the sociologist with materials that are descriptive in the sense that such materials may then be used—as they stand—for further sociological investigation. Alternatively, sociologists themselves frequently use Members' categorization devices to categorize Members as one step in doing sociological inquiries.<sup>10</sup> In both cases the presumptive warrant for this usage is or would seem to be that the demonstrable correctness of the categorization may properly be established by some such procedure as looking to see whether the object (person) so categorized was properly categorized, i.e. by observing, for example, that the Member categorized as "negro" is a negro.

While such sorts of assertions may seem to be adequate, may seem to employ a correspondence notion of the correctness of an assertion, the observation of (1.1.3) operates to prevent the use of their warrant. A demonstration of our claim that the presumptive warrant is inadequate, and consideration of when it might be adequate will be presented, first at (1.2). Further analysis is required before the features of that demonstration may readily be employed.

1.1.4 In the formulation of the notion *categorization device* (1.1.1), reference was made to rules of application of such a device's categories to a population. Rules of application will be presented at various places in this paper. A first rule is one that for a population N can only hold for the use of Pn-adequate devices.

*Consistency Rule.* If some population of persons is being categorized, and if a category from some device's collection has been used to categorize a first Member of the population, then that category or other categories of the same collection *may* be used to categorize further Members of the population. As a correlate of the consistency rule, the following may be proposed: *Category Relevance Rule 1.* If any Pn-adequate device is appropriate for categorizing some population, then any category of such a

device may be used on each Member of the population to provide a count of how many are and how many are not Members of that Category.<sup>11</sup>

1.1.4.1 The relevance of the consistency rule may readily be established.<sup>12</sup> If any population N consists of at least two Members, i.e. requires at least two categorizations to do the job of categorizing its Members, then it is possible that although one device would do, two or more devices can be used. In other words, some Members could be categorized by reference to one device's categories, while other Members could be categorized by reference to another device. In short, for any population of two or more Members, the outcome reproduceability (of categorization) requires either the use of the consistency rule or some combining rules; and this is so even if we are dealing with the production of each categorizer separately or if there is only one categorizer.<sup>13</sup>

1.1.5 We have been talking of the activity of categorizing as involving the use of single categorization devices, and implicitly of a single category (e.g. "negro") being applied to single population Members. Let it be noted that one of the central features of the culture with which we are dealing is that single categories of single categorization devices can be referentially adequate.<sup>14</sup>

1.1.5.1 For Members, it is not absurd or insufficient in characterizing a Member to use a single category to refer to him. It is adequate reference on many occasions to say of someone no more than that they are "female" or "old" or "negro." It is not the case that such a usage is partial for every occasion or use whatever, though it is for some.

1.1.5.2 This fact (1.1.5) permits us to formulate another rule for the use of categorization devices.

*Economy Rule.* For any population N, on any occasion of categorizing Members, whether the consistency rule or some combining rules are necessary, the task may be complete if each Member of the population has had a single category applied to them.

1.1.5.3 The economy rule permits us to partially formulate one central socialization problem. Once a child has reached that stage of learning he makes utterances like:<sup>15</sup>

- 1) Once there was a baby pig. He played with his Mommy. He went to Mommy. Mommy went to Daddy.
- 2) The Daddy works in the bank. And Mommy cooks breakfast. Then we get up and get dressed. And the baby eats breakfast and honey. We go to the school and we get dressed like that. I put coat on and I go in the car . . .

From such a point, the child's task of becoming adequately socialized to doing categorization of Members consists in learning (a) what categories must be added to "Mommy," "Daddy," and "baby," to complete the collection of which they are members; (b) of adding to their apparatus of

category collections, i.e. of learning collections other than the former one,<sup>16</sup> and (c) of learning proper occasions and rules of use of each of the devices. No longer need they face the task of learning what in principle adequate reference consists of. They've learned that. In principle their categorization is referentially adequate. The combinatorial tasks they face are of a different character, and a major combinatorial task has been solved (in principle) when they can make such utterances as:<sup>17</sup>

- 3) Pussy scratched. He cried. He's a *bad boy*. He banged. He stopped crying. He's a *good boy*. He cried again.

While the economy rule does not preclude the use of combinations of membership categories for single population Members, its presence does mean that the task of being socialized to doing adequate reference does not involve having to learn combinatorial possibilities for each pair, triplicate, etc., of categories as a prerequisite to doing adequate reference. The combinatorial problems are between classes of modifiers, of which (good, bad) are prototypes, and classes of membership categorization collections, of which (Mommy, Daddy, baby, etc.) is a prototype, and having learned the prototypes and their combinations the basic tasks have been accomplished.

1.1.6 Given the economy rule we can pose an initial formulation of the relation between categorization devices. Since a single device can be Pn-adequate, it is possible that on some occasion of doing categorization of a population N, a single Pn-adequate device can be exclusively appropriate. Such relations as mutual exclusion may obtain between particular devices or, indeed, the appropriateness of a given device may involve the exclusion of all others. This of course can only be possible if there are some single devices whose categories are referentially adequate, for example.

1.1.6.1 A central relevance of the foregoing possibility may be noted. Given the finding of (1.1.3), if two categorizers (or more) are in action, and they are dealing with any population N, if convergence between them is relevant, then a convergence problem exists. That is to say, it is possible that even if each of them need only categorize the same single Member, the fact that there are at least two devices available with no overlap of members means they might employ different categories to categorize that Member even if there was only a single proper solution to the problem of categorizing that Member when only one device was properly usable. By reference to (1.1.5-6), however, we may see that the economy rule providing for the possibility of single device adequacy, and exclusive appropriateness being possible, there are means for systematically providing for converging categorizations, perhaps without regard to either population size or number of categorizers.

1.1.7 Given the consistency rule and the economy rule we have the:

*Repeatable Use Rule.* The application of a Pn1-adequate device to a population N involves determining for each Member of the population, in any sequence, which category is appropriate,<sup>18</sup> where any category may be repeatably used.<sup>19</sup>

1.2 Given the findings of 1.1.4–5–6–7 we are in a position to make the argument promised in 1.1.3.2.

It is possible in the first instance that the use of a single category to categorize some Member may be appropriate. Such a category may properly be chosen from a Pn-adequate device. However, the observational correctness criterion<sup>20</sup> of such a categorization would only be a warrant for the sociologist doing or using such a categorization, if: The sociologist could determine that the categorization device from which the category was selected was exclusively appropriate, i.e. by reference to a selection procedure for determining category device appropriateness. The foregoing is so because the observational correctness warrant focusses only on whether the category chosen from a given device is the appropriate one given that device's alternatives. If an uncategorized population were specifiable for which only one device could be found that would categorize it, then the selection problem would become trivial.

Since, however, we have shown that there are always at least two devices available, it follows that the correspondence-type criterion of correctness is only appropriate as a second step, i.e. after it has been determined that some particular exclusively appropriate device is to be used. The reproduceability of any categorization, whether done by members or by sociologists, requires, then, some method whereby the selection of the categorization device(s) to be used in making that categorization may be reproduceably provided for. While the manner in which that can be accomplished may well be problematic, the reader may now see how it is that the formulation of our research task (1.0) is arrived at. That accomplished, we may shortly proceed with our investigation of the "search for help."

1.3 We may say, introductorily, that if Members selected categorization devices methodically, then their selection activities might be describable. There are reasons for supposing that at least for some of the activities Members engage in they do proceed methodically.

1.3.1 "Methodical" and "describable" are equivalent both for the activities of doing science and the activities of the phenomena on which it is done. The fact of science tells us that some activities that humans do—for example, science—are methodical, and indicates as well that what is distinctive about social science may be just the fact that one is now dealing with an animal that is in principle capable of adequate self-description (and not that one is dealing with an animal whose activities are undescribably complex).

1.3.2 The fact, then, that some human activities are adequately describable (by which we mean describable by virtue of the methods whereby they are produced) means that we can, for any given activities, inquire as to whether they are describable in this fashion. Our task may then be formulated as follows: Let us see whether Members' activities of categorizing Members are methodical and, thereby, describable.

1.3.3 If, as I shall hope to show, Members' activities of categorization are not only descriptably methodical, but also that activities are done methodically is quite essential to the ways that they are seen as graspable by Members, then some ways whereby not only the describability but the simplicity of activities may be found, will be revealed. This, and no less, is our aim.

2.0 Let us introduce the two category collections we shall basically need in dealing with the materials this paper is concerned to describe.<sup>21</sup>

2.1 The two collections with which we shall be dealing may be called (1) R—a collection of paired relational categories, and (2) K—a collection constructed by reference to special distributions of knowledge existing about how to deal with some trouble (here, "suicidality").

2.2 The members of collection R are such pairs of categories as husband–wife, parent–child, neighbor–neighbor, boyfriend–girlfriend, friend–friend, cousin–cousin, . . . stranger–stranger.

2.2.1 We find that the following rule provides for whether a pair of classes is a member of collection R: Any pair of categories is a member of collection R if that pair is a "standardized" relational pair that constitutes a locus for a set of rights and obligations concerning the activity of giving help.

2.2.1.1 To say that the pairs are "standardized" is to say the following:

1) If any Member X knows his own pair position with respect to some Member Y, then X knows the pair position of Y with respect to himself. X also knows that if Y knows what pair position Y has to X, then Y knows what pair position X has to Y.

2) If any Member Z (neither X nor Y) knows what X takes to be X's pair position to Y, then Z knows what pair position X takes it that Y has to X. Z also knows that X takes it that if Y knows that X stands to Y in the pair position X supposes, that Y takes it that Y stands to X in the pair position X supposes. Z knows too that the converse holds for Y. Z knows further, as X and Y know, what the rights and obligations are that obtain between X and Y given a convergence in their determination of their respective pair positions.

2.2.2 Since it is altogether central to the use of R in the search for help that it has the sort of standardization we have proposed,<sup>22</sup> let us here and now locate what in the materials the formulation permits us to observe, to see the culturally-provided-for orderliness of.

2.2.2.1 By virtue of the features of the standardization of R, any two Members, without regard to the pair positions they employ to locate each other and therefore even if they are unacquainted prior to the given conversation, are able to assess the treatment any third Member will expectably (1) give one of them, if one of them is suicidal, and the third Member's pair position to that one is determined, or (2) get from any other member, if it is someone other than one of the two who is suicidal, and if the pair relation of that third and any other Member is determined.

2.2.2.2 With the foregoing we can then partially<sup>23</sup> provide for some of the most recurrent occurrences of our materials, i.e. the various pairs of conversationalists are able to assess the expectable behavior of variously categorized third persons, where one participant to the conversation, and sometimes both, know only the pair position of the third persons whose expectable behaviors are being assessed. Such occurrences are then observably orderly across the various pair-positions from which they are done. See, for example, Quotations 2, 5, 10, 11, 17 in the appendix.

2.2.3 Having observed some central uses of knowledge of pair positions in collection R, we may explicitly propose what has heretofore been hinted at. Single categories may, for some items of Members' knowledge, be inferentially adequate. Members' knowledge of how Members behave is so organized that items of that knowledge may, discriminatively, be taken as expectably descriptive if no more than a single referentially adequate category has been asserted to hold for some Member in question.<sup>24</sup> It is that Members have such categorically localized knowledge that provides for what it is they employ to make the assessments just referred to.

2.2.4 Where R is relevant, its categories have what we shall call "programmatic relevance." By this latter term we intend the following: If R is relevant, then the non-incumbency of any of its pair positions is an observable, i.e. can proposedly be a fact. Furthermore, the various uses that may be made of the facts that Members locate and deal with obtain for this sort of fact also. For example, accounts of suicidalness may be constructed that employ the fact of some non-incumbencies as criterial. See Quotation 3 in appendix.

*Category Relevance Rule 2.* Given the relevance of some categorization device whose categories are programmatically relevant (whether or not the device is Pn1-adequate), each category of the device is usable on the population being categorized such that the product of the device's application may consist of a set of observations (facts) that are formulable and usable not only vis-à-vis the product (category member + population Member) but also (category member + no population Member).

The outcome of the use of a device whose categories are programmatically relevant, given its relevance, may be proposed in terms of absences as well as presences, i.e. of categories for which there is not an incumbent as well as for those for which there is.

2.2.5 Apart from R, some prominent cases of devices whose categories have programmatic relevance (on the device's relevance) are the device "family," and various cases of the device-class "team," e.g. baseball team, football team, etc. For some of these devices, and perhaps for some categories of each of them, each category has a proper number of incumbents, such that not only may one observe that there are no incumbents for some category, but also how many are missing.

Those devices that are both (A) composed of programmatically relevant categories and (B) have for each category, either (a) some proper number of incumbents or (b) some proper minimal number of incumbents, may by a modification of (1.1.7) form cases of a class of Pn-adequate devices, (Pn2).

The modification, any device as specified above (A, B), may categorize any population N, where the device's categories are treated as a unit with reference to repeatable usage. The population then is construed in terms of the number of complete or incomplete units that its Members may be partitioned into.

2.2.5.1 One way that the modification operates to extend the size of the class of Pn-adequate devices is as follows: Some group of the categories of a Pn1-device, may by reference to the modification, constitute a Pn2-device. Some of the categories, which as pairs are collected in R, may be recombined, and under the label "family" become a Pn2-adequate device. By virtue of this modification we see (even more strongly than previously) that the class of devices usable on any population N is not merely larger than two, but that it is large indeed.

2.3 Collection K is composed of two classes (professionals, laymen). The bulk of our consideration of this collection will be offered elsewhere. Our aim in this section is to provide the minimal resources with regard to K necessary for the analysis in this paper. Let us first note that K is Pn-adequate<sup>25</sup> and provide, second, for how membership is distributed between its classes.

2.3.1 1) All those occupational categories for which it is correct to say that Members of the named occupations have special or exclusive rights for dealing with some trouble(s) are occasional occupants of K's class (professionals).

2) For any given trouble for which such an occupation exists as (1) above locates, that occupation (or occupations) constitutes the category exclusively occupying the (professional) class, where all who are not Members of it are undifferentiatedly occupants of the K class (laymen).

Thus, for any given trouble, incumbency in one of the classes excludes incumbency in the other.

3.0 In focussing on collection R, it might be asked:<sup>26</sup> How is it that when a search for help is being engaged in, the relevance of collection R is provided for? The formulation is, however, erroneous. For, as we shall observe, the very propriety of a search for help is provided for by the rights and obligations that are organized by reference to collection R. Our initial task is then to show how features of collection R provide for the propriety of occurrence of a search for help.

3.1 We have proposed (2.2.1) that the paired relational categories of collection R constitute loci for rights and obligations. Let us note that it is "programmatically R" (2.2.4) that provides the relevance of the category pairs, i.e. it is not the case that the relevance of the rights and obligations organized by reference to R is provided for by the fact of actual incumbency of some set of pairs.

For some pairs of categories:

1) X (a suicidal person, a programmatic incumbent of some pair positions) has a right to turn to Y (a programmatic incumbent of alternative pair positions) for help. Hence, any Member has a programmatic right to undertake a search for help, i.e. to at least determine whether any pair position to whose programmatic incumbent he has a right to turn is occupied by an actual incumbent.

2) If X chooses to undertake a search for help, and if that search involves telling those sought out who he is, what is wrong with him, and what he makes out the causes of his suicidalness to be, then X is obliged to turn to incumbents of these categories. Incumbents of these categories have a right that X not turn to incumbents of other categories.

3) If X sees that the alternative to engaging in a search for help is doing suicide, then X is obliged to seek help in alternative to doing suicide. It is a right of incumbents of these classes that X seek help as an alternative to doing suicide.

3.2 These three rules provide for the propriety of the search for help, where the alternative to seeking help is doing suicide. They provide also for its permissibility. They provide further that if the search is undertaken, it will, properly, be from classes to which the obligation to undertake a search is owed that helpers will be sought.

Since the rules provide from whom help may and may not be sought, they can be seen to distribute the classes of collection R into two subsets,  $R_p$  and  $R_i$ . Those classes that the rules locate as "classes whose incumbents are proper to turn to" are members of  $R_p$ , and those that the rules locate as "classes whose incumbents are not proper to turn to" are members of  $R_i$ .

3.3 It seems that subset  $R_p$  is properly used in an orderly fashion—that there is a proper sequence in the use of the classes it contains and that, furthermore, the rules (1–3, 3.1) hold not only with regard to the subset  $R_p$

but also with regard to the proper sequence for going into  $R_p$ . Then, if there is an incumbent of some "first-position" category pair, with respect to any incumbent of some "second-position" category pair, the rules provide that the incumbents of the first position should be turned to and not the second.

3.4 Given (3.1–2), and with respect to collection R, we are in a position to pose at least the form of the searcher's problem: "Anyone" means "any incumbent of a pair-position in subset  $R_p$ ," and "no one" means "no incumbent of a pair-position in subset  $R_p$ ." For any searcher, then, the problem is: Are there available persons who are incumbents of some pair position that is a member of the subset whose incumbents are properly turned to for help?

3.4.1 Assuming for the moment what we have yet to establish (cf. 7 ff.) that incumbency and availability are separate problems, we may observe that if for some suicidal person there are no incumbents of  $R_p$ , then the rules of 3.1 provide only that he is not obligated to turn to anyone for help. The rules do not provide, given that eventuality, that he cannot properly turn to anyone else. Compare, in this regard, Quotation 4 with Quotation 22 in the appendix.

3.5 With the preceding discussion (3.1 ff.) we have established (if that discussion is descriptive) the correctness of the assertion of 3.0. It is not the case that the search for help provides the relevance of collection R. Instead, the fact of suicidalness provides the relevance of a set of rights and obligations organized by reference to collection R. Collection R and the rights and obligations organized by reference to its categories provide the propriety of engaging in a search for help. As has been further indicated, collection R does more than that. It provides for the permissibility of the search and also the procedure for doing that search. But of these latter, more shall be said in the ensuing.

3.6 From the foregoing (3 ff.), several important results may be claimed. For the case of suicidalness, we have found that there is a solution to the problem posed in (1 ff.). A suicidal Member, when doing a search for help, will properly categorize Members by use of the categories of collection R. (See 5 ff. for a detailed consideration.) The use of R has been so established that if a Member who is suicidal and in the course of a search for help says of someone that they are "wife" or "friend" or "stranger," that assertion may be treated as reproducibly correct or incorrect. Before proceeding to see in detail how it is that R is used to organize the search for help, an attempt must be made to deal with the convergence problem, i.e. with the question of how it is that Members sought out by the use of R may or may not come to employ R to formulate their responses.

4.0 In this section we shall deal with a problem about assertions (most particularly, such an assertion as "I am suicidal") that is similar to the Membership categorization problem dealt with in (1 ff. and 3 ff.). Can

such an assertion as "I am suicidal" be, to use a term shall shortly explicate, "definitive"? The import of the problem for the course of the search for help will be examined, most particularly with regard to the "convergence" (1.1.6.1) problem.

4.1 In our conversational materials, and in related and unrelated materials, it is recurrently noticeable that (1) when suicidal persons tell a Member of Rp that they are suicidal, the latter hears the assertion as a "joke," and (2) suicidal persons recurrently assert that they are afraid to tell Members of Rp that they are suicidal because they fear that the ones told will treat their assertion as a "joke."

We are of course not claiming that these possibilities are always actualized. It does seem that some assertions, such as "I am suicidal," can operate to provide, for one sought out by use of R and its rules of use, the relevance of R and its rules of use in formulating a response to the assertion. See Quotations 10, 11, 13, etc. Alternatively, Quotation 18 in the appendix.

4.2 We will say that an assertion is

1) "definitive" if, *that* a Member, A, proffers to another, B, an *assertion* which can operate to provide for B the relevance of the device employed by A to locate (a) who to locate, and (b) what to assert to them, *operates* as proper grounds for B to use the same device to control his response to the assertion. Such an assertion would then be definitive of the device its recipient would use to formulate his response.

2) "ambiguous," if we can clearly locate some set of consistently present alternative devices that its utterance provides as "proper alternatives" to choose between.

If, then, for some assertion A1, only device CD1 is properly usable by a recipient to formulate his response, and by the asserter to formulate it to the recipient, then assertion A1 is definitive. If, for some assertion A2, either device CD2, CD3 or some listable set of alternatives is properly usable to formulate who to offer it to and to formulate a response, then assertion A2 is ambiguous.

By a "proper alternative" we intend: Any alternative that a recipient may use both (a) to formulate his response and (b) to formulate an account of his response, where the account is acceptable even if the course of events that provides for his having to offer an account has involved the fact that the alternative he proposes to have used is by the course of events proved wrong. A proper alternative is then one that provides its user either with (a) the correct response to have taken, i.e. the correct collection plus its rules, or (b) an excusable error.

4.3 Now, given the fact that such an assertion as "I am suicidal" can operate to provide the relevance of R for some recipient, we may seek to see whether the assertion is definitive or whether it is descriptably ambiguous. Let us proceed first to present some relevant materials.

1) (husband of .ler is suicidal)

C1. . . . But about two months ago when I was still home, he one Sunday, oh we have five children and I got home from church and he got a butcher knife and told the kids to go to the park and play. This is kind of unusual for him because he doesn't want them, especially the baby, to go anywhere unless we're there.

S1. Uh huh

C2. After they were all gone, I was laying on the couch just reading the Sunday paper and he came over there and started holding this butcher knife at my throat and I said what is the matter with you. He said I'm going to kill you. I'm going to end it all and I said oh for goodness sake put it down and go—I started to laugh it off and he sat there for about an hour. So I thought well he kept threatening to kill me and then he would pull it back as if to stab me and I just laid there, prayed. I almost believed that he was crazy. And then he has been acting fairly good since then. He doesn't have any religion and I'm Catholic but I said why don't you go down and talk to the priest, maybe he would talk to you. And he said No I don't have any friends, and I said honey you have lots of friends . . .

C3. . . . The last time he tried to kill me he sat and wrote a long suicide note or whatever—I don't know, I didn't read it. This was on a Sunday, when the kids and I got home from church and he wanted to know if I went to church with the kids, and they said of course she always goes to church with us. He said, I know she's got a boyfriend. I said quit acting silly in front of these kids. What's the matter with you? He says—oh and then I don't know, anyway, this time he tried to kill me. I didn't want him to think I was taking him seriously. He said well Joey run down to the police station before I do something I don't want to do. I says, Daddy quit it. Joey says, Daddy I don't want to go down there. They'll all look at me funny when they read the note. I says, Joey run outside, Daddy's only kidding. He says, No I'm not. You'd better let me do it. Then he got in the car and went tearing off. I looked for the note, last night, and he didn't have one so I thought oh, maybe he knew I'd wake up and maybe not. But I don't want to leave it go.

S3. I wouldn't let it go. It doesn't sound too good . . .

2) (from a coroner's report)

On the evening before she died she had dinner with LJ and Miss AB, close personal friends who live in the same building. She expressed feelings of discouragement . . . and made the following statement: "I get so damned disgusted sometimes that I think I will just commit suicide." Her friends thought she was kidding, and all of them had a few drinks and forgot about it.

3) See Quotation 18 in the appendix.

4) (mother, re. adult daughter)

S1. Now does she turn to you for help?



C1. Yes. When she gets all of this—when everything builds up in her so much, then she turns to me. One day here she was—and she was—we was standing at our sink washing dishes and she was crying and telling me. She says, mother, she says, I need help. She said, please help me. She said, mother, I've even got on my knees to Johnny [husband] and begged and cried for him to help me. And she said he would laugh at me like he thought I was crazy or something, I didn't need help or I was putting on or something. And her cousin that works over there—Elsie is her name, McKim, and she said that Elsie even told me herself—she's been over here since and said that she even cried for her to help me. She said, she told her, she says, Elsie I need help. She said I don't know where to go or who to turn to.

5) (friend)

C1. . . . and I haven't talked to her about calling anybody else, and the more I thought about it, you know, the more scared I got, really, because I would feel just terrible if she did anything to herself after telling me about it, and I don't want to cause trouble if she's just kidding and trying to . . .

4.4 In providing for such occurrences as the foregoing we seem to need first to recognize (1) that members employ a contrast set for categorizing assertions, where (2) it is by reference to a determination which member of the set an assertion is a case of that they find the relevance of alternative membership categorization devices.

4.4.1 Two central members of the assertion categorization contrast set which Members recognize and employ and for which they have names, are (serious, joke). Let us proceed to give an initial characterization of this set and these two of its members.<sup>27</sup>

4.4.2 For any assertion for which a recipient properly uses some membership categorization device (such as R) to formulate his response, the contrast set provides relevant categories, one of which is presumptively correct. The determination of which is apparently correct operates to locate the appropriate membership categorization device, i.e. the membership categorization devices are uniquely tied to assertion contrast-set categories. It is not an excusable error to hear an assertion as "serious" and use the device appropriate if the assertion were heard as "joke," and vice versa.

4.4.3 However, the category "serious" may be seen to be "complex," while the category "joke" is to be seen as "simple," i.e. if an assertion is heard as "serious," then depending on what the assertion proposes ("I am suicidal," "I offer you a job," "Let us get married") depends what particular categorization device is appropriate, where there are a variety of alternatives tied to different possible "serious" proposals. If an assertion is heard as "joke," then a single device is appropriate without regard to what the assertion might be seen to propose.

4.4.4 If a recipient cannot determine which category of the contrast set an assertion is a case of, that fact is relevant to the choice of a categorization device, where: The device then appropriate may be one not seen as appropriate, given either alternative clearly being seen as apparently correct.

4.4.5 The membership categorization device appropriate, given the determination that an assertion is a case of the category "joke," has (1) two members (audience, performer), where (2) the determination of which participant is a Member of which category is made by reference to who is a maker of the assertion (performer) and who the recipient(s) (audience). Given the assertion's categorization, laughter is the audience's appropriate response. The use of that response operates to (a) close the sequence which the assertion began and (b) to detopicalize the assertion. The fact that there is for some assertion a response that serves as (a) above does, means that there are both immediately available and conversational means of disposing of an assertion. It is obvious that for many actions, including many assertions, particularly those that are "serious," there may be neither immediately available nor conversational means for disposing of them. A question, for example, may remain live until an answer has been given:

- 1) A: Hey, did you talk Marcia into moving down here?<sup>28</sup>  
B: Was she here?  
A: Yeah.  
B: When did she leave?  
A: Bout half hour ago.  
B: Yeah, I talked her into living here with me.

2) It should not be forgotten that about nineteen hundred years elapsed between the time when Pilate asked his famous question "What is truth?" (St. John, xviii. 38) and Tarski (285. 14) made a satisfactory reply: . . . J. C. C. McKinsey and Patrick Suppes: review of P. Destouches-Fevrier, "La structure des theories physiques," in *Journal of Symbolic Logic*, v. 19, no. 1, March 1954, p. 54.

The assertion "I am suicidal" may have not conversation, but hospitalization, as its appropriate response. If the assertion is heard as "serious," then the matter thereby raised may not be disposed of until its proposer has died. That the response of laughter operates also to detopicalize the assertion is equally important. For, given detopicalization, the assertion need not be counted as the first event in a history of suicidalness, a first warning, in terms of which both further and past events are to be assessed to decide the problem's proper treatment. To detopicalize is then to erase, and it may be noted there is some reason to suppose that, like alcoholism, once actually recognized, suicidalness is not erasable. Our conversations indicate, for example, that currently suicidal persons, on being asked for their history, will mention having been suicidal perhaps thirty years previously,

though they do not intend thereby that the problem will continuously live.

4.4.6 It is well to note then that these ways that the categorization of an assertion as "joke" operates are centrally important alternatives to those operative, given the determination "serious." This being so, the possibility that an assertion is ambiguous as between the two categories is consequential. Let us look at some of the consequences.

4.4.6.1 If a Member knows that "serious" is a member of a contrast set of which "joke" is an alternative member, where an assertion relevant to that contrast set for its categorization faces the possibility of being categorized as one or the other, then it is understandable that Members considering how to get help via R may find themselves seeking more definitive means of invoking R than the use of an assertion. The so-called "attempted attempt" at suicide may be an action formulated out of such a search. The definitiveness of a body unconscious from an apparent overdose of pills may be seen as rather more secure than the assertion "I am suicidal," with regard to the likelihood of generating help.

4.4.6.2 The possibility of erroneous categorization by the recipient of an assertion provides the asserter with the basis for employing attempted correctives. Phrases such as "believe me" as in "And believe me, it's no joke because as I say, I just don't feel my life is worth anything at this point" seem directed to preventing or correcting the categorization "joke." Alternatively, the asserter may employ an attempted corrective that is methodically equivalent, for the asserter, to laughter for the recipient, i.e. such a line as "I was only kidding."

- 1) A: You always have an answer—just shut up.  
B: I don't want to.  
A: You don't have to. I was just kidding.

- 2) I would like to relate an incident that occurred with the man I was talking about earlier. At one stage he grew a beard, which was contrary to hospital rulings, and we got into a tangle over it. However, my patient grew a big, full beard. He stands five feet one. His father had not previously seen the beard and when I took him to visit his home, suddenly the father said, "Oh ho, So our boy is hiding behind a beard now, is he?" I said quietly, "Mr. B., I don't think that is true." There was an awful pause; the old man spluttered once or twice and left the room. When he came back 4 or 5 minutes later he said, "Oh ho! So it is a beard our boy is hiding behind now, is it?" I said, "Mr. B., you have said that twice. I don't think it is true." Then there was another ghastly pause before he said, "I was only kidding."<sup>29</sup>

4.4.7 An important general possibility was suggested in 4.4.6.1. For those assertions that can provide the relevance of some membership categorization device to which some procedures are tied, is it the case that for any assertion that can be "serious" the possibility exists that such an assertion can alternatively be "joke"? If this is so, then no such assertion

can be definitive and then all such assertions require, for a description of how they are categorized, a formulation that provides for a selection from among the alternatives (serious, joke).

4.4.7.1 A variety of procedures might be employed to resolve the problem of (4.4.7).

- 1) Each assertion that can be "serious" and each assertion that can be "joke" might be examined to see whether any that can be one cannot be the other.

- 2) It might be asked whether there is some component(s) intrinsic to the production of a possibly "serious" assertion that provides for the possibility that any such production could employ the component in such a fashion as to provide for the assertion as "joke."

- 3) The character of categorization devices might be examined to determine whether it is the case for a device that contains, say, two mutually exclusive categories that to produce an action for which one category may be appropriate involves producing an action for which the device is thereby relevant in such a way that both of its categories are thereby relevant if one is.

4.4.7.2 While the first alternative (of 4.4.7.1) is obviously the most conservative, and it was the fact that for a rather different group of assertions the alternative (serious, joke) was recognized as relevant that led me to ask whether the alternatives were general, that same alternative would hardly seem to provide us with sufficient means for formulating the problem in appropriate depth.

It is by reference to a combination of the second and third procedures that we came to see one import of the problem—which is nothing less than the structured way to which that "possible danger" gets oriented.

- 1) Mr. Liebler. Tell us what happened as you took these pictures.  
A. Well, as the car came in line, almost—I believe it was almost in line—I was standing up here and I was shooting through a telephoto lens, which is a zoom lens and as it reached about—I imagine it was around here—I heard the first shot and I saw the President lean over and grab himself like this (holding his left chest area).

Mr. Liebler. Grab himself on the front of his chest?

- A. Right—something like that. In other words, he was sitting like this and waving and then after the shot he just went like that.

Mr. Liebler. He was sitting upright in the car and you heard the shot and you saw the President slump over?

- A. Leaning—leaning toward the side of Jacqueline. For a moment I thought it was, you know, like you say, "Oh, he got me," when you hear a shot—you've heard those expressions and then I saw—I don't believe the President is going to make jokes like this, but before I had a chance to organize my mind, I heard a second shot and then I saw his head opened up and the blood and everything came out and I started—I can hardly talk about it. (The witness crying.)<sup>30</sup>

2) While walking along Pine Ave., in Long Beach, Fred W. Fox, a former Mirror colleague noticed a beer truck parked at the curb. Behind it on the street were half a dozen large cartons of beer, obviously just unloaded for delivery to a liquor store there.

As he went past it Fred imagined he heard a muffled voice calling, "Let me out, let me out of here!" No other passer-by seemed to hear it and he wondered if he were being bamboozled by a ventriloquist.

He stopped and turned back and the voice became louder. "Let me out—somebody let me out!" Then he noticed a slight tremor on the latch handle on the truck's rear door. He opened it and a large, red-faced teamster almost fell out. He'd locked himself in and there was no inside release for the latch. Fred wonders if the campaign to remove locks from abandoned refrigerators so children at play won't be trapped should be extended to beer vans.<sup>31</sup>

3) 12. And the men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides son-in-law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place:

13. For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the Lord; and the Lord hath sent us to destroy it.

14. And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons-in-law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place; for the Lord will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons-in-law.

15. And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city.

24. Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and the fire from the Lord out of heaven;

25. And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground.<sup>32</sup>

4) Who could these men be? What were they talking about? What authority could they represent? K. lived in a country with a legal constitution, there was universal peace, all the laws were in force; who dared seize him in his own dwelling? He had always been inclined to take things easily, to believe in the worst only when the worst happened, to take no care for the morrow even when the outlook was threatening. But that struck him as not being the right policy here; one could certainly regard the whole thing as a joke, a rude joke which his colleagues at the bank had concocted for some unknown reason, perhaps because this was his thirtieth birthday, that was of course possible, perhaps he had only to laugh knowingly in these men's faces and they would laugh with him, perhaps they were merely porters from the street corner—they looked very like it—nevertheless his very first glance at the man Franz had decided him for the time being not to give away any advantage that he might possess over these people. There was a slight risk that later on his friends might possibly say he could not take a joke, but he had in mind—though it was not usual with him to learn from experience—several occasions of no importance in themselves, when against all his friends' advice he had behaved with deliberate recklessness and without the

slightest regard for possible consequences, and had had in the end to pay dearly for it. That must not happen again, at least not this time; if this was a comedy he would insist on playing it to the end.<sup>33</sup>

While we are not now in any position to determine whether the (serious, joke) alternative is general for assertion categorizations, the possibility that it is one that ought to be given most serious attention, both with regard to the question of the ways persons do and might more effectively orient to possible danger and to the theoretical status of the phenomenon "joke," its sociological interest apart from theories of humor or non-serious activities. Let us summarize the discussion of this section.

4.4.8 The discussion of assertion categorization has relevantly indicated that the detection problem—what category an assertion is a case of—can be something oriented to by the (potential) asserter, and that one may find either (a) that those one ought properly to seek out, by reference to R, are not likely to hear one's assertions as "serious," i.e. by reference to what R would provide they do if they did so hear, or (b) that having made the assertion to them, they have failed to hear it as "serious," i.e. as signalling the propriety of use of R.

4.4.8.1 As a consequence of (a) above, the potential asserter may either seek a more definitive means of getting R operative—for example, the attempted attempt, or may attempt to see if there are not some hearers who may be turned to for whom the assertion is definitive. As a consequence of (b) above one may find the propriety of turning elsewhere, or the removal of the obligation to turn to Rp, by reference to the failure of those so located to use R in response. Alternatively, one may feel that he has done the tasks precedent to suicide, and with the illegitimacy of it removed as claimable against him by Rp members, he may feel free to do it.

5.0 Let us now see how the apparatus we have constructed out of our materials may permit us to analyze their production. Let us see how the foregoing categories and rules of use provide for the reproduceable occurrence of a variety of actually occurring pieces of conversation. Let us see further how solutions may be constructed to the problem we initially posed: How is it that the conclusion "I have no one to turn to" may be reproduceably provided for?

5.1 First, the fact that R classified any population N, and that the obligations to seek help and the rules for searching helpers out are formulated in terms of its categories, operates to provide that R is used to make an initial classification of the recipient (of the phone conversations we are examining) by the suicidal caller. This is so despite the fact that the recipient can be categorized by reference to categories organized in some other collection (e.g. K.). Suicidal callers recurrently talk of the recipient as a "stranger." (See Quotations 4, 22. cf. Quotation 21.) Also, non-suicidal callers recurrently report that it is by reference to the categories of R

that a suicidal person came to locate them as someone to turn to for help. (Quotations 12, 14, 16.)

5.1.1 Such categorization is made (as we may put it) "even though" it may be the case that given the category employed to locate the recipient, the recipient is thereby—by reference to the subsets of R—formulated as improper to turn to.

5.1.2 If the recipient is not a member of Rp, it may be noticed that the explanations that involve reference to Rp features are offered without being sought, or are sought, and when sought are offered without being treated as irrelevant or improper. (See Quotations 1-4, etc.)

1) (Suicidal woman; no request for an account has been made by the recipient)

My sister came over on uh Sunday and she talked to me and I called her now to talk to her and she told me to please call these people and tell me what they say.

2) S1. . . . May I help you?

C1. Well, I don't know. My brother suggested that I call you.

S2. I see. Well, he must have had a reason for making this suggestion. Has there been some personal problem or difficulty that you're experiencing?

C2. Yes. I just lost my wife and I feel awfully depressed.

5.1.3 If an account has not been offered, then as an alternative to requesting one, the recipient may, by reference to the standardization of R, construct an account himself. He may infer the account—employing the features of R—where the fact of a contact having been sought with someone in Ri is treated as indicative of the situation of a caller with respect to Rp. See, for example, Quotation 2.

5.1.4 It is important to see, as our formulation proposes, that the caller may treat his having made the call as improper without regard to the fact that the recipient is one who holds himself out as proper to be called quite independently of the regulations of R. Recognized impropriety of a contact and the unwillingness of a recipient are quite separate matters. The fact that some persons or classes of persons are willing to give help, hold themselves out to give help, or propose their special competence to give help doesn't make them proper to turn to, if with respect to R they are members of Ri. (See Quotations 4, 13, 23.)

5.2 The fact of the standardization of R and of the programmatic relevance of its categories provides for discourse between Members about the categories and their incumbents "even though" the participants to the conversation are unacquainted previously to the analyzed conversations. The collection of programmatic relevant categories provides a set of topics. For one, the question of whether there are incumbents of these categories may be considered, where (a) the relevance of consideration of

whether there are incumbents is not seen as problematic; (b) the way in which the fact of there being incumbents is dealt with is itself not disorderly.

5.2.1 So, for example, questions may be constructed employing the subset Rp as the object in the question—e.g. "Have you anyone to turn to?" Correlatively, answers to such questions may be formulated and recognized as possibly correct (recall 3.6), by constructing statements whose objects are categories that are members of Rp, e.g. "I have a husband." The reader may observe that interchanges composed of such questions and answers may be found throughout the materials included in the appendix.

5.3 Further, recalling the observation of (2.2.2.1), the standardization of R provides for the occurrence of aspects of almost all of the conversations collected in the appendix. To repeat: Two Members, without regard to the pair positions they employ to locate each other, and therefore even though they have no prior acquaintance, do engage in assessing the treatment some third Member(s) will expectably (1) give one of them, if that one is suicidal, and no more than the third Member's pair position to that one is in the first place determined, or (2) get from any other Member, if it is someone other than one of the two who is suicidal, and if the pair-relation between that third and any other Member may be determined. (See Quotations 5, 8, 10, 16, 17, 24.)

5.3.1 It is recurrently observable in the materials that the assessments of expectable behavior turn on the determination of the pair-positions in R of the Member whose expectable behavior is being assessed.

1) It is not the case that such discussions proceed by reference to Members formulated as "somebody" or to formulations by reference to collections other than R.

2) Sometimes neither participant to the conversation is acquainted with those they are talking about, but the pair-position information still seems adequate to them to provide assessments of expectable behavior.

3) Given the pair-position information, those who take it that they have information about the incumbent inconsistent with the inferences pair-position knowledge provides take it as those they are conversing with also take it that pair-position inferences are not simply superseded if "special knowledge" is held. Instead, special argumentation is required, and it may be insisted that the special knowledge will turn out to be incorrect where the pair-position inference will not. The inferences that pair-position knowledge provides are then to be treated seriously even if their correctness is to be denied. Acquaintanceship does not obviously provide superseding knowledge. (See citations to 5.3.)

5.3.2 If it is the suicidal person who is a third party to the conversation (i.e. not a participant) then their expectable reaction to proffered help is assessable. Again, in doing such assessment, the regulations with regard to R are relevant. The caller will recurrently propose that it is not expectable that the help of an outsider will be accepted; that, further, the

suicidal person would be much disturbed to know that an outsider has been consulted. In several cases the caller proposed that the proper strategy would be for them to tell the suicidal that it is a "friend" that has been sought out and who ought to be contacted. The argument (considered below, see Quotation 4) that the recipient makes to a suicidal person who considers his own contacting "a stranger" improper is then made to the non-suicidal caller.

5.4 The standardization of R and the rules for distributing categories into its subsets provide the sense of one solution to the problem of this paper. A sense of "no one to turn to" can be stated thus: For the subset Rp, for some Member A, there are no incumbents of Rp categories.

5.4.1 The standardization only provides the sense of a solution. The possibility that such a situation may occur for some Member is another order of fact, one whose possibility is provided for by reference to quite a different apparatus. For some societies, the removal of an incumbent from a category—say the death of a husband—is the occasion for the operation of machinery that involves some other Member taking that place, if such another who is eligible is available. Among the Bemba, for example:<sup>34</sup>

When a man dies, his name, his kinship duties and his hereditary bow are passed on to his sister's son or to her grandson through a daughter. The heir actually becomes the dead man in a social sense; he adopts the kinship terms the latter used, calling, for instance, "maternal nephew" the person he would previously have called "brother."

Again, among the people of the Shtetl:<sup>35</sup>

If a man dies childless, his unmarried brother is obligated to marry the widow in order to perpetuate the line. Neither the widow nor the brother may marry anyone else without a formal release from the other.

Such machinery seems largely absent in this society. The fact of absence is of special importance because a variety of relations that Members treat—where the slots of a unit are filled, as named-person named-person and not unit-member unit-member relations—turn out, upon the occurrence of a pair having been rendered incomplete, to have been or now become unit-member unit-member relations. A widow finds that her friends are no longer her friends when she has not a husband any more, and finds then that she has lost (even) more than her husband by his death (or, in the case of divorce, by the divorce).

Our conversations include such interchanges as:

S1. How long have you been feeling the way you're feeling now? Since Christmas? [that was when her husband left her for another woman].

C1. Yes.

S2. Before?

C2. No. I had hope before Christmas. I had hope. I thought a love such as mine could overcome anything. I felt that I had everything there was in my love. And now it's turned against me. I don't feel like I have anything anymore. Nobody gives a damn, in other words.

S3. Nobody what?

C3. Gives a damn. What's the use?

S4. How about friends? Have you friends?

C4. I have friends. So-called friends. I had friends, let me put it that way.

S5. But you feel that since he left, everything—

C5. It's just like rats deserting a sinking ship. Nobody wants to talk to anybody that's in the condition I'm in. They all have their own family, their own problems. They all have their own husbands.

Another reports (a widow):

C1. And I'm just at the break. I said what have I got to live for? I said, Elsie, [daughter] tell me. If you could tell me something. She says, oh you going to take sleeping pills? Happy dreams. And this was it. And I says, I just can't find anything to go on for. I haven't—I had some friends, but not such close friends. I mean, they all have husbands. You can't push yourself in with them. I sit here day after day.

6.0 The preceding section might lead us to propose that device R provides Members with what could non-trivially be called a search procedure. To have found that Members have one, and perhaps have more than one, search procedure is of course extremely significant. First, it would not merely be a strong warrant for our supposition that the fact of science is not to be seen as extremely special—but indeed, since scientists very frequently do not by their own account have search procedures—other activities may be orderly in ways that we are not yet able to see that scientific activities are. Furthermore, if we can say that Members do have a search procedure, that device R constitutes one, then certain rather puzzling occurrences, which we shall consider below, might be clarified.

6.1 However, before any claim to have discovered that Members have search procedures may seriously be made, a problem must be posed: The analysis of 5 ff. dealt with (possible) reports of searches that were or were not undertaken. The question of how such conversations may be said to stand in relation to the occurrence of the search for help involves us in considering what sort of mapping there is between the talk about—more precisely, the talk within, for our conversations constituted parts of the search for help—a search for help and descriptions of the course of that search. Now, we know that there can be a one-to-one relation between a report of some action and the course of the action reported on. We know it because the methodical report of the scientist does just that. His report describes methodically how it is that some result may be reproduced, how

in that sense it can be (was) arrived at. Such a coincidence for the possible reports that we are dealing with cannot merely be supposed.

6.2 Our task, however, does not seem to be to take some report and construct for that reporter a description of the course of his search; then see whether the two reports coincide. We have made no suggestion that for activities to be methodical their reports must consist of descriptions of the ways they are methodical. What we need is to see whether the procedure constructed in coming to terms with the reports the conversations contain usefully describes search procedural activities for which such conversation does not exist.

6.3 We make no claim to have even begun a systematic investigation of such materials. Such materials as we have collected are, however, consistent with the analysis otherwise developed. On the occurrence of a death that officials take it may be suicidal, those concerned to determine whether it was suicidal engage in an attempt to locate and then interrogate Members whom they take it have relevant information.

6.4 It does seem that Rp and the rules of its use provide officials with the how of such an investigation. It does seem that they use device R such that knowing no more than the dead person's name they can feel confident as to who it is—that is, what potentially available possible persons—they need to discover and contact so as to determine whether the death was expectably suicidal. Officials can apparently suppose that if a suicide has possibly occurred and if there are Members of Rp available, then the possible suicider would (by reference to the rules of Rp) have informed such Members—some of them—that they were suicidal if they were. Rp is routinely used in this way by the police and coroners.

1) (from police report)

After we had completed our investigation at the hospital, we proceeded to the location and contacted victim's husband and her two sons. Upon questioning them, they repeated to the undersigned that it was their opinion that the victim had probably died of natural causes; that she had never threatened or attempted suicide, and that they felt that the capsule found near the body had nothing to do with her death.

2) (from coroner's report)

It is felt that the person who should be contacted is Mr. R.'s wife, who, however, is in New Mexico, apparently permanently.

3) (from coroner's report)

The evaluation of the personality of the victim must of necessity be limited because of the objection of the parents to revealing what was considered to be an important source of information about the victim. They refused to disclose the

name of the victim's girlfriend with whom he had been out the night before, stating that she was upset enough and they did not want her to be involved.

6.5 In connection with the second part of the first quotation above, when Rp Members are located they do treat the fact (when it is a fact, or claimably so) that the dead person had not informed them of being suicidal as criterial for their not having committed suicide. The very relevance of such a claim—we are not of course considering whether it is in any particular case, correct—would seem to be further material that is most readily clarified by reference to the use of R as a search procedure.<sup>38</sup>

6.6 The quotations presented after (6.4) are obviously closely related to the discussion of (5 ff.). For as the conversations considered in the latter section involve the assessment of the expectable behavior of persons with whom at least one and sometimes both participants are unacquainted, so, too, the quotations indicate that officials take it that locatable persons with whom they are unacquainted, and who initially are not even known to exist, can be specified such that it is expectable that they will have information as to the possible suicidalness of a currently dead person. In both situations the working of the rules of R seems central.

7.0 Our aim in this section will be to develop another way that the conclusion "I have no one to turn to" may properly be arrived at. Our basic resources are, as before, the apparatus constructed in (2-4 ff.).

7.1 Let us first note that it seems that on the assertion of "I am suicidal," the offering of an account, an explanation, is relevant. Either it is offered or its absence is noticeable, and on not being offered it may be requested. The relevance of that request is not questioned: Either an account will then be offered or the recipient of the request may propose that they do not have an account—I don't know why—where both they and the Member they are talking to take it that that fact may be used in a similar fashion to the way a proffered account may be used.

7.2 Given our formulation of the detection problem (4 ff.), one basis for the request for help being requiredly accompanied by an account may be formulated. The basis seems to be of far more general relevance than the situation of suicidalness.

7.2.1 Where a Member's doing of some action (like giving help) is conditioned on his being informed of the presence of some state that (a) they cannot independently determine to be present and (b) where the assertion is not definitive of its correctness—i.e. can be made improperly, as a joke or lyingly—then Members take it that they may be placed in a situation where the request is made without proper basis. Members' orientation to possible misrequests in such situations are exemplified by the "Cry wolf" fable.

7.2.2 In the case of suicidalness, Members take it that the claim of suicidalness may be mis-asserted:

1) (an ex-girlfriend, with reference to a supposedly suicidal man)

S1. Do you know if he's had this kind of mood before?

C1. Not like that, no. But I mean as I tried to mention before, at first I thought that this was all part of an act, I mean not act, I shouldn't use that word. But it's just, he tries everything, you know, to patch things up and so . . .

This fear of what we may call the subversive use of a claim of suicidalness is clearly not without basis. For example, note the following conversation between a man referred to the clinic and a staff member.

1) S1. What did you do?

C1. It was an impulse because my wife was going to leave me, but it was only to steer her into going into reconciliation court. Do you understand what I mean?

S2. Yes. What did you do?

C2. I tried to shoot myself.

S3. How did you do it?

C3. I took the gun and loaded it, and tried to fire it.

S4. Then what happened?

C4. It went off, but actually I didn't aim it at myself. Maybe I can explain it better; it was to let her know that I had intentions of doing that.

S5. Well, what do you think about what you did?

C5. I got her to reconciliation court.

7.2.3 While there are a variety of ways that have been developed for dealing with this possibility of a subversive use of the request for help, one way seems to involve the following: Members take it that there are adequate and inadequate grounds for suicidalness, and that they may determine whether and what help they ought to do depending on whether or not an adequate, and determinedly present ground exists. Members take it (again, quite generally) that they may decide whether or not some proposed fact exists by determining whether or not a proposed explanation exists and is adequate.

1) The following quotation from a quite different area—part of an arbitration decision—may exemplify this procedure. Ford-UAW Arbitrations, case A-70, Harry Shulman, arbitrator.

The story of the other discharged employees approaches the bizarre. Twelve of them testified before me. Each of them claims to be a completely innocent bystander wholly at a loss to understand why he was picked up for discharge. None of them admits being part of the crowd in any of the demonstrations. None of them admits even the normal curiosity of an innocent bystander. Each claims that he knew very little about the cause of the stoppages and cared even less after learning the cause. Each claims that

when the lights went out, or the lines stopped, he asked his foreman what to do and, upon being told to stay or go home as he pleased but that his time stopped in any event, he left for home. One of the men, a lively young boxer, asserts that after seeing the crowd and the excitement he calmly repaired to a warm comfortable spot and went to sleep. He did this, he asserts, on two of the three days (being absent on the third) and slept the peaceful sleep of the just until the excitement completely quieted down. All, it seems, were veritable angels above and beyond contagion by the excitement in the Department.

Now there unquestionably were serious stoppages in Dept. 84 on Nov. 5th, 6th and 8th. There were vociferous and angry men milling around and demanding action. Who were the incensed men who did take part? Who were the angry men whom it was so difficult to get back to work and who were so incensed, as the Union claims, that they turned against their own committeemen and even assaulted two of them? How indeed were these 14 chosen?

The union advanced no explanations. There is no suggestion that these men were chosen by lot; and even such a method would normally be expected to catch some of the guilty. And there is no basis whatever in the evidence to suppose that the men were selected because of any personal animosity against them—with the slight possible exception of one man. Nor were the men generally regarded as "trouble-makers" of whom the Company would be glad to be rid.

The Company's explanation is simple and without any contradiction other than the incredible stories related by the men themselves. The labor relations conciliator, with the help of his assistant, took the names or badge numbers of the most active men in the crowds that demonstrated in his office. This accounts for twelve of the fourteen . . . Under these circumstances I cannot give credence to the men's protestations of innocence.

In short, Members take it that they may choose among proposed competing facts by deciding that the fact is present for which there is an adequate explanation, and the fact is not present for which there is not an adequate explanation. Hence, where the action of giving help is properly conditioned on the presence of some state that is not independently determinable to be present by the one who ought to give help, the requirement that the request be accompanied by an explanation of the presence of the proposed state seems to be directed to permitting the determination to be made of whether the state is indeed present.

7.2.4 One who is contemplating the use of R to get help may then be faced with having to announce both that and why he is suicidal. And they may thereby be faced with considering the various treatments they may receive, given the announcement of their grounds—the account. It is then not merely the claimed fact of their suicidalness that provides for what it is that Rp Members ought to do. Instead, the account of their suicidalness provides those they seek out with an account for the latter's response, i.e.

the suicidal Member's account may provide an account, or the potential helper's response. This being so, a procedure for assessing what a potential helper may expectably do is relevant and available. The suicidal Member may consider the various actions the potential helper may take for which the suicidal's account stands as the potential helper's proper account. The suicidal may use such a procedure in a circumscribed fashion, by reference to the standardization of proper actions the potential helper may take, given some account as the account of those actions.

7.3 We may recall that if there is a first Member available of Rp, it is to that Member that the suicidal ought to turn for help. Hence, the suicidal may use the above (7.2.4) procedure by reference to that first member. Suppose the suicidal person is a married woman. It seems that for such a one, the first Member of Rp is her husband. Now, suppose further that the account of her suicidalness involves the fact that she has been seduced into having an affair with another man—say, to keep as the prototype one that we have found in a suicide note, an acquaintance of her husband. She may then consider the various actions her husband may undertake given her adultery as the grounds of his action. On the one hand, he might treat the fact of her suicidalness as adequately accounted for and give her help. On the other, he might treat the fact of her adultery as an adequate ground for breaching their relation, for divorce.

She then faces the following dilemma. On the one hand, the fact that she is married and suicidal provides that her husband is the one to turn to for help. On the other, that which she tells him may operate to take him out of the slot that in the first place provides for him to be turned to. He is there (perhaps) so long as she doesn't speak; once she does, he may no longer be there. In that sort of dilemma she may well see that there is no one to turn to; where, furthermore, she is obliged to turn for help, to turn to him, and he is available.

7.4 The prototype may readily be generalized. If a suicidal Member has as the account of their suicidalness some action of theirs that for the first Member of Rp stands as the adequate grounds of a breach (e.g. of divorce, or disownment, or breaking-off, or indeed of death), then the suicidal person may, employing the categories according to the rules of use we have constructed, find themselves in the above described dilemma, and may see and report that "I have no one to turn to." (See Quotation 5 where the possible breach action is death of Rp members, Quotation 24.<sup>37</sup>)

7.5 Having proposed that there are correct ways of arriving at "no one to turn to" the reader may ask whether, for us, any assertion of that conclusion stands only to pose the problem of how to show that the assertion is correct. There are, apparently, incorrect assertions of this type. Members recognize assertions as incorrect. And our analysis permits their location.

1) S1. Now: say you are contemplating suicide?

C1. That is right. I have been contemplating it now for three months. But I finally reached the end of my rope, I think.

S2. You think that the only pressure on you is financial?

C2. That is right. I don't think I'm insane. In order to think of suicide, I understand you've got to be insane.

S3. That's not necessarily true. Suppose we talk about your financial condition then.

C3. It's in a muddle, that's all. When I say it's in a muddle there is no embezzlement involved. It's just a lot of money that I have borrowed and I can't meet my obligations. A lot of it is personal, dear friends of mine, and a good portion of it I owe to the bank. The payments are due, and it's just pressing me and I have no other alternatives. I can't turn anywhere; that is, I still could. I could still go to friends of mine, but I've got a lot of pride and I don't want to do that anymore.

7.6 For Members, the fact that a breach may properly be undertaken given the suicidal's account does not necessarily mean that it will be undertaken. However, while suicidal persons do try to find out whether it will be employed, the attempt to find that out meets with special difficulties.

7.6.1 The problem is as follows: (1) There are known to be maxims that provide that for some actions for which a breach might be engaged in, breach is not engaged in. Thus there is a maxim to cover the case of unmarried pregnant daughters. While parents might propose in general that the pregnancy of unmarried girls is terrible, and drastic actions, say disownment, should be done to those who get "that way," if it happens that a daughter is in such a situation, then the maxim proposed, to quote its use in one of the conversations, is "parents close ranks around her, and give her the care she needs." There are such maxims for many breach-usable actions, but (2) they seem uniformly to be maxims for which there are no procedures available to determine whether, on any given occasion of their relevance, it will be the maxim or the breach that will provide the relevant Rp's actions.

7.6.2 How Rp will behave does not seem readily determinable as a condition of informing them (or not) of the action upon which they may proceed to act in drastically different ways. The various ways one in such a situation may attempt to find out what will be done are manifestly inadequate. They involve, for example, getting discussions going on the matter in general, or on current occurrences not within the given relational unit. For these, the proper conversational response seems to involve employing the breach alternative, whether one would use it or not were the proposed situation confronting one. (See Quotations 8, 20.)

8.0 It is apparent that central to the foregoing possibility (7 ff.) is the rule of orderly use of Rp, and of its correlate: If a first position of Rp has an incumbent, then the fact that a suicidal person has a good warrant for



not turning to them does not mean that turning to some second position incumbent is thereby made proper.

The orderly use of Rp has a set of consequences that we may collect in this section—though some of them have been mentioned or suggested earlier. We may begin by reviewing earlier suggestions.

8.1 The considerations of (6 ff.) seem to indicate not only that it was R that provided the police with a search procedure, but further that they could take it that R had been operative with regard to the interactions between the suicidal person and others, i.e. that if someone had been suicidal, then they would have used R in its proper fashion to inform first position members of the fact of their suicidalness.

8.1.1 The fact that the first position member is standardized is obviously crucial to officials. The specifics of that standardization are that it is expectable that whether there is a first position member is something determinable by use of the dead person's name, such that parent or spouse is to be sought out, and where, furthermore, such possible persons are seen to be exclusively appropriate repositories, i.e. if they exist, then the question of the success of an inquiry turns first on their availability. We have seen that the fact that they are unavailable seems to have as its consequence that the inquiry is to proceed without further use of R—i.e. without seeking to locate persons who might otherwise know whether a declaration of suicidalness was made.

8.1.2 First position Members may be seen to agree with officials in this regard. Thus, as we shall indicate with some materials shortly, they take it that if a possible suicide did not inform them that they were suicidal, then the death is not to be seen as suicidal. The fact that they may propose that they were not so informed recurrently constitutes the basis for a claim on their part that a decision that the death was suicidal should not be made or should be reversed.

1) (in a letter asking coroner to reverse a decision of suicide)

I know this may seem just a nuisance to you, but as I said I can't explain how much it means to me not to have my mother's memory marred by there being any question of her death. I also do not ever want any of her grandchildren, of which there are thirteen, to ever know or feel there was ever any doubt in her death, because I know there couldn't have been.

My husband spent some time with her that evening and she was in good spirits. She went to work Saturday 6-2-62 morning and worked till 4:30 p.m. She stayed and had coffee with one of the women and was in good spirits. Later in the evening she talked to the lady in the connecting apartment, telling her how badly she felt *physically* and that she intended moving in with me and making her home with us. Later that evening my sister-in-law called her on the phone and she was coughing a lot and felt very tired but was completely herself mentally and she said she felt so bad she was going

right to be and try to get some rest as she had to be to work early Sunday morning . . .

2) (from coroner's report)

On 4-4-63 I called Mrs. D. to arrange an appointment. She said that her husband never talked about suicide, and it was not like him to commit suicide.

8.2 Where a non-first-position incumbent is either turned to or happens on to information as to suicidalness, then even if they are unacquainted with first position incumbents they take it that their proper course of action consists in either locating and informing a first position incumbent as to the presence of the state that provides for the latter's relevance, or advising the suicidal person that a first position incumbent should be sought out. (See Quotations 10, 11.)

8.3 One difference between the variety of possible first positions in Rp and later positions in Rp is that alternative first positions, whether they be "parent," "spouse," or "boyfriend," each have a proper number of incumbents. Some further position Rp categories—for example, "friend"—do not. While, as noted in (8.2), incumbents of such further position categories do take it that first position incumbents are more proper to be turned to than they are, they also take it that the category "friend" is a member of Rp and that its incumbents with respect to each other stand in an orderly relation relevant to their alternatively being approached.

8.3.1 The treatment of the category "friend" as internally ordered seems to operate in several different ways.

1) A friend who is asked to help may, feeling that he is not a first-position friend, find (a) that as regards those he takes it are closer, his being turned to is an affront to them, and (b) that those whom he so locates may concur with him and treat the fact that he has been turned to as improper, as something that requires special explanation, and perhaps as evidence that they are not really in the position that they had supposed they were.

2) The latter fact suggests that a correlate to the proverb "when you need help you learn who your friends really are" is operative, i.e. the order in which friends are turned to in time of need indicates the order in which their closeness is otherwise felt.

8.4 It may be that there is an important consequence of the proper orderly use of Rp—to wit, that if first position Members fail to give help it is not expectable that any further position Members will do so.

9.0 We have observed (2.0) that both R and K can categorize any population N. Since the rules organized by reference to R provide for the propriety and the procedure of the search for help for suicidalness, and since by reference to R, one who is by reference to K "a professional" is

(in our materials) a "stranger," i.e. a Member of Ri, the question must be posed: How is it that suicidal persons, or those they turn to for help by reference to R, come to treat as proper calling for a professional's help?

9.1 Since, as it seems, the restriction to use of Rp is an obligation that the suicidal have to Rp, several procedures consistent with the non-violation of that obligation may be found.

1) Members of Rp may tell the suicidal that they ought to turn to a professional. (See 5.1.2. (1), (2).)

2) Members of Rp, on being turned to for help, may themselves seek out a professional. (See, for example, Quotations 14, 15.)

3) If there are no Members of Rp, then while turning to a "stranger" may not involve turning to one who owes one help, it is at least not improper. (See Quotation 22.) In this case one is not replacing R with K, but using R beyond the point where one has claims to get help.

4) If there are Members of Rp, then perhaps one does not violate one's obligations to them if, while one does seek out a non-Member, one does it anonymously, i.e. without revealing who one is, and thereby without revealing who one's Rp are. Such an agency as the Suicide Prevention Center finds that suicidal persons who call it for help recurrently will not give their names. That fact is perhaps partially accounted for by reference to the fact that in contacting a stranger they are violating the rules of R if they do inform the stranger of their names. If a contact is made under these constraints, then it is obvious that a recipient, in seeking to extend the contact to a therapy relation, faces a special task. While we shall not here consider in detail how a professional can in such a situation get the contact extended, an outline of his solution may be sketched.

Just as the appropriateness of R provides for the inappropriateness of K, so the appropriateness of K provides for the inappropriateness of R. Those who are by reference to R, Members of Rp, are likely by reference to K, to be Members of Ki, where Kp is (professionals) and Ki (laymen) for any given trouble for which K is relevant.

The task of a professional, contacted initially as stranger, seeking to provide for both the propriety of his having been sought out, and a transformation of his status into the exclusively appropriate category to have been sought out, is then to show the suicidal person that his trouble is one for which the profession has special and exclusive competence such that it is not merely the case that it is not improper to turn to them, but that Rp cannot give help (See Quotation 4.)

9.2 Since the conclusion "no one to turn to" is arrived at by reference to Rp, it might be supposed that the replacement of R by K would in principle undercut the possibility of arriving at the conclusion. However, (1) to remove the appropriateness of R may serve to undercut the obligatory character of a search for help; (2) as a correlate of the "representativeness" feature (footnote 14) holding for K, if a first professional rejected the

request for help. The requester might suppose that further requests to such persons would meet with the same response; (3) the criteria for use of K being seen by the suicidal as not merely need of help, but need of help plus ability to pay, then those who lack the latter might see themselves in even a weaker position if they saw K as exclusively appropriate.

1) (regarding another's suicidal wife)

C1. I said to him, since he was concerned about this, I wondered why he hadn't sought psychiatric help before. He said he couldn't afford private psychiatric help. If he could, you know, he would have done this. He evidently thought she would come out of it . . .

2) S1. . . . Have you seen a doctor?

C1. I have a doctor but he's a medical—in a clinic. I mean he has a medical center and he is so busy and I know that I've gone in there a lot of times with aches and pains and things and he says there is nothing wrong with me.

S2. Does he know about your depression?

C2. No. Well he should know, but I've never told him about that. We owe a bill and I couldn't go back there again to him until I got that bill paid and the last time I was there he had told me that there wasn't anything wrong with me and I really was full of aches and pains but he said he couldn't find anything.

3) (regarding previous psychological treatment)

S1. And were you feeling better during that time, or is it hard to evaluate?

C1. Yes and no. At times I was and at times I wasn't. I really didn't feel that I could open up to her, because she was seeing me free of charge and I think that this might have had a lot to do with it, but I was afraid that if I, you know, yelled at her or something like this, she would say: "I don't have to see you, or something like that."

4) S1. You've never seen a psychiatrist, though.

C1. No. They cost too much money.

## Appendix

### 1.

- S1. You don't have anyone to turn to?  
C1. No.  
S2. No relatives, friends?  
C2. No.

### 2.

- S1. Have you ever been married, Miss G—?  
C1. No.  
S2. And you're out here kind of on your own and things not going well?  
C2. That's it.  
S3. You have no one out here?  
C3. Well, I have cousins, but you know they're cousins. They're third or fourth cousins . . .

### 3.

- S1. Uh tell me. Is there uh is there anyone close to you, friend or family and so forth, that you could uh kind of be in contact with over this evening to kind of help you over the hump?  
C1. If I had somebody like that I'd probably never b— never get to this point.

### 4.

- C1. Maybe it was a mistake to call. I don't know. But I mean—  
S1. Why do you think it might be?  
C2. Well, you know, it seems to reach out for help from strangers is, I don't know. It seems to be very—like I shouldn't do it. Like my family and friends don't help me, I mean why should I go to a stranger for help, you know?  
S2. Sometimes you need professional help.  
. . .  
C3. Well I'm going to tell you something. I have tried for many many years to get my family to help me. To understand and make myself clear to them. Try to tell them exactly what I was, and what I was trying and they refused to listen and oh, everything's all mixed up and now I've been just thrown over to my grandmother's, and of course I'm—oh, I don't know.  
S3. You have parents in town?  
C4. No. They're in Texas. I have nobody but my grandmother.  
S4. Well, you know sometimes when the people close to us don't come through when we need them, we get sort of hopeless and feel as if no one will.

- C5. Well, the exactly how I feel. I feel today as though I would just like to go out and say—to hell with the whole thing and just flash away and be gone with me. That's exactly how—you know I shouldn't of called you to start with. I mean, I wanted to, to really wanted to. I thought maybe I might get a few answers, but I shouldn't have, because I feel as though it's a deceit. I really do.  
S5. What? To ask for help?  
C6. Yes. I really do, and because I—help, ask for help and somebody might say, he's mentally—well, he needs help or something. You know that type of thing.  
S6. Well, let's get something straight. Anybody can get into a spot that he can't get out of by himself, where he needs some outside help.  
C7. Yeah, so then we have to call strangers to get some help?  
S7. Yes. If you break a leg, you wouldn't think anything of calling a doctor to have him help you.  
C8. Yes, but that's different. But your own family should help you, don't you think?  
S8. Maybe they should, but they're not.  
C9. Yeah, but I really do think, I mean—  
S9. Actually I don't think your family could help you with this. I think this is something you're going to have to struggle out inside yourself, and you will need professional help with this. Now are you afraid that this means you're crazy?  
C10. No. I don't really think that I'm crazy.

### 5 (suicidal homosexual).

- S1. Well I understand what these pressures are on you. Is there anyone you trust, anyone who can take care of you, because right now you need some taking care of. You need somebody to move in and take over.  
C1. The only people I know are people just like myself. I don't have any regular friends.  
S2. Well what about people just like yourself?  
C2. They give me all kinds of things and they—  
S3. What about your doctor?  
C3. I don't have a family doctor.  
S4. Well, somebody prescribed those pills.  
C4. Well, he's just a doctor. I only called him up.  
S5. You never saw him?  
C5. A long time ago, for a little thing. I don't know him that well.  
S6. You think he'd take over?  
C6. I don't know.  
S7. What about your parents?  
C7. I can't tell them. I'd rather kill myself than tell them.  
S8. You can't tell them what?  
C8. Anything.  
S9. Not even that you're suffering and need to be in a hospital?  
C9. No.

- S10. But they must have eyes. They probably have been sitting around worrying about this for a long time now.
- C10. No. They haven't.
- S11. I'd like to call them up and talk with them.
- C11. I don't want them to know.
- S12. I certainly wouldn't tell them anything that you told me. I'd just tell them that you're suffering, and that you're in bad shape, and you're thinking of killing yourself, and you need to be in the hospital, and I'd want them to get you there. You willing to have them know that?
- C12. I don't want them to know anything. My dad's got heart trouble, and my mother ain't very good.
- S13. And your mother what?
- C13. And my mother isn't in good health either. If you called them and told them anything—
- S14. I don't know. I've talked to a lot of people and I think I can handle them, so they won't fall over or anything. But you certainly need somebody to take care of you right now. I think this is part of the big problem that you have no relationships, you got nobody you can lean on. That's true, isn't it?
- C14. Yeah. The only thing I can lean on right now is the floor.
- S15. I think, well, what I've found from my experience is that people usually come through better than you think they will, even a stranger will come through for you if you say I'm sick and I've got to get to the hospital, but in any case, I would like to talk with your parents about this. You can be sure I won't tell them anything about your sexual problems, and I'm sure they're worried about your coming home drunk every night.
- C15. They don't know, they're always in bed.
- S16. Are they not very bright?
- C16. They're all right. They've done too much for me actually.

## 6.

- S1. And what brings the idea of suicide into your mind?
- C1. Because. I don't know. A feeling of uselessness, persecution—oh just so many things. I can't put my finger on any one. I know it's a combination of all of them. I'm too weak to fight any of it, it seems. You know, I just don't really care. The only reason I'm doing this this way is because I don't want to involve my roommate in anything like this. Otherwise, if I were living alone I probably wouldn't have called anybody or anything.

## 7.

- S1. Right. But you have thought about specific ways of doing it.
- C1. Yeah. The only problem that seems to become involve—
- S2. Is getting the means?
- C2. No. No. The means are all there. It's just the amount of—if I could do it without involving other people, without leaving any traces, just nice and cleanly and not having the police involved and so forth and so on, this would be fine.

## 8.

- S1. Is there anyone who you can lean on or turn to?
- C1. Not in a situation like this.
- S2. There is no one who knows what you're going through?
- C2. No, and nobody—I'll explain this to you. I share an apartment with a fellow who is very close. However, this isn't the sort of thing I want to go into with him.
- S3. Why?
- C3. Well, let's say that this fellow is a very positive-thinking type.
- S4. Sort of aggressive—
- C4. Very aggressive type of person, and well, for one thing, this would rather dunk him and he's always had a great deal of faith and—and you name it and he has leaned against me a number of times. Now for me to turn around and tell him this had been going through my mind, and so forth and so on.
- S5. You don't think he would understand?
- C5. He would understand it, but it would mean that he'd feel that he couldn't lean upon me or trust me or so forth to the degree that he has been doing.
- S6. I don't quite follow that jump in reasoning. You feel that if he finds out you have a weakness or that you're feeling upset, or despondent, that you would shake his faith in you?
- C6. Yes. This is my feeling.
- S7. Now sometimes we don't evaluate the people around us very well, and sometimes they respond better to a situation than we might imagine. But that's just a guess. I don't know him.
- C7. Well, I have sort of tried to evaluate the situation as far as he is concerned; shall we say, by dropping subtle hints and referring to other people and so forth and so on, and this is the attitude that I get.
- S8. He doesn't think much of anyone who feels this way?
- C8. No. He's apt to consider them very weak and not able to handle problems and so forth and so on. And I don't want to create that impression in his mind that such a thing would happen to me.
- S9. You'd rather be dead?
- C9. Quite frankly, I think yes.

## 9.

- C1. Does anyone need to know I've talked to you?
- S1. Does anyone need to know?
- C2. Yes.
- S2. Such as who?
- C3. Anybody. I wouldn't want anybody to know because if he [husband] found out or if anybody found out, his attorney found out—anything, they could always say that I was unstable and put me in an institution just like they did with his wife. That's what happened to his wife.
- S3. What? That's what happened to his wife?
- C4. Yes.

- S4. Was she in a mental hospital?
- C5. Yes.
- S5. And you feel you're cracking up?
- C6. This is what he's trying to do to me.
- S6. Are you feeling that you're going out of your mind. Is that it?
- C7. No. No. No. I don't feel like I'm going out of my mind.
- S7. But he might be?
- C8. But he would take advantage of this and say that I'm unstable.
- S8. I don't know how he'd learn about this. Certainly not from us.
- C9. Well that's all I wanted to know. Is this strictly in confidence? Is it strictly protective?
- S9. Yes. Now as it happens it might be useful for us to see him, and I'm wondering about that.
- C10. Oh. God forbid.
- S10. Why do you say that?
- C11. Oh, because he would use it against me in five minutes. I know that he would. He has an attorney that is that shrewd that he would.

**10 (friend of suicidal is caller here).**

- C1. So then one day—one fine day—I went over there and I found him—a neighbor—standing there, didn't know what the hell to do next, and I'm sure I didn't. She was lying absolutely out on her bed with the Vodka right next to her and just miserable. Well, I thought, if I ever saw a human derelict with a good mind this was really pitiful, you know? Something has to be done. I'm not obligated but you just can't—I mean I just can't stand to see a human being in this condition and do nothing. So I called up her—I didn't know what to do with her. I didn't have the money or the place or anything else to take her in and do anything for her, so I called the—I called her sister . . . Well, anyhow I was over there and I called her sister—this woman who is so much older than she who lives down in Alhambra, and I said, now what am I going to do. This girl is lying here; she's drunker than a skunk. She doesn't have any money. Her husband left her. She's in a pitiful condition and I don't know what to do with her, and her sister said, "Well I'm sorry Miss Green, I'm afraid I can't help you. We're all packed and ready to go on a vacation tomorrow morning. This isn't the first time this kind of thing has taken place and frankly, I just don't feel that I should do anything about it." Well, I was absolutely astonished, and that left me holding this awful bag . . .

**11.**

- C1. I wonder if you could give me a little bit of advice. Last Saturday I had a neighbor and friend who came over. She was very desperate about a family situation, and she told me that she just didn't want to live any more, and I really didn't take her seriously, but while she was here she took 18 sleeping pills.
- S1. At your home?

- C2. Yes. This is on Saturday—oh, about 5 o'clock, I'd say, and so I have advised her to—I didn't know that she did this, you know, because it was when I went out of the room. And I had advised her to go and see a relative. I thought it could give her more help than I could. You know, to stay with, everything . . .

**12.**

- C1. . . . I'm calling for a friend who's had a history of mental disturbance; I believe attempted suicides were involved at that time . . .
- S1. . . . What is your relationship to her?
- C2. Just a friend.
- S2. Just a friend. I see.
- C3. Her family moved out about a year ago.
- S3. No family. I see.
- C4. Not in this part of the country.

**13.**

- S1. What prompted you to call? You must have been concerned now, I suspect?
- C1. Well, I don't know. Well, you know, I'm in a position where I feel like I'm a meddler, and then like somebody told me once, if you see something—you think they're drowning, and you jump in to save them, you wouldn't be meddling. So I don't know.
- S2. Well, it doesn't sound to me that you're meddling. It sounds like you're concerned about a friend and an employee.
- C2. Well she doesn't work for me any longer. She worked for me for a short while, and I like her very much . . .

**14 (man, regarding suicidal girlfriend).**

- C1. Well, here is the situation. Now, first of all, I don't feel that I am adequately situated to be able to talk a person out of thinking their way in reference to suicide . . . I explained to her—I stayed up with her all night explaining to her that she just feels this way, and that these things do happen, but we accept them in the best faith possible, but now, I'm ready to give up and I want to turn it over to someone who can do a lot more good than I can.

**15 (father of a suicidal son).**

- C1. The whole story is I'm the kind of fellow that if you were in my territory where you had difficulty with controlling a refinery or boiler plant, I would expect you to listen to me. When I'm outside of my territory and know it, I would expect to listen to someone who is qualified on it.

**16.**

- S1. I see. Now this is your nephew?

- C1. This is my nephew, and he resists any attempt to help him. Father K., an Episcopal minister, picked him up in a bar one night and took him outside and talked to him and then his wife took him home and he promptly beat his wife.
- S2. I see. That makes it very difficult.
- C2. It makes it just dreadful. And I think his mother—he will have nothing to do with any of us, of course. He says we are interfering with his life, which of course, we are, I suppose. But what do you do in a case like this. I am afraid to open a paper in the morning, I'm so afraid that he's gone rampant with a gun and, while they have taken the two guns he's had all the time away from him, you know those people could get guns anywhere.

## 17.

- S1. You mentioned that your wife doesn't understand. Does she know you are sick?
- C1. She—you're acting like a little boy. Mind his mother. I don't know if this is right.
- S2. It doesn't help to throw something like that at someone. Didn't your doctor ever explain to her that you were ill?
- C2. She wouldn't see him. You know what I mean. She doesn't feel there's any need for that sort of thing. I don't know whether she's a small person or whether she's normal. I don't know what it is. Maybe she doesn't have the capacity.
- S3. Maybe she just doesn't know about these things . . .

## 18.

- C1. . . . I mean the thing that makes it even more serious to me is the once or twice that I've mentioned it—not deliberately, but kind of slipping to the family or anything like that, they try to make a joke of it, you know.
- S1. Well, no, see here we take all of that seriously.
- C2. And believe me, it's no joke, because as I say, I just don't feel my life is worth anything at this point.
- S2. Well we take that very seriously, and when someone feels that way, we try to do whatever we can to help them to work out of that feeling. And we'd like to help you.
- C3. OK, fine then Mr. C—— . . .

## 19.

- S1. Do you live alone?
- C1. No. I have my mother with me. She's blind, has diabetes, and I can't talk to her. I have a son 26 years old by a previous marriage who's not with me. He has his own family and he's not very—of actions. He's strong minded. I remember I was too until this happened.

## 20 (man, regarding roommate).

- C1. He doesn't know anything about this. I don't want to involve him in it at all.
- S1. You ever talk to him about how you feel? About how discouraged you are?
- C2. No.
- S2. Why is that?
- C3. Well he isn't the type of person who would understand anything like that, you know? I've seen other people—as a bartender he meets other people like this, and I've seen him at work and people will try to tell him something and he'll listen and then he'll make a big joke of it, and things like this, you know? He doesn't mean any harm by it, but—

## 21.

- C1. Hello. I'd like to see a doctor right away. The state Mental Hygiene Clinic doesn't have anyone there this afternoon and they gave me your number and I need somebody to help me.
- S1. Can you tell me what the trouble is?
- C2. Yes. I'm going crazy. I'm cracking up right now, and I need somebody to say, yes, we'll help. Because I've been fighting for a long time, and I can't help myself and nobody can help me. I need professional help and right now there is no answer at all.
- S2. OK. Why don't you come on in this afternoon.

## 22.

- S1. Let me ask you another thing. We're very interested here. We get calls from people who often are very reluctant to give their names or just don't. Why is that? What prevents you or what makes you hesitate?
- C1. Well. One feels like such a goddam fool you know?
- S2. Why?
- C2. I'm well over 21, and I should—you know—if I had a sister or a brother or a husband or somebody to talk to I'd talk to that person. But I feel like such an idiot when you have to call up a stranger and say will you please let me talk to you.

## 23 (not telephone, psychiatrist and woman).

- Psych. 1 . . . Well I think I can see how we can help you . . . we will try to get you and your husband together to decide between you what's right. I think if you know what's right, you'll try to do what's right and that will be easier for you to get along.
- W.1 You're going to have to tell my husband.
- P.2 I think he'll come in.
- W.2 No I mean if he comes in and if you talk about certain things. He's going to know that—
- P.3 What?

W.3 Well, that I was talking about it.

P.4 He won't like that? You sound as though you're afraid of him.

W.4 No. But he just says that you're not supposed to talk about things that happen in the home.

P.5 Well, of course, coming here is like coming to a doctor, the professional relationship. While that's generally true, this is sort of the exception . . .

#### 24.

S1. And do you have anyone to lean on? Anyone to help you at all?

C1. No one.

S2. There is no one you can talk to or turn to? No one who offers to help?

C2. No. I go with a fellow now, but he doesn't know anything about this.

S3. Why not?

C3. I don't know. I just can't tell anyone.

S4. Doesn't he notice how upset you are?

C4. Well, I didn't answer the phone Saturday and he finally came over and I was in bed, and he wanted to know what was the matter and I just told him I had the flu.

S5. Uh huh. But it sounds as if he's at least some worried about you, which means he may have picked up clues. You haven't said anything to anyone about wanting to harm yourself?

. . .

S6. Now you have your boyfriend. I think he is entitled to be let in on what's going on.

C6. Well, he's never had a problem himself in his life. I don't know. I just don't want to tell him about it. I know he's real kind, but I haven't gone with him that long. I've just been going with him for two months. Before that I went with someone for three years.

S7. What happened to him?

C7. He was afraid of problems.

S8. I see. So you're afraid you'll scare this fellow away?

C8. Yes.

S9. But if he does care about you at all, I think he would want to share your troubles, you know at least be a listener, because you—let me tell you something about what I think is going on with you . . .

. . .

S10. Another thing that helps clear a depression is being with people and talking. Besides your boyfriend is there anyone else? Do you have any other friends?

C10. Oh I have all kinds of friends. A lot of friends. But I just never have been able to talk. If I do, if I feel like talking about it, I'll say something that I don't mean. I can't explain it. Well, I mean it, I just don't really come out and say what's really troubling me.

S11. Why is that?

C11. I don't know.

S12. Are you afraid you'll be imposing on people?

C12. Yes, at times.

S13. Well, this is a time when you have to stop worrying about imposing on people. If you have a friend, this is what the friend is for. Is there anybody you can call in the middle of the night to just talk for a while when you need to?

C13. No.

S14. Why is that?

C14. Just maybe I don't have as good friends as I thought I did. I just know I don't think anyone would appreciate it.

S15. You say, maybe they're not so good. But maybe also you aren't willing to take advantage of them.

C15. Well of course I just never feel like talking to anyone in the middle of the night. I can't call somebody and say, gee, I had a bad dream, can't expect them to get up.

S16. I don't know. I think when you're in trouble, you need to use everybody around you. Could you call up your boyfriend?

C16. Oh I imagine so. I've never thought about it. He just called me a little while ago.

. . .

S17. Well I think there's too much your hiding from yourself. But this can come out in time. Right now, you know he knows there is something wrong and he wants to know what it is.

C17. Well I do recognize why I don't tell him. It's because I am afraid that he's just about the greatest person that I've ever known, and I'm just so afraid of losing him. I didn't lose the other one that way. He was just a selfish person. In fact we're still very good friends. But he admitted he was selfish.

S18. But this fellow seems to want to help. Sometimes the best thing you can do is to let him know you need him. I think you have some trouble about taking help, but that's just a guess. Anyway let's talk about this some more. You have a boyfriend; you have some other friends. There are some people you can be with. You shouldn't feel alone. When you're feeling really low, you ought to be in touch with somebody. Now you don't sound very convinced about your ability to do that. One thing in a depression is that people tend to be off by themselves.

#### 25 (suicidal woman).

C1. . . . And I'm just at the break. I said, what have I got to live for? I said, Elsie [daughter] tell me. If you could tell me something. She says, oh you going to take sleeping pills? Happy dreams. And this was it. And I says, I just can't find anything to go on for. I haven't—I had some friends, but not such close friends. I mean, they all have husbands. You can't push yourself in with them. I sit here day after day. Even if I go to work, what am I working for? For what? I can't see anything to go on for. My daughter doesn't need me. My son doesn't need me. Everyone has to be needed by someone, and no one needs me.

- S1. What about yourself?  
C2. Well, do I need myself? Do I need my worries?

26.

- C1. I am 49 years old and quite an active woman. I might possibly be menopausal, and this is doubtful. So what the hell, you know?  
S1. How long have you been thinking about killing yourself?  
C2. I was probably four or five. I tried to stab myself with a fork.

27.

- S1. And you called Pelton [a state hospital] and they said they can't take you into the hospital. That's rather hard to believe if you really made clear it's an emergency.  
C1. They think I'm kidding. I'm not.  
S1. What makes them think you're kidding?  
C2. I don't know.  
S2. Anybody who knows about these things knows that you take something like this seriously . . .

*EMANUEL A. SCHEGLOFF*

*Notes on a  
Conversational  
Practice:  
Formulating  
Place\**

**M**y aim in this essay is twofold. I hope to develop two problems of conversational analysis, each drawn from a different domain of problems. I shall develop a series of considerations that bear on one of the problems, and attempt to use those considerations in the understanding of the other. I shall proceed by sketching the first problem having to do with conversational sequencing, the problem of "insertion sequences," then abruptly shifting to the other problem, selecting formulations, which I shall call

\* The research on which this discussion is based was supported by the Advanced Research Projects Agency, Department of Defense, through the Air Force Office of Scientific Research under Contract number F-44620-68-0040. An earlier version of some

(Notes to this selection will be found on pp. 432-433.)



<sup>1</sup> See 1.1.1 for the meaning of this term.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Quotations 1, 5, 22 in the appendix.

<sup>3</sup> The question of what it is that "help" consists of will not be dealt with here.

<sup>4</sup> When "member" is used with an upper-case m it refers to a user of the categorization devices; when with a lower-case m it refers to a category that is a member of some collection.

<sup>5</sup> In the term *collection of categories*, *collection* is not used in a weak sense, as equivalent to the weak sense of *set*, but is only used to refer to groups of categories that Members of the community of users do indeed group together. Thus the issue of whether some particular category is a member of some particular collection of categories is an empirical issue, upon which any particular assertions we may make can be erroneous.

<sup>6</sup> Constraint (b) is introduced largely for purposes of simplicity. We will see (2.2.4 ff.) that there are Pn-adequate devices that do have overlapping members. For our current problem we need two devices that do not have overlapping members.

<sup>7</sup> I choose the example of the collection "age" in order to notice a feature that it and some other collections have: The device is Pn-adequate over a variety of formulations of the categories that are its members. Categories may be replaced from the collection without affecting its ability to categorize any population N. That is not to say that for any given group of categories any given category may be removed and remain Pn-adequate. There are thus alternative groups of categories where it is the groups that are substitutable, or where some particular category is partitionable into a group of categories constituting subsets of it.

<sup>8</sup> If a device is Pn-adequate, it follows immediately that it is also Pa-adequate, where a is some particular natural integer. It is not simply the case then that an uncounted population may be categorized by a Pn-adequate device, but also that any counted population may also be categorized by such a device. Having counted a population, it is of course the case that some devices other than Pn-adequate ones may be adequate to categorize it.

<sup>9</sup> See (2.2.5).

<sup>10</sup> It may be observed that either the first alternative constitutes a version of the second, where part of the research is done by one lacking professional status, or the second constitutes a version of the first achieved by reference to the fact that the professional is a Member of the population of categorization device users or feels competent to act on their behalf.

<sup>11</sup> For the relevance of this rule, see (2.2.4–5).

<sup>12</sup> The consistency rule can only be generally formulated for Pn-adequate devices. However, for partially specified populations, e.g. for those that have been counted, the consistency rule might be usable for non-Pn-adequate devices.

<sup>13</sup> The import of two or more categorizers will be considered in (1.1.6.1, and 4.2 ff.).

<sup>14</sup> First, see (2.2.3). Second, the relation between referential and inferential adequacy is extremely close. I explore the relation elsewhere, and one of the findings of that research especially relevant here may be proposed as follows: Any Member of any of the categories of such a device is a "presumptive representative" of that category. Briefly, the knowledge organized by reference to some category of a Pn-adequate device is presumptively appropriate for some Member given the determination that he is an incumbent of the category.

<sup>15</sup> The materials of this section are quoted verbatim from *Children Tell Stories*, by Evelyn G. Pitcher and Ernst Prelinger, New York, 1963, p. 35, 31.

<sup>16</sup> They also know the device whose collection is the pronouns. The working of this rather central device will be considered elsewhere.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.* p. 31, emphasis added.

<sup>18</sup> For some Pn-adequate devices, their construction is such that for any population Member the categories are mutually exclusive. For some Pn-adequate devices this is not so. For such (latter) devices it is nonetheless possible that a single categorization may reproducibly be provided for by reference to an orderly procedure for considering the applicability of categories and a rule providing for stopping as soon as a category has been found applicable for any given Member.

<sup>19</sup> For some ices, their proper use does not involve repeatable use of categories. Suppose, for example, one is using the device *baseball team* (first base, second base, . . . catcher) to select players from a larger population than nine (or eighteen) potential players.

<sup>20</sup> Or any other correspondence-type criterion.

<sup>21</sup> While we do this introduction without having shown how the relevance of these collections is provided for, that task is not going to be ignored. The reader who would rather proceed by reference first to the indication of relevance may turn to 3 ff.

<sup>22</sup> Recall (1.1.6.1).

<sup>23</sup> By "partially" we mean that such matters as the rules of conventional sequencing by which the relevant interchanges take place have not been constructed.

<sup>24</sup> Recall Note 14, 1.1.5.

<sup>25</sup> Recall 1.1.6 ff. Given Pn-adequacy of K and R, we can see both the possibilities of mutual exclusiveness and of convergence.

<sup>26</sup> The formulation will be seen to be correct for K.

<sup>27</sup> It may be noted that the characterization has been developed from a consideration of a variety of materials other than the suicide materials presented above and in the appendix.

<sup>28</sup> From author's field notes.

<sup>29</sup> G. Bateson, p. 172, *Group Processes*, 1955, ed. Schaffner.

<sup>30</sup> *The Witnesses*, p. 46, testimony of A. Zapruder, Bantam Books, 1964.

<sup>31</sup> Los Angeles Times, 4-14-65.

<sup>32</sup> Genesis, Ch. 19.

<sup>33</sup> Franz Kafka, *The Trial*, pp. 7–8, Knopf, New York.

<sup>34</sup> A. I. Richards, *Chisungu*, pp. 38–9, Faber, 1956.

<sup>35</sup> Mark Zborowski and Elizabeth Herzog, *Life is with People*, p. 289, Schocken edition, 1962.

<sup>36</sup> See further (8 ff.).

<sup>37</sup> From the analysis we have presented, it is quite expectable that persons who find themselves in the binds described may find themselves unable to turn for help, and elect suicide. Several of the suicide notes we have collected or seen evidence that the suicidal had found themselves in such a situation. It is expectable further that persons in such a situation will not leave a note or a note that gives an account of their trouble. Cressey's data, similar as it is to the materials we have been analyzing, and given the fact that it is largely concerned with persons who have failed to find a legitimate way out, i.e. with persons in prison, seems to confirm these expectations. See, for that data, Donald R. Cressey, *Other People's Money*, Free Press, 1953, especially Chapter 2.