FRAME ANALYSIS

An Essay on the Organization of Experience

Erving Goffman

With a foreword by BENNETT M. BERGER

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Introduction

There is a venerable tradition in philosophy that argues that what the reader assumes to be real is but a shadow, and that by attending to what the writer says about perception, thought, the brain, language, culture, a new methodology, or novel social forces, the veil can be lifted. That sort of line, of course, gives as much a role to the writer and his writings as is possible to imagine and for that reason is pathetic. (What can better push a book than the claim that it will change what the reader thinks is going on?) A current example of this tradition can be found in some of the doctrines of social psychology and the W. I. Thomas dictum: "If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences." This statement is true as it reads but false as it is taken. Defining situations as real certainly has consequences, but these may contribute very marginally to the events in progress; in some cases only a slight embarrassment flits across the scene in mild concern for those who tried to define the situation wrongly. All the world is not a stage—certainly the theater isn't entirely. (Whether you organize a theater or an aircraft factory, you need to find places for cars to park and coats to be checked, and these had better be real places, which, incidentally, had better carry real insurance against theft.) Presumably, a "definition of the situation" is almost always to be found, but those who are in the situation ordinarily do not *create* this definition, even though their society often can be said to do so; ordinarily, all they do is to

assess correctly what the situation ought to be for them and then act accordingly. True, we personally negotiate aspects of all the arrangements under which we live, but often once these are negotiated, we continue on mechanically as though the matter had always been settled. So, too, there are occasions when we must wait until things are almost over before discovering what has been occurring and occasions of our own activity when we can considerably put off deciding what to claim we have been doing. But surely these are not the only principles of organization. Social life is dubious enough and ludicrous enough without having to wish it further into unreality.

Within the terms, then, of the bad name that the analysis of social reality has, this book presents another analysis of social reality. I try to follow a tradition established by William James in his famous chapter "The Perception of Reality,"[1] first published as an article in *Mind* in 1869. Instead of asking what reality is, he gave matters a subversive phenomenological twist, italicizing the following question: *Under what circumstances do we think things are real?* The important thing about reality, he implied, is our sense of its realness in contrast to our feeling that some things lack this quality. One can then ask under what conditions such a feeling is generated, and this question speaks to a small, manageable problem having to do with the camera and not what it is the camera takes pictures of.

In his answer, James stressed the factors of selective attention, intimate involvement, and noncontradiction by what is otherwise known. More important, he made a stab at differentiating the several different "worlds" that our attention and interest can make real for us, the possible subuniverses, the "orders of existence" (to use Aron Gurwitsch's phrase), in each of which an object of a given kind can have its proper being: the world of the senses, the world of scientific objects, the world of abstract philosophical truths, the worlds of myth and supernatural beliefs, the madman's world, etc. Each of these subworlds, according to James, has "its own special and separate style of existence,"[2] and "each world, *whilst it is attended to*, is real after its own fashion;

1. William James, *Principles of Psychology*, vol. 2 (New York: Dover Publications, 1950), chap. 21, pp. 283–324. Here, as throughout, italics in quoted materials are as in the original.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 291.

only the reality lapses with the attention."[3] Then, after taking this radical stand, James copped out; he allowed that the world of the senses has a special status, being the one we judge to be the realest reality, the one that retains our liveliest belief, the one before which the other worlds must give way.[4] James in all this agreed with Husserl's teacher, Brentano, and implied, as phenomenology came to do, the need to distinguish between the content of a current perception and the reality status we give to what is thus enclosed or bracketed within perception.[5]

James' crucial device, of course, was a rather scandalous play on the word "world" (or "reality"). What he meant was not *the* world but a particular person's current world—and, in fact, as will be argued, not even that. There was no good reason to use such billowy words. James opened a door; it let in wind as well as light.

In 1945 Alfred Schutz took up James' theme again in a paper called "On Multiple Realities."[6] His argument followed James' surprisingly closely, but more attention was given to the possibility of uncovering the conditions that must be fulfilled if we are to generate one realm of "reality," one "finite province of meaning,"

3. *Ibid.*, p. 293.
4. James' interest in the varieties-of-worlds problem was not fleeting. In his *Varieties of Religious Experience* (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1902) he approached the same question but through a different route.
5. "But who does not see that in a disbelieved or doubted or interrogative or conditional proposition, the ideas are combined in the same identical way in which they are in a proposition which is solidly believed" (James, *Principles of Psychology*, 2:286). Aron Gurwitsch in his *The Field of Consciousness* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1964) makes a similar comment in a discussion of Husserl:

> Among such characters we mentioned those concerning modes of presentation, as when a thing is one time perceived, another time remembered or merely imagined, or when a certain state of affairs (the identical matter of a proposition) is asserted or denied, doubted, questioned, or deemed probable. [p. 327]

6. First appearing in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, V (1945): 533–576; reprinted in his *Collected Papers*, 3 vols. (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1962), 1:207–259.) A later version is "The Stratification of the Life-World," in Alfred Schutz and Thomas Luckmann, *The Structures of the Life-World*, trans. Richard M. Zaner and H. Tristram Engelhardt, Jr. (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1973), pp. 21–98. An influential treatment of Schutz's ideas is Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, Anchor Books, 1966).

as opposed to another. Schutz added the notion, interesting but not entirely convincing, that we experience a special kind of "shock" when suddenly thrust from one "world," say, that of dreams, to another, such as that of the theater:

> There are as many innumerable kinds of different shock experiences as there are different finite provinces of meaning upon which I may bestow the accent of reality. Some instances are: the shock of falling asleep as the leap into the world of dreams; the inner transformation we endure if the curtain in the theater rises as the transition into the world of the stageplay; the radical change in our attitude if, before a painting, we permit our visual field to be limited by what is within the frame as the passage into the pictorial world; our quandary, relaxing into laughter, if, in listening to a joke, we are for a short time ready to accept the fictitious world of the jest as a reality in relation to which the world of our daily life takes on the character of foolishness; the child's turning toward his toy as the transition into the play-world; and so on. But also the religious experiences in all their varieties—for instance, Kierkegaard's experience of the "instant" as the leap into the religious sphere—are examples of such a shock, as well as the decision of the scientist to replace all passionate participation in the affairs of "this world" by a disinterested contemplative attitude.[7]

And although, like James, he assumed that one realm—the "working world"—had a preferential status, he was apparently more reserved than James about its objective character:

> We speak of provinces of *meaning* and not of subuniverses because it is the meaning of our experience and not the ontological structure of the objects which constitute reality,[8]

attributing its priority to ourselves, not the world:

> For we will find that the world of everyday life, the common-sense world, has a paramount position among the various provinces of reality, since only within it does communication with our fellowmen become possible. But the common-sense world is from the outset a sociocultural world, and the many questions connected with the intersubjectivity of the symbolic relations originate within it, are determined by it, and find their solution within it.[9]

and to the fact that our bodies always participate in the everyday world whatever our interest at the time, this participation implying a capacity to affect and be affected by the everyday world.[10] So instead of saying of a subuniverse that it is generated in accordance with certain structural principles, one says it has a certain "cognitive style."

Schutz's paper (and Schutz in general) was brought to the attention of ethnographic sociologists by Harold Garfinkel, who further extended the argument about multiple realities by going on (at least in his early comments) to look for rules which, when followed, allow us to generate a "world" of a given kind. Presumably a machine designed according to the proper specifications could grind out the reality of our choice. The conceptual attraction here is obvious. A game such as chess generates a habitable universe for those who can follow it, a plane of being, a cast of characters with a seemingly unlimited number of different situations and acts through which to realize their natures and destinies. Yet much of this is reducible to a small set of interdependent rules and practices. If the meaningfulness of everyday activity is similarly dependent on a closed, finite set of rules, then explication of them would give one a powerful means of analyzing social life. For example, one could then see (following Garfinkel) that the significance of certain deviant acts is that they undermine the intelligibility of everything else we had thought was going on around us, including all next acts, thus generating diffuse disorder. To uncover the informing, constitutive rules of everyday behavior would be to perform the sociologist's alchemy —the transmutation of any patch of ordinary social activity into an illuminating publication. It might be added that although James and Schutz are convincing in arguing that something like the "world" of dreams is differently organized from the world of everyday experience, they are quite unconvincing in providing any kind of account as to how many different "worlds" there are and whether everyday, wide-awake life can actually be seen as but one rule-produced plane of being, if so seen at all. Nor has

7. Schutz, *Collected Papers*, 1:231.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 230. See also Alfred Schutz, *Reflections on the Problem of Relevance*, ed. Richard M. Zaner (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1970), p. 125. On matters Schutzian I am indebted to Richard Grathoff.
9. From "Symbol, Reality, and Society," Schutz, *Collected Papers*, 1:294.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 342.

there been much success in describing constitutive rules of everyday activity.[11] One is faced with the embarrassing methodological fact that the announcement of constitutive rules seems an open-ended game that any number can play forever. Players usually come up with five or ten rules (as I will), but there are no grounds for thinking that a thousand additional assumptions might not be listed by others. Moreover, these students neglect to make clear that what they are often concerned with is not an individual's sense of what is real, but rather what it is he can get caught up in, engrossed in, carried away by; and this can be something he can claim is really going on and yet claim is not real. One is left, then, with the structural similarity between everyday life—neglecting for a moment the possibility that no satisfactory catalog might be possible of what to include therein—and the various "worlds" of make-believe but no way of knowing how this relationship should modify our view of everyday life.

Interest in the James-Schutz line of thought has become active recently among persons whose initial stimulus came from sources not much connected historically with the phenomenological tradition: The work of those who created what has come to be called "the theater of the absurd," most fully exhibited in the

11. Schutz's various pronouncements seem to have hypnotized some students into treating them as definitive rather than suggestive. His version of the "cognitive style" of everyday life he states as follows:

1. a specific tension of consciousness, namely, wide-awakeness, originating in full attention to life;
2. a specific *epoché*, namely suspension of doubt;
3. a prevalent form of spontaneity, namely working (a meaningful spontaneity based upon a project and characterized by the intention of bringing about the projected state of affairs by bodily movements gearing into the outer world);
4. a specific form of experiencing one's self (the working self as the total self);
5. a specific form of sociality (the common intersubjective world of communication and social action);
6. a specific time-perspective (the standard time originating in an interaction between *durée* and cosmic time as the universal temporal structure of the intersubjective world).

These are at least some of the features of the cognitive style belonging to this particular province of meaning. As long as our experiences of this world—the valid as well as the invalidated ones—partake of this style we may consider this province of meaning as real, we may bestow upon it the accent of reality. [*Ibid.*, pp. 230–231.]

analytical dramas of Luigi Pirandello. The very useful paper by Gregory Bateson, "A Theory of Play and Phantasy,"[12] in which he directly raised the question of unseriousness and seriousness, allowing us to see what a startling thing experience is, such that a bit of serious activity can be used as a model for putting together unserious versions of the same activity, and that, on occasion, we may not know whether it is play or the real thing that is occurring. (Bateson introduced his own version of the notion of "bracketing," a usable one, and also the argument that individuals can intentionally produce framing confusion in those with whom they are dealing; it is in Bateson's paper that the term "frame" was proposed in roughly the sense in which I want to employ it.)[13] The work of John Austin, who, following Wittgenstein,[14] suggested again that what we mean by "really happening" is complicated, and that although an individual may dream unrealities, it is still proper to say of him on that occasion that he is really dreaming.[15] (I have also drawn on the work of a student of Austin, D. S. Schwayder, and his fine book, *The Stratification of Behavior*.)[16] The efforts of those who study (or at least publish on) fraud, deceit, misidentification, and other "optical" effects, and the work of those who study "strategic interaction," including the way in which concealing and revealing bear upon definitions of the situation. The useful paper by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss, "Awareness Contexts and Social Interaction."[17] Finally, the modern effort in linguistically oriented disciplines to employ the notion of a "code" as a device which informs

12. *Psychiatric Research Reports* 2, American Psychiatric Association (December 1955), pp. 39–51. Now reprinted in his *Steps to an Ecology of Mind* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1972), pp. 177–193. A useful exegesis is William F. Fry, Jr., *Sweet Madness: A Study of Humor* (Palo Alto, Calif.: Pacific Books, 1968).

13. Edward T. Cone, in the first chapter of his *Musical Form and Musical Performance* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1968), quite explicitly uses the term "frame" in much the same way that Bateson does and suggests some of the same lines of inquiry, but I think quite independently.

14. See, for example, Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958), pt. 2, sec. 7.

15. See, for example, chap. 7 in his *Sense and Sensibilia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962).

16. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965.

17. *American Sociological Review*, XXIX (1964): 669–679.

and patterns all events that fall within the boundaries of its application.

I have borrowed extensively from all these sources, claiming really only the bringing of them together. My perspective is situational, meaning here a concern for what one individual can be alive to at a particular moment, this often involving a few other particular individuals and not necessarily restricted to the mutually monitored arena of a face-to-face gathering. I assume that when individuals attend to any current situation, they face the question: "What is it that's going on here?" Whether asked explicitly, as in times of confusion and doubt, or tacitly, during occasions of usual certitude, the question is put and the answer to it is presumed by the way the individuals then proceed to get on with the affairs at hand. Starting, then, with that question, this volume attempts to limn out a framework that could be appealed to for the answer.

Let me say at once that the question "What is it that's going on here?" is considerably suspect. Any event can be described in terms of a focus that includes a wide swath or a narrow one and—as a related but not identical matter—in terms of a focus that is close-up or distant. And no one has a theory as to what particular span and level will come to be the ones employed. To begin with, I must be allowed to proceed by picking my span and level arbitrarily, without special justification.[18]

A similar issue is found in connection with perspective. When participant roles in an activity are differentiated—a common circumstance—the view that one person has of what is going on is likely to be quite different from that of another. There is a sense in which what is play for the golfer is work for the caddy. Different interests will—in Schutz's phrasing—generate different motivational relevancies. (Moreover, variability is complicated here by the fact that those who bring different perspectives to the "same" events are likely to employ different spans and levels of focus.) Of course, in many cases some of those who are committed to differing points of view and focus may still be willing to acknowledge that theirs is not the official or "real" one. Caddies

18. See the discussion by Emanuel A. Schegloff, "Notes on a Conversational Practice: Formulating Place," in David Sudnow, ed., *Studies in Social Interaction* (New York: The Free Press, 1972), pp. 75–119. There is a standard criticism of "role" as a concept which presents the same argument.

work at golf, as do instructors, but both appreciate that their job is special, since it has to do with servicing persons engaged in play. In any case, again I will initially assume the right to pick my point of view, my motivational relevancies, only limiting this choice of perspective to one that participants would easily recognize to be valid.

Further, it is obvious that in most "situations" many different things are happening simultaneously—things that are likely to have begun at different moments and may terminate dissynchronously.[19] To ask the question "What is *it* that's going on here?" biases matters in the direction of unitary exposition and simplicity. This bias, too, I must be temporarily allowed.

So, too, to speak of the "current" situation (just as to speak of something going on "here") is to allow reader and writer to continue along easily in their impression that they clearly know and agree on what they are thinking about. The amount of time covered by "current" (just as the amount of space covered by "here") obviously can vary greatly from one occasion to the next and from one participant to another; and the fact that participants seem to have no trouble in quickly coming to the same apparent understanding in this matter does not deny the intellectual importance of our trying to find out what this apparent consensus consists of and how it is established. To speak of something happening before the eyes of observers is to be on firmer ground than usual in the social sciences; but the ground is still shaky, and the crucial question of how a seeming agreement was reached concerning the identity of the "something" and the inclusiveness of "before the eyes" still remains.

Finally, it is plain that retrospective characterization of the "same" event or social occasion may differ very widely, that an individual's role in an undertaking can provide him with a distinctive evaluative assessment of what sort of an instance of the type the particular undertaking was. In that sense it has been argued, for example, that opposing rooters at a football game do not experience the "same" game,[20] and that what makes a party

19. Nicely described by Roger G. Barker and Herbert F. Wright, *Midwest and Its Children* (Evanston, Ill.: Row, Peterson & Company, 1964), chap. 7, "Dividing the Behavior Stream," pp. 225–273.

20. Presented perhaps overstrongly in a well-known early paper by Albert H. Hastorf and Hadley Cantril, "They Saw a Game: A Case Study," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, XLIX (1954): 129–234.

a good one for a participant who is made much of is just what makes it a bad one for a participant who thereby is made little of.

All of which suggests that one should even be uneasy about the easy way in which it is assumed that participants in an activity can be terminologically identified and referred to without issue. For surely, a "couple" kissing can also be a "man" greeting his "wife" or "John" being careful with "Mary's" makeup.

I only want to claim that although these questions are very important, they are not the only ones, and that their treatment is not necessarily required before one can proceed. So here, too, I will let sleeping sentences lie.

My aim is to try to isolate some of the basic frameworks of understanding available in our society for making sense out of events and to analyze the special vulnerabilities to which these frames of reference are subject. I start with the fact that from an individual's particular point of view, while one thing may momentarily appear to be what is really going on, in fact what is actually happening is plainly a joke, or a dream, or an accident, or a mistake, or a misunderstanding, or a deception, or a theatrical performance, and so forth. And attention will be directed to what it is about our sense of what is going on that makes it so vulnerable to the need for these various rereadings.

Elementary terms required by the subject matter to be dealt with are provided first. My treatment of these initial terms is abstract, and I am afraid the formulations provided are crude indeed by the standards of modern philosophy. The reader must initially bestow the benefit of mere doubt in order for us both to get to matters that (I feel) are less dubious.

The term "strip" will be used to refer to any arbitrary slice or cut from the stream of ongoing activity, including here sequences of happenings, real or fictive, as seen from the perspective of those subjectively involved in sustaining an interest in them. A strip is not meant to reflect a natural division made by the subjects of inquiry or an analytical division made by students who inquire; it will be used only to refer to any raw batch of occurrences (of whatever status in reality) that one wants to draw attention to as a starting point for analysis.

And of course much use will be made of Bateson's use of the term "frame." I assume that definitions of a situation are built up in accordance with principles of organization which govern events—at least social ones—and our subjective involvement in

them; frame is the word I use to refer to such of these basic elements as I am able to identify. That is my definition of frame. My phrase "frame analysis" is a slogan to refer to the examination in these terms of the organization of experience.

In dealing with conventional topics, it is usually practical to develop concepts and themes in some sort of logical sequence: nothing coming earlier depends on something coming later, and, hopefully, terms developed at any one point are actually used in what comes thereafter. Often the complaint of the writer is that linear presentation constrains what is actually a circular affair, ideally requiring simultaneous introduction of terms, and the complaint of the reader is that concepts elaborately defined are not much used beyond the point at which the fuss is made about their meaning. In the analysis of frames, linear presentation is no great embarrassment. Nor is the defining of terms not used thereafter. The problem, in fact, is that once a term is introduced (this occurring at the point at which it is first needed), it begins to have too much bearing, not merely applying to what comes later, but reapplying in each chapter to what it has already applied to. Thus each succeeding section of the study becomes more entangled, until a step can hardly be made because of what must be carried along with it. The process closely follows the horrors of repetition songs, as if—in the case of frame analysis—what Old MacDonald had on his farm were partridge and juniper trees.

Discussions about frame inevitably lead to questions concerning the status of the discussion itself, because here terms applying to what is analyzed ought to apply to the analysis also. I proceed on the commonsense assumption that ordinary language and ordinary writing practices are sufficiently flexible to allow anything that one wants to express to get expressed.[21] Here I follow Carnap's position:

> The sentences, definitions, and rules of the syntax of a language are concerned with the forms of that language. But, now, how are these sentences, definitions, and rules themselves to be correctly expressed? Is a kind of super-language necessary for the purpose? And, again, a third language to explain the syntax of this super-language, and so on to infinity? Or is it possible to formulate the syntax of a language within that language itself? The obvious fear will arise that in the latter case, owing to certain reflexive defini-

21. *Wovan man nicht sprechen kann, ist nicht der satz, "Wovan man nicht sprechen kann, darüber muss man schweigen."*

> tions, contradictions of a nature seemingly similar to those which are familiar both in Cantor's theory of transfinite aggregates and in the pre-Russellian logic might make their appearance. But we shall see later that without any danger of contradictions or antinomies emerging it is possible to express the syntax of a language in that language itself, to an extent which is conditioned by the wealth of means of expression of the language in question.[22]

Thus, even if one took as one's task the examination of the use made in the humanities and the less robust sciences of "examples," "illustrations," and "cases in point," the object being to uncover the folk theories of evidence which underlie resort to these devices, it would still be the case that examples and illustrations would probably have to be used, and they probably could be without entirely vitiating the analysis.

In turning to the issue of reflexivity and in arguing that ordinary language is an adequate resource for discussing it, I do not mean that these particular linguistic matters should block all other concerns. Methodological self-consciousness that is full, immediate, and persistent sets aside all study and analysis except that of the reflexive problem itself, thereby displacing fields of inquiry instead of contributing to them. Thus, I will throughout use quotation marks to suggest a special sense of the word so marked and not concern myself systematically with the fact that this device is routinely used in a variety of quite different ways,[23]

22. Rudolf Carnap, *The Logical Syntax of Language*, trans. Amethe Smeaton (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1937), p. 3.

23. I. A. Richards, for example, has a version in his *How to Read a Page* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1942):

> We all recognize—more or less unsystematically—that quotation marks serve varied purposes:
>
> 1. Sometimes they show merely that we are quoting and where our quotation begins and ends.
> 2. Sometimes they imply that the word or words within them are in some way open to question and are only to be taken in some special sense with reference to some special definition.
> 3. Sometimes they suggest further that what is quoted is nonsense or that there is really no such thing as the thing they profess to name.
> 4. Sometimes they suggest that the words are improperly used. The quotation marks are equivalent to *the so-called.*
> 5. Sometimes they only indicate that we are talking of the words as distinguished from their meanings. "Is" and "at" are shorter than "above." "Chien" means what "dog" means, and so forth.
>
> There are many other uses. . . . [p. 66]

that these seem to bear closely on the question of frame, and that I must assume that the context of use will automatically lead my readers and me to have the same understanding, although neither I nor they might be able to explicate the matter further. So, too, with the warning and the lead that ordinary language philosophers have given us. I know that the crucial term "real" may have been permanently Wittgensteined into a blur of slightly different uses, but proceed on the assumption that carefulness can gradually bring us to an understanding of basic themes informing diversity, a diversity which carefulness itself initially establishes, and that what is taken for granted concerning the meaning of this word can safely so be done until it is convenient to attend to what one has been doing.

A further caveat. There are lots of good grounds for doubting the kind of analysis about to be presented. I would do so myself if it weren't my own. It is too bookish, too general, too removed from fieldwork to have a good chance of being anything more than another mentalistic adumbration. And, as will be noted throughout, there are certainly things that cannot be nicely dealt with in the arguments that follow. (I coin a series of terms—some "basic"; but writers have been doing that to not much avail for years.) Nonetheless, some of the things in this world seem to urge the analysis I am here attempting, and the compulsion is strong to try to outline the framework that will perform this job, even if this means some other tasks get handled badly.

Another disclaimer. This book is about the organization of experience—something that an individual actor can take into his mind—and not the organization of society. I make no claim whatsoever to be talking about the core matters of sociology—social organization and social structure. Those matters have been and can continue to be quite nicely studied without reference to frame at all. I am not addressing the structure of social life but the structure of experience individuals have at any moment of their social lives. I personally hold society to be first in every way and any individual's current involvements to be second; this report deals only with matters that are second. This book will have weaknesses enough in the areas it claims to deal with; there is no need to find limitations in regard to what it does not set about to cover. Of course, it can be argued that to focus on the nature of personal experiencing—with the implication this can

have for giving equally serious consideration to all matters that might momentarily concern the individual—is itself a standpoint with marked political implications, and that these are conservative ones. The analysis developed does not catch at the differences between the advantaged and disadvantaged classes and can be said to direct attention away from such matters. I think that is true. I can only suggest that he who would combat false consciousness and awaken people to their true interests has much to do, because the sleep is very deep. And I do not intend here to provide a lullaby but merely to sneak in and watch the way the people snore.

Finally, a note about the materials used. First, there is the fact that I deal again in this book with what I have dealt with in others—another go at analyzing fraud, deceit, con games, shows of various kinds, and the like. There are many footnotes to and much repetition of other things I've written.[24] I am trying to order my thoughts on these topics, trying to construct a general statement. That is the excuse.

Second, throughout the book very considerable use is made of anecdotes cited from the press and from popular books in the biographical genre.[25] There could hardly be data with less face value. Obviously, passing events that are typical or representative don't make news just for that reason; only extraordinary ones do, and even these are subject to the editorial violence routinely employed by gentle writers. Our understanding of the world precedes these stories, determining which ones reporters will select and how the ones that are selected will be told. Human interest stories are a caricature of evidence in the very degree of their interest, providing a unity, coherence, pointedness, self-completeness, and drama only crudely sustained, if at all, by everyday living. Each is a cross between an *experimentum crucim* and a sideshow. That is their point. The design of these reported events is fully responsive to our demands—which are not for facts but for typifications. Their telling demonstrates the power of our

24. So much so that I use source abbreviations, a list of which can be found on p. xi.

25. An analysis of incidentally published stories—"fillers"—is provided by Roland Barthes along with an exhibition of literary license in "Structure of *Fait-Divers*," in his *Critical Essays*, trans. Richard Howard (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1972), pp. 185–195.

conventional understandings to cope with the bizarre potentials of social life, the furthest reaches of experience. What appears, then, to be a threat to our way of making sense of the world turns out to be an ingeniously selected defense of it. We press these stories to the wind; they keep the world from unsettling us. By and large, I do not present these anecdotes, therefore, as evidence or proof, but as clarifying depictions, as frame fantasies which manage, through the hundred liberties taken by their tellers, to celebrate our beliefs about the workings of the world. What was put into these tales is thus what I would like to get out of them.

These data have another weakness. I have culled them over the years on a hit-or-miss basis using principles of selection mysterious to me which, furthermore, changed from year to year and which I could not recover if I wanted to. Here, too, a caricature of systematic sampling is involved.

In addition to clippings as a source of materials, I draw on another, one as questionable as the first. Since this study attempts to deal with the organization of experience as such, whether "actual" or of the other kinds, I will have recourse to the following: cartoons, comics, novels, the cinema, and especially, it turns out, the legitimate stage. I am here involved in no horrors of bias different from the ones already exhibited in the selection of bits of human interest news. But I am led to draw on materials that writers in other traditions use, whether in literary and dramatic criticism of current "high" culture or in the sort of sociological journalism which attempts to read from surface changes in commercially available vicarious experience to the nature of our society at large. In consequence, many of the things I have to say about these materials will have already been said many times and better by fashionable writers. My excuse for brazenly dipping into this preempted domain is that I have a special interest, one that does not recognize a difference in value between a good novel and a bad one, a contemporary play or an ancient one, a comic strip or an opera. All are equally useful in explicating the character of strips of experienced activity. I end up quoting from well-known works recognized as setting standards, and from minor works current at the time of writing, but not because I think these examples of their genre have special cultural worth and warrant endorsement. Critics and reviewers

cite the classics of a genre in dealing with current works in order to explicate what if anything is significant and artful in them. I draw clumsily on the same materials—as well as critiques of them—simply because that is what is easy to hand. Indeed, these materials are easy to everyone's hand, providing something of a common fund of familiar experience, something that writers can assume readers know about.

* * * * * *

That is the introduction. Writing one allows a writer to try to set the terms of what he will write about. Accounts, excuses, apologies designed to reframe what follows after them, designed to draw a line between deficiencies in what the author writes and deficiencies in himself, leaving him, he hopes, a little better defended than he might otherwise be.[26] This sort of ritual work

26. There is a useful article by Jacob Brackman called "The Put-On" (*The New Yorker*, June 24, 1967, pp. 34–73). In his twelve-page introduction to the paperback edition he writes:

> Updating. If "updating" this essay were to mean exchanging more current jokes and performers for ones since disappeared, and appending how there came to be "put-on" head boutiques, and TV game shows, and a Sears Put-On clothing shop, and publishers crowing "This is the novel that makes you ask: *Is the author putting me on?*", and thousands of winkful commercials that seemed to say, "I know that you know that I'm trying to sell you. Let's you and me both goof on the product together."—if I were to "update" along these lines, and if I were to add little exegeses of Tiny Tim's wedding, Paul Morrissey's movies, Paul McCartney's death, then the piece would begin to stink of inauthenticity. . . .
>
> I think you must let a piece like this stand—not in its syntax, necessarily, but within the limits of its original awareness—as a fragment of cultural history. It may have been valid to the precise present for a matter of months, or days; who will quibble now that time is so short? Once the vision's devoured, mulched and incorporated, unless it has been frozen somewhere, its moment—when only so much had happened, when only so much had been revealed—is lost forever. All we have left are "updated" reports, grotesquely stretched, debased and freshened up, as what played itself out between haircuts is made to seem the rage of a decade. If I were to do this piece today (which would itself be impossible) hardly anything in it would stay the same. Of things in the real world about which one can try to write, sensibility may be the slipperiest. If I won't write the new piece now, how can I go back and meddle with the old one? [*The Put-On* (New York: Bantam Books, 1972), pp. 10–11.]

Brackman also argues that current items of cultural interest date very rapidly and fully, and, by implication, that writings concerned with these items will date quickly, too. He also suggests that the point of such writings is to bring the not quite consciously appreciated to awareness, and to do this first, and that once again a restatement or republication will sound stale. All of this I think has some truth and correctly describes the contingencies of that kind of subject matter, there being inevitably an unstated element of the reader's interest that derives from the current interest of the item. This element will decline rather quickly, leaving the writer having written something that can no longer be read with interest. In fact, every analyst of jokes has faced this problem, since the current version of a basic joke which he writes about today will sound very dated tomorrow. But given what Brackman is stuck with reprinting, his introduction does the framing work that introductions can do to segregate the producer from his product, in this case arguing that the piece was an expression of his sensibility *then*, not now.

can certainly disconnect a hurried pedestrian from a minor inconvenience he might cause a passing stranger. Just as certainly, such efforts are optimistic when their purpose is to recast the way in which a long book is to be taken. (And more optimistic still in the case of a second edition's preface to an already prefaced edition, this being an attempt to recast a recasting.)

* * * * * *

But what about comments on prefaces? Where does such a topic taken up at such a point leave the writer and the reader (or a speaker and an audience)? Does that sort of talk strike at the inclination of the reader to discount or criticize prefacing as an activity? And if it turns out that the preface was written in bad faith, tailored from the beginning to exemplify this use that will have come to be made of it? Will the preface then be retrospectively reframed by the reader into something that really isn't a preface at all but an inappropriately inserted illustration of one? Or if an admission of bad faith is made unconvincingly, leaving open the possibility that the disclosure was an afterthought? What then?

* * * * * *

And does the last comment excuse me in any degree from having been puerile and obvious in commenting on prefaces, as when, in a book analyzing jokes, the writer is excused the badness of the cited jokes but not the badness of the analysis of them? (A novelist who nowadays injects direct address in the body of his work—"Dear Reader, if you've gone this far, you'll know I hate that character . . ."—easily fails to change the foot-

ing we allow him; but what if he writes that he would like to succeed in such a device but knows we will not let him?)

* * * * * *

And what about discussions about being puerile and obvious? A word incorrectly spelled can, I think, be successfully used by the misspeller as an illustration of incorrect spelling and analyzed as such. But can a writer posture in his writing and then effectively claim that all along he was only providing an illustration of bad taste and lack of sophistication? Would it be necessary for him to show, and if so, how would he, that his claims were not merely a device hit upon after the fact to make the best out of what he was not able to prevent from being a bad thing?

* * * * * *

And if in the first pages after acknowledging colleagues who had helped, I had said: "Richard C. Jeffrey, on the other hand, did not help." And if I had gone on here (in these later pages) to suggest that the aim had been to make a little joke and incidentally bring awareness to a tacit constraint on acknowledgment writing? Then the explication of this aim could be seen as bad faith—either a post-hoc effort to hedge on having tried to be witty or an admission of having entrapped the reader into accepting a plant, that is, a statement whose reason for inclusion would later be shown to have not been apparent. But if, as is in fact the case, the whole matter is enclosed as a question within a section of the introduction dealing with a consideration of introductions and is therefore not to be seen as having an initial character as a simple, straightforward introduction, what then?

And after all of this, can I get the point across that Richard C. Jeffrey in fact didn't help? Does this last sentence do it? And if so, had a conditional been used, as in: "And after all of this, could I get the point across . . . etc." What then? And would this last comment transform an assertion into an illustration and so once again cast the matter of Richard C. Jeffrey in doubt?

* * * * * *

And if the preface and the comments on the preface and the comments on the comments on the preface are put in question, what about the asterisks which divide up and divide off the various sections in which this is managed? And if the orthography had still been intact, would this last question itself have

undermined these framing devices, including the ones which bracket this sentence with the prior one?

* * * * * *

And if above I had said: "What about the * * * * * * which divide up and divide off . . ."; would this be a proper use of print, and can an easy rule be formulated? Given the motivational relevancies of orthographers, a book on orthography can properly use a batch of print to illustrate print, to the neglect of saying something with its meaning. Similarly, a geography book can properly switch from words to maps. But when a mystery writer has his hero find a coded message on a torn bit of paper and then shows the clue to the reader by insetting it in the center of the page as though it were a map in a geography book, so that the reader sees the tear as well as the message, what sort of shift to a nonfictional frame has the writer asked the reader to make, and was he quite within his rights to ask it? Is it overly cute for an anthropologist reporting on the role of metaphor (with special reference to animal sources) to write, "One always feels a bit sheepish, of course, about bringing the metaphor concept into the social sciences and perhaps that is because one always feels there is something soft and wooly about it"?[27] Similarly, if I try to get dodgy with prefaces, is this not different from writing about tricks done with prefaces (which characteristically need not be undertaken at the beginning of a study)? Is this not the difference between doing and writing about the doing? And in considering all of these matters, can I properly draw on my own text ("And if above I had said: 'What about the * * * * * * that divide up and divide off . . .'; would this be . . .") as an illustration? And in this last sentence has not all need to be hesitant about the right to use actual asterisks disappeared, for after all, a doubtful usage cited as an example of doubtful usage ceases to be something that is doubtful to print?

* * * * * *

And if I wanted to comment on the next to last sentence, the one containing a parenthesized quoted sentence and questionably real asterisks, could I quote *that* sentence effectively, that is,

27. James W. Fernandez, "Persuasions and Performances: Of the Beast in Every Body . . . And the Metaphors of Everyman," *Daedalus*, Winter 1972, p. 41.

employ the apparently required punctuation marks and yet allow the reader an easy comprehension of what was being said about what? Would the limits of doing things in print have been reached?

* * * * * *

That is what frame analysis is about.

2

Primary Frameworks

I

When the individual in our Western society recognizes a particular event, he tends, whatever else he does, to imply in this response (and in effect employ) one or more frameworks or schemata of interpretation of a kind that can be called primary. I say primary because application of such a framework or perspective is seen by those who apply it as not depending on or harking back to some prior or "original" interpretation; indeed a primary framework is one that is seen as rendering what would otherwise be a meaningless aspect of the scene into something that is meaningful.

Primary frameworks vary in degree of organization. Some are neatly presentable as a system of entities, postulates, and rules; others—indeed, most others—appear to have no apparent articulated shape, providing only a lore of understanding, an approach, a perspective. Whatever the degree of organization, however, each primary framework allows its user to locate, perceive, identify, and label a seemingly infinite number of concrete occurrences defined in its terms. He is likely to be unaware of such organized features as the framework has and unable to describe the framework with any completeness if asked, yet these handicaps are no bar to his easily and fully applying it.

In daily life in our society a tolerably clear distinction is

sensed, if not made, between two broad classes of primary frameworks: natural and social. Natural frameworks identify occurrences seen as undirected, unoriented, unanimated, unguided, "purely physical." Such unguided events are ones understood to be due totally, from start to finish, to "natural" determinants. It is seen that no willful agency causally and intentionally interferes, that no actor continuously guides the outcome. Success or failure in regard to these events is not imaginable; no negative or positive sanctions are involved. Full determinism and determinateness prevail. There is some understanding that events perceived in one such schema can be reductively translated into ones perceived in a more "fundamental" framework and that some premises, such as the notion of the conservation of energy or that of a single, irreversible time, will be shared by all. Elegant versions of these natural frameworks are found, of course, in the physical and biological sciences.[1] An ordinary example would be the state of the weather as given in a report.

Social frameworks, on the other hand, provide background understanding for events that incorporate the will, aim, and controlling effort of an intelligence, a live agency, the chief one being the human being. Such an agency is anything but implacable; it can be coaxed, flattered, affronted, and threatened. What it does can be described as "guided doings." These doings subject the doer to "standards," to social appraisal of his action based on its honesty, efficiency, economy, safety, elegance, tactfulness, good taste, and so forth. A serial management of consequentiality is sustained, that is, continuous corrective control, becoming most apparent when action is unexpectedly blocked or deflected and special compensatory effort is required. Motive and intent are involved, and their imputation helps select which of the various social frameworks of understanding is to be applied. An example

1. Edward Shils, in a suggestive paper on the sociopolitical aspects of the moral order, "Charisma, Order and Status," *American Sociological Review*, XXX (1965): 199–213, argues:

> The fundamental discoveries of modern science in cosmology, astronomy, medicine, neurology, geology, genetics, are significant as disclosures of the basic order of the cosmos. Scientific order, like the order disclosed by theology, has its imperatives. Being in "regular relations" with the truths of science, doing things the "scientific way," having a "scientific attitude" are as much responses to the imperatives of the order disclosed by scientific research as pious godfearingness is a response to the imperatives of the theologically disclosed religious order. [p. 204]

of a guided doing would be the newscast reporting of the weather. So one deals here with deeds, not mere events. (We support some perceivedly basic distinctions within the social sphere, such as that between human and animal purposiveness, but more of this later.) We use the same term, "causality," to refer to the blind effect of nature and the intended effect of man, the first seen as an infinitely extended chain of caused and causing effects and the second something that somehow begins with a mental decision.[2]

In our society we feel that intelligent agents have the capacity to gear into the ongoing natural world and exploit its determinacy, providing only that natural design is respected. Moreover, it is felt that, with the possible exception of pure fantasy or thought, whatever an agent seeks to do will be continuously conditioned by natural constraints, and that effective doing will require the exploitation, not the neglect, of this condition. Even when two persons play checkers by keeping the board in their heads, they will still have to convey information concerning moves, this exchange requiring physically competent, willful use of the voice in speech or the hand in writing. The assumption is, then, that although natural events occur without intelligent intervention, intelligent doings cannot be accomplished effectively without entrance into the natural order. Thus any segment of a socially guided doing can be partly analyzed within a natural schema.

Guided doings appear, then, to allow for two kinds of understanding. One, more or less common to all doings, pertains to the patent manipulation of the natural world in accordance with the special constraints that natural occurrings impose; the other understanding pertains to the special worlds in which the actor can become involved, which, of course, vary considerably. Thus each play in checkers involves two radically different bases for guidance: one pertains to quite physical matters—to the physical management of the vehicle, not the sign; the other pertains to the very social world of opposing positions that the play

2. Refinements provided by philosophers unintentionally express the murkiness of our ideas here. See, for example, Arthur C. Danto, "What We Can Do," *Journal of Philosophy*, LX (1963): 435–445, and "Basic Actions," *American Philosophical Quarterly*, II (1965): 141–148; and Donald Davidson, "Agency," in Robert Binkley et al., eds., *Agent, Action and Reason* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971), pp. 3–25.

has generated, wherein a move can equally well be made by voice, gesture, or the mails, or by physically shifting a checker by the fist, any combination of fingers, or the right elbow. Behavior at the board can easily be separated into making moves and shifting checkers. And an easy distinction can be drawn between a clumsy move, one that ill considers the strategic positions of the two players, and a move made clumsily, one that has been badly executed according to local social standards for accomplishing physical acts. Observe that although an adult with a newly acquired prosthetic device might play checkers fully mindful of the physical task involved, ordinary players do not. Decisions as to which move to make are problematic and significant; pushing the checker once the decision is made is neither. On the other hand, there are guided doings such as fixing a sink or clearing a sidewalk in which sustained, conscious effort is given to manipulating the physical world, the doing itself taking on the identity of an "instrumental procedure," a task, a "purely utilitarian" activity—a doing the purpose of which cannot be easily separated from the physical means employed to accomplish it.

All social frameworks involve rules, but differently. For example, a checker move is informed by rules of the game, most of which will be applied in any one complete playing through of the game; the physical manipulation of a checker, on the other hand, involves a framework informing small bodily movements, and this framework, if indeed it is possible to speak in terms of *a* or *one* framework, might well be manifest only partially during the playing of a game. So, too, although the rules for checkers and the rules of vehicular traffic can be (and are) well enough explicated within the confines of a small booklet, there is a difference: the game of checkers incorporates an understanding of the governing purpose of the participants, whereas the traffic code does not establish where we are to travel or why we should want to, but merely the restraints we are to observe in getting there.

In sum, then, we tend to perceive events in terms of primary frameworks, and the type of framework we employ provides a way of describing the event to which it is applied. When the sun comes up, a natural event; when the blind is pulled down in order to avoid what has come up, a guided doing. When a coroner asks the *cause* of death, he wants an answer phrased in the natural schema of physiology; when he asks the *manner* of death, he

wants a dramatically social answer, one that describes what is quite possibly part of an intent.[3]

The idea of a primary framework is, then, the first concept that is needed: I wish it were more satisfactory. For example, there is the embarrassing fact that during any one moment of activity, an individual is likely to apply several frameworks. ("We waited till the rain stopped and then started the game again.") Of course, sometimes a particular framework is chiefly relevant and provides a first answer to the question "What is it that's going on here?" The answer: an event or deed described within some primary framework. Then one can begin to worry about the microanalytic issues of what is meant by "we," "it," and "here" and how the implied consensus is accomplished.

Now a further consideration is necessary. When an x and y axis can be located as the framework within which to identify a given point, or a checkerboard is brought to mind as a matrix within which to locate a move, the notion of a primary framework is clear enough, although even here there is the issue of the dependency of a particular framework upon our understanding of frameworks of that type. When one looks at some ordinary happening in daily life, say, a passing greeting or a customer's request for the price of an article, an identification of the primary

3. Marshall Houts, *Where Death Delights* (New York: Coward-McCann, 1967), pp. 135–136. Guy E. Swanson, "On Explanations of Social Interaction," *Sociometry*, XXVIII (1965), presents the same argument and then warns that this observation itself does not carry us far enough:

> We understand or explain an empirical event by showing that it is an instance, an aspect, a phase, a consequence, or a cause of other events. Conceptualization is the symbolic formulation of such relationships. In translation, one provides more than one conceptualization for a given event. Thus a wave of the hand might be conceptualized in physical terms as a discharge of energy, in biological terms as a neuro-muscular process, in psychological terms as a symptom of anxiety, and in social terms as a gesture of greeting.
>
> The special danger for our purposes is that translation, the multiple conceptualization of an event, is made a substitute for an identification of the steps by which events of one order, that is, behavioral interaction, become events of another order, that is, social interaction. To show that a wave of the hand may fruitfully be considered both as a symptom of anxiety and a greeting tells us nothing of how it came to be either or how it might become merely one and not the other. Translation is a matter of *multiple classification*. What we require are interrelated *implications*. [p. 110]

framework is, as already suggested, very considerably more problematic. Here indeed is where the writers in the tradition I am employing have quietly fallen down. To speak here of "everyday life" or, as Schutz does, of the "world of wide-awake practical realities" is merely to take a shot in the dark. As suggested, a multitude of frameworks may be involved or none at all. To proceed, however, an operating fiction might be accepted, at least temporarily, namely, that acts of daily living are understandable because of some primary framework (or frameworks) that informs them and that getting at this schema will not be a trivial task or, hopefully, an impossible one.

In describing primary frameworks so far I have limited attention to those that are assumed (explicitly or in effect) by the individual in deciding what it is that is going on, given, of course, his particular interests. The individual, it is true, can be "wrong" in his interpretations, that is, misguided, out of touch, inappropriate, and so forth. "Wrong" interpretations will be considered throughout. Here I want only to mention the belief that in many cases the individual in our society is effective in his use of particular frameworks. The elements and processes he assumes in his reading of the activity often *are* ones that the activity itself manifests—and why not, since social life itself is often organized as something that individuals will be able to understand and deal with. A correspondence or isomorphism is thus claimed between perception and the organization of what is perceived, in spite of the fact that there are likely to be many valid principles of organization that could but don't inform perception. And just as others in our society find this an effective claim, so do I.[4]

4. Some students would have it, of course, that the belief I express here is unnecessary and misplaced and that one ought to restrict oneself totally to analyzing a subject's conceptions without drawing on the issue of their validity, except when this issue is itself treated as merely another matter to examine ethnographically. Else one confound subject matter with the means of studying it. Such a position introduces a famous problem of its own, the requirement that readers exempt the writer's generalizations from the treatment he advocates for everyone else's. (I believe writers should be indulged in this requirement, since they often succeed in illuminating matters through this indulgence.) More important, it can be argued that although all interpretive responses ought to be treated as a subject matter, *some* happen to provide useful beginnings *of*, not merely *for*, analysis.

II

Taken all together, the primary frameworks of a particular social group constitute a central element of its culture, especially insofar as understandings emerge concerning principal classes of schemata, the relations of these classes to one another, and the sum total of forces and agents that these interpretive designs acknowledge to be loose in the world. One must try to form an image of a group's framework of frameworks—its belief system, its "cosmology"—even though this is a domain that close students of contemporary social life have usually been happy to give over to others. And note that across a territory like the United States there is an incomplete sharing of these cognitive resources. Persons otherwise quite similar in their beliefs may yet differ in regard to a few assumptions, such as the existence of second sight, divine intervention, and the like.[5] (Belief in God and in the

5. According to an AP report (*San Francisco Chronicle*, March 4, 1968), Marine Colonel David E. Lownds authorized Lance Corporal D. E. Isgris to use brass divining rods to search for suspected North Vietnamese buried tunnels in Khe Sanh:

> "No matter how stupid anything is, and I don't say the brass rods are stupid, we use it," said the base commander. . . .
>
> Wells' [commander of the sector where an underground tunnel was found] men—from C Company, First Battalion of the 26th Regiment—are using divining rods. Over a tunnel the rods are supposed to either cross or spread apart, depending on the individual.

The military is not alone in manifesting this sort of open-mindedness. As a last resort, the then assistant attorney general of Massachusetts, John S. Bottomly, apparently authorized use of the Dutch seer Peter Hurkos in an effort to identify the Boston Strangler. See Gerold Frank, *The Boston Strangler* (New York: New American Library, 1966), pp. 87–120. The widely publicized (and televised) efforts of the late Bishop James A. Pike to reach his son who had departed to the other side is another case in point. (See, for example, *Time*, October 6, 1967; Hans Holzer, *The Psychic World of Bishop Pike* [New York: Crown Publishers, 1970]; and James A. Pike [with Diane Kennedy], *The Other Side* [New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1969]. An historical treatment of late Victorian spiritualism in England is provided by Ronald Pearsall, *The Table-Rappers* [London: Michael Joseph, Ltd., 1972].) I might add that often those who hold these occult beliefs feel they are supporting a scientific view, merely one that has not yet been accepted by the authorities in charge of our sciences. Here see Marcello Truzzi, "Towards a Sociology of the Occult: Notes on Modern Witchcraft" (unpublished paper, 1971).

sacredness of His local representatives seems to constitute currently one of the largest bases of dissensus in our society concerning ultimate forces. Tact ordinarily prevents social scientists from discussing the matter.)

III

The notion of primary framework, unsatisfactory as it is, does allow one immediately to consider five distinctive matters and to appreciate something of their bearing on our overall understanding of the workings of the world.

1. First, the "astounding complex." An event occurs, or is made to occur, that leads observers to doubt their overall approach to events, for it seems that to account for the occurrence, new kinds of natural forces will have to be allowed or new kinds of guiding capacities, the latter involving, perhaps, new kinds of active agents. Here are included what appear to be visitations and communications from outer space, religious healing miracles, sightings of monsters from the deep, levitations, horses that are mathematically inclined, fortune-telling, contacting the dead, and so forth. As suggested, these astonishing occurrences imply the existence of extraordinary natural forces and guidance capacities: for example, astrological influences, second sight, extrasensory perception, and so on. Believe-it-or-not books are available detailing events that are "still unexplained." Occasionally scientists themselves make news by giving what is defined as serious attention to ESP, UFOs, influences deriving from the phases of the moon,[6] and the like. Many private persons can call to mind at least one event which they themselves have never quite been able to account for reasonably. Yet in general, when an astounding event occurs, individuals in our society expect that a "simple" or "natural" explanation will soon be discovered, one that will clear up the mystery and restore them to the range of forces and agents that they are accustomed to and to the line they ordinarily draw between natural phenomena and guided doings. Certainly individuals exhibit considerable resistance to changing their

6. See, for example, *Time*, January 10, 1972, a story entitled "Moonstruck Scientists."

framework of frameworks. A public stir—or at least a ripple—is caused by any event that apparently cannot be managed within the traditional cosmology. An example from the press might be cited:

> Alamasco, Colo.—An autopsy on a horse believed by its owners to have been killed by inhabitants of a flying saucer has revealed that its abdominal, brain and spinal cavities were empty.
>
> The pathologist, a Denver specialist who wished to remain anonymous, said the absence of organs in the abdominal cavity was unexplainable.
>
> Witnessing the autopsy Sunday night at the ranch where the carcass was found were four members of the Denver team of the National Members Investigating Committee on Aerial Phenomena.
>
> . . . .
>
> When the pathologist sawed into the horse's brain cavity he found it empty. "There definitely should have been a good bit of fluid in the brain cavity," the pathologist said.
>
> . . . .
>
> The Appaloosa's owners said they believe the horse was killed by occupants of a flying saucer. Several others in the San Luis Valley, where as many as eight sightings of unidentified flying objects have been reported in one evening recently, had said they agree. . . .[7]

And we expect a resolution as follows:

> Moscow (AP)—A Russian housewife who startled the world seven years ago with her claims of "finger vision" has been exposed as a fraud, a Soviet newspaper said.
>
> Five scientists who tested Mrs. Rosa Kuleshova concluded that she had been peeking through holes in her blindfold.
>
> Mrs. Kuleshova, a celebrity in her home town, gained an international reputation when her alleged powers to see with her fingertips were publicized in the Soviet press in 1963.
>
> The commission wrote that Mrs. Kuleshova's claims were given credence erroneously in 1963 when she was tested by Soviet scientists who shined a beam of color on her hands while her eyes were covered by various means.
>
> But the color machine made "squeaking and rustling noises," the commissioners wrote and helped tip her off as to what color came next. . . .[8]

7. *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 10, 1967.
8. *The New York Times*, October 11, 1970.

Let me repeat: in our society the very significant assumption is generally made that all events—without exception—can be contained and managed within the conventional system of beliefs. We tolerate the unexplained but not the inexplicable.

2. Cosmological interests, in some ways the largest we can have, support a humble entertainment: the exhibition of stunts, that is, the maintenance of guidance and control by some willed agency under what are seen as nearly impossible conditions. Here is found the doings of jugglers, tightrope walkers, equestrians, surfers, trick skiers, knife throwers, high divers, daredevil drivers, and, currently, astronauts, these last having the greatest act of all, albeit one for which they must share credits with American technology. One might also include the stunts that individuals can learn to perform with their physiology, as when a function like blood pressure or pain response is brought under voluntary control. Note that "animal acts" play an important role in regard to stunting. Trained seals, sociable porpoises, dancing elephants, and acrobatic lions all exemplify the possibility of ordinary guided doings done by alien agents, thus drawing attention to the cosmological line drawn in our society between human agents and animal ones. So, too, when animals are shown to have been pressed into doing the sort of utilitarian tasks that are felt to be the exclusive province of man, as when a chimp causes deep consternation on the highway because her trainer has taught her to steer an open sports car while he appears to be asleep in the next seat, or a troop of chimps is employed by a farmer in Australia to help with the harvesting.[9] It might be added that some academic research is supported by the same interest, the object being to establish with precision just where the line ought to be drawn between animals and man in regard to capacity for guided doings.[10]

9. Some comments on apes at work are available in Geoffrey H. Bourne, *The Ape People* (New York: New American Library, Signet Books, 1971), esp. pp. 140–141.

10. The leading illustrations here are the efforts to establish communication with dolphins and to test the effects of human socialization upon monkeys. Academicians are also, of course, employed to critically test claims regarding animals that, if established, would necessitate a modification in our primary beliefs. See, for example, O. Hobart Mowrer, "On the Psychology of 'Talking Birds': A Contribution to Language and Personality Theory," in his *Learning Theory and Personality Dynamics* (New York: The Ronald Press, 1950), pp. 688–726. Of course, no traditional philosophical system was complete without a thumping statement on the "essential" difference between man and animals; it is only recently that this responsibility has been taken over by students in the social and biological sciences.

It is worth noting that both the astounding complex (in the form of human freaks) and stunts are closely associated with circus sideshows, as if a social function of circuses (and latterly, marine museums) were to clarify for patrons what the ordering and limits of their basic frameworks are.[11] Stunts also figure in vaudevillelike nightclub acts (now much in decline), as do the talents of trained dogs, acrobatic teams, jugglers, magicians, and, as will be considered later, "mentalists." Whatever the viewers obtain from such exhibits, it is clear that interest in cosmologically grounded issues is an everyday concern of the layman and by no means restricted to laboratory and field researchers.

3. Consider now "muffings," namely, occasions when the body, or some other object assumed to be under assured guidance, unexpectedly breaks free, deviates from course, or otherwise slips from control, becoming totally subject to—not merely conditioned by—natural forces, with consequent disruption of orderly

11. The monstrosities that were exhibited in sideshows to country folk and townspeople in our society seem cousin to the ones used in some preliterate initiation ceremonies, or so Victor Turner suggests in "Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in *Rites de Passage*," in his *The Forest of Symbols* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1967):

> Earlier writers . . . are inclined to regard bizarre and monstrous masks and figures, such as frequently appear in the liminal period of initiations, as the product of "hallucinations, night-terrors and dreams." McCulloch goes on to argue that "as man drew little distinction (in primitive society) between himself and animals, as he thought that transformation from one to the other was possible, so he easily ran human and animal together. . . ." My own view is the opposite one: that monsters are manufactured precisely to teach neophytes to distinguish clearly between the different factors of reality, as it is conceived in their culture. . . .
>
> From this standpoint, much of the grotesqueness and monstrosity of liminal *sacra* may be seen to be aimed not so much at terrorizing or bemusing neophytes into submission or out of their wits as at making them vividly and rapidly aware of what may be called the "factors" of their culture. I have myself seen Ndembu and Luvale masks that combine features of both sexes, have both animal and human attributes, and unite in a single representation human characteristics with those of the natural landscape. . . . Monsters startle neophytes into thinking about objects, persons, relationships, and features of their environment they have hitherto taken for granted. [pp. 104–105]

life. Thus, "flubs," "goofs," and—when the guidance of meaning in talk should have occurred—"gaffes." (The limiting case would be where no blame whatsoever attaches, as when an earthquake is given full responsibility for a person's having spilled a cup of tea.) The body here retains its capacity as a natural, causal force, but not as an intentioned, social one. An example might be cited:

> Five persons were injured—two seriously—yesterday when a car went out of control and ran them down on a crowded Haight-Ashbury sidewalk.
>
> The driver of the car, 23-year-old Ed Hess of 615 Cole Street, was taken in a near hysterical condition to Park Station, where he was booked on charges of carrying a concealed weapon and suspicion of possessing dangerous drugs.
>
> "I couldn't stop the car," he cried. "There were people all over—four, six, eight people—but oh, God, it wasn't my fault."
>
> . . . .
>
> Witnesses said the car was westbound on Haight Street just past the Masonic Avenue intersection when it jumped the curb, plowed into the windows of the New Lite Supermarket and swept 50 feet farther down the sidewalk.
>
> . . . .
>
> "I didn't mean to hurt them," he [Hess] sobbed, "but they were all around me—on my left, right, all around."[12]

Note, a stunt occurs when we might well expect and even condone a loss of control, a muffing when exemplary effort is not felt to be needed to maintain control, but nonetheless control is lost.[13]

12. Reported in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 19, 1968.

13. Learning-to-do almost always involves a period of frequent muffings, and performance will occasionally involve muffings on the part of the fully competent. Here an awesome example is the work that captains do on the bridge of big ships. When a ship is docking or approaching another ship, the swath it cuts provides an elegant demonstration of the skill with which it is guided, a demonstration which can be directly witnessed from anywhere within a monstrously large sphere. And yet that which the captain must direct is clumsy and not very responsive, and distances on water are very hard to judge. Further, the port may be unfamiliar, or "highlining" may be required between two other ships. Add to this the lives aboard and the value of the vessel and its cargo, and some idea can be obtained of the horror the captain lives with in regard to the possibility of suddenly "losing the picture," of not knowing precisely where he is and what is happening. Naval discipline, a rigid circus in its own right, has been accounted for by this anxiety in regard to muffings. (On matters nautical I draw on an unpublished paper by David L. Cook, "Public Order in the U.S. Navy" [University of Pennsylvania, 1969].)

The apparent locus of control exerted in guiding an act provides a perspective on failures to control and indeed a suggestion of how we distinguish among types of doing. Some acts are seen as being implemented by the limbs alone, as when we rub an eye, light a match, tie a shoe, balance a tray. Some are seen as located in an extension of limbs, as in driving a car, raking a lawn, or turning a screw driver. Finally, there are doings which seem to begin with the body or an extension of it and end up guiding something that is palpably separated from the initial control, as when a golf ball, a tobacco quid, or a missile ends up where it was aimed. Early socialization presumably assures competence in the first; adult socialization—specifically job training—competence in the other two. Observe that one of the consequences of this learning program is the transformation of the world into a place that is appreciably governed by, and understandable in terms of, social frameworks. Indeed, adults in urban communities may move about through months of their days without once finding themselves out of control of their bodies or unprepared for the impingement of the environment—the whole of the natural world having been subjugated by public and private means of control. In any case, attention is directed anew to sports, such as skating, skiing, surfing, and riding, which allow youths and adults to reaccomplish guided control of their bodies through uneasily managed extensions of them. A recapitulation of early achievement results, accompanied (as of old) by many muffings, but now in a special context, play—a case of counterphobia for the leisure classes. To be noted, too, is the obvious appeal of the Laurel and Hardy type of comedy which presents incompetence and bungling on a massive scale, and the "vertigo" rides at fun fairs which allow individuals to lose control of themselves in carefully controlled circumstances.

4. Next to consider is "fortuitousness," meaning here that a significant event can come to be seen as incidentally produced. An individual, properly guiding his doings, meets with the natural workings of the world in a way he could not be expected to anticipate, with consequential results. Or two or more unconnected and mutually unoriented individuals, each properly guiding his own doings, jointly bring about an unanticipated event that is significant—and these actors have this effect even though their contributed doings remain fully under control. We speak here of happenstance, coincidence, good and bad luck, accident, and so

forth. Because no responsibility is imputed, one has something like a natural framework, except that the ingredients upon which the natural forces operate are here socially guided doings. Note, too, fortuitous consequences may be felt to be desirable or undesirable. I cite an instance of the latter:

> Amman, Jordan—A ceremonial salvo was fatal to a Palestinian commando yesterday. He was killed by a stray bullet as guerrilla units fired their rifles in the air at burial services for casualties of an Israeli air raid Sunday.[14]

The notion of fortuitous connection is obviously delicate, as though those who put it forward as an account had some doubts about using so pat a solution or were concerned that another might have these doubts. This precariousness becomes especially evident when a particular kind of happenstance occurs a second or third time to the same object or individual or category of individuals.[15] So, too, meaningfulness will be hard to avoid when the beneficiary or victim of the fortuitousness is in a prominent class of persons containing only one member.

The concepts of muffings and fortuitousness have considerable

14. *San Francisco Chronicle*, August 6, 1968.

15. Roland Barthes, in "Structure of the *Fait-Divers*," in his *Critical Essays*, trans. Richard Howard (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1972), suggests:

> Here we encounter the second type of relation which can articulate the structure of the *fait-divers:* the relation of coincidence. It is chiefly the repetition of an event, however anodyne, which marks it out for the notion of coincidence: *the same diamond brooch is stolen three times; a hotelkeeper wins the lottery whenever he buys a ticket,* etc.: why? Repetition always commits us to imagining an unknown cause, so true is it that in the popular consciousness, the aleatory is always distributive, never repetitive: chance is supposed to vary events; if it repeats them, it does so in order to signify something through them; to repeat is to signify. . . . [p. 191]

Some empirical evidence is provided in a useful paper by Rue Bucher, "Blame and Hostility in Disaster," *American Journal of Sociology*, LXII (1957): 469.

A general vulnerability of social organization seems to be involved here. All of us belong to many cross-cutting categories, membership in which is determined by one or more shared attributes. If good or bad fortune is visited upon a few identified individuals, we and they will seek for an understanding by examining the attributes they share, especially the ones that appear to be exclusive to them. If the category which results is broad —as it was, for example, in regard to the persons apparently of interest to the Boston Strangler—then diffuse unsettlement of the population can occur.

cosmological significance. Given our belief that the world can be totally perceived in terms of either natural events or guided doings and that every event can be comfortably lodged in one or the other category, it becomes apparent that a means must be at hand to deal with slippage and looseness. The cultural notions of muffing and fortuitousness serve in this way, enabling the citizenry to come to terms with events that would otherwise be an embarrassment to its system of analysis.

5. The final matter to consider bears upon the segregation issue expressed in "tension" and joking. As will be argued throughout, individuals can rather fully constitute what they see in accordance with the framework that officially applies. But there is a limit to this capacity. Certain effects carry over from one perspective in which events could easily be seen to a radically different one, the latter the one which officially applies. The best documented case, perhaps, is the slow development of the easy right of medical people to approach the human naked body with a natural instead of a social perspective. Thus, it was only at the end of the eighteenth century in Britain that childbirth could benefit from an obstetric examination, an undarkened operating room, and delivery—if a male physician was to do it—unencumbered by its having to be performed under covers.[16] The gyneco-

16. Peter Fryer, *Mrs. Grundy: Studies in English Prudery* (London: Dennis Dobson, 1963), chap. 17, "The Creeping Obstetrician," pp. 167–170. It should not be assumed that in the West individuals have shown a continuously increasing capacity to suffer examination in a naturalistic perspective and treatment in a purely instrumental, "physicalistic" one. We no longer have slaves, and therefore, presumably, no longer do individuals have to suffer the kind of impersonal testing described by Harold Nicolson in *Good Behaviour* (London: Constable & Co., 1955):

> The slave dealers, whether those of Delos or the *mangones* who ran the slave-market by the Temple of Castor in Rome, would display their wares in the manner of horse-copers, allowing prospective purchasers to examine the teeth and muscles of the animals, taking them for little runs on a string to show their paces. Slaves were exhibited for sale in a wooden cage, their feet being smeared with white-wash, and tablets stating price and qualifications hung around their necks. [p. 63]

In any case, one should see that allowing ourselves to be treated as objects is a form of conduct, if only a passive one. Persons being made up by stage cosmeticians, measured by their tailors, and palpated by their physicians conduct themselves in much the same way. They respond to requests to assume various positions, may engage in desultory side talk, but the rest follows a widespread understanding as to how to act when we are supposed to be merely bodies.

logical examination is even today a matter of some concern, special effort being taken to infuse the procedure with terms and actions that keep sexual readings in check.[17] Another example is the difficulty faced by those who would promote the practice of rescue breathing; mouth-to-mouth contact apparently cannot easily be dissociated from its ritual implications.[18] Similarly, we manage to let orthopedists and shoe salesmen touch our feet, but first we make sure to clean what might ritually contaminate. Or consider the Sensei, the instructor at karate, who, when his students take up a proper position, ordinarily can touch crucial points of their bodies instrumentally, as might a physician, to determine directly whether the appropriate tension is present. Consider the question of limits to this sort of physicalistic framing that is introduced by the admission of female students:

> When Sensei makes the rounds to test our "stance," by touching the "butt" and thigh muscles, he just doesn't touch ours. After three months he finally did touch the fifteen-year-old's "butt," but he still avoids us older women like the plague. It seems clear that twenty-five-year-old Sensei cannot see us as other than females who can be touched for one purpose and one purpose only.[19]

It should be obvious that the human body and touchings of it will figure in the issue of frame maintenance, just as the body's various waste products and involuntary movements will figure in

17. The staging of the gynecological examination so as to sustain nonsexual interpretations is nicely detailed in James M. Henslin and Mae A. Biggs, "Dramaturgical Desexualization: The Sociology of the Vaginal Examination," in James M. Henslin, ed., *Studies in the Sociology of Sex* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1971), pp. 243–272. A useful treatment is also available in Joan P. Emerson, "Behavior in Private Places: Sustaining Definitions of Reality in Gynecological Examinations," in Hans Peter Dreitzel, ed., *Recent Sociology No.* 2 (New York: Macmillan, 1970), pp. 74–97. Emerson argues that although joking during a gynecological examination may provide too open a reference to what must be inhibited, other more subtle means will allow (and oblige) participants to give nonmedical matters (such as "feminine" modesty) their due. Here see also "A Simultaneous Multiplicity of Selves," in *E.*, pp. 132–143. Emerson's paper provides a useful reminder that when one schema applies, its tenure may shift from moment to moment and may never totally exclude alien readings—and (it is felt) properly so.

18. See, for example, Maurice E. Linden, "Some Psychological Aspects of Rescue Breathing," *American Journal of Nursing*, LX (1960): 971–974.

19. Susan Pascalé et al., "Self-Defense for Women," in Robin Morgan, ed., *Sisterhood Is Powerful* (New York: Random House, Vintage Books, 1970), p. 474.

tensions regarding boundaries.[20] For it seems that the body is too constantly present as a resource to be managed in accordance with only one primary framework. It seems inevitable that our interpretive competency will allow us to come to distinguish, say, between an arm waved to signal a car on and an arm waved to greet a friend, and that both wavings will be distinguished from what we are seen as doing when we dispel flies or increase circulation. These discernments in turn seem linked to the fact that each kind of event is but one element in a whole idiom of events, each idiom being part of a distinctive framework. And here what is true of Western society is probably also true of all other societies.[21]

20. Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966), provides a text:

> But now we are ready to broach the central question. Why should bodily refuse be a symbol of danger and of power? Why should sorcerers be thought to qualify for initiation by shedding blood or committing incest or anthropophagy? Why, when initiated, should their art consist largely of manipulating powers thought to inhere in the margins of the human body? Why should bodily margins be thought to be specially invested with power and danger?
>
> . . .
>
> Second, all margins are dangerous. If they are pulled this way or that the shape of fundamental experience is altered. Any structure of ideas is vulnerable at its margins. We should expect the orifices of the body to symbolise its specially vulnerable points. Matters issuing from them is marginal stuff of the most obvious kind. Spittle, blood, milk, urine, faeces or tears by simply issuing forth have traversed the boundary of the body. So also have bodily parings, skin, nail, hair clippings and sweat. The mistake is to treat bodily margins in isolation from all other margins. There is no reason to assume any primacy for the individual's attitude to his own bodily and emotional experience, any more than for his cultural and social experience. This is the clue which explains the unevenness with which different aspects of the body are treated in the rituals of the world. In some, menstrual pollution is feared as a lethal danger; in others not at all. . . . In some, death pollution is a daily preoccupation; in others not at all. In some, excreta is dangerous, in others it is only a joke. In India cooked food and saliva are pollution-prone, but Bushmen collect melon seeds from their mouths for later roasting and eating. [pp. 120–121]

21. A Borneo society might serve to provide an illustration:

> The clasping of hands, or throwing an arm about the neck of a friend of the same sex, or a relative beyond the range of defined incestuous relationships, serves to establish boundaries of permitted tactile contacts in social action situations. Lovers regularly denote their status by mutually clasping waists while walking in public. Community members not related, or in the status of special friends, or lovers, are not permitted the

IV

One general point should be stressed here. The primary perspectives, natural and social, available to members of a society such as ours, affect more than merely the participants in an activity; bystanders who merely look are deeply involved, too. It seems that we can hardly glance at anything without applying a primary framework, thereby forming conjectures as to what occurred before and expectations of what is likely to happen now. A readiness *merely* to glance at something and then to shift attention to other things apparently is not produced solely by a lack of concern; glancing itself seems to be made possible by the quick confirmation that viewers can obtain, thus ensuring that anticipated perspectives apply. For surely we have as an important motivational relevance the discovery of the motivational relevance of the event for the other persons present. Mere perceiving, then, is a much more active penetration of the world than at first might be thought.

Bergson approaches this argument in his fine essay *Laughter:*

> *Any arrangement of acts and events is comic which gives us, in a single combination, the illusion of life and the distinct impression of a mechanical arrangement.*[22]
>
> Rigidity, automatism, absent-mindedness and unsociability are all inextricably entwined; and all serve as ingredients to the making up of the comic in character.[23]

familiarity of such forms, since each denotes a meaning of opening another close level of tactile experience. Touching or holding contacts are permitted among non-married adults of opposite sex only during instances of divination and curing relationships between a female ritual specialist and seriously ill persons. In the course of both divination and curing rituals a female specialist in the supernatural seeks out the site of illness through gross palpation of trunk and limb areas. In most instances, areas of sexual meaning are avoided. There is no practice of generational transfer of political power through tactile contact, although ritual and magical formula and associated power passage between an aged female ritual specialist and a girl pupil may involve clasping of hands as a symbolic transfer is effected. [Thomas R. Williams, "Cultural Structuring of Tactile Experience in a Borneo Society," *American Anthropologist,* LXVIII (1966): 33–34.]

22. Henri Bergson, *Laughter,* trans. Cloudesley Brereton and Fred Rothwell (London: Macmillan & Co., 1911), p. 69.

23. *Ibid.,* p. 147.

> *We laugh every time a person gives us the impression of being a thing.*[24]

In pointing out that individuals often laugh when confronted by a person who does not sustain in every way an image of human guidedness, Bergson only fails to go on and draw the implied conclusion, namely, that if individuals are ready to laugh during occurrences of ineffectively guided behavior, then all along they apparently must have been fully assessing the conformance of the normally behaved, finding it to be no laughing matter. In sum, observers actively project their frames of reference into the world immediately around them, and one fails to see their so doing only because events ordinarily confirm these projections, causing the assumptions to disappear into the smooth flow of activity. Thus, a properly dressed woman who closely examines the frame of a mirror on sale at an auction house and then stands back to check on the trueness of the mirror's reflection can well be seen by others present as someone who hasn't really been seen. But if she uses the mirror to adjust her hat, *then* others present can become aware that only a certain sort of looking had all along been what was expected and that the object on the wall was not so much a mirror as a mirror-for-sale; and this experience can be reversed should she appraisingly examine a mirror in a dressing room instead of examining herself in the mirror.[25]

24. *Ibid.,* p. 58.

25. I do not mean to imply that no stable meaning is built socially into artifacts, merely that circumstances can enforce an additional meaning. Cannon shells, five-gallon jars, and bits of disused plumbing can be transformed from utilitarian goods into decorative lamps, but their value as the latter depends on their never quite ceasing to be the former. At best the result is not a lamp but an interesting lamp. In fact, a certain amount of sport can be found in subordinating an official use to an irreverently alien one, as when pranksters manage to play pushbutton phones for tunes, not numbers, a possibility opened up by the fact that each button, when pushed, produces its own distinctive tone (*Time,* March 6, 1972).

Here again I argue that the meaning of an object (or act) is a product of social definition and that this definition emerges from the object's role in the society at large, which role then becomes for smaller circles a given, something that can be modified but not totally re-created. The meaning of an object, no doubt, is generated through its use, as pragmatists say, but ordinarily not by particular users. In brief, all things used for hammering in nails are not hammers.

3

Keys and Keyings

I

1. During visits to the Fleishacker Zoo beginning in 1952, Gregory Bateson observed that otters not only fight with each other but also play at fighting.[1] Interest in animal play has a clear source in Karl Groos' still useful book, *The Play of Animals*,[2] but Bateson pointedly raised the questions that gave the issue its wider current relevance.

Bateson noted that on some signal or other, the otters would begin playfully to stalk, chase, and attack each other, and on some other signal would stop the play. An obvious point about this play behavior is that the actions of the animals are not ones that are, as it were, meaningful in themselves; the framework of these actions does not make meaningless events meaningful, there being a contrast here to primary understandings, which do. Rather, this play activity is closely patterned after something that already has a meaning in its own terms—in this case fighting, a well-known type of guided doing. Real fighting here serves as a model,[3] a detailed pattern to follow, a foundation for form.[4] Just as obviously, the pattern for fighting is not followed fully, but rather is systematically altered in certain respects. Bitinglike behavior occurs, but no one is seriously bitten. In brief, there is a transcription or transposition—a *transformation* in the geometrical, not the Chomskyan, sense—of a strip of fighting behavior into a strip of play. Another point about play is that all those involved in it seem to have a clear appreciation that it is play that is going on. Barring a few troublesome cases, it can be taken that both professional observers and the lay public have no trouble in seeing that a strip of animal behavior is play and, furthermore, that it is play in a sense similar to what one thinks of as play among humans.[5] Indeed, play is possible *between* humans and many species, a fact not to be dwelt upon when we sustain our usual congratulatory versions of the difference between us and them.

Since Bateson's discussions of animals at play, considerable work has been done on the subject, allowing one to attempt to state in some detail the rules to follow and the premises to sustain in order to transform serious, real action into something playful.[6]

a. The playful act is so performed that its ordinary function is not realized. The stronger and more competent participant restrains himself sufficiently to be a match for the weaker and less competent.
b. There is an exaggeration of the expansiveness of some acts.
c. The sequence of activity that serves as a pattern is neither followed faithfully nor completed fully, but is subject to starting

1. "The Message 'This Is Play,'" in Bertram Schaffner, ed., *Group Processes* (New York: Josiah Macy, Jr., Foundation Proceedings, 1955), p. 175. The entire discussion of play by Bateson and the conferees (pp. 145–242) is useful. See also the treatment by William F. Fry, Jr., *Sweet Madness: A Study of Humor* (Palo Alto, Calif.: Pacific Books, 1968), pp. 123 ff.

2. Trans. Elizabeth L. Baldwin (New York: D. Appleton & Company, 1896).

3. "Model" is a tricky word. I shall mean throughout a design that something *else* is patterned after, leaving open the question of whether or not this design is an ideal one; in brief, a model for, not a model of.

4. Fry, *Sweet Madness*, p. 126, uses the term "foundation behavior" here.

5. P. A. Jewell and Caroline Loizos, eds., *Play, Exploration and Territory in Mammals* (London: Academic Press for the Zoological Society of London, 1966), p. 2.

6. Here I follow in part Caroline Loizos, "Play in Mammals," *ibid.*, p. 7; and in the same volume, T. B. Poole, "Aggressive Play in Polecats," pp. 23–24. See also W. H. Thorpe, "Ritualization in Ontogeny: I. Animal Play," in *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London* (being "A Discussion on Ritualization of Behaviour in Animals and Man," organized by Julian Huxley, December 1966), pp. 311–319.

and stopping, to redoing, to discontinuation for a brief period of time, and to mixing with sequences from other routines.[7]

d. A great deal of repetitiveness occurs.[8]

e. When more than one participant is to be involved, all must be freely willing to play, and anyone has the power to refuse an invitation to play or (if he is a participant) to terminate the play once it has begun.

f. Frequent role switching occurs during play, resulting in a mixing up of the dominance order found among the players during occasions of literal activity.[9]

7. Konrad Lorenz, "Play and Vacuum Activities," in *L'Instinct dans le comportement des animaux et de l'homme* (Paris: Masson et Cie, 1956):

> It [a kitten] will suddenly crouch, lift the hind legs alternately and make a very interesting aiming movement with its head, all of which is photographically identical with what the adult Cat does in stalking a Mouse. The kitten, however, thus "stalks" one of its siblings, rushes at it, clasps it with both front paws and performs rhythmical thrusts at the other with the hind legs. This, again, is a movement performed in a serious fight between adult Cats. Alternately the kitten, jumping at the other, may suddenly stop, stand broadside to its opponent, hunch its back and ruffle the hair of its tail, in other words, assume an attitude characteristic of the serious defense against a dangerous predator. It is only in play that these movements can follow each other in such quick succession. The autochthonous readiness for hunting, rival fighting and defense against predators are mutually exclusive or at least inhibitive. [p. 635]

A version for the highest primate may also be cited:

> Most of the rough-and-tumble play consists of behaviour which on the surface looks very hostile: violent pursuit, assault, and fast, evasive retreat. However, the roles of the participants rapidly alternate and the behaviour does not lead to spacing out or capture of objects; the participants stay together even after the chasing ends. Also the movements involved are quite different from those in fights over property. The facial expressions and vocalizations, and motor patterns involved separate out into two quite different clusters. Thus beating with clenched fist occurs with fixating, frowning, shouting, and not with laughing and jumping. Wrestling and open-handed beats occur with jumping and laughing and not with frown, fixate and closed beat. So although rough and tumble looks like hostile behaviour it is quite separate from behaviour which I call hostile because of its efforts, i.e., involving property ownership and separation of individuals. [N. G. Blurton-Jones, "An Ethological Study of Some Aspects of Social Behaviour of Children in Nursery School," in Desmond Morris, ed., *Primate Ethology* (London: George Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1967), p. 358.]

8. Suggested in Stephen Miller, "Ends, Means, and Galumphing: Some Leitmotifs of Play," *American Anthropologist*, LXXV (1973): 89.

9. On dominance reversal in pigs, see Glen McBride, "A General Theory of Social Organization and Behaviour," *University of Queensland Papers*, Faculty of Veterinary Science, I, no. 2 (June 1964): 96.

g. The play seems to be independent of any external needs of the participants, often continuing longer than would the actual behavior it is patterned after.

h. Although playfulness can certainly be sustained by a solitary individual toward a surrogate of some kind, solitary playfulness will give way to sociable playfulness when a usable other appears, which, in many cases, can be a member of another species.[10]

i. Signs presumably are available to mark the beginning and termination of playfulness.[11]

The transformational power of play is nicely seen in the way certain objects are prone to be selected for play or prone to evoke play. These often will be ones that, like balls and balloons, tend to sustain initial impact through movement, thus producing the appearance of current guidedness. Thorpe provides a statement:

> Play is often related to an object, a "play-thing," which is not one of the normal objects of serious behaviour. These objects may include the body as a whole, or its parts.[12]

A plaything while in play provides some sort of ideal evidence of the manner in which a playful definition of the situation can utterly suppress the ordinary meanings of the world.

2. By keeping in mind these comments on animal play, one can easily turn to a central concept in frame analysis: the key. I refer here to the set of conventions by which a given activity, one

10. See, for example, Thorpe, "Ritualization in Ontogeny," p. 317.

11. McBride, "A General Theory of Social Organization": "For example, in pigs, the initiator will usually scamper around the pen before running up to another animal, often a socially dominant pig, and biting the latter on the neck. . . . In dogs, play is initiated by a wagging of the tails after normal recognition formalities" (p. 96).

Miller, "Ends, Means, and Galumphing":

> . . . baboon social play seems to be invariably demarcated by a meta-message "this is play." A loping, bouncy gait is often seen when an infant or juvenile invites a chase or fight, etc.; the face, however, seems the most important communicative area. Wide-open and quickly moving eyes and open mouth with teeth not bared are two components of the "this is play" signal. All the social play interactions observed involved the participants constantly looking at each other's faces. Eye-contacts were brief and frequent, often occurring throughout the interaction and *always* occurring at a start, stop, of change of activity. The face-to-face encounter appeared to be the only necessary component of all the play observed. [p. 90]

12. Thorpe, "Ritualization in Ontogeny," p. 313.

already meaningful in terms of some primary framework, is transformed into something patterned on this activity but seen by the participants to be something quite else.[13] The process of transcription can be called keying. A rough musical analogy is intended.[14]

13. J. L. Austin, in discussing his notion of "performative utterances," that is, statements which function as deeds, in *How to Do Things with Words* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), presents a version:

> (ii) Secondly, as *utterances* our performatives are *also* heir to certain other kinds of ill which infect *all* utterances. And these likewise, though again they might be brought into a more general account, we are deliberately at present excluding. I mean, for example, the following: a performative utterance will, for example, be *in a peculiar way* hollow or void if said by an actor on the stage, or if introduced in a poem, or spoken in soliloquy. This applies in a similar manner to any and every utterance—a sea-change in special circumstances. Language in such circumstances is in special ways—intelligibly—used not seriously, but in ways *parasitic* upon its normal use—ways which fall under the doctrine of the *etiolations* of language. All this we are *excluding* from consideration. Our performative utterances, felicitous or not, are to be understood as issued in ordinary circumstances. [pp. 21–22]

Leonard Bloomfield in *Language* (New York: Henry Holt & Company, 1946), pp. 141–142, concerned himself with much the same issue under the title "displaced speech." The point is to try to apply to all social behavior something of what linguists and logicians have considered in regard to statements.

14. In linguistics, the term "code" is sometimes used to refer to just the sort of transcription practices I have in mind, but so also are "variety" and "register," the first sometimes used to refer to the linguistic practices of a particular social group and the second to the linguistic requirements of a particular kind of social occasion. (Here see Dell Hymes, "Toward Linguistic Competence" [unpublished paper].) Linguists also use "code" to refer to what I here call primary framework. In law, "code" is used to refer to sets of norms—such as traffic laws. Biologists have still another use for the term. In everyday usage, "code" carries the connotation of secret communication, as it does only incidentally in cryptography, where technical use of the term seems to have originated. Interestingly, the term from cryptography that comes closest to the linguistic and biological referent is cipher, not code.

My choice of term—"key"—has drawbacks, too, the musical reference not being entirely apt, since the musical term "mode" is perhaps closer to the transformations I will deal with. Note, in reference to key I use the term "convention," not merely "rule," because here it is probably best to leave open the question of necessity, obligation, and interdependence. Hymes, it might be added, uses the term "key" somewhat as I do. See his "Sociolinguistics and the Ethnography of Speaking," in E. Ardener, ed., *Social Anthropology and Language* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1971), pp. 47–93.

Now if one is restricted to a look at otters or monkeys one won't find many things like play, even though play seems to be the sort of thing that leads one to think of things like it. Bateson suggests threat, deceit, and ritual. In all three cases, presumably, what appears to be something isn't quite that, being merely modeled on it. When attention is turned to man, however, many different kinds of monkey business can be found. Keys abound. In addition to what an otter can do, we can *stage* a fight in accordance with a script, or *fantasize* one, or describe one *retrospectively*, or *analyze* one, and so forth.

A full definition of keying can now be suggested:

a. A systematic transformation is involved across materials already meaningful in accordance with a schema of interpretation, and without which the keying would be meaningless.
b. Participants in the activity are meant to know and to openly acknowledge that a systematic alteration is involved, one that will radically reconstitute what it is for them that is going on.
c. Cues will be available for establishing when the transformation is to begin and when it is to end, namely, brackets in time, within which and to which the transformation is to be restricted. Similarly, spatial brackets will commonly indicate everywhere within which and nowhere outside of which the keying applies on that occasion.
d. Keying is not restricted to events perceived within any particular class of perspectives. Just as it is possible to play at quite instrumentally oriented activities, such as carpentry, so it is also possible to play at rituals such as marriage ceremonies, or even, in the snow, to play at being a falling tree, although admittedly events perceived within a natural schema seem less susceptible to keying than do those perceived within a social one.
e. For participants, playing, say, at fighting and playing around at checkers feels to be much the same sort of thing—radically more so than when these two activities are performed in earnest, that is, seriously. Thus, the systematic transformation that a particular keying introduces may alter only slightly the activity thus transformed, but it utterly changes what it is a participant would say was going on. In this case, fighting and checker playing would appear to be going on, but really, all along, the participants might say, the only thing really going on is play. A keying, then, when there is one, performs a crucial role in determining what it is we think is really going on.

3. Because our individual can now answer the question "What is it that's going on here?" with "They're only playing," one has a means of distinguishing types of answers to that question that was not quite available before. More is involved than merely a matter of variation in focus.

One answer speaks to the fact that the individual may be confronted by "engrossables," a set of materials whose concatenations and interactions he can become caught up in or carried away by, as might warrant the answer: "King Arthur has just unsheathed his sword and is about to defend Guenevere," or "The little otter is about to attack his mother," or "His bishop is about to threaten my knight," this last answer being the one he could give a sympathetic kibitzer or—with the pronouns changed—a forgetful opponent. These answers have an inward-looking experiential finality. They go as far as participants might feel it possible into the meaningful universe sustained by the activity—into what one might call a *realm*. (Only some realms ought to be thought of as *worlds*, since only some can be thought of as "real" or "actual.")

The other possibility is to provide a commonsense version of what is here being attempted, namely, frame analysis: "In the Scott novel, the writer has the character Ivanhoe do all kinds of strange things," "The otters are not really fighting," "The men seem to be playing some kind of board game."

When no keying is involved, when, that is, only primary perspectives apply, response in frame terms is not likely unless doubt needs combating, as in the reply: "No, they're not merely playing; it's a real fight." Indeed, when activity that is untransformed is occurring, definitions in terms of frame suggest alienation, irony, and distance. When the key in question is that of play, we tend to refer to the less transformed counterpart as "serious" activity; as will be seen, however, not all serious activity is unkeyed, and not all untransformed activity can be called serious.

When response is made in terms of the innermost engrossable realm of an activity, time plays an important role, since dramatically relevant events unfold over time and involve suspense, namely, a concerned awaiting of the outcome—even in the case, perhaps, of chess by mail. When response is made in terms of frame, however, time often seems to drop out or collapse because the same designation can equally cover a short or long period of some activity, and developments within it may be discounted, not

qualifying as something to take special note of. Thus, a statement such as "They're playing checkers" may override what it is that is happening now in regard to the strategic situations of the two players, dropping these details from what is perceived.

All of which allows another go at reality terms. Actions framed entirely in terms of a primary framework are said to be real or actual, to be really or actually or literally occurring. A keying of these actions performed, say, onstage provides us with something that is not literal or real or actually occurring. Nonetheless, we would say that the *staging* of these actions was really or actually occurring. Nonliteral activity is *literally* that, or is if everyday usage is to be followed. Indeed, the real or the actually happening seems to be very much a mixed class containing events perceived within a primary perspective and also transformed events when these are identified in terms of their status as transformations. And to this must be added the real that is construed retrospectively—brought to mind because of our way of defining something as not qualifying in that way.

But that is too simple, too. For there are strips of doing which patently involve a keying but which are not much seen in these terms. Thus, as often remarked, our interpersonal greeting rituals involve questions about health which are not put or taken as literal requests for information. On these occasions kissing can also occur, the gesture following a form that is manifest in the more sexualized version, but here considerably disembodied. And between males, blows can be exchanged, but obviously ones not given or received as serious attacks. Yet upon observing any of these ceremonies we would say that a real greeting was occurring. A literal act can then have figurative components within it not actively seen as such. And for a keying of a greeting one would presumably have to look to the stage or, say, a training school for the polite arts. In order to be careful, then, perhaps the terms "real," "actual," and "literal" ought merely to be taken to imply that the activity under consideration is no more transformed than is felt to be usual and typical for such doings.

II

Although the characterization of types of primary framework that has been suggested is not itself particularly satisfactory, a

categorization and itemization of keys and their transposition conventions seems more promising. In what follows, an attempt is made to review some of the basic keys employed in our society. They are treated under five headings: make-believe, contests, ceremonials, technical redoings, and regroundings. And in distinguishing between the original and the copy, I leave quite unconsidered the question of how the copy can come to affect the original, as when crime films establish language and style for actual criminals.

1. *Make-believe:* By this term I mean to refer to activity that participants treat as an avowed, ostensible imitation or running through of less transformed activity, this being done with the knowledge that nothing practical will come of the doing. The "reason" for engaging in such fantasies is said to come from the immediate satisfaction that the doing offers. A "pastime" or "entertainment" is provided. Typically participants might be expected to be free of pressing needs before so indulging themselves and to abandon these enjoyments unceremoniously should basic needs or urges become acute—a dour philosophy not particularly borne out by animal experimentation. Further, the engrossment of the participants in the dramatic discourse of the activity—the innermost plane of being—is required, else the whole enterprise falls flat and becomes unstable. Finally, when an individual signals that what he is about to do is make-believe and "only" fun, this definition tends to take precedence; he may fail to induce the others to follow along in the fun, or even to believe that his motives are innocent, but he obliges them to accept his act as something not to be taken at face value.

a. The central kind of make-believe is playfulness, meaning here the relatively brief intrusion of unserious mimicry during interaction between one individual and others or surrogates of others. The practices to follow in transforming a strip of actual activity into playfulness have already been considered in regard to animal play and will not be fully reconsidered here. However, some amplification is required.

The function of play has been commented on for many centuries, to little avail. However, it is probably possible to say something about the location of playfulness in the flow of activity, since playfulness is favored at certain junctures in social intercourse.[15] In any case, brief switchings into playfulness are everywhere found in society, so much so that it is hard to become conscious of their widespread occurrence. (In this study, the situational study of playfulness is not attempted.)

When particular animal species are examined, one finds that not all aggressive behavior can be keyed as play. Thus among polecats, apparently, sustained neck biting, "sideways" attack, defensive threat, and screaming are found in actual set-to but not in play.[16] Presumably a polecat that tried to perform these acts unseriously would be ineffective in its aim. What is observable here is a limit to the content of play, and, in a way, a limit to this particular kind of keying. Of course there will be other limits. Allowable play, obviously, can get out of hand:

> A polecat which does not wish to indulge in play or has already had enough, threatens its opponent by hissing and baring the teeth; this results in the attacker desisting. If one of the animals is smaller or weaker than its opponent which is being too rough, it cries plaintively until it is released.[17]

It is apparent, then, that although individuals can playfully engage in an extremely broad range of activity, limits on playfulness are established in various groups—*limits* being a factor to be attended to throughout frame analysis. Among familiars, for example, there will be appeals to "taste"; it is not nice to make light of certain aspects of the lives of friends. In the game of

15. Playfulness seems to be facilitated where there is special evidence that the activity could not be meant literally, as when a betrothed girl is jokingly bussed by a close friend of her fiancé in his immediate presence, or when boxers, weighing in, exchange a joking gesture of blows for the camera. If a serious playing through of the act is physically impossible, playfulness may also be favored, as when unacquainted persons wave at each other, each going in the opposite direction in his respective train. (Sophia Loren, on her arrival at Kennedy International Airport, kissed an employee through a plate glass window in response to his greeting [*San Francisco Chronicle*, May 26, 1966].) Where seriously spoken words might expose opposition, especially in the matter of overlapping jurisdiction, playful unseriousness may be employed—as implied in the classic analysis of joking relationships. Where one essential faction of participants is present in a setting containing elaborate equipment for a social event that is soon to be staged with the help of the now absent faction, joking use of the setting may occur.

16. Poole, "Aggressive Play in Polecats," pp. 28–29.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 27.

"dozens" played by black urban youths, statements made about a player's parent are seen as displaying the wit of the insulter, not the features of the parent, and so can be wondrously obscene. A mild-sounding insult that happened to refer to known features of the particular parent would be given a different relevance and cease to be unserious.[18] Similarly, jests by an individual about his having a bomb in his bag are not tolerated by air hostesses,[19] just as mock robberies are not by bank tellers, and certain jokes using certain words told by certain nightclub performers are not tolerated by certain local police. In Las Vegas a man in a cocktail lounge who complied with his girl's request to scare her out of her hiccups by pulling a .38 from his waistband and sticking it into her tummy was arrested for his gallantry.[20]

The issue of limits can hardly be considered without looking at another, namely, changes over time and place in regard to them.

18. A full analysis is available in William Labov, "Rules for Ritual Insults," in David Sudnow, ed., *Studies in Social Interaction* (New York: The Free Press, 1972), pp. 120–169; and William Labov, *Language in the Inner City* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1973), pp. 297–353.

19. Would-be jokesters presumably now know that kidding an airline stewardess about having a bomb in their briefcase is no longer excusable, but this leaves open frame ploys that are more complicated, such as: "It's not permissible, is it, Miss, for me to jokingly say that this bulge in my briefcase is a small bomb?" In any case, these limits themselves have unstated limits which experience occasionally explicates:

> A pretty United Air Lines stewardess halted a trembling, wild-eyed man who was trying to enter the pilot's cabin yesterday 33,000 feet over Oregon countryside.
>
> "I've got a bomb in my hand," he told Mary Lou Luedtke, 27, "and I want to see the captain."
>
> Miss Luedtke shot a horrified glance at the man's hand and saw that he was carrying a simple, yellow piece of wood with metal straps dangling from each end.
>
> "I got it from God," the man said.
>
> Miss Luedtke invited him to sit down, but he refused.
>
> A male passenger noticed the commotion and grabbed the man by his coat lapel. He forced the "bomber" to a seat and talked quietly with him for the rest of the trip.
>
> When the DC-8 jet from Seattle landed at San Francisco International Airport at 1:05 P.M. authorities took the man into custody. [*San Francisco Chronicle*, February 18, 1966]

> Working in a very delicate situation, the " 'bomber' " managed somehow to hit upon the pattern of behavior that would allow him (apparently) to feel he was serious but not allow others to so respond.

20. Reported by Paul Price, *Las Vegas Sun*, October 27, 1965.

As an example, take this bit of fooling around just after the French Revolution:

> Outside, Heindreicht and his men were erecting the guillotine. One or two of the Director's friends strolled out to watch the work; caught up in the prevailing mood of geniality, the *bourreau* invited them to come onto the platform and inspect things at close quarters; the guests were charmed; affable Heindreicht explained the mechanism, pointed out little features with modest pride; M. Sardou was among the group; in a final spasm of hilarity, he insisted on being placed on the *bascule*. The headsman entered into the spirit of the thing, seized the humorous author, pushed him onto the plank. One of the bales of straw used to test the blade before each execution was laid where his neck should have been. The blade flashed down, sliced through the straw an inch or so away from M. Sardou's head. It was irresistible! Everyone was in splendid humour by the time Troppmann was led out past the cordon of troops, their swords lifted in the traditional salute, to replace the man of letters.[21]

That sort of thing may have been acceptable then, but it wouldn't be now; indeed, the ceremony of execution itself is coming to be thought no longer acceptable. Or consider the decline of sacrilegious mockery. What today could be equivalent to the most famous of the eighteenth-century Hell Fire Clubs, Sir Francis Dashwood's sturdy little group of Restoration Rakes, which enjoyed a semiannual, week-long retreat in buildings surrounding the ruins of Medmenham Abbey? These remains had been rebuilt and furnished to provide the setting for a serious camping of Catholic rituals, and on so extensive a scale that there could be few settings for real worship in America today to match it. Indeed, it is said that servants were not to be trusted as witnesses, lest stories spread and cause violent offense to the populace, this at a time when it was not easy to violently offend Londoners.[22] Contemporary society seems to oblige less flare at its playfulness, at least playfulness of the private kind, although one ought not to

21. Alister Kershaw, *A History of the Guillotine* (London: John Calder, 1958), p. 72.

22. See E. Beresford Chancellor, *The Lives of the Rakes*, vol. 4, *The Hell Fire Club* (London: Philip Allan and Company, 1925); Burgo Partridge, *A History of Orgies* (New York: Bonanza Books, 1960), chap. 5, "The Medmenhamites and the Georgian Rakes," pp. 133–166.

underestimate the continued capacity of the English for irreverence in their staged fun.

b. Playfulness, then, is one form of make-believe. A second is fantasy or "daydreaming." Although children jointly act out spurts of free-form make-believe, the typical arrangement is a one-person production, often solitarily sustained. The individual imagines some strip of activity, all the while knowingly managing the development and outcome to his own liking or disliking. Daydreams involve reveries of an acutely cautionary or pleasant kind,[23] whether cast in the past or the future. Interestingly, daydreams are not merely not shared in the act, but, unlike dreams, are not even seen to be a subject matter for retelling later. These flights are characteristically short and not very well organized, although, of course, an individual may spend a great deal of time thus engaged. (Surely the total number of man-hours a population spends per day in privately pursued fantasy constitutes one of the least examined and most underestimated commitments of its resources.) Note, daydreaming presumably occurs in the mind, there being little outward behavioral accompaniment, overt signs of talking to oneself being the principal exception.

Although daydreams are ordinarily seen as private matters, a post-Freudian variant ought to be mentioned, namely, the sort of reporting about self that clinicians feel it worthwhile to elicit and clients are willing to engage in. An industrialized version is promoted by the so-called projective techniques. The Thematic Aperception Test, for example, is designed to evoke fantasy responses to test materials, which responses, presumably, the subject thinks are evoked by the materials and not by his predispositions. Thus responses are thought to escape usual censorship.

In fact, of course, responses to projective tests provide something more than, or rather something different from, merely a set of fantasies delivered on request around specific pictorial themes. For example, TAT subjects commonly decline in whole or part the request to take the materials "seriously" as a seeding for the

23. J. Richard Woodworth, "On Faking Reality: The Lying Production of Social Cooperation" (Ph.D. diss., Department of Sociology, University of California, Berkeley, 1970), p. 26. Woodworth suggests: "A principal characteristic of fantasy is the *concentrated* relation it bears to matters of pleasure and pain."

production of thinly disguised, self-referential daydreams. Subjects sometimes burst out laughing nervously, or comment on the scene from the perspective of art criticism, or identify the characters as kinsmen or famous persons, or revert to supernatural stories, or guy a stereotyped response (with accompanied singsong voice), or place the scene as an illustration from a popular magazine. Some effort is made by interpreters to treat *these* responses as symptomatic, but on the face of it, at least, what has occurred is that the task set before the subject has been denied and other frames have been brought to bear. One can find here, I want to add, a hint of the flexibility that keying brings to the management of participation—in this case participation in a clinical task.[24]

c. Consider now dramatic scriptings. Include all strips of depicted personal experience made available for vicarious participation to an audience or readership, especially the standard productions offered commercially to the public through the medium of television, radio, newspapers, magazines, books, and the legitimate (live) stage. This corpus of transcriptions is of special interest, not merely because of its social importance in our recreational life, or, as already suggested, because of the availability of so much explicit analysis of these materials, or because the materials themselves are easily accessible for purposes of close study; their deepest significance is that they provide a mock-up of everyday life, a put-together script of unscripted social doings, and thus are a source of broad hints concerning the structure of this domain. So examples drawn from dramatic productions will be used throughout this study.

The issue of framing limits can be illustrated especially well by reference to dramatic scriptings. For example, the following news report shortly after John Kennedy's assassination:

> "Manchurian Candidate," the movie about a madman who attempts to assassinate the President with a scope-equipped rifle, has been yanked out of all theaters in the area and is being withdrawn nationally; ditto an earlier Sinatra film, "Suddenly," about a similar attempt on the President's life.[25]

24. Erving Goffman, "Some Characteristics of Response to Depicted Experience" (Master's thesis, Department of Sociology, University of Chicago, 1949), chap. 10, "The Indirect Response," pp. 57–65.

25. Herb Caen, *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 2, 1963.

So, too, frame change through time:

> Under foreign domination the Greeks had indeed produced New Comedy; the Romans, overwhelmed under their own Empire, gave themselves up to a merely sensual existence. In their theatres pantomime took the place of tragedy, while comedy gave way to farce. Since the sole aim was to tickle the jaded palate of the public, producers not only lavished all the resources of wealth and technique on their extravagant productions, but also descended to the lowest depths of the disgusting and the obscene. Even Livy regarded the theatre of his day as a danger to public morals and the existence of the State; soon sexual displays were visibly presented on the stage, and stage "executions" were carried out in reality (by substituting for the actor a condemned criminal).[26]

It might be added that most of these changes have been sufficiently slow and separate, one from another, so that during any one occasion participants could feel that a particular frame prevailed and would be sustained.

The obvious moral limit associated with scripted productions in our society is sexual, the general argument being that certain activities of a lewd and lascivious kind are not to be depicted in print, onstage, or on the screen. For example:

> Sacramento—The Senate approved and sent to the Assembly yesterday a bill by Senator Lawrence E. Walsh (Dem–Los Angeles) making it a misdemeanor to perform such productions as "The Beard" on any state college campus.
>
> The bill would make it a misdemeanor for any person to engage in "any simulated act of sexual intercourse or deviate sexual conduct during a play, motion picture, television production, sponsorship, or control of any State college."
>
> Teachers or school officials who "knowingly" permit, procure, assist or counsel a person to engage in such acts would be equally responsible and subject to misdemeanor penalties.[27]

26. W. Beare, *The Roman Stage* (London: Methuen & Co., 1964), p. 238, partly cited in Elizabeth Burns, *Theatricality: A Study of Convention in the Theatre and in Social Life* (London: Longman Group, 1972; New York: Harper & Row, 1973), p. 15.

27. *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 10, 1968. There seems to be, incidentally, a tricky frame difference between kissing and screwing. The first can be done onstage as a simulated act, with lips not touching, or, posturally, as a "real" kiss, with lips touching, but in either case the kiss is presumably not "really" felt and is therefore a keyed kiss. ("Social" or cousinly kisses are not meant to be "felt," and the difference here between a staged version and the real thing would presumably have to be referred back to the wider facts, for the simulation of perfunctoriness is all too perfectly managed.) Here the stage context and the play frame can dominate (and hence restructure) the event. The second seems to fall somewhat beyond the power of dramaturgic framing: physically real screwing onstage seems to be treated by audiences more as a literal sexual act than as a dramaturgically keyed one. According to our current belief system, actual penetration defies theatrical transcription. This is ceasing to be true of the cinematic frame, although here, too, framing limits obtain, as will be considered later.

A considerable literature, legal and otherwise, exists on this matter of pornography. Not too much attention, however, seems to have been directed to the fact that rulings do not attach to "indecent" acts alone, but also to the presentation of these acts in particular frames. As might be expected, sentiment varies considerably according to the particular key in question. Obviously, what is offensive in a movie might not be offensive in a novel.[28] In attempting to judge the suitability of a given presentation, reasons are very hard to provide, I think, partly because we look to the original model for an explanation instead of looking to the character of a frame involving a particular kind of keying.

Pornography itself, that is, the scripting of sexuality that is "improperly" explicit for the frame in question, can be considered along with other "obscenities." A recent study provides a statement and an analysis:

> These reflections suggest two preliminary definitions of obscenity: (1) obscenity consists in making public that which is private; it consists in an intrusion upon intimate physical processes and acts or physical-emotional states; and (2) it consists in a degradation of the human dimensions of life to a sub-human or merely physical level. According to these definitions, obscenity is a certain way of treating or viewing the physical aspects of human existence and their relation to the rest of human existence. Thus, there can be an obscene view of sex; there can also be obscene views of death, of birth, of illness, and of acts such as that of eating or

28. A difference which can itself change. In the late sixties, movies seemed to have considerably narrowed the gap; for example, *Midnight Cowboy* was as raunchy on screen as in the text. In the early seventies, novels seemed to have somewhat regained their difference, once again moving ahead (or back, depending on one's perspective); Cynthia Buchanan's *Thinking Girl* is an example. More recently still, the influence deriving from the increasing acceptability of hard-core pornographic films seems to foretell a new round in the competition.

> defecating. Obscenity makes a public exhibition of these phenomena and does so in such a way that their larger human context is lost or depreciated. Thus, there is a connection between our two preliminary definitions of obscenity: when the intimacies of life are exposed to public view their value may be depreciated, *or* they may be exposed to public view in order to depreciate them and to depreciate man.[29]

In brief, the issue is frame limits, the limits concerning what can be permissibly transcribed from actual events to scriptings thereof. And the details are particularly interesting. Whatever the body can become involved in can be touched upon, but the view must be veiled and distanced so that our presumed beliefs about the ultimate social quality of man will not be discredited. The body as the embodiment of the self must make its peace with its biological functioning, but this peace is achieved by ensuring that these functions will be seen in "context," meaning here as incidental to human social experience, not the focus of attention. Stories can call for persons to eat, make love, and be tortured, but as part of an inclusive human drama, not as an isolated display or a matter of interest to examine closely in its own right.

2. *Contests:* Consider sports such as boxing, horse racing, jousting, fox hunting, and the like. The literal model seems to be fighting (or hunting or fleeing from) of some kind, and the rules of the sport supply restrictions of degree and mode of aggression. (Examine what occurs during ritualized sparring contests over troop dominance by rival male animals, or when solicitous elders separate two brawling youths and license them only for a "fair fight" with rules, an informal umpire, and a circle of earnest watchers.)

Framing limits regarding combatlike contests are very well marked, with considerable change through time and, what is more, fairly well documented. Typically these changes have been seen as signs of the decline of toleration for cruelty and performer risk, at least in the recreational sphere. Just as cats are no longer "burnt alive in baskets at Lewes on Guy Fawkes Day, their agonized shrieks drowned by the delighted shouts of the onlookers,"[30] so cock fighting, bearbaiting, ratting, and other blood

29. Harry M. Clor, *Obscenity and Public Morality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), p. 225.

30. Christina Hole, *English Sports and Pastimes* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1949), p. 5.

sports have been prohibited. The changing frame of organized boxing can be followed from its bare-handed beginnings at the turn of the eighteenth century, to the introduction of skin gloves some decades later, to the Broughton Code in 1743 and the Queensbury rules circa 1867.

Some sports, then, can be identified as keyings of elementary combative activity—ritualizations, in ethological terms. But obviously this view has limited use. There are lots of sports, such as hockey and tennis, which bring competing sides into structured opposition, but the specific equipment employed and specific goal enjoined can only suggest a primary framework. This embarrassment to the analysis I am recommending is even more marked in the case of games. In the little game "King of the Castle" played by small children and by lambs,[31] the reference to everyday dominance is clear. In developed adult games this reference is attenuated and no great value seems to remain to uncovering possible mythic or historic roots in specific life activity; one deals, in effect, with primary frameworks.

There seems to be a continuum between playfulness, whereby some utilitarian act is caught up and employed in a transformed way for fun, and both sports and games. In any case, whereas in playfulness the playful reconstitution of some object or individual into a "plaything" is quite temporary, never fully established, in organized games and sports this reconstitution is institutionalized—stabilized, as it were—just as the arena of action is fixed by the formal rules of the activity. (That presumably is what we mean by "organized.") And as this formalization progresses, the content of play seems to become further and further removed from any particular replication of day-to-day activity and more and more a primary framework unto itself.

A final note. I have stressed the changing limits in regard to dramatic productions and sports, arguing that here historical documentation is very rich. The value of these materials for us is apparent. Above all else, dramas and contests provide engrossables—engrossing materials which observers can get carried away with, materials which generate a realm of being. The limits placed on this activity are limits placed on activities that can become engaging and entrancing. The history of these limits is

31. Thorpe, "Ritualization in Ontogeny," p. 316.

the history of what can become alive for us. And if keyings have a history, then perhaps primary frameworks do, too.

3. *Ceremonials:* Social ritual such as marriage ceremonies, funerals, and investitures are examples. Something unlike ordinary activity goes on in them, but what goes on in them is difficult to be sure of. Like scripted productions, a whole mesh of acts are plotted in advance, rehearsal of what is to unfold can occur, and an easy distinction can be drawn between rehearsal and "real" performance. But whereas in stage plays this preformulation allows for a broad simulation of ordinary life, in ceremonials it functions to constrict, allowing one deed, one doing, to be stripped from the usual texture of events and choreographed to fill out a whole occasion. In brief, a play keys life, a ceremony keys an event. Also, unlike stage productions, ceremonials often provide for a clear division between professional officiators, who work at this sort of thing and can expect to perform it many times, and the officiated, who have the right and the duty to participate a few times at most. And for them, a few times are all that are needed, for on the occasion of these "performative displays" something gets accomplished once and for all which has important connections and ramifications in their wider world. Finally, observe that in plays a performer appears as a character other than himself; in ceremonials, on the other hand, the performer takes on the task of representing and epitomizing himself in some one of his central social roles—parent, spouse, national, and so forth. (In everyday life the individual is himself, too, but not in so clearly a self-symbolizing way.)

Once it is seen that ceremonials have a consequence that scripted dramas and even contests do not, it is necessary to admit that the engrossment and awe generated by these occasions vary greatly among participants, more so, perhaps, than is true in general for nonceremonial activity. Furthermore, through time, the same script may be retained but widely different weight imputed to the doings, so one can move from a full-blooded ritual to a mere or empty one. A good example here is the coronation of Queen Elizabeth. The Queen and Mr. Shils no doubt had a view of the proceedings that differed somewhat from that of skeptics.[32]

4. *Technical redoings:* Strips of what could have been ordinary activity can be performed, out of their usual context, for utilitarian purposes openly different from those of the original performance, the understanding being that the original outcome of the activity will not occur. These run-throughs are an important part of modern life yet have not been much discussed as something in their own right by students of society. Consider briefly some varieties of these doings.

a. In our society, and probably in all others, capacity to bring off an activity as one wants to—ordinarily defined as the possession of skills—is very often developed through a kind of utilitarian make-believe. The purpose of this practicing is to give the neophyte experience in performing under conditions in which (it is felt) no actual engagement with the world is allowed, events having been "decoupled" from their usual embedment in consequentiality. Presumably muffing or failure can occur both economically and instructively.[33] What one has here are dry runs, trial sessions, run-throughs—in short, "practicings." When an instrumental task is at issue, we speak of a mock trial or exercise, of which one up-to-date illustration is provided:

> Simulation is a newly developing area of medical education which provides lifelike clinical experience without actually involving living patients, and indeed where the participation of a living patient would be undesirable or impractical. Simulation techniques may involve very simple manikins for practicing mouth-to-mouth resuscitation or very complex computer-operated automatons capable of recreating many essential life functions. Denson and Abrahamson have been evaluating a manikin, "SIM-One," which reproduces all essential cardiorespiratory and nervous system functions associated with the administration of general anesthesia. The manikin responds "appropriately" to both correct and incorrect treatment, mechanical and pharmacologic, and is quite capable of regurgitating or simulating cardiac arrest. The unit may be halted at any time during "induction" or "maintenance" of general anes-

32. Nicely argued in Burns, *Theatricality*, pp. 19–20.

33. There are some data to suggest that even in the animal world practicing, as distinct from play, is a possibility. See Rudolf Schenkel, "Play, Exploration and Territoriality in the Wild Lion," in Jewell and Loizos, eds., *Play, Exploration and Territory*, esp. p. 18. Note, practicing has one irreversible, unkeyed element. The number of run-throughs required for an individual or a team to acquire proficiency with a task or script can be taken as an indication of learning capacity, flexibility, motivation, and so on.

thesia for instruction and revision of therapy before the "patient dies" or is harmed.[34]

When a social ritual or a theatrical play or a musical score is to be mastered, we speak of rehearsals. The distinctive thing about rehearsals is that all the parts are eventually practiced together, and this final practice, in conjunction with a script, allows for more or less full anticipation of what will be done in the live circumstances.[35] Lots of activities that are run through cannot be scripted closely, because not all the main participants of what will be the live action are part of the same team. An individual may "rehearse" in his mind what he is going to say on a particular occasion, but unless his speech is a long one to which a passive response can be anticipated, "rehearsal" here is a figurative use of the term, and the rehearser is partly kidding himself. Similarly, television stories concerning undercover agents (e.g., *Mission Impossible*) involve the heroes in designing and executing a detailed scenario that ought not to be counted on in real life, because continuous response is required from those not on the team, and this response, of course, cannot be scripted, only induced and anticipated more or less. Even when all participants *are* basically on the same side, as in military field exercises, the planned course of action, the scenario, may require controllers to periodically reestablish and redirect what it is that is "happening"; forces that have gone too far ahead for the scenario will have to be held up and slow forces advanced.

34. Daniel O. Levinson, M.D., "Bedside Teaching," *The New Physician*, XIX (1970): 733.

35. Indeed, when the end product of a performing effort is a tape and not a live show, the final version can be an edited composite of strips taken from several run-throughs. During these tries the performers will rightfully feel that they are not obliged to "stay in frame" throughout, as they would in a "real" performance, and yet they are proving to be producing what will come to be treated as bits of the final show.

All of which again raises the issue of reality. A political speech may have little value as a reliable indication of what the speaker will actually do, but it can be said to be a real speech. A TV audience (and certainly a radio audience) obtains a version of the talk that is slightly different from the one obtained by a live audience, but the difference doesn't much signify, perhaps. But what if an ailing president waits for a moment of good feeling and then tapes his talk before a cheering assemblage of his own staff, a talk that has been built up from small, self-sufficient passages ("preclips") which allow for the editing out of ineffective bits, and then releases the tape to the networks for later broadcast? Is the result a show or a speech? And is the notion of keying sufficient to deal with the matter?

When an elaborate action is plotted closely in advance, the sequence of steps covertly played out in the mind or on paper in order to check on timing and the like, we speak of planning. As suggested, task trials, rehearsals, and plannings together can be seen as varieties of practicing, all these variations together to be distinguished from "real experience," this presumably providing for learning, too, but differently.

The places where practicing occurs are a wonder to behold. Here Dickens has informed our orientation; Fagan teaching his young charges how to steal hankies, using simulated conditions, is part of our tradition. So, too, are "caper" movies, such as *Rafifi*, which focus on execution of a planned, timed, and rehearsed operation. In any case, of smugglers one can read:

> One group has even gone to the trouble to buy three regular, upholstered VC-10 airliner seats from BOAC so that they can train their couriers, bowed down with gold, to sit in them for hours on end without getting cramped and to be able to get up without appearing a cripple at the end of the journey.[36]

Dulles provides similar comments regarding his line of work:

> The "live" situations in the training school are intended to achieve somewhat the same end as combat training with live ammunition. Pioneer work along these lines was done during World War II in the Army schools which trained prisoner-of-war interrogators. The interrogator-trainee was put up against a man who was dressed like an enemy officer or soldier, acted like one who had just been captured and spoke perfect German or Japanese. The latter, who had to be a good actor and was carefully chosen for his job, did everything possible to trick or mislead the interrogator in any of the hundred ways which we had experienced in real interrogation situations in Europe and the Far East. He refused to talk or he deluged the interrogator with a flood of inconsequential or confusing information. He was sullen or insolent or cringing. He might even threaten the interrogator. After a few sessions of this sort, the interrogator was a little better prepared to

36. Timothy Green, *The Smugglers* (New York: Walker and Company, 1969), p. 217.

take on a real-life POW or pseudo defector and was not likely to be surprised by one.[37]

And Scandinavian Airlines, to advertise its good work, shows pictures of air hostesses-to-be practicing the serving of liquor in a flight simulator filled with company customers and trainers at the "Air Hostess College, Sandefjord."[38] And in a broadcasting studio, the warm-up of the live audience may require the practicing of clapping.[39]

Practicing provides us with a meaning for "real thing," namely, that which is no longer mere practicing. But, of course, this is only one meaning of real. A battle is to a war game as a piano recital is to a finger exercise; but this tells us nothing about the sense in which warfare and music are different orders of being.

What are the limits of practice? We are accustomed, for example, to wedding rehearsals, but little knowledge is available as to how far up the ritual ladder this sort of practicing goes. We would probably be surprised about the ins and outs of rehearsal for a coronation or a papal investiture, the assumption being that the personages involved are so high in ritual status that they ought to be too unbending to rehearse at all, although, of course, even more than lesser folk, they have to bend this way. Pictures of the president of the United States rehearsing for his daughter's wedding are news, although perhaps barely.[40] Perhaps we also have some conception of how much participants ought to be willing to invest of themselves in practicing. This might be too little betimes, too little enough, that is, to make news:

> Hinkley Point, England (UPI)—A sergeant major in the British Army Cadets thought it was downright un-British when, with a simulated war exercise about to take place, the "enemy" refused to participate because it was raining.
>
> Sgt. Maj. Roy Blackmore of the West Somerset Cadets said: "An officer told me his unit would not take part because it was raining and they didn't want to get wet."[41]

37. Allen Dulles, *The Craft of Intelligence* (New York: New American Library, Signet Books, 1965), p. 167.
38. *Newsweek*, September 7, 1970.
39. See Gerald Nachman, "Now a Word from the Audience," *Daily News* (New York), September 11, 1973.
40. *Life*, June 18, 1971.
41. *The New York Times*, December 29, 1968.

And so much might be involved as to provide notable autobiography, as Lillian Gish illustrates in her description of filming *Way Down East* under D. W. Griffith:

> The scenes on and around the ice were filmed at White River Junction, Vermont, where the White River and the Connecticut flowed side by side. The ice was thick; it had to be either sawed or dynamited, so that there would be floes for each day's filming. The temperature never rose above zero during the three weeks we worked there.
>
> For the scene in which Anna faints on the ice floe, I thought of a piece of business and suggested it to Mr. Griffith, who agreed it was a fine idea. . . . I suggested that my hand and my hair trail in the water as I lay on the floe that was drifting towards the falls. Mr. Griffith was delighted with the effect.
>
> After awhile, my hair froze, and I felt as if my hand were in a flame. To this day, it aches if I am out in the cold for very long. When the sequence was finally finished, I had been on a slab of ice at least twenty times a day for three weeks. In between takes, one of the men would throw a coat around me, and I would warm myself briefly at a fire.[42]

The question of too little or too much investment is an obvious aspect of framing limits. Less obvious is the issue of the propriety of practicing itself. Something of a joke is made about young people practicing smoking in front of a mirror in order to acquire a sophisticated look. But behind the joke seems to be an understanding that "expressive" behavior, as found, for example, in greetings, statements of love, facial gestures, and the like, ought never to have been practiced, is rather always to be a by-product of action, never its end. And to sustain this theory of behavior, we must refrain from teaching and practicing such conduct or at least teach and learn disavowably.

The organization of practicing provides a good example of how individuals can recognize that in reality a keying is involved even though for them matters are quite serious. Thus, hairdressing and barber colleges train their students on live heads provided by subjects who are willing to accept semitrained work because the price is so good. Such customers devotedly hope for standard

42. Lillian Gish, *The Movies, Mr. Griffith and Me* (New York: Avon Books, 1969), pp. 233–234.

competence (and will have prideful stories to tell when they get it) but are not in a position to demand it.

An interesting feature of practicing is that instructor and student are likely to find it useful to focus conscious attention on an aspect of the practiced task with which competent performers no longer concern themselves. Thus, when children are being taught to read aloud, word pronunciation can become something that is continuously oriented to, as if the meaning of the words were temporarily of little account.[43] Indeed, the same text can be used as a source of quite different abstractable issues: in the above case, spelling, phrasing, and so forth. Similarly during stage rehearsals, proficiency with lines may come first, movement and timing later. In all of this one sees again that a strip of activity is merely a starting point; all sorts of perspectives and uses can be brought to it, all sorts of "motivational relevancies" can be found in it.

Practicing has another developmental feature. In a performer's acquisition of a particular competence, the first step attempted is often easier and simpler than any he will take in the serious world, whereas the last practice session before he goes forth is likely to involve a higher concentration of varied difficulties and emergencies than he is ever likely to face in real life.[44] The first

43. A useful treatment is available in an unpublished paper by John J. Gumperz and Eleanor Herasimchuck, "The Conversational Analysis of Social Meaning: A Study of Classroom Interaction."

44. For example:

> Simulators are expensive to build and operate but hold tremendous promise. Significant phases of acute, subacute, and chronic disease could be compressed into a few minutes' time and operant techniques used to develop diagnostic and therapeutic skills. Cardiac arrest, anaphylactic shock, diabetic acidosis, congestive failure, myocardial infarction, and other common major illnesses could be "diagnosed" and "treated" repeatedly until proficiency is second nature. [Levinson, "Bedside Teaching," p. 733.]

> Nevertheless, there is a view among some students of the legal process that most rules are inherently uncertain and that most legal concepts are flexible and variable in meaning. In the United States, habits of thought inculcated during the course of legal training may encourage this point of view. Law students learn by debating the application of doctrine to extremely difficult borderline situations derived from cases reviewed by appellate courts. One object of this exercise is to train the students' minds in legal thought and develop skills of advocacy, and this object, it is believed, is best accomplished through the examination of difficult questions, rather than easy questions and well-settled law. [Lawrence M. Friedman, "Legal Rules and the Process of Social Change," *Stanford Law Review*, XIX (1967): 791.]

> Another example is found in the training of craps dealers. As might be expected, the terminal phases of dead table training involve dealing to a vastly complicated layout, the "bets" large and varied beyond what is likely to be met in real play.

45. Novelistic versions of field exercises and maneuvers present another issue. If a manageable exercise is to be accomplished, both "sides" must abide by all the conventions of real warfare and some special ones in addition: for example, a scoring device of some kind must be relied upon to determine who has been injured and how severely and what damage has been done to what equipment; private property and other areas out of bounds must be avoided; stopping and starting signals must be allowed to govern. And of course, to ensure all of this, umpires and controllers must be respected. But if the exercise is to test the capacity to infiltrate, to employ surprises, to outwit traditionally inclined opposition, in short, to win in any way and at any price, then it is just these ground rules of the war game that may have to be breached. Thus, cheating becomes the right way because it is the wrong way. See, for example, E. M. Nathanson, *The Dirty Dozen* (New York: Random House, 1965), pp. 425–434; William Crawford Woods, *The Killing Zone* (New York: Harper's Magazine Press, 1970), pp. 117–167.

Military presentation of field exercises suggests a less dramatic framing problem. Apparently the great restriction on war games is not bullets but nature. In actual warfare a vast confusion of uncertain factors is present: the weather, the "friendliness" of the natives, shortwave reception, the clogging of roadways with prisoners, fleeing householders, disrepaired vehicles, and so forth. For killing, like speaking, occurs in a context. In actual exercises, these factors in the main can at best be painted in by the umpire through verbal announcements, a simulation that seems even more academic than the use of color-coded equipment and personnel tags to distinguish slight damage, severe damage, destruction, and contamina-

phase of training thus affords the learner some protection from the anxiety produced by incompetent performances, and the last phase provides an arrangement in which the attention and interest of the performer can be held at a time when he can probably handle live conditions. In any case, the world of practice is both simpler and more complex than that of actual, "live" conditions.

Note that these extremes must miss some of the point. Insofar as real performance depends on how the performer manages himself under fateful conditions, a dry run can only approach "real" conditions, never achieve them. This dilemma is seen most clearly perhaps in war games, where participants must take seriously that which can ultimately be made serious only by what can't be employed: "live" ammunition lethally directed.[45]

b. So there is practicing. A second class of redoings consists of "demonstrations" (or exhibitions), that is, performances of a tasklike activity out of its usual functional context in order to allow someone who is not the performer to obtain a close picture of the doing of the activity. This is what happens when a salesman shows how a vacuum cleaner works to pick up the dirt he has instructively dropped on a housewife's floor, or when a visiting public health nurse shows an unwashed mother how to wash a baby, or when field commanders are shown what a piece of artillery will do, or when a pilot at full altitude shows his passengers what the sound and sensation will be like when air flaps are lowered:

> In our descent I may extend the air brakes to slow up our speed. This is what it will be like [extends air brakes, plane shudders]. The shudder in the cabin is quite normal [retracts brakes].

thus using a closely predicted demonstration as a means of ensuring that later what might be taken as a sign for alarm, an unguided doing, will be seen as an intended, instrumental act. Observe that demonstrating, unlike practicing, is typically done by someone who can perform proficiently, and typically only one or two run-throughs occur. Of course, the two types of redoings may be employed together, as when a teacher provides a demonstration and a student replies with a practice trial. And an aspirant for a job may be tested for proficiency by being obliged to perform one or two run-throughs before critical eyes, creating circumstances in which a performance has a significance unusual for it but (at least for the performer) one that is no less consequential. More complicated still, we have execution sports, such as figure skating, fancy diving, and gymnastics, which allow for presented competitions involving run-throughs that are at once indications of amount of skill and demonstrations of ideal form.

The limits of demonstration have some interest. First is the limit, already suggested, regarding bedside teaching, namely, the use of patients to illustrate (for students) treatment even while actual treatment is being given. The implication is that at least at

tion. See, for example, Department of the Army Field Manual (FM 105–5), *Maneuver Control* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 1967), pp. 51–130.

certain junctures, this particular duality of perspective should not be allowed.

Second is the limit regarding substance. It is felt that no single demonstration should entail too much cost, certainly in many cases not the cost involved in actual activity. Here too much dramaturgy might be thought inappropriate. Even Abbie Hoffman thinks so, as implied in his citation of the following news report:

> Fort Belvoir, Va., Oct 4 (AP)—The Army demonstrated today its latest riot control tactics and equipment.
>
> The setting was Riotsville, U.S.A., a mockup of a city area swept by disorder.
>
> While about 3,000 persons observed from bleachers, a Riotsville mob made up of soldiers dressed as hippies set fire to buildings, overturned two cars and looted stores.
>
> Then, with bayonets fixed, troops wearing black rubber gas masks arrived on the scene and controlled the "mob" with tear gas.[46]

Again something similar can be said about practicing. Thus, the use of outdated though seaworthy ships either for target practice or as demonstration materials for new bomb capabilities of aircraft can press the limits. Similarly, in the training of race horses, practice runs and trial heats must be managed so as not to damage the beast, that contingency being reserved for actual races.

Finally, most interesting of all, there is a version of the segregation problem. Although the demonstrating of something can be radically different from the doing of that something, there is still some carry-over—especially if "real" equipment is used—and this carry-over can be sufficient to prohibit demonstration. At the same time, one must expect historical changes regarding these limits, as this news release suggests:

> Toronto, Aug. 4 (Canadian Press)—The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation has lifted its ban on commercials that had been regarded as too intimate for television.
>
> Advertisements for girdles, deodorants, brassieres, health clubs, hair removers, and bathroom tissues may now be seen on the network.

46. Photographically cited in his *Revolution for the Hell of It* (New York: Dial Press, 1968), p. 192.

"Subjects that were not considered polite in mixed company a number of years ago now are considered acceptable," said Charles Spraggett, supervisor of press publicity for the C.B.C.

A ban on panties remains.[47]

I would like to add that a treacherous distinction is sometimes attempted between demonstrations for theory and demonstrations for practice—a nice framing issue bearing directly on the matter of limits. Thus, a course on guerrilla warfare at San Francisco State College (in the student-run experimental program) apparently pressed the limits, at least as the press reported:

"This is an important speech," the barrel-chested, welterweight instructor of the Experimental College course in guerrilla warfare explained. "This is where Carmichael sets a new direction for the Black Power movement—calling on blacks to organize themselves, become nationalistic, almost racist."

After the speech, recorded at Huey Newton's birthday party rally in Oakland, a panel of "combat veterans" took the stage and reviewed, historically, the tactics and practice of urban warfare, discussing sabotage, espionage, counter-intelligence and weaponry, with emphasis on the Battle of Algiers.

This unusual college class, a subject of controversy off campus, is being investigated by the state attorney general's office.

"If it is a classroom discussion on guerrilla warfare," says Charles O'Brien, chief deputy attorney general here, "that is one thing; if it is an exercise in guerrilla warfare, if they are training guerrillas, that is quite another thing."[48]

And in fact a detailed course in sabotage could hardly escape providing instruction as well as enlightenment. The concept of "demonstration" thus has embarrassing ambiguities.[49]

c. In our society there is considerable (and growing) use of replicative records of events, that is, replays of a recording of a strip of actual activity for the purpose of establishing as fact, as having occurred, something that happened in the past. Whereas

47. *The New York Times*, August 5, 1957.

48. Dexter Waugh reporting in the *San Francisco Sunday Examiner and Chronicle*, April 21, 1968.

49. A further example: exhibition ball games. They aren't "serious," since the outcome does not affect a series or the players' individual records. But an exciting contest can occur.

a demonstration provides an ideal running through of an activity for learning or evidential purposes, documentation employs the actual remains of something that once appeared in the actual (in the sense of less transformed) world without, it is claimed, a documentary intent. Written and photographic records are standard examples, as are artifacts from an actual strip of activity, now tagged as "exhibits." Recently tape and video recordings have enormously expanded the use of documentation. In any case, the variety of documentation is great: courtroom evidence, industrial stroboscopic examinations, X rays for medical use, time-and-motion studies, linguistic use of taped speech, replays in sportscasting, news shots of historic events, camera coverage of battlegrounds, and so on.

The power of the documentary key to inhibit original meanings is impressive. Take, for example, one of the Lenny Bruce obscenity trials:

The task of reaching a verdict was handed to the jury after Bruce's unprintable word and unprintable story were related in his own words in an 18-minute excerpt taped from his October 4 [1961] show.

"This show is high comedy," Bendich [Bruce's lawyer] announced before pulling the switch to start the performance. "I am going to ask that the audience be allowed to respond to the humor. It wouldn't be human not to."

Judge Horn stopped Bendich in mid-argument.

"This is not a theater and not a show. I am not going to allow any such thing," the Judge replied.

Judge Horn then turned to the spectators in the crowded courtroom and said, "I am going to admonish you to control yourselves in regard to any emotions you may feel."

The warning was taken solemnly—and so, it developed, was the performance.

No one laughed, and very few in the room showed the trace of a smile during the sampling of the humor of Lenny Bruce.[50]

An experimental illustration is provided by Richard Lazarus' research on stress. A film on primitive subincision rites was shown to selected audiences wired for the metering of heart rate

50. From a longer report by Michael Harris, "Lenny Bruce Acquitted in Smut Case," *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 9, 1962.

and palmar skin resistance.[51] By altering the soundtrack, the experimenter could partly determine the perspective the audience employed. One of these perspectives, "intellectualization," offered an anthropological line, in part transforming the scene into documentation—a keying which appreciably reduced stress response for college students.

But, of course, there are limits to the documentary frame, and they have special interest. There is a normative question as to whether recordings of any kind should be used as evidence against a person whose unwitting action provided the source of the material. Correspondingly, it is believed that the individual ought to have protection against recordings of his voice and actions at times when he is unaware that documentation is being created. Further, there is the issue of a document's permissible use even after its subjects have freely given their consent; educational television's use of filmed family psychotherapy is an example.[52] In these cases, the concern is not with the document per se but with the rights of the persons documented, and behind this a concern for their interests on occasions when they might be tempted unwisely to consent to publicity.

Another limitation is even more instructive in its way, namely, the limit on the dissociation between the action documented and the document itself, the concern being that if a reprehensible or horrible or improper action is represented, whether this be an unkeyed action or itself a keying, how free can the documentation be of the original sin? At first blush, of course, one might think there would be no limits, since everyone clearly appreciates that a documentation of a past event is not that past event. But, nonetheless, connection is felt, and connection is honored:

> Fort Lauderdale, Fla. (AP)—The City Commission's new ordinance to ban obscenity in books, magazines and records for those under 17 is so specific in describing anatomical features and acts which may not be portrayed that The Miami Herald reported the definition is unprintable.[53]
>
> Winchester, Ind., Dec. 29 (UPI)—Winchester's new antipornography ordinance may not take effect because the local newspaper says its language is not in good taste.
>
> In an article explaining the position, Richard Wise, publisher of the Winchester News Gazette and Journal Herald, said:
>
> "We are not questioning the wisdom of the ordinance itself or the constitutional right of persons to buy or sell such material. Rather, we are simply exercising our right to print only matter which we feel is reasonable or tasteful and we do not believe the language with definitions is in good taste."
>
> Winchester ordinances must be printed in a Winchester newspaper of general circulation in order to take effect, and Mr. Wise has the only one.[54]

Lenny Bruce, reporting on one of his New York obscenity trials, suggests another illustration:

> The *New York Law Journal* pleaded guilty to not publishing the lower court's statement, with an explanation: "The majority opinion, of necessity, cited in detail the language used by Bruce in his night-club act, and also described gestures and routines which the majority found to be obscene and indecent. *The Law Journal* decided against publication, even edited, on the grounds that deletions would destroy the opinion, and without the deletions publication was impossible with the *Law Journal* standards."[55]

Reportings of pornographic content are not the only instances for which documentary limits exist. The "Moors" murder trial pressed matters to another kind of limit:

> Chester, England—The tape-recorded screams of a little girl pierced the stillness of the courtroom at Britain's "bodies on the moors" trial yesterday.

51. Partly reported in Joseph C. Speisman et al., "Experimental Reduction of Stress Based on Ego-Defense Theory," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, LXVIII, no. 4 (April 1964): 367–380; Richard S. Lazarus and Elizabeth Alfert, "Short-Circuiting of Threat by Experimentally Altering Cognitive Appraisal," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, LXIX, no. 2 (August 1964): 195–205.

52. See Edward A. Mason, M.D., "Safe to Be Touched; How Safe to Be Exposed?" film review in *Community Mental Health Journal*, II (1966): 93–96.

53. *The Evening Bulletin* (Philadelphia), November 1, 1968.

54. *The New York Times*, December 30, 1973. For this and other help I am grateful to Millie Owen.

55. Lenny Bruce, *How to Talk Dirty and Influence People* (Chicago: Playboy Press, 1966), p. 195. Mr. Bruce, in the lines that follow, can go on to provide an illustration of what it was the *Law Journal* could not apparently print, since the framing restrictions that apply to the *Journal*'s business do not apply to Mr. Hefner's. Observe that I have not cited what Mr. Bruce goes on to cite, because restrictions of my frame allow me to do that only if something would be lost in not doing so, which is not the case, although *now*, in the light of this comment on the frame of academic books, I might have warrant for repeating Bruce's illustration.

Women in the public galleries wept. Others covered their ears as the 16-minute recording was played.

Prosecutor Sir Elwyn Jones told the court they were the sounds made by 10-year-old Lesley Ann Downey as she was tortured and pornographic photos taken of her just before she was slain.

Jones alleged that the recording was made by Ian Brady, 27-year-old stock clerk, and his 23-year-old mistress, Myra Hindley.

. . . .

Lesley Ann disappeared after going to a fairground the day after Christmas 1964. Police later dug her nude body from a shallow peat grave on the wild Pennine moor.

As the child's screams sounded in the oak court, Miss Hindley and Brady stared impassively at the bullet-proof glass surrounding them.[56]

It is apparent that dramatic presentation, illustration, and documentation all share some issues regarding limits of a somewhat moral kind, especially in connection with what is sexually tabooed. And it is apparent that whenever an exercise in license is examined closely, various limits will still be found. Take, for example, a book specifically concerned with sexual matters, as reported in a review:

> This book, copyright Copenhagen 1968, is presumably one of the first fruits of Denmark's abolition of sexual censorship. It consists of 42 black-and-white photos of a couple making love in as many positions, with a shortish blurb on the facing pages setting out the main pros and cons of each. The photos have a specifically disturbing quality in that (obviously by design) they neither show us organs nor the facial expressions of the participants.
>
> The lack of the first seems relatively natural and is accounted for by the topography of the bodies, but the preservation of the models' facial anonymity leads to a few bizarre effects. One position, for instance, "is one of the few . . . where the union of the sexual organs and movements is visible for both" and "the purely mental effect of this may in turn contribute significantly to an increase of sexual excitement." Well and good. But the models in the illustration virtually eschew this excitement; their eyes and heads averted from us and from each other, they appear to be watching a telly somewhere in the middle-distance.[57]

56. *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 27, 1966. The issue of courtroom documentation leads into another, that of limits of newspaper reportings of courtroom documentation. For comments on the Moors trial reporting and the problem of "imitative crime," see Louis Blom-Cooper, "Murder: How Much Should Be Reported?" *The Observer* (London), May 1, 1966, p. 11.

That such limits should be discernible is hardly news. However, what does seem to be newly demonstrated in the last five or ten years is how changeable these limits are. The rightness of existing limits can arouse deep feelings of support, and yet next year these limits can be quietly breached and the year thereafter the breach can be ratified. Apparently in matters of frame, rulings can change very rapidly—if contemporary experience is a fair measure.

d. Group psychotherapy and other role-playing sessions ought to be mentioned, if only because the vast literature in the area provides a ready opportunity for formalization of the transformational practices employed.[58] Here, presumably, the reliving of experience under the director's guidance serves not only to illustrate themes but also to alter the actor's attitude to them.

e. No matter what sort of routine, keyed or unkeyed, is considered, there is the possibility that someone will want to run through it as an "experiment," not to achieve its ordinary end but for purposes of study, a playing out under circumstances in which an hypothesis can be tested and disinterested examination, measurement, and analysis can occur. "Natural" conditions may be maintained as much as possible, except that natural reasons don't exist for the performance. Note, in order for the term "key" to be unreservedly applied here it must be assumed that the participants in the activity—experimenter, subjects (when there are any), and the scientific audience—all share the same appreciation of what it is that is happening while it is happening, namely, an experiment of a particular kind.

Again, of course, the question of limits arises. The antivivisection movement is one expression of this concern, reaction to medical study within German concentration camps another. A further example is the unease shown about experimentation with the centers of the brain—electrical and chemical stimulation

57. Review by Christopher Williams in *New Society*, October 2, 1969, p. 365, of *Sexual Techniques*, by Mogens Toft, with photographs by John Fowlie (Souvenir Press).

58. An interesting effort at formalization (with full aliveness to similarities and differences) is provided by Eric Bentley, "Theater and Therapy," in *New American Review*, no. 8 (New York: New American Library, 1970), pp. 131–152.

resulting in emotional and behavioral changes produced at the experimenter's will. In all of this, desecration of something felt to be sacred is involved, namely, the mind. Desecration of experience also figures. Here a leading contemporary incident is the Masters and Johnson research on the female orgasm.[59]

5. *Regroundings:* Major types of keys have been reviewed: make-believe, contests, ceremonials, and technical redoings. A further general class needs be mentioned, it being conceptually the most troublesome of the lot. What is involved is the performance of an activity more or less openly for reasons or motives felt to be radically different from those that govern ordinary actors. The notion of regroundings, then, rests on the assumption that some motives for a deed are ones that leave the performer within the normal range of participation, and other motives, especially when stabilized and institutionalized, leave the performer outside the ordinary domain of the activity.

One example of regrounding is found in charity work, as when an upper-middle-class matron serves as a salesperson at a salvage sale, or when the following social impossibility occurs:

> When she [Princess Margaret] was about 25, she stood behind a counter selling nylon stockings and nightgowns at a church bazaar in Ballater, Scotland, on a Saturday night. A young man edged through the crowd of women and asked for a pair of nylons. "What size?" asked Princess Margaret. The man blushed, then said: "I don't know, but they're for a young lady about your size." "Oh," smiled Margaret, "then you'll want eights."[60]

Given the rather strict rules regarding talk with a member of the Family, there could hardly be anything better to indicate the strength of a key to reconstitute what it keyed—although not so

59. The first published report was William H. Masters, M.D., "The Sexual Response Cycle of the Human Female," *Western Journal of Surgery, Obstetrics and Gynecology,* LXVIII (1960): 57–72. The researchers brought a wide variety of research controls into the activity held in our society to be the most private and delicate, causing individuals to be subjects in new ways. Not merely were the limits extended in regard to doing things for experimental purposes, but it is hard to imagine how these limits could be pressed any further in this particular direction. A version of the negative reaction was well stated in Leslie H. Farber's "I'm Sorry, Dear," *Commentary,* November 1964, pp. 47–54, a piece that is almost as funny as the research it criticizes.

60. Reported in the *San Francisco Chronicle,* November 5, 1965.

strong as to prevent the boy from blushing or the event from acquiring news status. (Nor need one restrict oneself to the good works of the better classes. In crofter communities in Shetland, where Sunday is defined as a day for clean clothes and the right to recess from croft work, a recently bereaved woman may be given a few hours of Sunday labor by her neighbors; the labor is the same, but now it has become the work of the Lord.) A woodsman's labor undertaken as recreation[61] or as medical prescription is another example. Still another: lowly tasks performed as penance by exalted sinners. Mountain climbing is yet a further example, the election of which to undertake—and not Everest—being a seventh wonder of the world:

> Shipton had invited me to accompany him on an exploratory trip to the southeast of Everest. . . . For ten days we climbed and explored in country that men had never seen. We crossed difficult passes and visited great glaciers. And at the end of it, it wasn't so much our achievements I remembered, exciting as they had been, but more the character of Eric Shipton; his ability to be calm and comfortable in any circumstances; his insatiable curiosity to know what lay over the next hill or around the next corner; and, above all, his remarkable power to transform the discomfort and pain and misery of high-altitude life into a great adventure.[62]

Also, there is the arrangement, now in considerable disfavor, whereby a neophyte attaches himself to a craftsman, shopkeeper, or professional and does the work of an assistant, doing this job with little or no pay in exchange for an opportunity to learn the trade. (Here, what for the professional is literally work is for the apprentice an opportunity to practice.) And, of course, there is participant-observation, at least when done with prior self-disclosure.

Relatively broad and obvious regroundings have been cited, although certainly more subtle versions also exist. Thus, in the law it is often possible to mark a clear difference between ordinary cases, brought primarily on the instigation of a plaintiff, and "test" cases, the latter chosen because they clearly engage a prin-

61. See Gregory Prentice Stone and Marvin J. Taves, "Research into the Human Element in Wilderness Use," Society of American Foresters *Proceedings* (Memphis, Tenn., 1956), pp. 26–32.

62. Edmund Hillary, *High Adventure* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1955), p. 50.

ciple, one that the participating lawyers and judges want to see resolved even if it means the nominal opponents will be carried into something beyond their resources or concern.

Now examine one example of regrounding in detail, namely, shilling Nevada style. This particular example is apt because the regrounding involved is of a well-formalized game—twenty-one or blackjack—and because the keying itself is sometimes explicated and formalized by casinos. In any case, a shill nicely patterns his playing after the game in question, yet there is a systematic alteration at every point in play to distinguish shilling from playing.

Legitimate shilling is a device officially employed to keep games going when no "live" players, or an insufficient number of them, are present. The current argument in the industry is that many players do not like to enter a game that is not in play, so shills provide an appearance of action. (Thus, in the trade, shills are sometimes called "starters.") Further, some players do not like to play "head on" against a dealer, and here, too, shills may be called on. (Management, of course, can use shills for less presentable purposes, the least dubious of which is to prevent the sort of head-on play in twenty-one that card counters favor.)[63] The following, then, are rules for legitimate shilling:

a. The play in general:
   1. Don't address customers unless addressed, then before they get the wrong idea, quietly tell them that you are a game starter.[64]
   2. Leave whenever the dealer or pit boss tells you to.
   3. Give attention to the play, but do not become involved in it.
   4. Cut the cards, change seats, or leave on request of the dealer.

63. In earlier decades of Nevada gambling, shills were used in many ways; one, for example, was to help the dealer cheat a customer by "taking" a good card otherwise destined for the player or "leaving" a card that was bad for him. Currently shills are "put in" to "break up" a run of player "luck," a practice the full implication of which introduces a topic ordinarily restricted to descriptions of primitive society.

64. There is an interesting parallel here provided by telephone answering services. A standard tack is for the service to respond as though the intended recipient's secretary were answering but to correct this tacitly induced wrong impression should the caller ask for information or help that the answering service can't supply. Here see Julius A. Roth and Mary Ellen Robbins Lepionka, "The Telephone Answering Service as a Communication Barrier: A Research Note," *Urban Life and Culture*, II (1973): 108.

   5. Don't draw attention to any mistake made by the dealer.
   6. Play fast.

b. Money:
   1. Bet one chip each play and one and a half on the play after a blackjack.
   2. Stack the chips in piles which the "eye" can read easily, and give back to the dealer any that accumulate over a specified amount.
   3. Don't toy with money or touch it unnecessarily.
   4. When coming into a game, exchange your shill "button" for ten chips (minimal table value but not less than a dollar), and on "being taken out," hand back all your chips and retrieve your shill button.

c. Rules of play:
   1. Do not split or double down or take "insurance."
   2. Hit all soft hands except soft 17 and stay on all stiffs.

These rules[65] systematically alter the character of play; follow them and you will have transformed table play into what can be mistaken for play but isn't.

III

In discussing primary frameworks it was argued that an issue regarding segregation could arise when two different perspectives were applicable to a matter but only one was meant to apply, and that often some tension and joking would there be found. As suggested, one must expect the same issue to occur in regard to keyings and, by the very nature of the case, to occur frequently. A nude female model, for example, is not in one sense literally naked; she is serving as a model, a nude, a human statue as it were, a lending of a person to an inanimate act, in short, the

65. Use here of the term "rule" presents an interesting problem. Generically one might prefer to say that conventions were involved, not rules; after all, shilling could quite nicely be done with a somewhat different set of guidelines, and in fact there is some variation from casino to casino. But casino management tends itself to here employ the term "rules." Instructions to beginners are presented as rules, the breaking of which will result in negative sanctions. Some casinos actually have written outlines of these practices and use the term "rules" in the description. Here one sees, of course, some of the trouble that can be caused by making technical use of terms that are used in an allied way by one's subjects.

embodiment of a body. Here, as in the medical cases earlier cited, care will often be exerted to pointedly bracket the modeling activity, ensuring clear-cut before-and-after boundaries. And rules may obtain prohibiting catching the eye of the model during work, the assumption being that any mutually ratified exchange may weaken the hold of the artistic frame and its capacity to preclude other readings, specifically the kind available to participants in an informal conversational encounter.

Keyings seem to vary according to the degree of transformation they produce. When a novel is made into a play, the transformation can be said to vary all the way from loose (or distant) to faithful (or close), depending on how much liberty has been taken with the original text. In general, in the matter of the faithfulness of a replication, one issue will be the number of keyings away the copy is from the original. When a novel is made into a movie and then the movie is "adapted" as a musical comedy, we assume the second effort will be further away from the original text than the first. A second issue will be the frame itself: a story presented in a novel seems more likely to appear in fuller form than when scripted as a puppet show.

The set of practices available for transforming a strip of activity into a particular keying can presumably operate in both directions. As a novel is made into a movie, so, alas, a movie can be made into a novel. Another example here is the set of equivalences for punctuation, allowing us to pass between typescript and print. Clearly, underlining is in the first what italics is in the second, and the translation can be made in either direction, that is, in the typing of print or the printing of typescript.

But this view of transformation is more geometrical than might be desirable. Our purpose often will not be to learn how one strip *could* be generated from another by the application of translation rules, but rather how two similar strips *were* both generated from a common model and differ from each other in certain systematic ways. One might find it reasonable to speak of two performances of a play given by the same company on two successive nights, or two readings of the same part given by two different actors, or two varieties of American speech—male and female—and feel it awkward to speak of one version being a keying of another. In each example both versions are keyings of a common model, and although rules might be written in each case

for transposing one version into another, the student engaging in this exercise might be the only one with any interest in doing so. There is the further fact that a copy made from a model may omit certain elements of the original, as, for example, in a line-drawing caricature of a human figure, or the integration of a mathematical expression containing a constant, so that although one could always move from original to copy, the copy alone might not provide enough information to allow full translation in the other direction. In any case, the possibility of comparing two transformations of the same text and that of deriving one transformation from another should be left open. Thus, a translation of a play from French into English might be viewed either as a second version of an underlying text or as an English keying of a French pattern of expression.

There is a deeper issue concerning reversibility. The reporting of an event and its documentation are not only seen as reductions of or abstractions from the original, but are also understood to possibly influence later occurrences of the real thing. Thus, for example, there is a concern that the detailed reporting of a crime may lead to further crimes modeled after the report. But although this sort of circularity may be imagined and presumably occurs, we seem to have a strong feeling that reportings and documentation ought not to be the cause of the actual event they record; the causality should all be in the other direction. Further, we sometimes act now with the sole intent to provide the hard evidence that can be called on later as documentary proof of our having (or not having) acted in the manner that comes to be questioned. We have charity balls so that the next day news coverage will appear, the coverage and not the ball serving to advertise the charity. And, of course, when a minor social occasion is graced by an important political speaker, the transcription given out to the major news media is likely to be the reason for the original performance, not merely its consequence.

Now a general theme, albeit in particular form: keyings are themselves obviously vulnerable to rekeying. This has already been implied in various ways. Although it is possible to rehearse something that will become a real doing, such as a robbery, it is much more likely that what will be rehearsed is the staging of something in a play, which, of course, is already a copy. Routinely, those who draw up plans for a building first make rough

sketches of the plans, and routinely, apparently, the military rehearses rehearsals:

> The officer preparing the exercise rehearses the exercise as a final check on his plan. He conducts the rehearsal well in advance of the scheduled exercise so that he will have time to correct any errors and readjust the time schedule. He rehearses the umpires and aggressor detail first, repeating the rehearsal as necessary so that everyone is thoroughly familiar with his duties. He follows this with a full-scale rehearsal, using a practice unit. The individual who originally directed that the exercise be prepared should be present at the rehearsal to make any changes that he deems necessary or to give his approval of the field exercise.[66]

So we must deal with retransformations as well as transformations. Nor can any obvious limit be seen to the number of rekeyings to which a particular strip of activity can be subject; clearly, multiple rekeyings are possible. Hal and Falstaff, when brought alive in Shakespeare's play, can rehearse the forthcoming interview with Henry IV, this being a staged keying.[67] A *New Yorker* cartoon can depict two male models posing (under the direction of a photographer) at a chess board for a liquor ad, apparently deep in play, one saying to another, "I wish I had learned to play the game."[68] (Three bounded spaces will be present: the space made available on the page by the absence of print, this marking the limits of the print-on-page frame; the area covered by the cartoonist's wash or coloring, this marking where the realm depicted in the cartoon begins; the boundary drawn *within* this particular example of the cartoon realm to show what the depicted photographer will restrict his depicted shot to, and thus where the cartooned keying of a posing session begins.)[69] And, of

66. Department of the Army Field Manual (FM 105–5), p. 26.
67. *Henry IV, Part I*, Act II, Scene 4.
68. January 30, 1965, by B. Tobey.
69. The punch lines provided by one of the cartooned models are, syntactically speaking, clearly part of the nonposing part of the cartoon, the part that includes the preoccupied photographer, the part that is to be thought of as not turning up in the picture the photographer is taking. But the physical placement of the words—in this case below the cartoonist's wash—need not comply with the conventions that govern the portrayal of scenic space. These words could appear in a "balloon" *inside* the "photographed" space and still cause no confusion. For we treat space one way for scenic presentations and another way for textual presentation, this dual treatment being one of the basic conventions of the cartoon frame. (Here I draw on David S. Marshall, "A Frame Analysis of the Cartoon" [unpublished paper, University of Pennsylvania, 1971].) Fry has an interesting footnote on the boundary between print and cartoon:

> Cartoons have their own special frame establishers—some verbal, some nonverbal. In the first place, they appear in magazines and newspapers. This fact, in itself, causes the specimen to acquire a particular complexion. Then, they are always set off from the rest of the material by a little lined box or a wide blank border. And they are frequently captioned to indicate their genus, but this is not essential. The point is: cartoons are recognizable as such by reason of the communication that "this picture is not of real life," or "is not a real advertisement," by means of conventional message-cues. It is awesome, when one thinks objectively about it, how few mistakes are made in cartoon recognition. [*Sweet Madness*, p. 143.]

course, not only can a particular stage play be presented in various versions or styles, from classical to modern dress, but also one of these versions can be satirized, guyed, camped, or played broad, the persistent purpose being to use a traditional presentation as a substance in its own right, as something in itself to work upon. (Thus, one function of referees and umpires during contests is to prevent the players from making a game of a game, that is, treating the contest unseriously, rekeying what was meant to have a less complex frame structure.)

Earlier it was argued that a key can translate only what is already meaningful in terms of a primary framework. That definition must now be qualified. As suggested, a *re*keying does its work not simply on something defined in terms of a primary framework, but rather on a keying of these definitions. The primary framework must still be there, else there would be no content to the rekeying; but it is the keying of that framework that is the material that is transposed.

IV

At the beginning of this chapter a distinction was drawn between actual, untransformed activity and keyings, and it was argued that in the latter case description could be either in frame terms or in terms of the innermost or modeled-after activity. Now terms must be found that will allow us to address rekeyings and to maintain some kind of control over complications.

Given the possibility of a frame that incorporates rekeyings, it becomes convenient to think of each transformation as adding a *layer* or *lamination* to the activity. And one can address two features of the activity. One is the innermost layering, wherein dramatic activity can be at play to engross the participant. The other is the outermost lamination, the *rim* of the frame, as it were, which tells us just what sort of status in the real world the activity has, whatever the complexity of the inner laminations. Thus, a description in a novel of a game of twenty-one has as its rim the special make-believe that was called a dramatic scripting, and innermost is the realm that can become alive for persons involved in blackjack. The rehearsal of a play is a rekeying, just as is a rehearsal staged within a play as part of its scripted content; but in the two cases, the rim of the activity is quite different, the first being a rehearsal and the second a play. Obviously, the two rehearsals have radically different statuses as parts of the real world. Note, in the case of activity defined entirely within the terms of a primary framework, one can think of the rim and the innermost core as being the same. And when an individual speaks of another not taking something seriously or making a joke of it, what the speaker has in mind is that the activity, whether laminated or not, was improperly cast by this other into a playful key. Indeed, it is quite possible to joke with another's telling of a joke, in which case one is not taking seriously his effort to establish a frame—one involving an unserious keying. Finally, it is convenient to refer to a particular frame by the label we give its rim; thus, "the rehearsal frame," "the theatrical frame," and so forth. However, one ought to keep in mind that often what is being described is not the frame as a whole but the keying it sustains.

4

Designs and Fabrications

I

Keying provides one basic way in which a strip of activity can be transformed, that is, serve as an item-by-item model for something else. Differently put, keyings represent a basic way in which activity is vulnerable. A second transformational vulnerability is now considered: fabrication. I refer to the intentional effort of one or more individuals to manage activity so that a party of one or more others will be induced to have a false belief about what it is that is going on. A nefarious design is involved, a plot or treacherous plan leading—when realized—to a falsification of some part of the world. So it would appear that a strip of activity can litter the world in two ways, can serve as a model from whose design two types of reworking can be produced: a keying or a fabrication.

A few terms immediately become necessary. Those who engineer the deception can be called the operatives, fabricators, deceivers. Those intendedly taken in can be said to be contained —contained in a construction or fabrication. They can be called the dupes, marks, pigeons, suckers, butts, victims, gulls. When two or more individuals cooperate in presenting a deception, covert communication among them is likely to be required, and even when not required, the grounds for indulging it are there.