

Seminar on Social Phenomenological Research

February 18-27, 2015

Universidad de Buenos Aires

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Week One - Phenomenological Precedents to Ethnomethodology

(Seminar 1) Edmund Husserl - Definition of phenomenology; Objectivation and Intersubjectivity (10:30 am-2 pm Feb 18)

Edmund Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology*, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1982, pp. 112-114, 128-131, 211-12, 248-49, and 285-90 (i.e. Sections 50, 55, 87, 102, & 121).

Edmund Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, London: Routledge, 1970), Vol I pp. 312-15 and Vol II pp. 638-40 (i.e. Vol I Sections 24, 25 (first half), & Vol II 38).

Edmund Husserl, *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969, pp. 117-119 and 124-25 (i.e. Sections 42 f&g, 43 b (iii)).

Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Philosophy*, Evanston, Ill: Northwestern Univ Press, 1970, pp. 56-57 and 163-64 (i.e. Sections 9 k& 47 (last half))

Edmund Husserl, "The Origin of Geometry" in *The Crisis of European Philosophy*, pp. 356-61 (also in Jacques, Derrida, *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry*, Lincoln, Neb: University of Nebraska Press, 1989, pp. 160-65).

Alfred Schutz, "Intersubjective Understanding," in *The Phenomenology of the Social World*, Northwestern University Press, 1967, pp. 132-34.

K. Liberman, "The Itinerary of Intersubjectivity in Social Phenomenological Research," *Schutzian Research: A Yearbook of Mundane Phenomenology and Qualitative Social Science*, Zeta Books, Volume 1, 2009, pp. 160-62.

(Seminar 2) Martin Heidegger - Definition of phenomenology; Openness; and Attunement (10:30 am-2 pm Feb 19)

Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* section 7(c) "The Preliminary Concept of Phenomenology" pp. 30-34 in the 1996 English edition; sections 15-16 "Things Encountered in the Surrounding World" pp. 62-71; and section 29 on "Attunement" (*Befindlichkeit*) pp. 124-43.

(Seminar 3) Maurice Merleau-Ponty – "The Intertwining – The Chiasm" (Feb 20)

"The Intertwining – The Chiasm" in *The Visible and the Invisible*, Evanston, Ill: Northwestern University Press, 1968, pp. 130-155 (also in Leonard Lawlor and Ted Toadvine (eds), *The Merleau-Ponty Reader*, Evanston, Ill: Northwestern University

Press, 2007, pp. 393-413).

Week Two - Ethnomethodological Research □

(Seminar 1) - Communication and Objectivation in Everyday Social Interaction
(10:30 am-2 pm Feb 23)

An introduction to ethnomethodological analysis will be given, including a review of its key concepts and terms.

Participants will read carefully two chapters from Harold Garfinkel's 2002, and we will go through the chapters paragraph by paragraph.

Harold Garfinkel, "Author's Introduction," *Ethnomethodology's Program*, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002, pp. 65-74.

Harold Garfinkel, "Authochthonous Order Properties of Formatted Queues," *Ethnomethodology's Program*, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002, pp. 245-258.

(Seminar 2) – The Accountable Nature of Intersubjective Life
(10:30 am-2 pm Feb 24)

"Accountability" refers to the practical work of a group of actors concerned to find a way to organize themselves so that their practical tasks can proceed in an orderly manner, and so that all of the participants can recognize just what that local orderliness is. In all social settings, parties continuously offer each other 'accounts' of what they are doing; once these accounts are offered, they can be accepted, rejected, or amended. Local activities then proceed under the authority of the account as it is spoken and heard. This creates social order, and persons undertake activities not only for the sake of accomplishing the task at hand but also with *an abiding orientation to the work of producing and maintaining a social orderliness*, which will facilitate their cooperative accomplishing of the task at hand. The enduring attention paid to developing these orderlinesses and to keeping them comprehensible is referred to as "the accountability" of any local occasion.

Michael Lynch, "Accounts," in *Scientific Practice and Ordinary Action*, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1993, pp. 14-15 & 286-87.

John Heritage, "Accounts and Accountability," in *Garfinkel and Ethnomethodology*, Polity Press, 1984, pp. 135-41 and 147-150.

(Lecture) – "Professional Methods for Making Coffee Taste Descriptors Objective" (5 pm Feb 25) [in Spanish]

(Seminar 3) - The Reflexivity of Understanding (10:30 am-2 pm Feb 26)

"Reflexivity" is one of the most important notions in ethnomethodology, and it differs somewhat from the talk of reflexivity that one finds in anthropology and philosophy (including Bourdieu). What is meant here is not the capacity to observe one's own presuppositions in the creation of ethnographic description. Rather, the reflexive ways

that *ordinary people* passively understand their world in everyday settings is the target for ethnomethodological research here.

While phenomenological insights into the projection of meaning-structures onto experience (mostly the contributions of Husserl, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty) inform these inquiries, ethnomethodology exceeds the 'constitutive idealism' and the individualism of phenomenology by observing just-how events *organize themselves* in ways that outstrip rational and deliberate controls. *Reflexivity is a natural phenomenon* that was discovered when ethnomethodologists attended closely to how people actually act and think in the world. Ethnomethodological research does not proceed by the researchers imposing their favored theoretical concepts upon the phenomena being studied; rather, the objective is to disclose, identify, and describe the schema of understanding and the practices that people themselves are using for making situations coherent.

K. Liberman, "The Reflexive Intelligibility of Affairs: Ethnomethodological Perspectives," *Les Cahiers Ferdinand de Saussure*, 64, pp. 73-99, 2011.

M. Lynch, "Reflexivity," in *Scientific Practice and Ordinary Action*, pp. 15-22 & 34-38.

E. Livingston, "Naturally Organized Ordinary Activities," *Making Sense of Ethnomethodology*, Routledge, 1986 (1 page).

(Seminar 4) – Studying Objectivation Practices (10:30 am-2 pm Feb 27)

Although thinking is often considered to be the activity only of individuals, a great deal of thinking is a public activity and takes place in concert with others. In order for people to concert their thinking together, they must convert their reflection into thought-objects that can be witnessed, understood, shared and adopted by others. This interactive work of coordinating words, meanings and understandings is called "intersubjective," and intersubjective inquiry has been a focus of the philosophical tradition known as phenomenology. Ethnomethodology has extended phenomenological analysis in new ways in light of discoveries made during its investigations of the ordinary world.

Harold Garfinkel has said that affairs are self-organizing, and he has recommended that we turn our attention to the neglected practical objectivity of social facts as they operate in a course of events because these practical objectivities are the tools with which these events set up their orderlinesses. I elucidate these practical objectivities by outlining an arational, collaborative model of objectivation practices that respects the local myopia of participants who are engaged in developing organizational matters, immanent affairs where much of the thinking is a public activity.