

CONTEXT ANALYSIS OF A FAMILY INTERVIEW

by

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"They (gestures) did not at bottom serve the function of the expression of emotions; that was not the reason they were stimuli, but rather because they were parts of complex acts in which different forms (animals) were involved. They became tools through which other forms responded...they are part of the organization of the social act and highly important elements in that organization.

Mind arises through communication by a conversation of gestures in a social process or context of experience – not communication through mind.

Meaning arises and lies within the field of the relation between the gesture of a given human organism and the subsequent behavior of this organism as indicated to another human organism by that gesture...meaning is thus a development of something objectively there as a relation between certain phases of the social act; it is not a psychic addition to that act, and it is not an 'idea' as traditionally conceived."

George Herbert Mead

Mind, Self and Society, 1934

Mead was talking about patterned sequences of gestures and the development of language in his grand scheme of the origins of mind, self and society. Although the research we will present here eventually brought us to such questions, it began as simple curiosity about the importance of body position in therapy interviews, especially, since we are family therapists, in family interviews.

In 1969, we borrowed a stop-motion projector, bought a film of Don D. Jackson, interviewing the "Hillcrest" family, found a dark room, and sat down to

look. In the course of the next two years we watched the same interview more than two hundred times. Once, exceeding our tolerance for the flickering light, we fell asleep. But during the other 199 viewings, we watched the event as the camera had recorded it in nature, and tried to describe it as though we were naturalists seeing a species for the first time. As psychiatrists, we had been accustomed to deriving an interview's meaning from 'intuition' or 'knowledge.' As researchers, we let events acquire meaning like inertia, only when they appeared as part of a repetitive patterned sequence within a larger pattern.

Our own research, of course, came from a previous matrix of work, and no doubt its meaning will tell only in relation to the work which preceded it and that which is going on now.

Let us briefly review our predecessors. The first context analysis of interviews began in 1957, when Ray Birdwhistell went from Palo Alto to Philadelphia to join Albert Scheflen, who was then studying the treatment techniques of John Rosen. Together, Birdwhistell and Scheflen made studies of filmed interviews of many psychiatrists, and in the course of that work published a rather startling and now-famous observation: that a therapist in one film invariably executed a sequence of leaning forward, lighting a cigarette, and leaning back, before the patient made a shift from the past to the present in the content of his talk. This was the first news many of us had of the importance which posture shifts might have for what we thought we were doing in psychotherapy.

Following this, Scheflen worked at Eastern Pennsylvania Psychiatric Institute, developing a method of context analysis, and applying it to such questions as "communication and regulation in psychotherapy" and "quasi-courtship behavior in psychotherapy." The method of context analysis itself was most fully described in Scheflen's monograph, "Stream and Structure of Communications Behavior", now revised and expanded to a book. Both are especially useful because they contain an analysis of a filmed interview between Carl Whitaker and Thomas Malone and a mother and daughter, with the analysis and transcript presented in their entirety.

Scheflen and Birdwhistell found:

(1) A limited vocabulary of movements. The repertoire of an individual's postures and gestures, like his repertoire of speech forms, is not large. Not only is it limited by culture, sex, role, etc., but within an interview especially, the

context-identifiable moves of a participant have a limited and repetitive quality. This led to the identification of:

(2) Repeated Patterns or "Programs." Psychotherapy interviews, and other gatherings as well, show, when subjected to such an analysis, a cycling of sequences of behavior which are invariant enough to be called "programs." They resemble a set of choreographic directions when plotted out in Scheflen's monograph. They are, from the standpoint of the naturalist, his most important observation.

Behavior programs are familiar to us from formal gatherings, dinner parties, work routines, greetings and introductions, etc. in which we often seem to be doing a familiar and recognizable dance. The predictability, which arises from the smooth execution of repetitive sequences of behavior, may be one of the things which make both work and communication possible. This is what Mead and his colleague the linguist Edward Sapir were driving at in their early writings.

In psychotherapy, however, where the task is to change the nature of human relations, accustomed and repetitive sequences may go against the grain of the task. Thus in the Whitaker-Malone film, a first interview where new relationships are being established, there are sequences of posture shift and gesture which have this quality. The mother and daughter regularly interfere with each other's verbal communication with the therapists, and that interference is manifested on the non-verbal level by a program of moves, which is highly repetitive.

With Scheflen's work we come down to the immediate stimulus for ours. When Scheflen came to Bronx State and we began to discuss his findings with others, the question most often asked was, "can anyone else besides Scheflen find such sequences?"

We started out with the intention of "replicating" Scheflen's analysis of the Whitaker-Malone film by looking for similar patterns in the Jackson film. We quickly found that this sort of replicating and hypothesis-testing produces an attitude of mind which makes it impossible to do natural history research. We could not look for Scheflen's sequences in the new film – we had to look for sequences peculiar to the new film. The repertoire and patterning of this new film was in many ways different. Scheflen's subject was a first therapeutic encounter between two men therapists, a mother and a schizophrenic daughter. Ours was a passing consultation between a man consultant, a married couple, and their four rather normal children. The differences of detail between what we found and what Scheflen found, and the similarity as to his and our general

conclusions, raise the fascinating possibility that every encounter develops its own sequences out of culture, set, idiosyncrasy etc., but always in the same general way. Whether as Birdwhistell has attempted to show in later publication, there is a universal grammar of visible behavior applicable to all encounters, is a question we will return to later. At the beginning of our work, we had to assume that we would find nothing that resembled Scheflen's or anyone else's observations about leg crosses, hair grooms or palm spreads. As soon as we stopped looking for those, we began to find things which eventually added up to another striking pattern of behavior programs. Thus Scheflen's general conclusions concerning the limited repertoire and the repetitive sequences were strongly confirmed.

We also brought to bear the ideas of several other workers in this field:

Condon

One of the most striking observations was Condon's: If motion pictures are made of a variety of conversations between people, and the smallest discernible movements of body parts are recorded from a frame-by-frame analysis of those films, the interacting persons, and spectators as well, appear to be moving fingers, lips, eyebrows and larger parts in microscopic synchronies, some fine and some gross, which resemble an orchestral score when plotted out. Further, there is an apparent connection between some of the synchronies and the relationships of the participants: a mother of female identical twins, one of whom is schizophrenic, for example, moves in definite synchrony with the well daughter, while the schizophrenic daughter is in several ways out of phase with the other two. Is the "sick" girl unable to catch up? Do the two "well" ones conspire to keep her out of a dance they are performing unawares?

Condon also notices symmetries (right-left, mirror-image and side-by-side sequential postures and movements of legs and arms) which are like those described by Scheflen. Both regard these spatial correspondences as important to the definition of relationships to the group.

Kendon

Kendon's work on gaze behavior as a factor in managing the beginning and ending of an utterance is an instance of precise work in this field. Such instances are rare, but do encourage us to go on, in the hope of identifying other such regularities. The piece of Kendon's work which we want to mention especially is an analysis of a conversation which was filmed in an English pub. He

describes a relationship between gesticulation and head-movement on the one hand, and the units of speech ("locutions") on the other, which as he points out are very similar to Scheflen's idea of the point. They appear to serve the function Scheflen describes for "point" movements: indicating the speaker's intention to keep on speaking, or his readiness to be interrupted. In another paper Kendon confirms some of Condon's findings on the larger movements in interactional synchrony, and notes that the people in synchrony are in agreement on the point being made at the time.

Charny and Loeb

We know of two other studies which might be seen as related to Birdwhistell and Scheflen's research. Charny succeeded in relating periods of upper-body congruency between a therapist and patient to measures of rapport in speech content during the same periods. Loeb related a "fist" gesture by the patient in an interview to expressions of anger in her speech. Though both of these workers refer to Scheflen and use the terms "context" and "structure" in their analysis it appears that they are describing the occurrence of previously defined behaviors in association with a particular verbal or emotional content. Such studies are helpful in building up the "vocabulary" of people in interviews, but they are not analyses of the patterns of movements or programs which we are interested in.

Stern, Ferber and Kendon

Stern has shown that there is a sequence of eye contact and eye avoidance behavior which mothers and babies use to regulate each other's behavior during feeding. Ferber and Kendon have shown that there is definable sequence of moves in the greetings between hosts and guests and family members at a party. Once these sequences have been identified, these workers can show differences in the handling of space and time within the sequences which appear related to how mother and baby, or host and guest, are defining their relationship.

Family Therapists:

Before going on now to our analysis of Don Jackson's interview with the Hillcrest family, we want to notice that family therapists have been using visible behavior as the clue to the realities of family interviews long before this. Nathan Ackerman is the past master of this, and Ferber and Beels have presented a

technical approach to the manipulation of such behavior, and a review of how it is used by others. In group therapy, the encounter and sensitivity people have made extensive, sometimes exclusive, use of non-verbal techniques. We shall return in our conclusion to the connection between science and intuition which is foreshadowed by the convergence of research and treatment in this area.

For now, let us summarize our effort: We tried to analyze the choreography of a dance; not why the dancers danced, nor what the quality of their movements were, but how they danced, in patterns.

Some methods of behavior research use statistical analysis to reduce behavior to factors which can be used for predictions. For a long time, these methods were at the opposite extreme from psychoanalytical thinking, which gave mystical and arcane explanations of behavior. However neither of these methods is well suited for studying natural groups or natural events which only happen once and cannot be statistically quantified or controlled in a lab. Nor was there ever a method for describing and verifying what actually occurs in a life event until the advent of motion pictures and, more recently, videotape recorders.

The motion picture camera permitted us to look at the Jackson interview many times, and to make a detailed description of what actually happened in it. This is what we saw.

II – DATA

The event that takes place in our film is called a “psychotherapy consultation” with an out-of-town high status visitor in the USA. It is a kind of face-to-face gathering at which work is to be done, that work being the discovery by the consultant of the causes of the real problem in the family, and his prescription of some remedial action. In addition, since the event is to be photographed, the scene is set up to make that possible. All participants know there will be a permanent record of the proceedings.

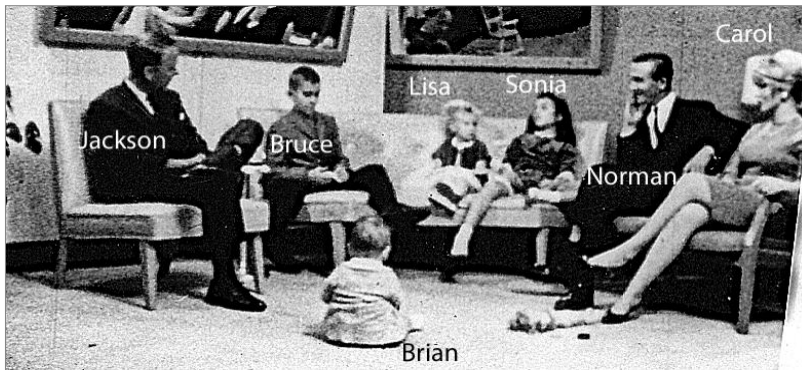
In order to facilitate the event, all parties have been briefed beforehand on what will take place. No social gathering occurs without some sort of preparation which lets the members get ready for their part in it. In this case, Dr. Jackson is prepared to be the expert, and the family to be the ones whose problems will be examined for repair.

A room is set up with couches and chairs arranged in a semi-circle, so that people may choose where to sit so long as they face each other most of the time

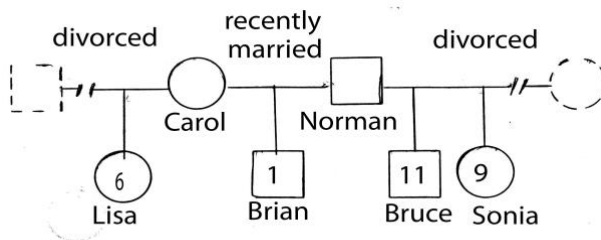
and can be seen by the camera. Jackson is in the room first. He acts as host as the others enter and waits until they are seated before taking his place. The greetings are typical formal greetings of strangers in American culture. Everyone is dressed for an important business or social event in the manner of 1963.

In the first stage of this event, the expert must decide what is to be worked upon. He does this by asking questions until he has enough verbal information to make conclusions. Here is the scene of the interview as recorded by the camera.

Figure 1



Here is a diagram of the family relationships.



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THE VERBAL CONTENT OF THE INTERVIEW"

(A) In the rough scenario which follows, the paragraphs describe units which will be defined later. The numbers refer to frames of the research film.

0-3600 (These are frame numbers, for later reference.) Jackson appears on camera and greets, in order of appearance, Bruce, Sonia, Lisa, then Norman and Carol who enter together, each walking Brian by one hand. They sit stiffly and Norman introduces everyone. Jackson says he has deliberately not been told what the problem is, so Norman describes the situation of his second marriage, and says that the main problem is in controlling Bruce. Jackson leans forward and asks what the parents differ about on how Bruce should be controlled.

(B) 3600-4350 Norman says he and Carol differ on how to maintain authority. He says he tells her not to scream. Carol, speaking for the first time, says she could take more action in other ways, but she has tried and it doesn't work.

(C) 4350-6200 Jackson turns his attention to Bruce, asking him whether he decided to be the problem in the family. Bruce, so far sullen gives a knowing look and says no. Jackson asks whether his new mother is harder to obey than his old one. Bruce says she is. Jackson then suggests to Carol that she expects to not be obeyed. She says she didn't know what she was getting into, acquiring four children all of a sudden.

(D) 6200-7800 Jackson inquires about Sonia and Lisa, getting their names mixed up. Norman says Lisa has a bad temper, but Sonia doesn't. Carol agrees. Norman concedes that Sonia does talk a lot, but says that's beside the point, since the real problem is Bruce.

(E) 7800-10200 Jackson suggests that Bruce could be made to obey; after all, he could be pulverized or kept in a concentration camp if it came to that, but perhaps Norman and Carol do not quite want him to obey? Carol is puzzled, but says he no longer steals, though she recalls indignantly that he once stole \$10.00 from her pocketbook.

(F) 10200-11400 Jackson says that if Bruce were suddenly very obedient he thinks it would put a strain on their marriage, and the parents would have to face the question of whose kids were better behaved.

(G) 11400-13200 Norman says Carol's discipline probably would never work anyway. Carol rejoins with a previous therapist's report that Norman's ex-wife never disciplined Bruce and Sonia, that it was an issue the original couple had fought over, whereas she, Carol, never went against Norman.

(H) 13200-14400 Norman says his father knocked him around with fists and it didn't do any good. Carol says Norman tries to get her to discipline Sonia and Lisa identically, but that they are five years apart. Jackson confronts Carol with the observation that she is trying too hard.

(I) 14400-15600 Jackson points out to Carol that father and son are just alike. Norman agrees and says Carol is improving day by day. Norman says he also stole, and that all boys steal. Jackson agrees.

(J) 15600-16800 Norman then goes on to say that Bruce doesn't steal anymore, anyway. Carol agrees, saying the real problem is that he exaggerates and lies. Jackson asks Carol if she is able to criticize her husband openly.

(K) 16800-18900 Carol says yes, they have it out right away. Jackson asks whether they argue enough. Norman says yes, but that the argument over Bruce never reaches resolution, and they get further away rather than closer together.

(L) 18900-21300 Jackson says he believes Norman and Carol still have a lot to say about what happens to Bruce. Norman says Bruce will learn when he gets out in the hard cold world. Carol stridently insists that Norman tries to make Bruce either too old or too young. Norman says firmly that Carol doesn't realize Bruce is eleven years old. They both become confused and ask Jackson what he would do with a ten-year-old boy who carried matches and smoked. Jackson says he has a ten year old who doesn't smoke, so he doesn't know what to do.

This is the halfway point of the film, and from here on the format changes somewhat. Jackson, having decided what the problem is, goes to work on his prescription. Carol becomes more strident and helpless, Norman seems a little less self-assured and overbearing, and the children become more active and uncontrolled.

(M) 21300-22300 Jackson asks Bruce what should be done, and Bruce just says he doesn't know. Norman indicates his displeasure and says Bruce will never say anything else. Jackson defends Bruce, saying his looks tell a lot, and that he

seems wise as an old chestnut. Carol jumps in, saying her eyes always give her away. Norman flirtatiously wonders what his eyes do.

(N) 22300-24900 Jackson hastily changes the subject, suggesting an agreement by which no discipline at all will come from Carol, and that Bruce should pay no attention to her. Carol immediately disagrees with this – Norman works long hours, she says, and she couldn't wake him up to punish Bruce. Bruce chuckles, and Jackson says it looks like he likes the idea. Jackson restates the proposition; that Carol could interfere with Bruce only if he, say, tried to burn the house down. Bruce says he wouldn't burn it down because he'd have nowhere to sleep. All proudly agree that that is smart of him.

(O) 24900-26700 Jackson asks Sonia what the problem of the family is. She looks at Bruce and gives the same answer he did, "I don't know." Jackson asks Carol if Lisa is easier to control than Sonia. Carol says Lisa just plays quietly by herself.

(P) 26700-29100 Both parents affirm that Lisa is not a problem, and that there is never a reason to punish her. She and all the kids move quickly when Norman makes up his mind. The problem is that Carol gives the kids too many chances before she means it.

(Q) 29100-33000 Jackson asks what Norman and Bruce do together. Norman says they don't do much, but Carol maintains that Bruce gets plenty of attention, for instance a crabbing expedition last year. She says Norman isn't home much, but when he is, she wants him. She goes on to talk about how much fishing and football Bruce gets to do in the summer. Jackson says she has changed the topic on him...he was talking about whether Bruce and Norman get together, and she is telling him how hard life is. He says a sore spot in the family is that someone always gets shortchanged. Norman says that's why he always goes with the whole family if he goes at all. The children start to leave the room. Carol tells them to go one at a time. They all go. Jackson tells her not to worry about it.

(R) 33000-34200 Jackson says he thinks it puts too much of a burden on Carol if she thinks she should control Bruce more at this point; that Bruce probably wants her and Norman to work it out between them, which Jackson feels is an appropriate 11 year old attitude.

(S) 34200-37500 Carol brings up another of her personal problems which she describes as compulsiveness. Also, she says, she learned not to talk back to her father, and objects when Bruce talks back to Norman, yet Norman doesn't seem

to mind. Jackson says this is further evidence that she and Norman should get it together between themselves.

(T) 37500-39000 Jackson changes tactics again, asking what the last time was that Bruce saw his natural mother. The children return to the room at this point. Carol says he hasn't seen his mother – she could legally have him, but she doesn't want him. Jackson asks how Bruce could know where he'd rather be if he hadn't seen her. Carol starts another speech, saying that Bruce's mother was all wrapped up in him for four years, and that she knows the way he feels because...Norman cuts her off.

(U) 39000-40200 Jackson asks Bruce whether he's written his mother. Bruce says yes, but she hasn't answered. He last wrote her in May.

(V) 40200-43800 Jackson tells Bruce he's up against one of the toughest obstacles there is – the ghost of his mother. Carol interrupts, saying she went through the same thing – her mother walked out on her when she was seven; her stepmother wouldn't mother her, so she got all wrapped up in her father. Jackson says she is also very wrapped up in these children's father, and that it makes for competition. Carol says Norman is not affectionate, and Norman agrees.

(W) 43800-45600 Jackson says well, love isn't all huggin' and kissin'. Carol says Sonia was very affectionate to her, but Bruce never had been. Jackson points out that Sonia is a girl, as Carol was, whereas Bruce is like his father.

(X) 45600-47100 Jackson notices the signal for the end of the interview and sums up, saying he wouldn't worry very much about a little problem with Bruce, considering all the things Norman and Carol have stacked against them. Carol makes a last-ditch effort for care, saying she has colitis and is working on an ulcer. Jackson suggests that she try to get Norman to take more responsibility for the discipline.

Curtain.

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The units according to which the scenario was broken up were not made arbitrarily. We decided, after consultation with Dr. Kendon, to divide the flow of behavior along axes of interaction. At a juncture between axes, three things had to happen. These were:

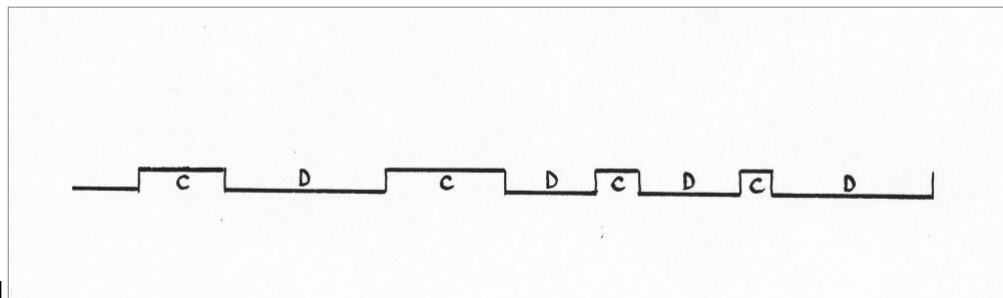
a major postural shift among adult participants

a change of subject

a change in membership in the conversation

Divided along these lines, we found twenty-four units of from one to three minutes duration, which we marked out on graphs. These are described in the above scenario and lettered A-X. Besides giving us smaller pieces of interaction to work with, the units later proved to be quite related to the communication process in general.

We also made a transcript of the verbal track of the interview, in order to relate this to the other material which we would record graphically. Looking at the transcript, there were patterns in the verbal track, at the topical level. During the first part of the interview, for instance, there was a clear alternation between discussions of how Bruce should be controlled and what the parents differed about. We represented these topics on our chart with a C for control and D for difference, like this:



Then, we began to record postural changes among the adults..

III – FINDINGS

Adult Postures in the First Half

We began by recording every change of posture of upper or lower body amount the adults which was held for any length of time. One of the most striking findings right at the first was that as the topics in the first half of the interview changed from Control to Differing, there was a coincidental shift of body postures in Norman and Carol. When they talk Control, Carol and Norman sit in these positions:



Figure 2

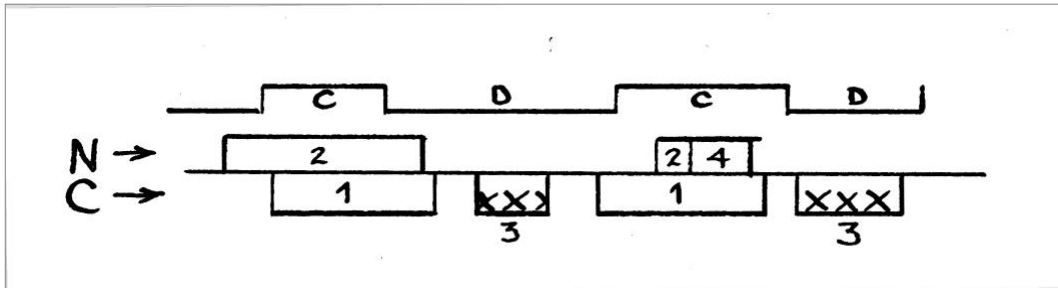
Norman's arm is up on the back of the couch, Carol's is on the arm of the chair, both tilted away from one another. But when they are talking about their differences, Norman centers his body in relation to Carol, she crosses her arms a good deal of the time, and they sit close together.



Figure 3

These are subtle position shifts, but major structural units in this part of the session. By charting them on the graph with the topic line, it is clear how the topics and body shifts alternate together.

Chart 2



The large blocks marked 2 and 4 on the N (Norman) channel represent his position in the Control periods; on the C (Carol) channel, the boxes marked 3 and X's represent periods when her arms are crossed, while the small l's represent periods when she is uncrossed and she is tilted and leaning on her outer arm. Looking at the whole sequence, the regularity of alternation between postures and topics becomes clear. Here are photographs of the first five alternations:

Figure



Now, add a third aspect to the pattern. If we look again at the first half of the film, concentrating this time on Jackson, there will be a related pattern of postural shifts. This is his One position:



And this is his Two And Three:



Figure 6

On the chart, we indicate his one position with the large blocks, appropriately numbered. The others occur in between.

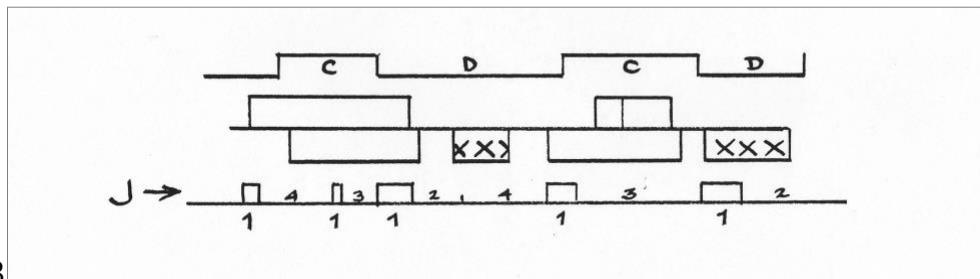


Chart 3

Notice that he usually takes up the One position at the beginning of each juncture. We usually call it his business position. It is frequently used by American male therapists, or by American males in negotiation.

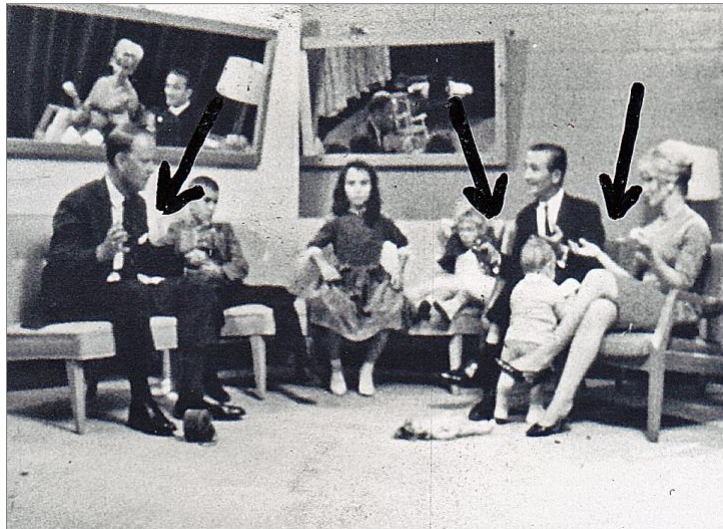
Now, the pattern we have charted breaks up at around 13,000 frames, just prior to a disagreement between Norman and Carol. This is the first time Norman actually turns and confronts Carol; it seems to us that Jackson has been trying to bring this confrontation about by asking "What do you two differ about."

Palms

During this time we will also see some palm presentation. A flash of the palm in conversation can mean many things, but the double palm presentation held for a period of time, is seen by many investigators including us as a time of intense negotiation...begging, giving, taking. We infer that an important change will occur. In this first half there was one palm at the introduction, several before and during the transitional phase we are now describing, and then a rapid

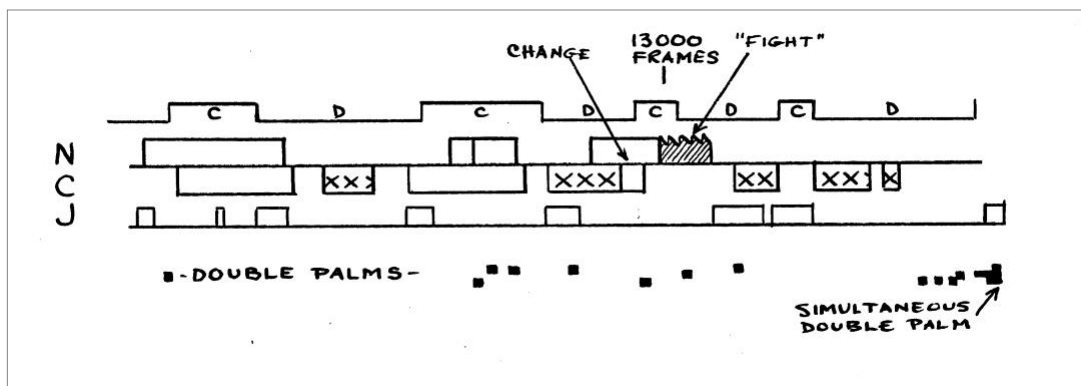
crescendo of palming which ends in a three-way simultaneous double palm at exactly the halfway point of the session.

Figure 7



We'll mark the palms with little black boxes and put them on the chart like this.

Chart 4



We want to return later to the simultaneous double palming at the midpoint of the session, but first let us describe the adult postures of the second half.

Adult Postures of the Second Half

The pattern in the second half of the film is very different from that of the first half. The clear alternation between themes disappears. Norman and Carol might be said to have accepted Jackson's definition of the problem, that they have a hard time controlling Bruce and the other kids because they have differences between themselves about a number of things. Norman and Carol never go into the Control configuration again. Early in this second half, Norman makes the first shift of his lower body. From then on he slumps down and rotates his lower body toward Carol. At times he puts his arm up, but never in the same way as in the first half. Carol's postures are similar to those she showed in the first half, including frequent arm crosses. But the most significant change in adult postures in this second half concerns Jackson. He takes up a definite series of new postures. In the first half, you'll recall, he introduced statements with his One position. At 20,000 frames, the end of the above charts, he does it for the last time.

From the midway point of the session, he goes into another series. The first is numbered 7:

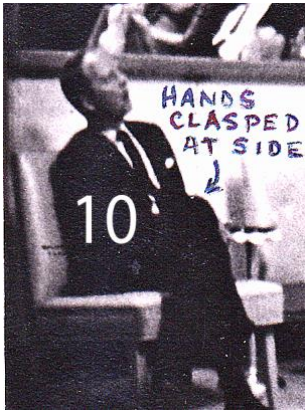
Figure 8



Position 7

In the seven position his hands grasp the sides of the chair, he has straightened his spine at the beginning, and at the end of it he moves his crossed

legs back and forth slightly. His next posture is numbered Ten:

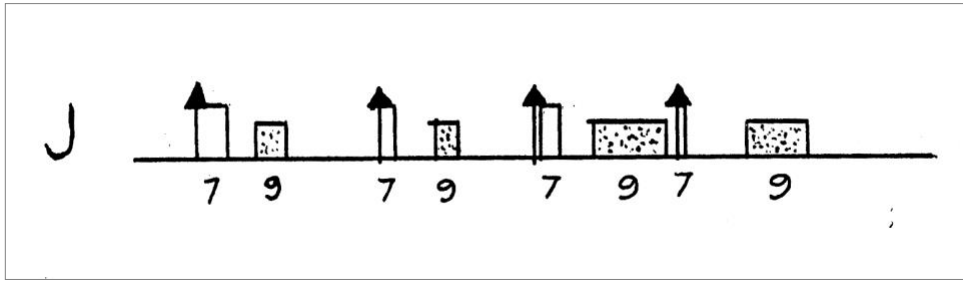


This one has a clasping of the hands and a lateral arm movement. And finally, there is position Nine:



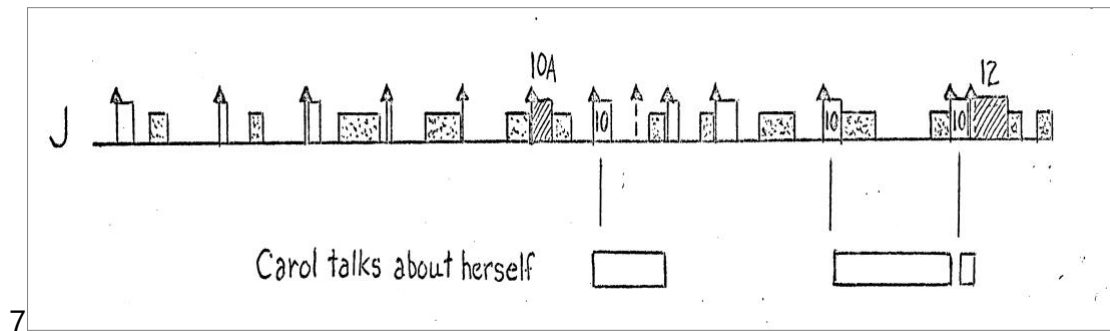
In the Nine, he crosses his legs and sits far back in the chair, folding his fist against his chin. Each of these posture shifts is performed the same way each time, and, just as in the first half, a pattern appears: a cycle of seven and nine which occurs according to a regular rhythm. On the chart, we indicate his spine stretch with an arrow, the seven with a tall block, the Nine with a short stippled block:

Chart 6



Again, this pattern is broken up once it is well established. In this case, the ten positions begin to appear. Each time Jackson takes a Ten posture, Carol starts talking about herself. We'll put a speech line on the chart later; for now, look at the placement of the Tens:

Chart7



Now, looking at the whole chart, you will notice places where a portion of the 7-9 cycle is omitted, or where there is another numbered block, such as 12.

[EDITORIAL NOTE: Somehow over the years the chart that showed this interesting finding has been lost. I do remember what we thought about it: that Jackson was making elaborate and unusual whole-body gestures to signal to Carol that she should not take what he was saying as an aggressive attack. It was what Scheflen would have called "a hold."]

The omissions in the pattern coincide with pointed remarks to Carol. The remarks to Carol, particularly, are accompanied by athletic postural changes. Most include an elaborate prolonged shift in leg position, indicated on the chart by a long break in the "legs" bar. Jackson makes remarks to other members of the family, but only those to Carol are accompanied by such dramatic changes. The remarks to Carol are indicated by this figure C those to Norman by N and those to everyone in general by E.

There is one other variation in Jackson's postural repertoire which we haven't account for; the 10A at 32,500 frames coincides with his instruction to the parents not to fetch the children, who have left.

At this point, we can postulate that certain visible acts on the part of the adults were communicative, that they acquired communicative meaning through patterned repetition in relation to other acts. We may also postulate that omissions in patterns are communicative elements. Whenever Jackson omitted or altered part of his 7-9 cycle, he dropped an interpretive comment..

Symmetry and Synchrony

Now there is another level on which we can look for communication. You'll remember we described a three-way synchronous double palm at the halfway point of the session. At the conclusion of it, Jackson drops his palms first, then Carol and Norman drop theirs at exactly the same instant. We call this synchrony. There are many examples of this and other kinds of simultaneous behaviors throughout the interview, involving not only the adults, but the children as well.

The first example of synchrony comes at the opening of the session. As the family enters and Norman makes the introductions, Sonia mimics him, pointing. Norman and Sonia have a natural complimentary affiliation – she is his daughter. During most of the proceeding she is making efforts to get in touch with him, sometimes kinesically, sometimes verbally. Often their affiliation is demonstrated in synchronous behavior. Sonia does a number with her shoe, for instance – dangling it teasingly, letting it fall and putting it back on, eyeing her father all the while. The shoe becomes established as a sort of prop. As Norman extends his arm, Sonia extends hers also, and the shoe drops. Their arm excursions are exactly synchronous. Later, her attempts to get in touch go to a verbal level – she says 'Daddy' a couple times – then, when this doesn't avail, she tries the shoe number again and makes various other advances, one a pronounced odalisque posture in his direction. Each of the advances is met with a simultaneous turn away and cigarette behavior by Norman, who keeps the ashtray behind him. Later, Sonia moves, her soliciting having been unsuccessful, but even from a distance, she maintains affiliation by simultaneous grooms – she picks her nose when he wipes his collar.

We will discuss grooms more later, but now look at another set of synchronies – those between Carol and Lisa. Lisa is Carol's natural daughter, and

there is a synchrony in the way they cross and uncross their arms. It is a different type of synchrony, though – with Sonia and Norman there was simultaneous synchrony – acts of a similar nature which occur at the same instant of time. There are also movements identical or similar in kind which follow one another at regular intervals. These we call tandem synchrony, and this is the type demonstrated by Lisa and her mother. Lisa eventually anticipates an arm-cross later to be performed by her mother.

One other concept goes along with synchrony – the spatial equivalent of it; symmetry. You may have noticed people sometimes sitting in identical poses – the same leg crossed the same way, heads tilted alike. This is what we call symmetry, and we record two kinds; isomorphic and mirror.

The concept of symmetry is relevant in the affiliative behavior of Bruce, for while his Dad synchs with Sonia and his Mom synchs with Lisa, he synchs and symms with Jackson. If we chart the position changes of Bruce and Jackson in the first half of the film, we get a series that looks like this:

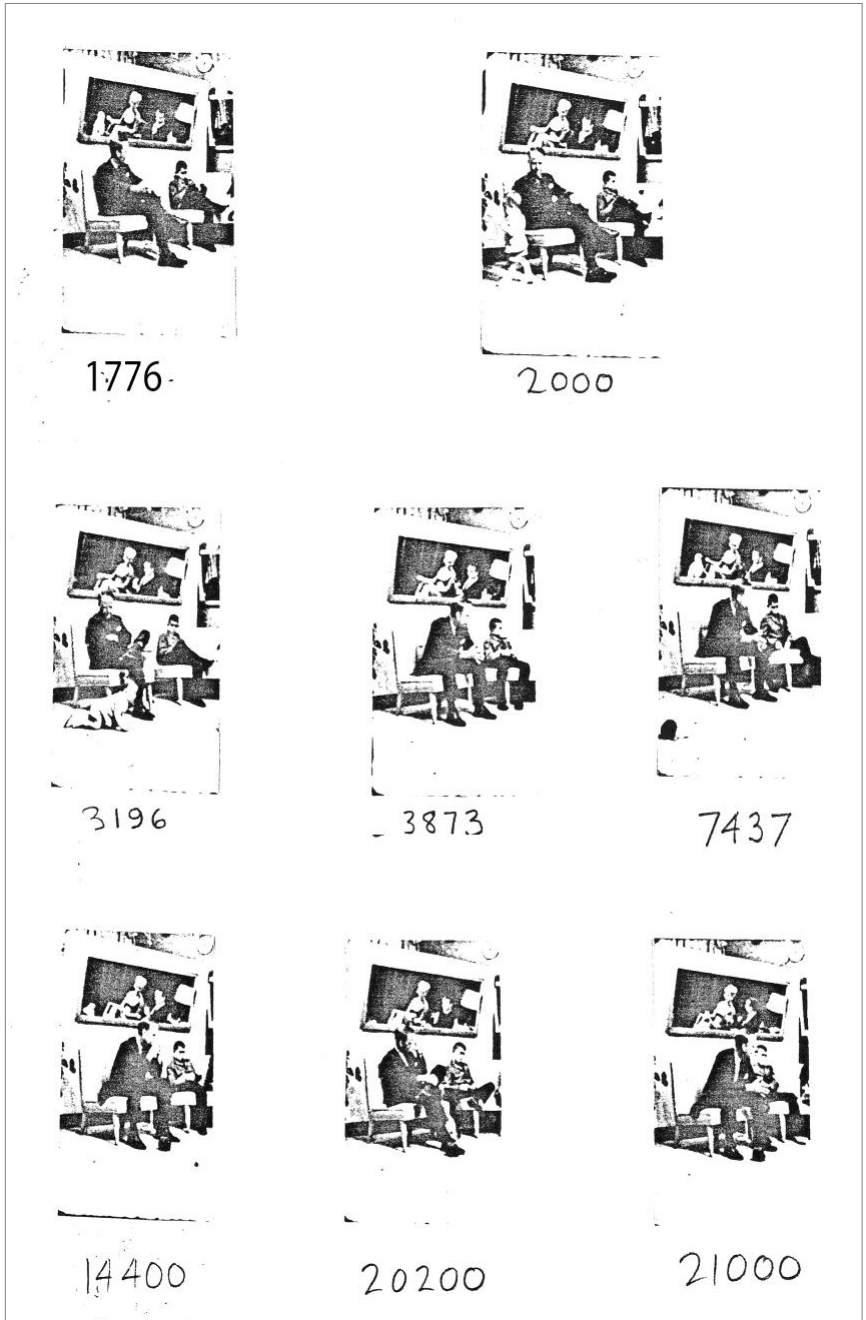
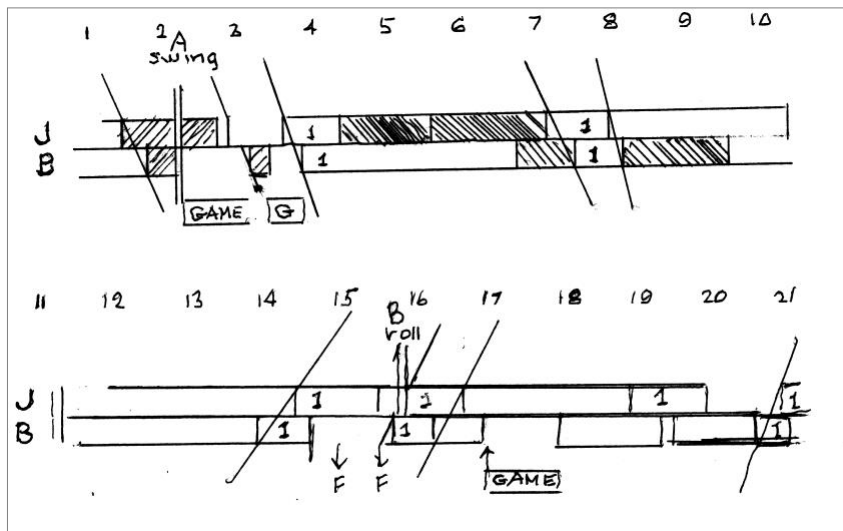


Figure 11

The places where they are sitting in symmetrical postures are indicated with slanting lines in the chart below. If we draw lines between the time of Jackson's moving into a posture and Bruce's moving into symmetry with him, we get a picture of Jackson leading by a regular interval, since the lines slant from the J to the B line.

Chart 9



In the midst of this, at point A, there is a simultaneous synchrony executed by Jackson and Bruce at frame 2000 – a swinging out of the arms; Jackson’s to Brian, and Bruce’s to his pamphlet.

Later, between 14000 and 17000 there is again a symmetrical similarity between Jackson and Bruce’s postures, but this time Bruce is anticipating Jackson. (The lines slant from B to J) At point B on the above chart, after Bruce breaks his posture to fish for an object on the floor, (F) Jackson also breaks his to pick up something from the floor and roll it to Brian. (point B).

The next time Jackson goes into a One, there has been no symmetrical move from Bruce. By the end of the half, however, Bruce and Jackson again go into a One in tandem synchrony, Bruce leading. (21000).

Quarters and Halves

Now to return to frame 11200, we find it is a transition point between the first two quarters of the film. It appears that everyone is in motion at this point. Jackson is coming out of a One, Bruce is moving into a leg-cross similar to Jackson’s, Sonia is going into her stretched-out odalisque posture, Norman is turning to his ashtray, and in the verbal channel Jackson is suggesting that if Bruce were very obedient it would put a strain on the marriage. This is a pivotal

point: Sonia gives up on her father, and starts a game with Lisa; Bruce's affiliative behavior changes, and in one and a half minutes, Norman and Carol have their first disagreement. It is striking that the interview, which last half an hour is so clearly demarked into quarters and halves, but this is not unusual for such a formal event. We have found, in viewing many other interviews that in early sessions, simultaneous double palms often mark the halfway point, provided the session is "going well."

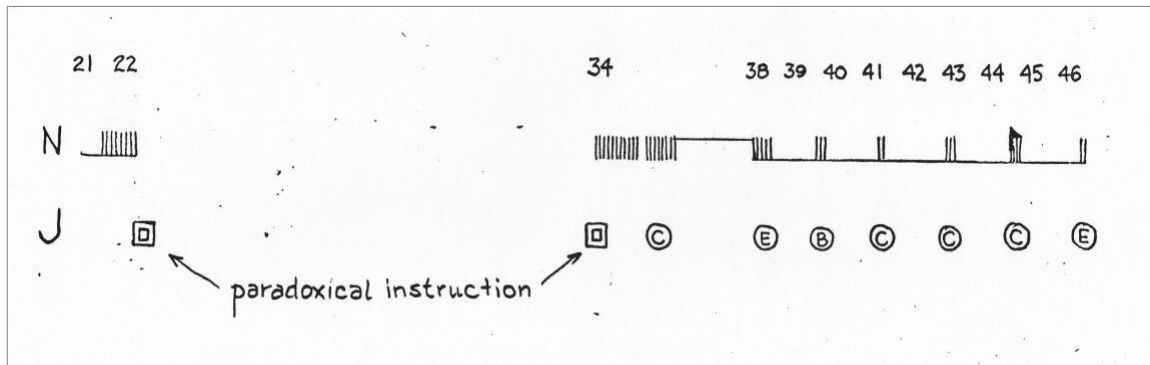
Simultaneous Grooms and Verbal Content

But to continue with simultaneous behaviors: we mentioned grooms before – these are semi-sexual or otherwise attractive gestures, noted especially by Schefflen in his studies of quasi-courtship in therapy sessions. They include gestures like hair preening, sock pulling, tucking in a shirt or adjusting a belt, things done on one's own person. These are associated with courtship, but as Schefflen pointed out, they are used in non-sexual settings to maintain interest and attention. They go on frequently between Carol and Jackson, often synchronously. The synchronous ones always occur when a strong alliance between the three males, Jackson, Bruce and Norman, is being emphasized, either verbally or kinesically. It is as if Jackson is grooming with Carol to put a reassuring "hold" on her while he is talking about the male alliance which excludes her.

In a similar way we also see mutual simultaneous grooms between Norman and Sonia when the topic is discipline – that is, disciplining Bruce or Norman or Lisa, but never disciplining Sonia.

The last kinesic maneuver we noticed is also synchronously related to what's going on in the verbal department. The lines on the Norman channel of the chart represent his cigarette behaviors (lighting, finding ashtray, putting out).

Chart 10



Each of Norman's cigarettings in the second half is exquisitely timed with pointed remarks Jackson makes to Carol, Bruce, or to the family in general. The second one occurs at 34000, where Jackson makes his second paradoxical suggestion. From there on, they occur with each of Jackson's pointed remarks to the others (circled letters). By the time Norman gets to the end of the interview, however, it is he, not Jackson, who makes the pointed remark, expanding on a remark Jackson has just made. In other words, Norman has gotten into synch with his own cigaretting. You will remember that Jackson's remarks coincide with omissions or changes in his own cycle of postures, which in turn are related to the direction of the whole program. The inter-relatedness of these different aspects is even more apparent in the film, once you get accustomed to watching in a certain way, than it is on the charts.

The Structure of the Verbal Channel

We have related Norman's cigaretting to verbal behavior, and we have introduced the notion of challenging remarks. Let us look further at the structure of the verbal channel as an exchange of challenge and response.

We can determine that a challenging remark has a quality all its own, regardless of its content; we also have noted that in this interview, the challenging remarks all appeared in a certain context. We try to look at the verbal behavior as though it were movement, without examining its explicit content, just as we try to keep away from judging an action according to what we think its actor intended to convey. It's hard to do that with verbal utterance, since we're so accustomed to listening to meaning. But if the actors were talking Bantu or some other unfamiliar language, we could still probably judge by the quality of the utterance whether it was an accusation or exclamation, without understanding just what the words meant.

The sequence of speaking becomes important. In the section between 3400 and 4100 frames, for example, there is a sequence of three – first Jackson challenges, then Norman responds, and finally Carol makes a closeout speech which takes over the conversation and, by virtue of the pitch pattern, voice tone and gesture, seems to imply that there is nothing more to be said.

We charted the speech sequences on the S line on the Chart, with each person's first initial standing for times when they are speaking. The chart becomes formidable at this point, but with patience it can be followed.

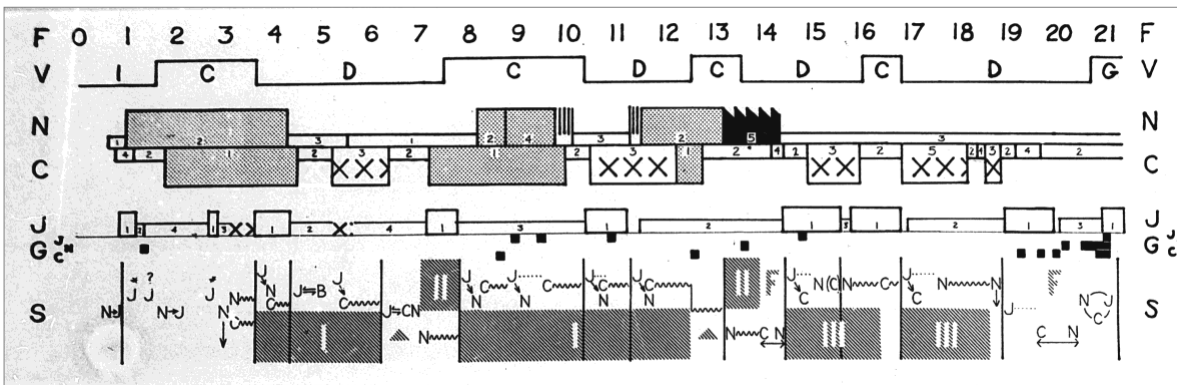
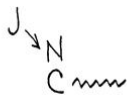
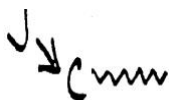


Chart 11

The vertical lines on the Speech channel are the unit divisions; you see how they line up, naturally, with changes of topic, but also with the other criteria of unit boundaries – major posture changes, and now with the people being included in conversation. Around 4000 there is the speech sequence first mentioned:



□ This means Jackson challenge, Norman respond, Carol closeout. There is a




□ repeat of All this is called Sequence I, and is marked with the striped block on the chart. After Sequence I is finished there is a change of

subject, a third person is talked about,  and then Norman makes a

Nmmmm

long speech:

This is marked as Sequence II, at 7000. After this, Sequence I is repeated four times, another third person is brought in and appears for the second II piece.

That brings us up to the point at 13000 where  Carol and Norman have their first fight (marked F). But this time, you'll remember, the Control-Difference pattern is breaking up, and now there is a combination of the elements in Sequences I and II. Jackson challenges, Carol responds, but Norman makes the

J ↓ C Nmmmm

closeout speech. This is marked as sequence III on the chart. It cycles twice.

Then, after the half, we get a new sequence altogether. Jackson challenges, Carol answers back, objects or explains then Norman turns to her and indicates by an aside that she is the target.

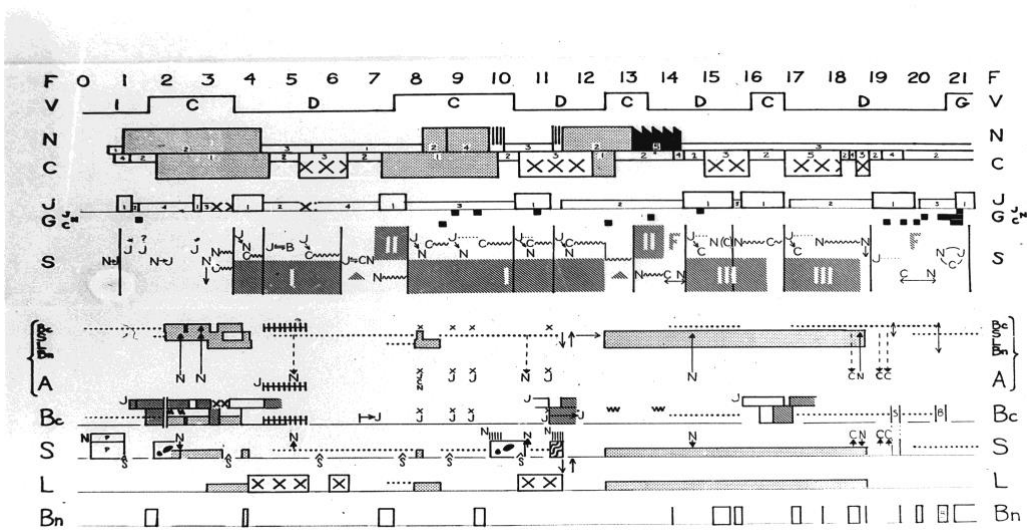
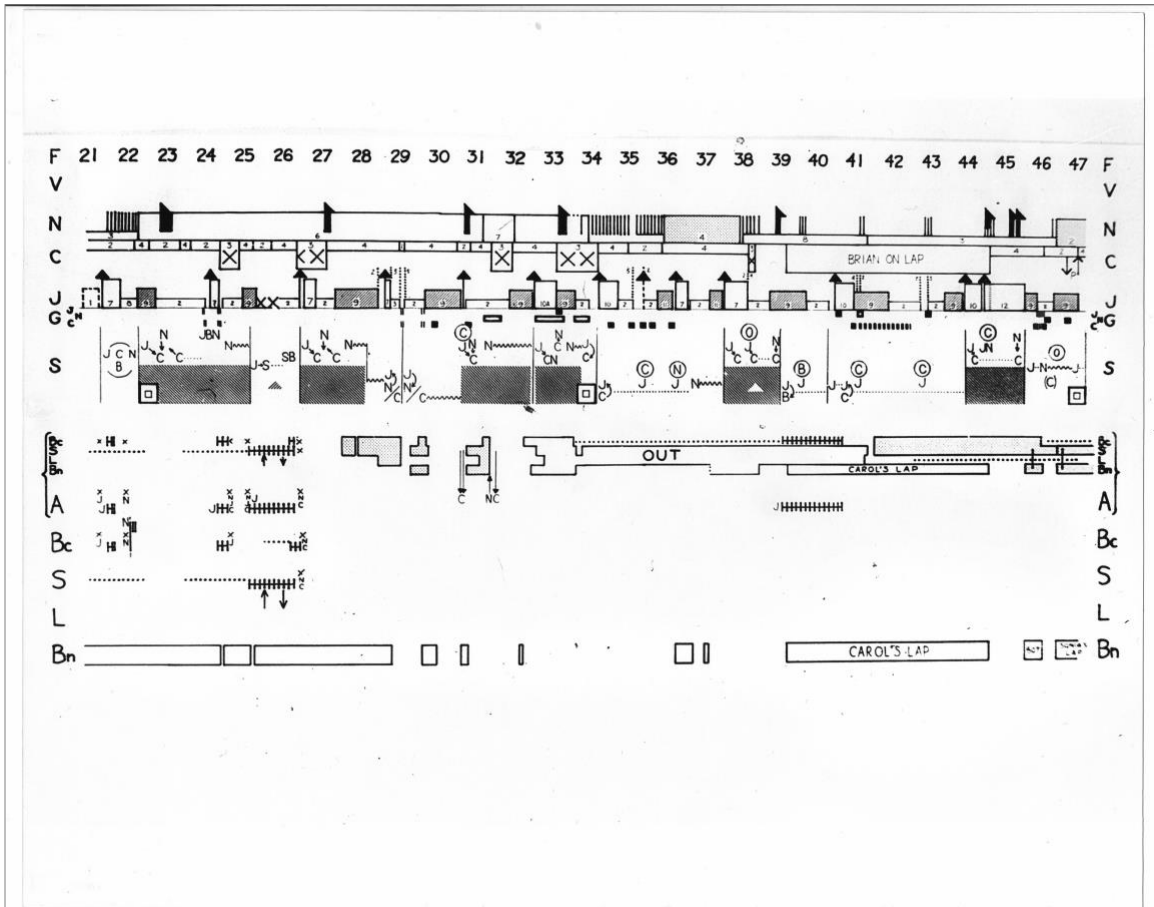
J ↓ C N ↑ C Nmmmm

Carol then crosses her arms, after which Norman makes the closeout speech.

Carol's arm crosses and Norman's asides are indicated in the N and C channels at the top of the chart. This new pattern is repeated six times after the halfway point of the interview (striped blocks in the second half). You can see by the chart that the elements of the sequence get closer together and sometimes fuse as we progress through the second half of the session. For example, in the last two, (38000 and 45000) Norman's aside and his final speech are the same. Notice that Norman's asides and Carol's arm-crosses in this half occur only in these intervals.

The speech sequence fit in well with the other structural markers, and lend themselves to a view of the session as a continuing negotiation and redefinition between the adults. At this point you could go browsing in the charts and make

any number of connections between various behaviors; it resembles an orchestral score.



THE CHILDREN AS A GROUP

We haven't looked at the children's behavior, except as each child affiliates with an adult in dyadic alliance. Let us look for a moment at the children as a separate group, since it is evident that they are sometimes actively involved only with each other, laying games or scrapping. As you might expect, those behaviors of theirs do align with the behaviors of the adults in a structural way.

Look at the largest version of the chart (Chart 12) and find the channel marked

BC

L

BN

A

adults. The stippled blocks are games.

In this first quarter, there is a game with the pamphlets, (2000-3000). This game starts just after Norman has initiated the Control topic, and starts for the second time when the Control topic comes up again.

The game in the second quarter is a little different, because Bruce is out of it. Sonia and Lisa play patty-cake. In the third quarter, Jackson begins to question the kids one at a time, so that one of them is usually disengaged from whatever game is going on, but after the questioning they got back to playing. At 28600 they are all holding their eyes and peering at the lights. During the last quarter, games go on almost continually and involve all four children. This is the part of the interview where Jackson has clearly established that he wants to focus on Carol, and considers the children separate from his work.

It is tempting, talking about games, to get into the symbolic level of the children's behaviors. For instance, Sonia snatches a pamphlet from Lisa just when Carol is talking about how everyone loves Lisa. One might say that Sonia's play is, in that case, a symbolic comment on the adult statement. But if we also

examined every other instance where Sonia snatched a pamphlet from someone, such a supposition wouldn't hold up.

Again, when Carol is talking about her own problem of mother deprivation, all hell breaks loose – Sonia carries the baby, Bruce wields a chair, and Lisa wanders around confused, as the session is about to end, leading, in a sense, to another deprivation. Instead of taking that on the enactive or dramatic level, however, we can look at it structurally, and see that games come up whenever the topic of deprivation comes up. (But then, one could ask, when isn't deprivation a topic?)

Even the baby's behavior relates structurally to the larger context. It is different in each quarter. Look at the Bn line at the bottom of the chart. In the first quarter he plays alone, making infrequent checks back with his mother. In the second quarter he's a lot closer more often; in the third quarter he stays right with her, and in the last quarter he's tactilely involved with someone most of the time – either out of the room with the other kids, or on Sonia's or Carol's lap.

IV. SUMMARY

Let's back off now, and look at the whole interview. In the first quarter there are alternating positions which correspond to a struggle about how the problem is to be defined. In the second quarter, after the fight, the parents are split and an alliance appears, with the men, Jackson, Norman and Bruce on one side and Carol on the other. Jackson's attention to Carol becomes more obvious in the second half, and by the beginning of the last quarter the children are excluded from the problem altogether, with the dialogue between Carol and Jackson talking center stage, and Norman pitching in now and then to assist Jackson. Jackson also talks with Bruce about his absent mother, and with Carol about hers. That's what's going on in the blank spots on the S line of the chart – Jackson first gives attention to everyone else, then ends by focusing on Carol exclusively.

Such a summary as we have just given is very much what a clinician might note in an assessment of this interview, using what he would call his knowledge, experience or intuition. Our point is that the information the clinician gets in this way is partly carried as the contextual structure of movement, its repetitiveness or simultaneity, and partly as the meaning of words, facial expression, etc. When all these are highly redundant and reinforcing, the result is a sense of conviction that we have received information and that we know what is happening.

V. CONCLUSION

Since this work was originally taken up as a replication of Scheflen's findings in Stream Structure of Human Communication, we should first compare these two works.

Similarities (1) The finding of patterns of postural behavior which repeat in a cycle.

(2) The cycles are related to the content of the interview.

(3) Some of the behaviors seem to be related to the progress of the negotiation as if they monitored or influenced it.

Differences (1) Our cycles are more variable and complex – less stereotyped – than those described by Scheflen. Perhaps this is related to the fact that ours is a large family with two generations meeting a single therapist. Theirs is a meeting of two small well-practiced or well-rehearsed teams: mother and psychotic daughter and two co-therapists who are long-time colleagues.

Beyond this, and our agreement with Scheflen's conclusions in that earlier work, what can we say of the implications of what we found – what to make for example of the correspondence, which should be clear from reading the findings, between the patterns we found and the "clinical" conduct of the interview? How shall we describe the way in which the movement patterns confirm and reinforce the clinical sense of what is going on?

To get at the somewhat speculative matters we want to take up here, we suggest several metaphors for this interview, and for psychotherapy interviews in general. We will then extend the metaphors, in the manner of Erving Goffman, to provide the language for the analyses we want to make.

The interview, without metaphor, is a medical consultation. Jackson is referred to as "doctor," and the forms of standard psychiatric consultation are overtly observed. Everyone is expected to speak (Bruce is scolded for not doing so) and everyone presents his problems for advice. It is understood that further, more technical advice, will later be given to the doctor-in-training conducting the treatment, but the family expects for themselves, if not a diagnosis, at least a recommendation. Carol says "what about me-I've got colitis and I'm working on

an ulcer.” Jackson advises her to somehow get Norman to take over the discipline of Bruce. That is his medical-psychiatric advice.

Now to this we want to add three metaphorical views of the interview: we will see it as a divination, as a negotiation, and as a dance.

Divination

The popular view of a psychiatrist is like that of the old-fashioned wizard or the even older shaman: he can read your mind, maybe even exorcize a psychotic spirit. At the very least it is the psychiatrist’s job to discover a hidden secret. In this interview, Jackson, a family therapist, faces a family which is quite sophisticated (they have had a lot of therapy both family and individual). The family clearly expects Jackson to tell them something they themselves do not suspect about their “problem” with Bruce’s misbehavior.

Jackson accepts the challenge and presents them with a riddling divination: if Bruce did not misbehave, the parents would fight. They do not understand at first, but after he has put it in the form of a mysterious task (Bruce should be disciplined only by his father) the interview takes a very revealing and confirmatory turn.

Jackson makes his divination very early. Norman has no more than stated the problem than Jackson is ready to say “what do you two disagree about how Bruce should be handled?” He sticks to his formula throughout the interview – clearly he is working on a strong intuition of what the problem is. What interests us here in a scientific way is, what are the ingredients of that intuition? And why does he stick to it? Does he test it in any way, or is he just going by rule?

There are, to be sure, some rules that he could use here. He may assume that all misbehaving children have disagreeing parents (there is some evidence of this assumption in his writings). He may assume that all second marriages involve the children in antagonism with stepparents – here he has a boy and his stepmother.

But there is more than that. We now want to draw your attention to the kinesic patterns of the first quarter, and show how they provide a basis for, and a test of, the apparently blind intuition. (Intuition is never blind – it comes from a word meaning “to look at”).

Norman describes the problem, "We've been having trouble with Bruce, and this has caused quite a lot of aggravation for Carol, here." As he develops this, the couple are sitting tilted apart from each other, with Norman's arm as a barrier on the back of the couch – their "C" configuration in the chart.

When Jackson asks them what they differ about, they shift into the "D" configuration, and when he further suggests to Carol that as a stepmother she should expect to be disobeyed, she crosses her arms, as she does subsequently in the middle of every "D" period.

Later, Norman shifts the topic back to "control" of Bruce. Carol has just settled into her "C" configuration and Norman shortly goes into his, but things are not easy. Carol makes a long speech, changes to her "D" position – Norman lights a cigarette. When Jackson proposes another difference between them, Carol crosses her arms immediately. This completes two cycles of Control-Difference, in which Jackson's probing of difference is met with arm-crossing and in which the couple if left to their own devices will get back to sitting far apart and talking about the control of Bruce.

There is another suggestion of trouble between them, in the speech sequences. Questions are usually addressed either to Norman or to both parents in the first quarter. Norman starts most of the replies, but it is Carol who delivers the closeout speech. Norman proposes, but Carol disposes. You will recall that this pattern changes after the fight at 13000.

The couple verbally reject his suggestion of their difference at every point, and only confirm his assumption that it exists by having that fight shortly after Norman has said "She never goes against me."

Now suppose we are correct in our idea that the basis of clinical intuition is partly in these behaviors, that they are the signs and portents that help the wizard in his divination. If Jackson were alive to say, would he be able to tell us so? Let us put the question on two levels, imagining two statements by the therapist.

(1) "This is a recent second marriage between two people who had a lot of trouble in the first marriages, and whose natural disagreements and conflicting expectations are covered up by their idealized façade. The wife for example is trying to be helpless and dependent but in action she cannot make that role work. Bruce's misbehavior is the result of tensions in this pseudo-harmony. The correct treatment is to reestablish the divisions of the family as they really exist."

There is much evidence for this – in fact the above statement is a composite of things Jackson does say to the family and afterwards to the therapist. If we asked him “How do you know?” would he say,

(2) “Something about the way they sat and the way she interrupted – they were working very hard to sound united.” Perhaps.

Would he be able to report the postural-kinesic analysis which we outlined above? Probably not. And here is the interesting point about the location of the material in awareness. We have described two kinds of information, the gross postural shifts and the speech patterns. There are other information types not available from our film which other workers have studied: eye-gaze behavior, and facial expressions for example – all making available to an observer, continuous channels of information. The only channel which passes necessarily through awareness is the verbal channel of word meanings and connotations. Occasionally a detail from the other channels surfaces: “A funny look,” “She looked away,” “blushing,” “He was fidgeting in his seat,” “He sat next to me, away from others” (Jackson noted this last about Bruce in the discussion afterwards.)

We suggest, for the most part, the information we have been describing is recorded on a non-verbal track in the mind, where it is subjected to a kind of kinesthetic integration which is beyond verbal reach. It is contrasted with verbal integration, the understanding of “what he says,” “what I think he means,” and “what I say to myself about him” which depend on a kind of linear decoding, an ultimate reference to a dictionary of culturally defined meanings and connotations.

The non-verbal information on the other hand is not composed of that kind of dictionary meaning. It is essentially contextual information consisting of patterns of repetition, sequence and synchrony. The brain-computer is programmed to attend to this kind of information, to attach significance to the redundancy of its iterations, which is defined by itself, and not by reference to a cultural catalogue. This is what interests us in the quotation from Mead at the beginning of the article – that he seemed to see that part of human communication as arranged like animal communication – as a “conversation of gestures,” and that the meaning of such a gesture will depend for the animal on where it stands in a sequence of behaviors stretching through time.

To return to our metaphor of the wizard and his divination, then, we are saying that the “intuition” is based partly on an integration of patterns of experience, which is acultural, which may be something we share with animals. One would become a better wizard then, with a lot of practice at tuning into

patterns and sequences in face-to-face behavior. Reading books and listening to lectures probably will not help, and the less so the more the books resemble dictionaries. A good wizard tests his sense of the patterns by altering them and experimenting with them – by participating himself in the conversation of gestures, in fact. We are saying here of course that the training of a good psychiatrist requires long active clinical experience. It probably also requires the ability to get away from literal meanings.

Part of the wizard's job is to find out secrets. The secret in this case is what is "really" going on in some behavioral or animal sense, as contrasted with the lexical façade, the report, the presentation. One implication is that, being out of verbal awareness and self-criticism (self-consciousness) of the participants, the patterns of behavior cannot be faked, operate automatically, at the ordering, so to speak, of the animal relationships. They represent – perhaps they are – the patterns of trust, alliance, antagonism, etc. which operate behind the official definitions of culture. As such they are transparent to your true wizard, who sees more perhaps because his customers are preoccupied with the official program of the occasion (see A. Ferber and C. Beels Changing Family Behavior Programs).

Negotiation

We now come to the metaphor in which the interview is to be seen as a group of people gathered to transact business. Some exchange will take place: some gaining and losing. There will be efforts to control the transaction to advantage by all parties: There will be factions, alliances, and leadership – a power struggle. The person who is leader by title, the therapist, is known ahead of time – and he expects to exercise leadership – but if he does not do it well he will lose out.

The idea of the therapist as leader has been unpopular in some quarters. Without getting into that active vs. reflective debate, we want here without apology to extend the ideas developed by Beels and A. Ferber in another paper (ref.), that what a therapist does is to take control of the process of the group. There is evidence in that paper and in Haley's Strategies of Psychotherapy, that all therapists, individual or group or family, must in some crucial sense be leaders, but it is most obviously true of family therapists. If a family therapist does not define the work of the group and lead it, the family will certainly take the leadership away from him.

We need first to ask, what are the criteria of "leadership" and "control" in this sense. That is, instead of saying that Jackson's leadership is intuitively obvious, to which most viewers of the film would agree – we want to ask what are the kinesic and sequential marks of that leadership.

Jackson:

(a) Initiates verbal sequences by changing the subject. He is the opening speaker in almost all the "axes of interaction."

(b) Especially in the first half of the interview, he makes these moves with a dramatic posture shift, position "1."

(c) He is allowed to, or he takes the privilege of, interrupting topics begun by others.

(d) An interruption or a change of subject from someone else can be challenged by him – he turns a subject change of Carol's into something for interpretation for example.

Now coming back to the interview:

The turning point in the negotiation goes like this:

During the first half of the interview, after Jackson had brought out the behaviors of disagreement between the parents, Norman is having an argument with Carol over how to stop Bruce from carrying matches and (presumably) lighting fires.

Verbal

Behavior

Norman (to Carol) "But I'm always crackin' him, and that doesn't do any good. You say to him why d'you do this and why d'you do that –"

Norman double-palms and looks irritably at Carol

Carol (to Jackson) Well, if you had a ten year old by who carried matches all the time, what would you do?

Carol double-palms, makes empathic demand to Jackson, voice overloud.

Jackson I have a ten year old boy who doesn't smoke, so I can't help you.

Jackson double palms, leans forward, cocks and bows his head in mock apology.

Carol Ohhhh-

All three simultaneously drop their extended hands and sit back. Carol's tone is disappointed.

This turning point in the interview (marked by the exchange of double-palms) is on the verbal level a bid from the family's leader (Carol) to define the interview as a request for advice from Jackson about how to control Bruce, and a humorous refusal by Jackson to accept that definition.

It is followed next by two decisive moves from Jackson:

(1) Appealing to Bruce's leadership of his own behavior (sequence beginning "have you ever asked Bruce what to do") – which defines Bruce as not the problem and

(2) The first paradoxical instruction to the parents. ("Maybe you could have an agreement that Bruce would not do anything that (Carol) told him – that all his discipline would come from his Dad") This defines the parents' style of leadership as the thing to change, and further defines Jackson as the person who is making the suggestion. This is furnished with a disingenuous grace note: "maybe you already have" tried something like this – to make it seem Jackson is not suggesting anything they wouldn't have thought of themselves.

In the second half of the interview where the consequences of this position are worked out, Jackson's style of leadership is more relaxed and subtle. His initiating posture (7) is less insistent, and his control is clearer as he gets what he wants. Carol's role shifts from leader of the parent faction to patient opposite Jackson as therapist. The alliance between Jackson, Norman and Bruce firms up. Contention between

Jackson and the parents is confined to shorter and shorter stereotyped episodes, and he spends longer stretches in one-to-one contact severally with Bruce, with Carol and with Norman.

How did he do it? Let us look at some details of the verbal contest. We will go back over the same ground as we described above, paying attention to the words. The explanation will take us a little away from the subject of kinesics, but it will show the anatomy of the bargaining process to which the movements are related. We hope it will show enough about Jackson's verbal tactics to understand why the midpoint break in the pattern comes where it does.

We are indebted to Lynn Hoffman, a colleague of Jackson's, for the language used here, - that of positive and negative feedback in psychotherapy. At the beginning of the interview, the parents take the "control" position and Jackson takes the "difference" position. For the first few exchanges these are offered alternately, and they correct each other, so that what results is a steady state of oscillation between the two positions. In cybernetic terms, this is negative feedback. One could imagine an escalation of ever stronger counter-positions which would produce the same result over a longer time.

Jackson's first strategy is to introduce positive feedback. He in a sense joins the parents by asking them to imagine what would happen if Bruce were completely, or at least very obedient. They are at a loss to respond. Jackson suggests it would put a strain on the marriage, since they would then have to argue over whose children were the better behaved. Jackson himself called this a "run-away," since by taking the opposition away from the opponents, it produces a skidding of the argument to a different level.

As we say above, Carol's recovery from this move is a strong bid to Jackson to take a corrective (negative feedback) position with respect to Bruce's fire-setting and Jackson replies with a joke, followed by the paradoxical instruction that things should continue as they are: Bruce should ignore his stepmother and obey his father. This is positive feedback of an oblique sort - it forces them to acknowledge the split in the family by behaving in terms of it.

Another way of understanding the paradoxical instruction is to say that Jackson resolved the struggle between the "control" and "difference" definitions of the problem by combining them both into an instruction: Norman will control Bruce and the parents will differ, because whatever Carol thinks, Bruce will pay no attention to her. The instruction is a prescription for things to continue as they are, only on purpose.

Dance

Our final metaphor is one in which the members of the group are assembled for a dance. We could imagine them on a stage, or in a field on a summer day, or assembled for a ritual war dance. The conventions of the event require that they remain seated throughout however, so their movements will mostly take the form of rocking in their chairs. The children have only recently learned this – they roll around quite a bit and sometimes run out of the room.

The dance begins with ritual greetings. Jackson is at the entrance to the dance ground and bows each family member on. The parents enter with their baby Brian between them, helping him walk, the parental archetypes.

Jackson, the leader, sets the beat, with his emphatic (1) lunges, but at first the movements do not fit well together. The movements and the axes of interaction are not precisely timed together. (We think this is a characteristic of dances which are also unresolved negotiations. We will see that the timing is better in the second half.)

The main synchronous movements we see in the first quarter are the movements of the children with their parents, and of Bruce with his partner and protector, Jackson. But as they get defined more and more out of the center of things by Jackson, they form their own group and go off stage, leaving the adults for a pas de trois.

After the midpoint with the tableau of palms, the movements of palms, the movements of synchrony are in terms of alliances now clearly formed. Jackson grooms synchronously with Carol as he groups the men together. Norman cigarettes in the background as Jackson moves in on Carol.

There are some instances where sequences, once learned (rehearsed) are condensed so that their elements are re-combined and fused. The speech elements I and II in the first half are cycled:

I-I II I-I-I-I II and then there the elements of I and II are combined in III, which cycles twice. In the second half, the elements of the sequence:

Jackson challenge

Carol defense

Norman aside to Carol

Carol arm-cross

Norman speech

are condensed during each of the six repetitions and other elements such as Norman's cigarette are brought in synchronously.

What is going on here? Why should the participants in a psychotherapy interview be doing a dance together? The question when asked from the standpoint of today's student of movement would probably be, why not? It is a common enough finding now among ethnologists, dance collectors, etc., that people dance this way as they talk or work together. The slow-moving picture leaves no doubt about this (see reference to Condon in the introduction). The dance-like features we have described in our interview appear to function in the ways others have described: They mark alliances or bonds. They seem to indicate a compatibility between the participants which allows them to proceed. They constitute a medium through which people are able to stay in each other's presence while talking or working without feeling somehow alienated. Studies of the movements of psychotics, strangers, and people passing from non-recognition to greeting to conversation, all bear on this point. In these studies, the movements of related people are more synchronous than the movements of unrelated or alienated people.

The more interesting question for us really lies in the opposite direction: Not why do encounters between people have the characteristics of dance, but rather why does dance have the characteristics of our animal information system?

Consider the arts with a time dimension: Dance, music and poetry. They add form to movement, sound and speech. The form which they add consists precisely of synchrony, sequence, and repetition. A rhythmic, progressively organized interaction and reiteration of elements, plus the tension artfully produced between meaning and connotation (content) on the one hand and these elements of form on the other, is what distinguishes art from the artless noise in our behavior.

This leads to the idea that art which is a specially intense or vivid or meaningful form of communication, reaches that special emphasis by taking those visible properties of natural human communication which are discoverable by context analysis -- repetition, synchrony and sequence -- and artfully or ritually developing them to produce a subjective sense of emotional significance. Put more simply, the rhythms and reiterations of dance are meaningful to us because they are intensified and developed versions of the same elements of form which we are accustomed to in our daily encounters. Dance makes deliberate the ways we unselfconsciously move together.