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Language, Interaction and National Identity

Studies in the social organisation of national identity in talk-in-interaction

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5 Symbolic Power and Collective Identifications

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One of the still-problematic tasks of sociology is to warrant an adequate relation between its constructs and the processes they designate. The aim of this paper is to respecify the notion of symbolic power, analysing in detail how such a power was achieved in the course of an interview which was considered by members of the Swiss national collectivity as a turning point in a national debate, the so-called ‘Jewish assets and Nazi gold affair’. The analysis will lead to a consideration of how a national debate, its actors and collectivities, are constituted by and constitutive of such a process.

The ethnomethodological respecification of the notion of symbolic power will lead to consider its communicational properties, thus expanding the analysis of media interview beyond the boundaries of its interactional properties through a recentring of membership categorisation analysis on action categorisations. As the interview is part of a political debate, it will lead also to consideration of how a national collectivity may exist for its members through that same communicational process, and how the quality of their membership may be thus subjected to symbolic power. It is thus an analysis of one of the many ways in which national collective identity is constituted.

The problematic adequation of sociology’s constructs and social reality is at the core of Ethnomethodology as it distinguishes between the world as signified by ordinary language – including ‘ordinary’ sociology – and the world of social practices, thus problematising the referentiality of language. Between both worlds, two links are proposed as research programmes: the common-sense rationality which allows members to constitute the world the way they do and the social practices as reflexive constituents of the very talk in which they constitute that world.

Harvey Sacks worked on both programmes under the rubric of membership categorisation analysis and conversation analysis. The first programme aligned with the main researches undertaken in ethnomethedology up to 1974, including publications from Bitner, Cicourel, Pollner, Speier, Wieder and many others. The second programme began 1974 with the publication of ‘A simplest systematics for the organisation of turn-taking for conversation’ by Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson. It can be said to begin at that date insofar as since then, the concern for conversations as actions (their beginning, developing, ending) faded in favour of a concern with turn-taking practices in the course of conversations. Losing sight of the inner boundaries of conversations it came to lose sight of its outer boundaries, its interweaving with other actions and their order.

The progressive double reduction of ethnomethodology to the second programme and of the second programme to turn-taking sequences, lead to a situation where the initially mentioned problematic task of sociology is reproduced in an original way. The question is no longer how sociology’s notions signify social processes but how the analysed conversational data relate to the social actions of which they pretend to be a part or at least a trace. As far as the practices of conversation analysis identify both – the data and the conversation – there is not even a place for the question to be posed. The notion of action itself gets reduced to ‘action in conversation’, ‘situated actions’, etc. Thus the world as it is constituted and experienced by members is somehow lost from sight, as is sociology for the same reason. It is one thing to account for the interactional practices to which members can be shown to orient in the course of their actions, it is another to account for the actions members accomplish through these practices. The former are reflexive constituents of the second but they are not their sole constituents. To put it crudely, what is taken to be a conversation by some analysts may be, for members, calling the police, returning a dead plant to a garden centre or adopting a position with respect to a current debate. The conversational practices in the analyst’s sense are a constituent part of these actions but they are not specific to them and thus their analysis is not adequate to them as the kind of action they are in members’ formulations.
It can be deduced from Garfinkel’s observation that the reflexive practices of members’ phenomena permit us to locate them and to establish their study (1967, p.vii). Garfinkel uses the notion of reflexivity in the same sense as Reichenbach. It does not refer primarily to indexical properties but to the accountability of talk: that talk manifests itself as the kind of activity it is. Garfinkel’s point was that, whatever is done through an action, it signifies in its course the kind of action it is. The inner temporal features of actions are analysable as sequential forms and the action thereby accomplished is analysable as categorisation in the sense of Sacks’ membership categorisation analysis. Together, as constituents of a self-interpreting process, they specify how reflexive practices permit us to locate members’ phenomena insofar as it allows us, observing how talk uses the consistency rule, to locate the categories which are relevant for members. Thus an adequate sociological analysis of member’s phenomena is possible as it has to specify at least members’ relevances.7

Although the notion of ‘ordinary sociology’ is vague, we may use it to designate a way of doing sociology which treats social processes as something which can be identified whilst disregarding the members’ competence involved in doing it. It uses members’ competence as an unexplicated implicit resource, becoming thus — in that respect — itself a talk in social order instead of being an analysis of social order. To say this is to say that, like any talk, ‘ordinary sociology’ can be analysed in order to see how for members it is a way of accounting for social order and is thus to be taken without irony as a gloss of social processes.8 The above restriction ‘in that respect’ opens the space for considering that, unlike ‘ordinary talk’ — it is a rationalisation, a ‘grammar of rhetoric’ (Garfinkel 1967, p.24). It is thus a first step in the analysis of social reality as it identifies typical social processes, although it does not show how it does this and how these processes are thus accountable. I will take seriously the notion of symbolic power as a sociological notion which designates a kind of social process and thus is a point of departure for locating phenomena in order to analyse their reflexive constitution. The promised result is to show how what happened (in members’ talk) can be shown in detail (analytical vocabulary) as an exercise of symbolic power (sociological vocabulary). Of course, there is no promise that there is a general rule for the re-specification of ‘ordinary’ sociology’s notions. The formal rationality of these notions will have in each case a relation to the substantial rationality of the designated processes but not the same relation in all cases.9

Toward a Respecification of the Notion of Symbolic Power

In its general sense, symbolic power is a way of imposing upon others a definition of reality. Thus it is a process both of power and of communication, including the availability and reception of its target population. Both processes — the exercise of power and its reception — are ‘paired actions’, a somewhat unhappy notion as the set theoretical metaphor is blind toward the internal relations between the two actions. I will call them action-devices in analogy to the notion of category device proposed by Sacks.10 The process of producing an item of communication provides at least for three slots, an enunciator, an addressee and a world spoken about — a definition of reality — as well as the internal relations between them. Symbolic power is a peculiar kind of communication process as it tries to impose upon its addressees a definition of reality which includes the very category that identifies the target population.11 Thus the expected reception by the target population includes not only the reception of an item of information but also the understanding that one has (or has not) to identify oneself with the proposed definition of the reality of which it is a part. Symbolic power is achieved only if the target population receives it as having been that kind of communication process.12

The process of reception is not only one of the ‘felicity conditions’ of symbolic power but also a structured process which was initiated in its production. As any question has to include an implicit categorisation of its addressee to make it available for the observation as to whether or not it was answered,13 symbolic power is a specific kind of communication which displays how its implied recipients are potentially available to observe if it succeeded or not.14 Symbolic power is thus at once an argumentative and a social process.15

In the next section we will consider the features of the interview as a published interview to enable us to observe in the following section how the implicit anonymous addressees of its publication are transformed in its course (chap. 4). That transformation of the participation frame is tied to a transformation of the enunciator and the production format. Bourdieu (1982, p 73) argues rightly that symbolic power presupposes the symbols of power, thus challenging, like Fauconnier (1979), the pragmatic analysis which locates the force of performatives in their logical structures. These symbols can however not be taken as somehow ‘objectively’ given, as Bourdieu seems to have it. We will observe how, step by step, the
enunciator constitutes these symbols of power, relying on taken-for-granted knowledge. That knowledge is not external to the talk. If we take it seriously that discourses are socially situated activities, than the members' competence in identifying how taken-for-granted knowledge is used in its accomplishment, is integral to the discourse itself. As that point has methodological consequences, I will come back to it later in chap. 2.

Taken-for-granted knowledge is not a general resource of some imaginary 'ordinary' member. It is knowledge which can be shown to be attributed to the addressees of the interview as members of the Swiss national collectivity, in a particular political issue and a specific institutional arrangement as known by them. Taken-for-granted knowledge is the socio-historical component of any action. We will see in the course of the analysis that, e.g., this knowledge takes it for granted that there exists a so-called 'Jewish assets and Nazi gold affair', that there is a public debate with its actors, that it involves descriptions which can be challenged, and that both the affair and its handling involve a national collectivity and the way members relate or should relate to it and to their past history. All these entities are part of the objective reality of social facts as an ongoing accomplishment of the concerted actions of daily life, with the ordinary, artful ways of that accomplishment being by members known, used, and taken for granted (Garfinkel, 1967, p.vii) that is the 'fundamental phenomenon' for 'members doing sociology'. As these entities are also the traditional concern of political science, the proposed analysis is a way of showing how socio-historical collectives are self-constituted entities. Communicative processes are central operators of the process of self-construction, as imaginary categories (in the sense of Anderson) are involved with which members are supposed to identify.

The Presentation of Data as Part of their Analysis

It is a routine practice to present the data to be analysed by giving some description of them. I propose to treat that presentation as a part of the analysis. The presentation of the data should allow the anonymous reader to 'situate' the data. It supposes thus an implicit membership analysis of the reader's supposed knowledge as not identical with the knowledge which was required for the accomplishment of the self-interpretation of action and of its analysis. This is not only a practical recognition of the socio-historical embeddedness of the required mastery of ordinary language, it is also a practical recognition that this knowledge can not be entirely explicated in the course of the analysis. So far as the few words used to present the data are taken to describe the data for all practical purposes, the presentation itself presupposes shared common knowledge between the implicit addressees and the writer.

The common sense features of the presentation of data can not be eliminated. Just as any 'breaching' of ordinary routines is always local, leaving the 'rest' of social order intact (Garfinkel, 1967, ch. 2; Heritage, 1984), any analysis of social order is always local (Garfinkel, 1996), requiring for its communication to trust on a shared and unexplained common sense between writer and reader.

The consideration of the relation between how a piece of data has to be presented and how it is analysed leads to a further observation. In order to understand what is going on in the interview of President Delamuraz on the last day of his presidency on 31 December 1996, one must know, e.g., (1) that the President changes each year in Switzerland and (2) that it is not usual for an outgoing President to comment upon his past presidency, whereas (3) it is usual for the new President to address the nation on New Year's Day which is also the first day of his presidency. That knowledge can not be observed in the text of the interview but it belongs to it as discourse since its addressees and enunciator are supposed to know that. It allows them to account for its occurrence. It allows them to understand the first question of the journalist which supposes that knowledge but does not presuppose it logically: 'What was the most difficult moment in your year as President?'

The unusual nature of an interview on the last day of a presidency can not be observed literally in the text but it may account for the ways Delamuraz establishes the 'symbols of power' in it and for some reactions to it how it could be seen as displaced, as not necessarily implying an official position of the Government, as a mere personal opinion, etc. Taken-for-granted knowledge contributes to the accountability of the interview, to the assessment of the degree of normality, familiarity and routine character and thus to its accountability as social action. All these features show that members' taken-for-granted knowledge is part of the interview as the kind of action it was. Although it accounts for some important sequential features, it is not punctually, sequentially produced. Thus, members -- and analysts -- who do not share that same taken-for-granted knowledge will not account for these features in the same way.

Taken-for-granted knowledge is part of the discourse as it can be shown to be supposed for its meaning. That feature allows to consider
how different types of analysis are adequate. The analysis of its interactional or textual properties will have to abstract from the discursive properties since it is looking for formal properties which are not specific to that discourse. These same discursive properties are on the other hand central for a sociological analysis if it claims to be adequate to its specificity. The first kind of analysis is thus adequate to an abstracted order of a formal linguistic or interactional kind whereas the second has to attend to the substantial order as accomplished in discourse. In both cases, the ordinary competence of the analyst is involved, even if not in the same way. The matter is as evident as if we say that one has to understand French if one wants to read the interview, although there is nothing particularly French in the textual or interactional devices used in that interview. The still ongoing criticism that to take account of the required members competence involves subjectivity is as senseless as to say that Bourdieu is subjective since he has to understand French in order to proceed to any analysis at all.25

The Implicit Addressees of Newspaper Discourses

The interview was published in a newspaper. We will thus first observe how it was published, looking at the title and the lead which introduce it. This is the place where the articulation between the interview and the newspaper discourse is discursively, i.e. reflexively, elaborated (Widmer, 1999, 2000):

(title)  A desire to destabilise Switzerland

(lead)  Jewish assets, Nazi gold: Jean-Pascal Delamuraz warns against a certain helvetic candour. And against the risks of a rise in anti-Semitic feelings.

In order to analyse the title, we have to distinguish between the intended readership of the newspaper and of that article, both distinct from the readership as members which, in reception, identify themselves with these intended readerships. The intended readership of the newspaper lives in the canton of Vaud, a French-speaking canton of Switzerland – a feature which accounts for its lay categorisation as regional newspaper of that canton, the Canton from where Jean-Pascal Delamuraz comes. These are people not addressed as individuals but as anonymous collective categories: those who may decide – individually – to buy or to read the newspaper, but also, according to the rubric or to a particular article, those who are interested in political news, in casualties, in sports news, those who are resident in the canton or in Switzerland and so on, i.e. implicit category types (Jayus, 1984). As a correlate of the newspaper, these anonymous categories are not properties of some people but categories with which some people are supposed to identify themselves.

One way of looking at these categories is to divide them in to sub-types according to the option a reader has of identifying with them. Thus, to be a member of a political collectivity like the canton Vaud or Switzerland is less optional than to be interested in sports or casualties. The first collective categories are self-organised collectivities (Jayus, 1984), whereas the second are not. Still there is no bond between the newspaper as a Swiss newspaper and its reader as a Swiss reader, as there is, for example between a religious publication and its believer. The newspaper does not operate as an organising element of the Swiss collectivity, whereas a religious newspaper does this for the religious community. More specifically, the newspaper is supposed to insert itself, according to the liberal understanding, in a pluralistic public sphere and in that way to contribute to the organisation of the Swiss collectivity as national community. According to that understanding, the implied reader has the option of reading or agreeing with any newspaper, but he should ‘inform’ himself as citizen. That difference between the option of reading and thus of having an individual opinion and the lesser optionality of being a member of the national collectivity will be relevant in our analysis since we will see that, as the interview is relevant for the political arena, its implicit addressees are no longer constituted primarily as optional readers but as members of the national community. This is something which may account – in this case – for the fact that all Swiss media did report that interview. We can observe this already in the title which says that there is a will to destabilise Switzerland, a description which concerns the readership as members of the national collectivity. But there will be stronger ways to address the reader as member of its national collectivity.

Before coming to them, let us consider the category ‘Switzerland’. It may function as the name of a collectivity or as the predicate of some individual people, as for example in the news that some Swiss people were killed in an aircraft accident. In this latter case, ‘Swiss’ is used as a predicate of some individual people, and the announcement presupposes that the readership identifies itself as Swiss even if they are only members of a part of it, in this case of Vaud. That identification is not automatic. Thus, we would hardly expect that a British newspaper announces that
some European people were killed in an aircraft accident when some French or German people were killed, unless the difference between European and non-European is relevant. That is, the British readership is not expected to identify itself with Europe in the same way as people of Vaud are expected to identify themselves with Switzerland. And this is surely true as well for French or German newspapers. Thus, we may learn something about political integration by looking to the ways newspaper discourses categorise people and events: political integration is a matter of culture and culture is observable as resource for action and inference, e.g. as routine ways of categorising people and events.

The title is not saying that some Swiss people are individually threatened with destabilisation but that Switzerland as a collectivity is under that threat. ‘Stability’ is here a property of a self-organised collectivity and not of its members, although the consequences of stability or instability may of course affect its members. Thus, the title of the article addresses its readership not only by way of an inclusion of its members into a collectivity – like elements in a set – but as members which are part of a self-organised collectivity which is logically distinct from its parts. Thus, whereas the news that some Swiss people were killed in an accident may concern Swiss readers insofar as they are members of the same category of people (but that quality is not affected by that accident), the news that Switzerland is ‘threatened with destabilisation’ concerns them in their very quality as members since it affects the self-organisation of the collectivity which ‘owns’ the category of which they are members (Sharrock, 1974).

This status of being member of a self-organised collectivity which is under threat places them in a passive situation since the organisation provides slots for members in charge of it and slots for members which are thus organised, and they are – as addressees of the newspaper – members of the second slot. Thus the announcement that Switzerland is threatened with destabilisation makes the personnel in charge of this collectivity potentially relevant. Jean-Pascal Delamuraz who is mentioned in the lead of the article – which is part of a larger dossier dedicated to him on the last day of his presidency – is known as a member of this slot. Moreover, he is the one who warns against that risk, – a feature which, as we will see, puts him in a strange situation: as a member of the Government, he may warn the people, but so far as the relevant actions will appear to be neither individual nor private, his warning is to be addressed to the authorities. At that point of the interview, he will appear as somehow above the Government, something which does not fit with the Swiss political culture, where the president is a mere primus inter pares. This troublesome feature becomes relevant later in the interview, as he proposes the core point of what, in his opinion is going on (Chapter 6).

Without considering for now the strange substantive ‘A will’, whose subject is not mentioned, we observe that the implicit addressees of the title suppose a common-sense knowledge of the political structure of Switzerland. This common-sense knowledge allows the intended readers to understand that they are concerned as part of the national collectivity by a threat which they may not face as individual members and for which there are political personnel who should take care of it, thus making both their affiliation to their country and their trust in the authorities potentially relevant.

The title, as articulation between the implicit readership and the subsequent article, opens thus a set of definite inferences along a social ontology which gives the readership a singular place as members of a threatened self-organised collectivity, making it relevant to ask who has the will to threaten Switzerland, what is the nature of that threat and what the authorities will do to counter it.

The lead which briefly introduces the interview, begins by indicating the nature of the threat – the Jewish assets and Nazi gold affair – as something the readers know about since it is clearly in a thematic position which renders thematic news about it relevant. The lead then introduces the political protagonist, Jean-Pascal Delamuraz, who may be understood as a candidate for the slot of the authorities made relevant in the title. He is said to be warning – who else if not the Swiss reader? The lead begins thus a story in a very classical way indicating that something has to be done. It is a manipulation in the sense of Greimas, an act which is normally followed by the display of the competence of the main protagonist to perform the relevant action – something we will observe in the first lines of Delamuraz’s first answer.

It is noteworthy, however, that in contrast with the usual examples of narrative semiotics, the reader is him/herself part of the story. He/she is the one who is warned and who is ‘threatened’ and not some intratextual figure. The lead thus operates a further transformation of the frame of participation announcing not so much some news about what goes on in some part of the world distinct from the reader and its newspaper as in the liberal understanding – but some news in which the reader is implicated.
The reader is warned against ‘a certain Helvetic candour’ and against ‘the risks of a rise in anti-Semitic feelings’. These mental predicates—candour and feelings—are not attributed immediately to the reader but treated nominally as phenomena in themselves, thus locating them closer to the abstract collectivity ‘Switzerland’ than to its concrete members. The candour is said to be ‘Helvetic’ like a general property of being a member of ‘Switzerland’, not as an actual description of the mental state of some particular members. Also, the anti-Semitic feelings are said to rise, a metaphor of curve that is usual in authoritative discourses such as the economical ones which avoid speaking about individual people in order to be in a position to say what is ‘really going on’ to these same individuals, who are supposed to ignore it. Thus this last warning does not announce something any reader may know—although it is about them—but some explanation of why it is so. It makes a causal explanation relevant for the reader who does not know what is happening to him. It thus preserves the participation frame induced in the title, placing the reader in a passive position of someone to whom something is happening as member of a self-organised collectivity of which he is a non-optimal member.

The lead gives also some hints at how to answer the question implicit in the title: Who wants to destabilise Switzerland? Consider the sequence of the warnings. If there had been first a warning against the rise of anti-Semitic feelings and then the warning against Helvetic candour, the reader might have understood that to have anti-Semitic feelings is a case of candour. In the actual sequence, the reader may understand that it is dangerous to be candid in the ‘Jewish assets and Nazi gold’ affair and that this danger may cause the rise of anti-Semitic feelings. Which category is responsible for both, for the danger in that affair—a danger which may be understood as nothing less than the ‘will to destabilise Switzerland’—and for the ‘rise of anti-Semitic feelings’? ‘Jew’ is a good candidate category for that inferential calculus if one admits that it can account for the ‘will to destabilise Switzerland’ and for ‘the rise of anti-Semitic feelings’. There is no logical constraint to do so but there is no indication how to otherwise achieve the relevant inference. In fact, the title and the lead reflect a feature of the interview itself: the threatening category is never named (Chapter 7).

Some features of the edited interview

I will underline only two particular features of the interviewer’s work. First, we can observe that the published interview appears as an edited interview as there is no sign of the participation format of the original interview. There are, for example, no opening and no closing, two sequences which most probably were part of the interview of which the published interview is supposed to be a transcription. The interview appears thus disembedded from its actual origin, a feature which allows it to be preserved as though taking place there and then, in the newspaper, on the date of its publication, which is also the last day of Jean-Pascal Delamuraz’s presidency.

The second feature relates to the first. The first question alludes to precisely this date of publication by asking a question which is possible only on the last day or in the next year since it asks Delamuraz to take a look backward at his past year as president. The interview thus takes on the status of a current discourse and loses the past tense usual in newspapers as they report about something which has happened somewhere in the world, which is a semantic feature of newspapers as actors of a liberal public sphere. In contrast, the interview is staged as if it were happening there, in the arena of the newspaper on the date of its publication and ratified reading.

These features are of a major importance since the exercise of symbolic power—like any performative action—supposes an anchorage in the present time of enunciation. It provides, in other words, a solution to the structural problem which arises from the fact that the regulation of the newspaper discourse supposes that Jean-Pascal Delamuraz is a reported enunciator whereas the regulation of the political discourse as the exercise of symbolic power supposes that he speaks on its own behalf: the reader is thus supposed not only to learn something about ‘what was going on’ in his collectivity and how his future will be, but also about what he should know is going on and what has to be done about it.

Other features of the interview are interesting but they are foreseeable from the already-observed features. Thus, we may observe that the five questions are topically coherent with the first answer, allowing Delamuraz to develop his arguments as if the questions were only the subtitle of his speech. The first three questions are oriented toward the past as it is presented by Delamuraz in his first answer, the fourth introduces a contemporary element—the unique case in which the journalist introduces a new topical element after the first question—and ends up with the future. The position of the journalist is thus not one of representing its anticipated reader by asking the questions he or she is supposed to be interested in, but of aligning with the enunciation of its interviewee.
All these features converge in a staging of the interviewer as an element facilitating the presidential speech as a direct speech to the members of the national collectivity. The only mediating feature is the spatial and temporal distance between the speaker and his audience, a distance which may be disregarded by members as a ‘mere technical’ feature. Thus, the interview was not read as staged. It was only in the subsequent debate, when its status as a well-thought-out interview was put in question, it transpired that Delamuraz’s political staff had read the interview before its publication thus excluding an interpretation of the interview as a careless way of speaking or as not corresponding to what was actually said.

The Symbols of Power: Power as a Category-bound Activity

As Bourdieu (1982, 73) puts it, the exercise of symbolic power requires the symbols of power. As analysed, the discourse of the newspaper and of the introduction to the interview proposes a topical and relevant frame which categorises the readership as members of the Swiss national collectivity. Further, several inferential paths were opened around that collectivity as a self-organised one. That frame is announced in the production format of the newspaper, i.e. in the third person. In order to exercise symbolic power, Delamuraz has to take position in the first person in that proposed frame and develop its properties as resources for his action. That process is ignored by Bourdieu’s notion of symbolic power since he considers these properties as ‘objectively’ given, supposing thus a mysterious causality akin to the classical pattern of explanation, decried by Smith (1974). We will analyse in much detail the first question and the three first utterances as they show how the symbols of power are accomplished, step by step, in a way which leads to a kind of admiration of how artfully it is achieved:

*What was the most difficult moment in your year as President?*

The business about Jewish assets and Nazi gold. Our feeling of uneasiness has come from the nature of the revelations made, but equally from the not very pure intentions that gave rise to them. It is important to avoid two attitudes.

In order to analyse the sequential accomplishment of the symbols of power, it is important to note that in stories like the one analysed by Sacks (1974) the category and action-devices are made available through the categorisation of its interactants – e.g. ‘baby’, ‘mommy’. In the action itself as it is accomplished, the core issue concerns the verbs as categorisations of the action being done, but, more crucially, it is the enunciation of talk itself which is accountable. Thus, it is not said in the story analysed by H. Sacks that it is a story told by children: it manifests itself as such a story since it can be read as an action bound to the category ‘child’, by both its enunciator and its addressees. Analysing how what is done gets done, one makes explicit in which quality it is done. Thus, the mention of the quality of the enunciator is an unusual feature of talk, as when Delamuraz states explicitly in the second answer ‘As president of the Confederation, I say’.

The interviewer’s first question can be taken as a personal question: *what was the most difficult moment in your year as President?* Delamuraz could have answered as a private person. Even the beginning of his answer *‘The business about Jewish assets and Nazi gold’* may still be heard in that production format since he may still speak personally about a public affair. The second utterance about his feelings of uneasiness may also be heard potentially as a personal way to speak about his past year as President. The third utterance *‘We need to avoid two attitudes’* makes it clear: he speaks as President. It is formulated in the present tense and its addressees are those who deal now with the alluded affair. It is formulated in the impersonal third person and not as proposition-bound to some first-person attitudinal verb.

Thus, retrospectively, the distinction made in the second utterance between *‘the nature of the revelations made’* and *‘the not very pure intentions that gave rise to them’* are also a politically relevant distinction. Further, his *‘feelings of uneasiness’* are not personal feelings but (also) feelings as President, that is, feelings which matter for the members of the collectivity concerned by *‘The Jewish assets and Nazi gold’* affair and not only by the feelings of their President as a person.

This analysis makes use of three resources. First, it simulates the work of interpretation of a member reading the interview for the first time, a procedure used by Sacks (1974) which has also the advantage of displaying the analyst’s members’ understanding for the reader. Second, it makes explicit the auspices under which the utterances are produced, that is which is the implicit categorisation of the enunciator. Third, it shows how Sacks’ rule of congruence is used as a resource for the inner temporal self-interpretation of talk: if the third utterance must be understood as presidential talk, than, if one can, one has to understand that Delamuraz spoke as ‘President’ all along and will presumably continue speaking in
this capacity. Note that the category ‘President’ is not named; it is made relevant in an implicit adverbial way: having presidential feelings, speaking as a president etc. The same feature will be observed in relation to the temporal and spatial features as well as about the quality of the implicit addressee, showing that the framing of talk consists materially of social structural features made relevant as adverbial configurations, and not as quasi-substantial entities, as the pre-eminence of membership categories would sometimes lead us to believe.

At the same time as Delamuraz’s answer progressively establishes the membership categorisation of its enunciation, it transforms its temporal frame. The newspaper discourse first anchors the discourse to a calendar date in order to ask about what in the past year was the most difficult moment in your year as President, thus already binding formal calendar time to the institutional time of his presidency. The answer relies upon that institutional time acknowledged through the mention of our feelings of uneasiness which may be heard as anchored in the year as President, in proposing an object the business about Jewish assets and Nazi gold. This object has its own temporal frame and everybody at that time knew it to be a still ongoing business. Thus, already the second utterance can be heard as a move in the business about Jewish assets and Nazi gold, thus bringing the past presidential year in a continuity with the present day of the interview.

In order to observe these transformations and the ones to come, the notion of time has to be understood as a gloss for the many ways in which member order the succession of specific events. By specific events, I mean events which for members relate to each other as successive events in an observable way. The abstract time of calendars and watches is a special kind of time since it is not structured by the succession of events but only by the rules of succession of numbers. The distinction is analogous to the one proposed by Schegloff (1972) between geographical space and relational space. Thus, one can see newspapers as a formal device of social order as they anchor an indefinite number of event-times in the calendar time of the date of their publication. In order to avoid any confusion with the notion of the abstract time of calendar and watches, I use the notion of temporal frame to refer to the ways members order events in a temporal succession. These temporal feature are not added to the events from the outside, as abstract time necessarily does. The temporal frame is part of their very determination as events. It belongs to their substantial rationality. Their mapping onto the abstract time of the calendar is thus a phenomenon in its own right.

Coming back to Delamuraz’s interview, we can observe that he opens two new temporal frames through the formulation that his feelings came from the nature of the revelations made, but equally from the not very pure intentions that gave rise to them: the nature of the revelation alludes potentially to the historical time of Switzerland’s past, whereas the not very pure intentions that gave rise to them opens the temporal frame of the actual ongoing debate during which these revelations were made.

The articulation of both temporal frames is provided by the logical structure of the notion of revelation: the act of revealing and that which is revealed. The orientation of the talk about them is both disjunctive and conjunctive: he had feelings of uneasiness about what was revealed but also for those revelations about the motives. The conjunction is that he had the same feelings about both. The disjunction expressed by but has a sequential feature of asymmetry: the second argument of the connector but mitigates the first argument. As Ducrot (1980) has already shown, but may implicate an implicit enunciator: Delamuraz may be heard saying like everybody, I had feelings of uneasiness about what was revealed but I also have such feelings about the intentions that gave rise to them, thus opposing his way of interpreting to some other way which may be a common way or the way the denunciator understands him/herself. These two possibilities correlate with a possible ambiguity of the first argument, the feelings about the nature of the revelations since it may refer to what passed in history and to what is said today about this past. The first interpretation can be heard together with but implying a common understanding since it would refer to what the public opinion learned about Switzerland’s past (a move in a process of collective memory in the sense of M. Halbwachs), whereas the second is congruent with the interpretation that the implicit enunciators are those who made the revelations and their not very pure intentions (a move potentially driven against an enterprise of collective memory as it limits the scope of relevant events to the events in the debate, excluding the historical events which are objects of the debate). We will see that it is the second interpretation which will be confirmed, under the assumption that the inner temporal self-interpretation of the interview is guided through the use of the congruence rule.

The third utterance, We need to avoid two attitudes, introduces still another enunciator and another temporal frame. It is anchored in the imperative tense, invoking a logical enunciator who says what has to be
done. It is the logical enunciator of a conditional imperative which will be justified as the two attitudes will shown to be wrong. This utterance is a main mark of symbolic power, as the enunciator Delamuraz identifies himself with an imperative enunciation the validity of which is claimed to be independent from whom, when and where it is uttered. It is also a place where we can observe how arguments are bound to social power. It is social power insofar as in that enunciative move Delamuraz changes the quality of its addressers: they are no longer mere readers interested in political debates, they are citizens attending to a political authority. The newspaper becomes thus a kind of political arena which allows Delamuraz to speak to the ‘people’ without any other mediation than that of the sole mediation of the media itself. We will now consider the features of the alignment of his talk thus achieved.

Enunciative frame as structural normativity of an action-device

This alignment is uncommon not only because the media usually conforms at least to the rhetoric of an autonomous place in a pluralistic political sphere, but also because the political culture of Switzerland reinforces the institutional mediations between the political authorities and the citizens. Thus, it is usual that the new President speaks to the country on the first day of a new year but current affairs are not expected to be addressed extensively in his wishes for the coming year. The expected place for such a speech is the parliament, in the presence of the two Houses. This is what the next President, A. Koller, was doing on April 1997 when he announced what the Government had decided to do regarding that same affair.

Delamuraz speaks at an unusual date, in an unusual media frame and he speaks in his own name, without invoking any governmental decision, in fact anticipating such decisions by the end of the interview. In a political culture which prefers institutionally mediated and collegial decisions, such an enunciative position may appear not only as authoritarian but as strange or misplaced. It is important to remember that the formal properties of normality are not only produced in the talk but are essentially bound to the reception of that talk. From the reception one can observe how that talk was accounted for and thus, whether it was a ‘normal talk’ or if it ‘failed’ in some way.

One way of failing would have been not to be commented upon at all; another would have been not to be treated seriously. This happens, for example, if an utterance is not bound to the category of ‘president’ but to his personal character, as at first did the head of the socialist party. Another failure would be to be considered nonsense, as in the first reaction of Martin Rosenfeld, the general secretary of the Swiss Federation of Israeli Communities. Of course, both persons later changed their opinions since Delamuraz’s talk was taken seriously, particularly outside of the country.41

Up to this point, the analysis did not address the exercise of symbolic power itself but how talk achieved the conditions in order to do so. The accomplishment of the symbols of power, to use Bourdieu’s terms, has a double face, the face of its production and the face of its reception. On the one hand, there is the strong self-interpretative sequence of the first three utterances and their correlative transformation of footing, involving all structural conditions of talk i.e. the quality of the enunciator, of its addressees, and of their temporal and spatial frames. This initial positioning of talk is a kind of preface for the actual exercise of power in the rest of the interview. On the other hand, that first accomplishment opens a further sequence after the interview, as it constitutes itself as the first part of communicative process which involves at least one second part, a slot where one can observe how the intended addressees account for it.

That distinction is only analytical: it is in doing the first that the second gets done. In order to understand this, we have to conceive what was done in the first three sentences as an action in an action-device. An action-device has properties similar to the categorisation devices proposed by Sacks (1974). A categorisation device is like a set of categories which may be multiplicatively organised in the sense that one may not only observe the proper number of members in its slots (e.g. the number of parents, of children) but also the number of actualised devices (e.g. the number of families). Actions may be bound in the same way. A denunciation is such a well-known device (Bojanski, 1984). It implies at least four slots: the denunciator, the accused, the victim and the judge.42 To each slot corresponds specific action-programmes: the denunciator may proceed according to very different strategies, partly in reaction to the ways the members of the other three categories act in their own action-programme. I say partly, because the denunciator has a specific place in such a device since he makes it publicly relevant. Thus to denounce is an act with specific conditions of felicity, analogous to the one observed here with respect to Delamuraz’s interview. What was analysed here is thus both the beginning of an action-programme and, as such, the beginning of an action-device.
Action-devices make specific frames or arena relevant. An answer is expected to reproduce the same frame as its question. Thus, a question in the schoolroom is expected to be answered there and then and not, say, at home or in the local newspaper. The same holds for action-devices. This phenomenon is called ‘height’ (grandeur, in French) by Boltanski and Thévenot (1991). It is well observed but it is analysed as a kind of logical consequence of the conditions of talk and not as achieved determinations in the talk itself. Thus, for the reception of Delamuraz’s interview, one will look in the media for the second part and not, say, by hearing the comments of the readers. Thus, as A.O. Hirschmann puts it, the possibility of having a voice is restricted to those voices which can get access to the media although Delamuraz’s talk is addressed to all members of the national collectivity. This means that for the vast majority of them, although they are the intended addressees, they have only the two other possibilities foreseen by Hirschmann exit or loyalty.

These observations throw further light on Delamuraz’s interview. If it had been a speech in the Parliament, the set of addressees which can self-select to respond to it would be institutionally defined by the arena of the Parliament. Since it was in the form of a newspaper interview, it is embedded in the procedures of media publicity, thus permitting any medium to publish (or not) reactions toward its talk. The choice of this form of publicity makes it possible to read the interview as addressing ‘directly the people’. Since everyone may read it without going through any apparent institutional filter, everyone expects to know what is to be said about it by consulting the media. The description of his talk as ‘direct’ is rational on the basis that the regulation of the media access is not restricted and thus foreseeable in the same way as parliamentary talk is. The absence of political embeddedness of his talk – i.e. the lack of category-boundedness of his talk to an institutional setting which displays the same categories as those made relevant in his talking – can be heard as a way of addressing himself directly to ‘the people’. This gives his talk still more claims to power as it involves the use of a powerful category, ‘President of the Confederation’, in a context of unpredictability, at the same time as it confines the majority of its addressees to the sole possibility of exit or loyalty without any certainty about who may be eligible or self-select to answer it. This lack of predictability concerns the expected quality of the possible voices. Although everyone who knows about the alluded-to affair may expect at least some reactions, nobody can know if and how many voices will be published, e.g. in the form of readers’ opinions. Further, there is no certainty about the spatial and temporal boundaries of the voices: there may be – and there were – international reactions and its very accounting as ‘turning point in the debate’ shows that the process of reception is open ended process.4 The potential weakness of the talk – its possible discounting as not normal, serious talk – is also a further resource in the exercise of symbolic power as it produces unpredictability, a well-known feature of some forms of power.

However, although the issue of this exercise of symbolic power supposes the affiliation or disaffiliation of the national collectivity with a proposed identity – as we will see, nothing less than the actions of the national collectivity toward an important debate on its own past – the fact that the process of reception is open-ended is a weakness since it supposes that Delamuraz is not in a position to control it. Thus, although his talk has many features of authoritarian charismatic talk it is not treatable as such because the commonly known features of the public sphere in which it takes place do not permit it. Thus the presence, or the lack, of press censure, of police control or of street violence is an internal feature of talk as it determines what it can become for members.

Analytically, there is no boundary to what is ‘local’ outside of what is made relevant in the talk itself. To treat an interview by disregarding how it was done - i.e. in which quality, through which media and so on - is a way of not analysing it adequately in a sociological perspective. Attending to how it is done brings the analyst to consider the determinations which made it into what it was in the eyes of the relevant members and thus to other data than those with which the analyst began. The endogenous character of the determinations of talk is missed if one imposes an arbitrary (formal) notion of ‘local’ or ‘situatedness’ to the talk to be analysed, disregarding the local determinations of what are, for members, non-local phenomena.

Rejecting and Proposing Collective Identifications

We know that the ‘Jewish assets and Nazi gold’ affair was a ‘difficult moment’ for Delamuraz and that he had ‘feelings of uneasiness’ raised ‘from the nature of the revelations made but also from the not very pure intentions that gave rise to them’ and that, with respect to the affair, ‘It is important to avoid two attitudes’. This imperative opens a space for two formulations which are expected to be accountable as ‘attitudes to be
avoided'. What we find is the rejection of two possible action-programmes and - and since they are the two possible programmes of the same action-device - also the rejection of that action-device. To say that 'It is important to avoid' these action-programmes amounts to inviting the addressees of the talk not to engage in them, that is, not to identify themselves with the proposed categorisation. After the actualisation of the symbols of power, this is a first move in the exercise of symbolic power, a first move which prepares the second, the proposition of the action-device with which the addressees should identify themselves.

It is important to avoid two attitudes. The first is the attitude of offended majesty which would have us to say that we have our good conscience and our history for ourselves. The second attitude would be to beg for pardon, to show by pleading guilty that we are overcome by our predecessors' wrongdoing. Sometimes, when I'm listening to certain people, I wonder whether Auschwitz is in Switzerland.

The first action-programme can be labelled the 'offended majesty'. It is spelled out in its consequences for 'us', an inclusive 'us' which is related to 'our history', thus including both Delamuraz and the national collectivity in the way - already implicit in the lead of the article - in which Delamuraz speaks on behalf of the self-organised collectivity. The rejected action-programme is, however, not treated as actually realised in the sense that there is no imputation that some people identify themselves with it. It is treated as a mere possibility.

This is not the case with the second action-programme which is identified through the collective action of 'begging pardon'. That device is taken to be realised since Delamuraz says he was listening to it. He does not specify the setting of his listening, thus avoiding identifying the proper frame of the relevant communication. But he does tell how he received their talk as it leads him to ask himself 'whether Auschwitz is in Switzerland.' One implicit point is: those who are responsible for Auschwitz have to beg for pardon, not the Swiss people. Moreover, since the Swiss people are known as not having been blamed for Auschwitz, the inference is that those who promote that action-programme at least do not fit with the issues at hand. It is also a way of saying what is a real crime, thus opening the possibility that the accusations against Switzerland do not concern real crimes.

The reality of the second action-programme was assessed in reception. In January 1998, some people, mainly intellectuals, signed a public declaration asking for a moral attitude of the nation toward its past during the Second World War. This opposition, in so far as it speaks about the nation's obligation to do so, categorised itself as legitimate members of the national collectivity, thus also challenging their possible implicit rejection outside it. They read the interview as a refusal of any moral action-device, something we will account for later on. Before looking at Delamuraz's talk in order to see how it could be accounted that way, we may note that their reaction - and that many others - acknowledged implicitly that symbolic power was exercised (even if they resist it) thus fulfilling one of the felicity conditions mentioned above as necessary for its successful accomplishment.

Delamuraz's double rejection displays the usual features of political discourse as it consists in rejecting and ridiculing collective identification possibilities in order to promote his own identification, which will be spelled out in the second answer (Jayusy, 1984; Véron, 1988, p.13). This kind of talk may include at least three possible types of addressees: the anti-addresses which he has now designated and with whom the addressees are invited not to identity; the para-addressees he will convince - those who are candid, as they are described in the next answer and the pro-addresses, those who identify with his proposal.

That arrangement is usual in political talk in the struggle among the political parties. However Delamuraz does not speak as member of his party but as President of the country, an enunciative position which may induce that his talk will be understood as defining who is a proper member of the national collectivity and who is not. The opposition of the intellectuals can thus be read not only as an argument against Delamuraz but also as a social protest insofar as it consisted in the affirmation of their proper membership to the nation.

We may note also that Delamuraz does not designate a political party but ad hoc categories which are described exclusively on the basis of their possible action-programmes in the definition of the proper action-devices in relation with the 'Jewish assets and Nazi gold' affair. The intellectuals mentioned above can be seen as such an ad hoc organisation, a collectivity which organised itself only for the sake of giving a response to Delamuraz's talk. Their action reproduces one of the features of the kind of media political communication Delamuraz's talk. Symbolic power, like any power, determines also the choice of the preferred arms and battlegrounds.

The rejection of the two action-programmes can be heard as 'attitudes' although they were not spelled out as such but implicated through the description of possible action-programmes. The first action-programme
was spelled out as 'which would lead us to say that we have a good conscience and that our history speaks for us'. This may be heard as pleading innocence as a possible action-programme of defence in a moral accusation device, a device also indicated through the use of 'good conscience' as description of the accused. The rejection of the second action-device: 'to beg our pardon, to be overcome by our predecessors' mistake by pleading guilty' is still more evidently a possible programme of the defence of an accused.

The rejection of the two attitudes - pleading innocence or pleading guilty - amounts to a rejection of the moral accusation device, since they are the two possible programmes of an accused in that device. This inference is congruent with the indication that those who accuse do not have 'very pure intentions'. The suspicion of the denunciator not only prepares the rejection of the accusation, it opens the space for a redefinition of who the denunciator 'really' is. However, it is important to note that the 'nature' of the accusation was not said nor was there given any definite description of who the denunciators are.

The implicit treatment of the moral accusation has a further consequence. Since in both cases, the accused is 'we', the Swiss people, it would be wrong for members which can be categorised as part of the 'we' to occupy the other slots of the moral accusation device - the slot of denunciator, of victim or of the judge - since it is in the logic of 'normal' accusations that an accused does not accuse himself, is not himself the victim nor his own judge. Insofar as the denunciators are not properly identified, the 'we' can be heard excluding it. Further, the possibility is open that a single category may occupy the slots of the denunciator, the victim and the judge, something which runs against the 'felicity conditions' of an denunciation action-device (Boltanski, 1984). If it is so, there may be something wrong with the accusation or with the people who make it, or both. Here, both will occur: the accusation will be said to be an aggression (second answer) and those who may occupy the other slots of the accusation will appear as aggressors. A moral denunciation device will be made relevant, but the Swiss will appear as victim and the former denunciators as responsible for lacking gratitude and provoking anti-Semitism (third answer). Finally, at that point it will also be clear that 'Jew' is the proper category for the identification of the members which occupy the unnamed slots.

The analysis of the first move in the exercise of symbolic power shows that the practical reasoning involved is not limited to what is said but includes necessarily who does it and to whom. I show that the imaginary community (in the sense of B. Anderson), is not only a semantic

presupposition but essentially a pragmatic one: in order to understand the interview, the addressees have to effectuate inferences and decisions about their own membership in such community. It is a major shortcoming of ordinary communication studies that they usually separate the analysis of the communicators from the analysis of the 'contents'.

Describing as a Way of Imposing an Action-device

The rejection of collective identifications was made by using an imperative form. The proposition of the positive identification will be made in quite another way as it distinguishes between what is done and what should not be done, respectively believed.

The second question of the journalist does not address the two rejected 'attitudes' but what was done with the 'affair': 'There is a feeling that the Federal Council was taken by surprise'. Delamuraz confirms that impression, thus transforming it in to a fact which has to be explained: the preceding signs were underestimated, there was Helvetic candour, nobody really weighs what is going on, and so forth.

Delamuraz changes then from a past time oriented talk to the present 'As President of the Confederation, I say that one should not be duped', thus again accomplishing the same move from an evaluation of the past to an affirmation of what should not be done. The rejection concerns not moral but epistemic attitudes: one should not be duped. This is the way the positive component of symbolic power is produced: it is evidence of 'what is going on' - an attack - against a duped candour. The para-addressee is thus identified as duped, (that is as victim) and the pro-addressee as the one who sees that an attack has been launched. Since both, para-addressees and the promoted pro-addresses, are possible descriptions of the accused in the moral accusation device rejected in the first answer, the inversion of the positions is complete: the Swiss people are no longer accused in a moral accusation device but are victims of economic aggression. Accordingly, the former moral denunciators (or victims, or judges) become economic aggressors, people who may be described as 'having not very pure intentions', an ascription of moral motives which will be completed later by saying that they are not to be trusted (fourth answer).

Two further features of that second answer are interesting to note: the Government, first identified in the third person, is then generalised
('nobody really weighs') and then included in the 'we'. In the option to account for a Government as either a representation or a part of the national collectivity, that move performs the second option. We can observe the same metonymic operation with respect to the nation: the Government is the organiser of the national self-organised collectivity as a political collectivity. Through the description of an 'economic attack' against the 'financial market' as an attack against the 'we', Delamuraz identifies the economic country with the political country.

This second type of metonymic identification was very often observed during that whole debate: many stories about what enterprises, banks, assurances or state offices did during the last war ended, with some comment generalising about what 'Switzerland' did during that time as if what any institutional part of it did included necessarily the whole national collectivity. Thus, there is no room left for an objectification of history since such a procedure would suppose that there is a place for an enunciator which is distinct from that which is objectified: a place from which the collectivity could say what 'they' did. The imposition of the action-device 'aggression' as a definition of 'what is really going' excludes that possibility as it constitutes a 'we' which is attacked and which has to trust to the authorities. The relation to the collective past has thus to be delegated to a 'they', the commission of historians. There is a phononinal logic in the possibility or impossibility of a collective judgement about one's collective past: either a 'we' judges a 'they' as historical actors – even if 'they' purported to act on behalf of that very collectivity – or the 'we' identifies itself with the historical actors, in which case there is only room for a 'they' to judge them. In the latter case, there are again two possibilities: either the 'they' is outside of the we-collectivity – something which happened in many countries; or the 'they' is subordinated to the 'we-collectivity'. The move of Delamuraz consists in treating any 'outside they' as aggressors and to subordinate the 'inside they' who have to account for the past to a 'list of duties' (last answer).

Those rejected through the second 'attitude' suppose the possibility of constituting an autonomous 'inside they' in order to judge the collective historical past. They will not be able to impose their definition, even though they distinguished between two tasks: resisting the outside attack and accounting autonomously for the history of Switzerland. On the one hand, the government proposed later in the spring of 1997 a policy which did not address the past but the future image of Switzerland in creating a Foundation of Solidarity (Terzi, 1999). Further, the whole affair dissolved partly into series of separate negotiations/transactions concerning the banks, the insurance, the art market etc. at the same time as the Government was relieved of having to account for history through the agreement negotiated by the main banks during the summer of 1998. That agreement was seen as a kind of ending of the debate, thus operating again the same metonymic identification of the political country with its financial part, but this time the other way around the financial country discharging the political one. It was seen as a 'kind of ending'; however, the press did stress that the accountability of Switzerland for its past was thereby still not completed. The publications of the Commission of Historians provided some occasions to debate that, but this could not find an adequate institutional frame.

The dissolution of the debate into series of affairs and the transfer of the resolution from the state to the banks is the inverse process to the framing of the debate as 'high' in the sense of Boltanski and Thévenot mentioned above. This involution was a solution to the incapacity of maintaining a liberal structure of public sphere because of the metonymic operations which identify the institutions and the people. Thus, the pragmatic possibility of appealing to principles for autonomously judging the past was foreclosed. There was no room left for principles whose validity could have been accepted independently of interests since everybody was presumed to be either accused or aggress.

The practical impossibility of such a move finds its counterpart in today's social sciences. It is commonplace to assert that collective identity is produced through a process of distinction from other collectivities. Although it is formulated in a structuralist way and most proponents of these positions are critics of xenophobia, this definition excludes the possibility of considering the classical liberal solution. As that historical model broke down in the 1930s, Carl Schmitt (1995/1934) still recognised that the definition of a political collectivity through its opposition to other political collectivities (i.e. a creation of 'differences') was only one of the possibilities for defining it and the implementation of economic relations as political relations was not a natural move, even if he criticised the liberal elite as being unable to support the political identification processes. My purpose is not to give a full account of these issues here, but to show that a close analysis of practical reasoning processes gives present history more relief than stipulated definitions would allow and that the same benefits may be obtained, from the reading of past analysis because they too are member accounts.
When we hear on the radio one of the members of the historians' committee whom we nominated, the one who is responsible for the Holocaust museum, reproaching the Federal Council for not having consulted American Jewish circles beforehand, a lot of people wonder whether we're still in a sovereign country.

It is made inferentially available that the member is Jew – both because he is said to be responsible for the Holocaust Museum (a category-bound inference) and because he is said that American Jews should be consulted - and in the same time he has said to be 'member of the historian's committee whom we nominated'. Thus this person is identified as both somehow belonging to 'us' and being loyal to Jews, and thus also identified potentially as a traitor or at least as disloyal to 'us'. Both are slots of an 'aggression' action-device but they are somehow even more threatening than 'aggressors' since they may jeopardise even the national sovereignty, as the end of the answers makes it clear. Of course, such identity politics against Jews is well known from history. Finally, it is important to note that the denunciation of that person is not placed in a political but in a media frame: 'when we hear on the radio ...' opens a public space which includes the 'many people' who wonder whether we're still in a sovereign country'. Thus, there is no institutional frame evoked which would account for the kind of accusation which is made and still less possibility for an adequate response to be given at that occasion.

Although the fourth answer was the one most quoted in the media, it just makes explicit a number of points already raised in the first three. The fourth question was 'Is the creation of a fund to help Nazi victims, to defuse the crisis, a good idea?' The answer - 'No, right now it's a foreign body' - is in the logic of the new action-device: since the 'crisis' is an aggression, such a fund is 'a foreign body' as it does fit in a moral accusation device: 'When bad faith is involved, you have to be careful. A fund of that kind would be considered as an admission of guilt.' The moral action-device is openly rejected - something which formulates the action outlined in the first answer - and for reasons which were spelled out in the second answer, as he made clear that 'we should not be duped'. Even the use of the metaphor of 'a foreign body' sounds like a lapsus as it was much used in authoritarian nationalism, thus reinforcing the implicit charges made in the third answer.
The most quoted utterance was the use of ransom and blackmail in the following context: 'The amount mentioned to ambassador Borer was 250 million. That's nothing but ransom and blackmail!' This characterisation of the aggressor's action is, of course, congruent with the aggression action-device, again made explicit with the use of the category 'the opposing party' which is of course a central slot of that device. The only aspect added here is that the action of the aggressor is thus described as a kind of 'dirty war' in which disloyal means are used. That point is then stressed about Mr d'Amato as he is asked to show 'the same loyalty as we have decided to demonstrate'. The quotation used in reception to formulate the interview can thus be heard as an adequate account of it as it summarises the essential features of the symbolic power exercised through that interview. It shows also a formal feature of reception discourses: the quoted expressions are able to summarise the interview but, of course, they could not alone produce symbolic power. The reception process appears here as a way of articulating itself with the production by taking on its result, leaving unsaid how that result was achieved. The description of an action by members supposes the 'course of action' but does not have to retrieve it. This is also how it opens us the space for possible challenges about the correctness of the quotation as 'out of context', 'not reflecting the author's intentions' and so forth.

Again, there is no identification of who committed the ransom and blackmail, following the same strategy as noted from the beginning. There is a normative ground for doing so. Displaying that an identifying category is relevant and not identifying it is a way of behaving which calls for a normative account of that omission. 47 If it can be understood that the unsaid category is 'Jew' then there is a normative account for not naming it if what is said could be categorised in reception as anti-Semitic. Since the aggressor is said to have 'not very pure intentions', and we found some common anti-Semitic inferences in the third answer – they are not grateful for what was done for them, they cause anti-Semitism, they jeopardise national sovereignty – the fact that the category Jew is not mentioned becomes a part of its characterisation: they are the ones who attack and which 'we' can not even name. Anti-racist rules are placed in the service of anti-Semitism.

Conclusion

The analysis of this interview with Jean-Pascal Delamuraz showed that its symbolic power resides not only in a definition of 'what is really going on' but that this definition is internally bound to processes of rejection of identification possibilities and of the elaboration of proposed positive identification possibilities. The anticipated reception is thus an essential part of it. The internal link is bound to the use of action-devices whose slots include the implicit addressees as well as the denunciation of the opponent. This opponent – 'the Jews' – are not addressed. They are referred to in the third person, thus excluding them implicitly from the ratified addressees and thus from the members of the national collectivity, since this is the relevant quality.

The complex practical reasoning involved can not be seen as purposeful, nor can its account as resulting action. That is, what Bourdieu calls the 'objective determinations' and what discourse analysis terms 'intertextuality' can be seen as something which is accomplished in the course of an action as the very substance of it. To use Bakhtine's terms, Delamuraz could not have control over the many 'voices' which can be heard in its discourse since, for members to be interested in the practical accomplishment of talk as 'accountable for all practical purposes', 'would consist of their undertaking to make the 'reflexive' character of practical activities observable' (Garfinkel, 1967, p.9). 48 The critical point is that is that which is said to be objectively given – as opposed to subjectively conscious – is not a matter to be stipulated by the analyst but something which can and should be demonstrated in close observation of what was done.

The notion of 'close observation' includes a refusal to restrict the analysis to 'local' practices as far as that notion means to consider only punctual operations between two turns of talk. The 'local' practice of answering the interviewer's questions can be shown to escape any meaning of 'local' as a lay category. The accomplishment of symbolic power is local in the sense that it took place then and there, but it could become what it was only because in many ways it included taken-for-granted knowledge about social structures, institutions, an ongoing debate and its issues, practical anticipation of the reception processes, etc. Further, the interview is an element in a communicative process, which means that its account as that specific action depends on some essential features of the reception process. Thus, the feature of being symbolic power depends on its reception as it acknowledges that it was that – 'the proof of the pudding is in the eating' (Stetson 1999, p.97).
Finally, the observation that the national collectivity is pervasively relevant as the implicit addressee of the talk is a feature found to be quite widespread (Widmer, 1999). It has some consequences for the study of public debates. In contradistinction to analyses which treat debates as referring to and making use of resources disposable in some ‘culture’ (e.g. Grompan and Modigliani), but as structural elements of the self-organising practices. Public issues appear as central ways in which national collectivities – or self-organised collectivity – act upon themselves through the mediation of public talk. The close analysis of the logical links between production and reception processes in the exercise of symbolic power is thus a way of bringing under scrutiny the historical processes of self-institution which were at the heart of the work of Castoriadis. It is also a way of enlarging and deepening the processes of ‘bootstrapping’ identified by some branches of systemic analysis.49 It is a promise to gain a better understanding of the complex relations between imagined communities, in Anderson’s sense, and their objectivation as frame of the ordinary life in nation states, as it allows to identify the logic of these processes and how the relevant actors are thereby constituted. This theoretical problem will not end with the nation states as it is at the core of any system of law (Müller, 1997), but the steps to their solutions will help to develop sociology as the study of human actions as self-constituted order.

Notes

1. The analysis is part of a research programme ‘La question des ‘fonds en déshérence’ dans l’espace public suisse. Analyse d’un problème public à travers les discours médiatiques’ (Swiss National Scientific Foundation, Grant no. 1214-05907699/1). I had many occasions to present earlier versions of this analysis and it is impossible to list here all the individuals whose questions helped me to progress, but I will mention R. D. Watson who not only was of a great help on a linguistic level but whose comments forced me to clarify many arguments.

2. Wieder’s distinction between multi-formulative and multi-consequential properties of a question is of central concern here (1974, pp.167-9). In Widmer (1991), I showed how that distinction is useful for understanding how telephone announcements relate to the division of labour in an administration. It is specified in the present paper by relating enunciative properties of talk to their implicit categorisation.

3. I understand ‘Ethnomethodology’ as referring to what was introduced under that label up to 1974 and to the later work consistent with this research programme. The discussion about the so-called radical programme of the ‘later Garfinkel’ is not relevant here, although, as R. Watson reminds me, some arguments of that programme are relevant: e.g., the distinction between formal analysis and the analysis of the quiddity/haecceity of actions.

4. By trace, I refer to the usage in conversation analysis to present the context of the data under analysis, something I will look at more closely under ‘The presentation of data as part of their analysis’ (pp.118-20).

5. To say that a member’s social reality is ‘out of sight’ does not imply that conversational analysis is not adequate to its object but that its object is not that member’s social reality. The criterion of adequacy is not a criterion of good or bad analysis but a criterion for the determination of how an analysis is adequate. These arguments are developed in Widmer (2001), in particular for the sometimes evoked argument that only categorisations and not categories can be described since meaning is said to be always locally produced and thus situated. Strictly speaking, such a stance is self-defeating since it legitimises in principle any talk about meaning. If no element of meaning is generic, the ‘private meanings’ arguments of Wittgenstein apply in analogy.

6. The consistency rule is a variant of the ‘documentary method of interpretation’ (Garfinkel, 1967, ch. 3). In both cases however, its observation has to include not only the utterances but their enunciation. That point was stressed in the notion of ‘description’ (e.g. Heritage, 1984 pp.150 ff.) but it is far from always used as a rule of research. Socio-semiotics, particularly as developed by Véron, provides useful analytical tools for the grasp of these constitutive relations.

7. The proposed criterion of adequacy is based on the difference drawn by Sacks (1974) between categories which may apply to members and categories which apply and are adequate since they are relevant and essential for their actions. An adequate sociological account of an action has thus to account at least for its relevant categories.

8. Although that consequences derives clearly from the ethnomethodological analysis of glossing practices, it was rarely applied to ‘ordinary’ sociology. There are of course exceptions of which Sudnow (1965) on criminal statistics or Pollner (1978) on labelling theory are examples.

9. A similar argument is proposed by Max Weber (1976, pp.59, 129) concerning the relation between formal (e.g. bureaucratic) and material rationality. It is pursued by Schütz and by Garfinkel (1967, ch. 8) concerning the relation between the formal rationality of science and the rationality of ‘ordinary’ conduct.

10. An action-device consists of a number of slots for actions which are internally related in the same way as categories are related in categorisation devices according to Sacks (1974). It presupposes a natural grammar of co-ordinated actions. We will come back to that notion latter. See ‘Rejecting and proposing collective identifications’ (pp.134-8).
11. P. Bourdieu insists that any classification is also a self-classification. This holds, however, for both the producer of classification and for its addressee.

12. Both aspects – the interactive feature of power processes and the control over the recipient – are analysed by Watson (1990) in the case of a police interrogation.

13. The analysis of Schegloff (1972) demonstrates that the first part of an adjacency pair does not only produce a slot for a second pair part but also an implicit categorisation of both, the enunciator of the question and of its addressee. The specificity of remote media communication will be addressed latter on.

14. The second pair part of symbolic power action is a source of contingency as a property of public sphere. It is significant that Bourdieu ignores that contingency as he ignores public sphere, a point on which I agree with Alexander (1995).

15. Although I do not propose to discuss that point in detail, it is interesting to note that the more argumentative elements of public debates as associated with the position of Habermas and the more social analysis of them, e.g. by Pizzorno, appear as two aspects of the same process. It is one more empirical evidence of the ethnmethodological stance that the cognitive and the social elements of actions are necessarily bound together (Sharrock and Watson 1991).

16. That phenomenon is usually called intertextuality in discourse analysis but its use is more often stipulated than consistently observed.

17. I take this to be one of the ways in which we can observe the endogenous causality as rationalities discussed by Garfinkel (1967, ch. 8). The role usually attributed to culture thus becomes an observable feature of action in the form of the specific 'mastery of ordinary language'. That mastery defines socially any member able to adequately observe an action, be it or not a member categorised by that action. The use of 'member' clearly differs in Garfinkel's and in Sacks' writings; in Garfinkel's sense it is close to the competence of an observer, in Schütz's sense. That Garfinkel did not consider systemically the socio-historical specificities of the 'mastery of ordinary language' – his analysis of the 'good organisational reasons for bad clinical records' (1967, ch. 6) is a brilliant exception – had major consequences for the development of ethnomethodology as sociology. One of them is the sometimes confused invocation of an 'unique adequacy criterion' as part of the radical, work-studies programme of the so-called 'later Garfinkel'.


19. These concerns escape today's mainstream poliitology and communication studies as well as most critical discourse analysis and cultural studies, although for other reasons.

20. In Widmer (2001) I show that in ordinary conversation analysis, there may be no continuity between the presentation of the data and their analysis insofar as the presentation uses categorisations which are neither analysed nor recognised as resource. This also shows that the access to the formal procedures requires common-sense knowledge of social structures, that knowledge is used as a not-explicated resource. The notion of the context-free and context-sensitive properties of conversational practices becomes thus a gloss for that common-sense practice.

21. The sometimes ritualistic invocation of order as 'locally produced' points implicitly to that same feature since there is no sense of speaking of 'local' if there is not something 'around' it. The presentations show what is 'non-local' and used as implicit resource. The locally-situated properties of practices are of course observable but they are not identical with the actions thus produced. The latter have to be added 'artificially' through the analyst's introductory presentations.

22. The difference is classically addressed as the difference between presuppositions which affect the truth value (e.g. the question presupposes that the addressee is president) and those which are indifferent. Since the question makes sense – although a different one – if Delamuraz had still been president in 1997, this knowledge is not logically presupposed.

23. I take the Pierce-ian notion interpretant to address the same issue. This is one of the major points of convergence and of complementarity between Ethnomethodology and the socio-semiotics derived from Pierce, e.g. the work of Véron.

24. The criticism is against a reduction of sequentiality (i.e. the temporal self-interpreting process) to turn taking sequences which leads to the assumption that if there is something 'institutional' about a given talk it has to be observable in the later sense. That point is discussed inter alia by Moerman (1988).

25. These criticisms can be explicated as a confusion between the members' knowledge that is required for the understanding that a communicative action took place and the position of a member who self-selects as its possible addressee, thus becoming a part of its action-device. Like the discussions about participant observer, it may be clarified through the two notions of member evoked.

26. This form of analysis is greatly inspired by the works of Véron on the 'contracts of reception' and of Dayan (1992, 1996) on the identification processes of members' reception of discourses.

27. The 'liberal understanding' is here a member's gloss for an institutional arrangement as it is normatively accounted but which is not always observable. Not only do media sometimes exercise political power but they routinely publish political or commercial press release as if they were newspaper
The notion of ‘public opinion’ is not taken as something which may be observed by counting opinions, but as a discursive device which is used in public debates as resource for the organisation of arguments and their potentiality for collective identification processes (Landowski, 1989).

In French, there is no identified subject ‘we’, it is the abstract ‘one has to’ (il faut), quite distinct from ‘we have to’ (nous devons).

Communication studies teach that a proposition may be challenged either by attacking its ‘content’ or its enunciator. In fact, all structural determinations are vulnerable including their spatial and temporal frames, and foremost, these challenges are not external to the properties of talk but internal to it as it consists both of how it was produced and how it was accounted by members. A special issue, which is not discussed here, is how people from outside of the country, and thus not primary addressees of the speech, nevertheless are considered as enunciators in the national debate. Part of the answer is in the relevance of the ‘aggression’ device (see pp...), but it is only a part.

The device includes ‘at least’ these four slots because there may be others. ‘Witness’ of the crime, ‘offender’ as the result of the search procedure, ‘the public’ which is potentially relevant in public legal settings. The point is here twofold: an action-device may have more than two slots, thus, that there is a third is not an ‘expansion’ of some basic two-slots unit as it is taken in literature (e.g. Stets 1999, p.87); and this is so because the relation between the slots is not ‘empirical’ but ‘relatively apriori’ or conceptual. The observation by members that a crime was committed without witnesses indicates that the category witness is relevant, even if there are no witnesses. As R. Watson reminded me, the Garfinkel (1956) study of degradation ceremonies is another example of action-device.

That feature is part of the non-institutionalised character of the talk as one can observe, by contrast, with court room procedures (Pollner, 1979).

It should be noted that the co-referentiality implied by the inferential calculus can not be established on a purely linguistic basis. One has to understand what is done and meant in order to show how it is done and meant. The inferential calculus is not semantic but based on social knowledge.

At least some action-devices have the following logical constraint: in their use, they suppose that members which are said to occupy their slot are identified through categories which are at least not exclusively tied to the slot they occupy. Formal institutions like the court room use categories which designate the function: but, even there, the story of some judgement suppose the use names of those who occupies these functions. It is interesting to note that the action-devices are named – in contrast to just being used – in a retrospective formulation, a perspective which allows to see social reality as ordered (Rawls 1987, p.141, note 8), that is as institutionally embedded. Further, the selection between common names and proper names appears to follow the rule proposed...
by Sacks and Schegloff (1979). The relation between the categorisation of members through action-devices and through membership category devices is still to be explored.

46. Elements of that discussion can be read also in Schmitt (1991/1937) and in its critics (e.g. Löwith, 1991/1935). The discussions about the replacement of moral authority with an industrial and technical one is also of great interest, and not only for the understanding of the past.

47. There is a general formal point here: omissions as well as negative assertions by members refer implicitly very often to slots in action or category devices (Widmer 1986). They are the routine basis for lay observations that a question was not answered (action-device) or that a couple does not have children (category device). Thus, my use of ‘normative account’ does not refer to the fact that there are anti-racist laws but that the descriptions show the omission of the identification of a relevant slot in the action-devices used (moral accusation and economic aggression). The anti-racist law is thus bearable as a possible resource for motivating this omission.

48. Although most of ethnomethodology is compatible with Max Weber’s sociology, the point that intentions are attributed to actions and as such are members accounts, marks a crucial distinction.

49. See Dupuy (1992, pp.217-24 and passim) for a very illuminating presentation about this line of reflection.

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Appendix: Text of an interview with Jean-Pascal Delamuraz

(title) An intent to destabilise Switzerland

(lead) Jewish assets, Nazi gold: Jean-Pascal Delamuraz warns against a certain Helvetic candour. And against the risks of a rise in anti-Semitic feelings.

1. What was the most difficult moment in your year as President?

The affair regarding Jewish assets and Nazi gold. Our feeling of uneasiness has come from the nature of the revelations made, but equally from the not very pure intentions that gave rise to them. It is important to avoid two attitudes. The first is the attitude of offended majesty which would have us to say that we have our good conscience and our history for ourselves. The second attitude would be to beg for pardon, to show by pleading guilty that we are overcome by our predecessors’ wrongdoing. Sometimes, when I’m listening to certain people, I wonder whether Auschwitz is in Switzerland.

2. There is a feeling that the Federal Council was taken by surprise.

Absolutely. There were a few warning signs, but they were all underestimated. We knew that certain senators with a certain amount of support put many researchers onto investigating the problem for a period of three years. What surprises me is this Helvetic candour with which we receive these attacks. Nobody really weighs what is going on nor do we seem to see that in addition to obstructive research into historical truth, there is also a formidable political intent to destabilise and compromise Switzerland. It had links in London and focused on nothing less than destroying the Swiss position in the [international] financial market. As President of the Confederation I say that one should not be duped and that people have tried with all the means at their disposal to undermine the Swiss position. It’s one thing to tell the truth and to do so unconditionally. It is another thing to sow disinformation. Economic competition is fierce and this affair demonstrates that.

3. Were you surprised by the content of the revelations?

By their extent, yes. But why does nobody say anything about the behaviour of others? The Allies were a part of this just like us. With very rare exceptions there’s no mention of the services rendered by Switzerland to the side of liberty. Nor should we forget that Switzerland was a welcome refuge for Jewish assets that were in danger of disappearing. There’s no doubt that recognition of that fact is somewhat sparing. What I fear are the effects caused by this operation. Even if it has a happy ending, it will have, unfortunately, unleashed negative reactions in Switzerland, anti-Semitic reactions. When we hear on the radio one of the members of the historians’ committee whom we nominated, the one who is responsible for the holocaust museum, reproaching the Federal Council for not having consulted American Jewish circles beforehand, a lot of people wonder whether we’re still a sovereign country.

4. Is the creation of a fund to help Nazi victims, to defuse the crisis, a good idea?

No, right now it’s a foreign body. We need to let a little more water flow under the bridge. When bad faith is involved, you have to be careful. A fund of that kind would be considered as an admission of guilt. The amount mentioned to ambassador Borer was 250 million. That’s nothing but extortion and blackmail! Right now we need to clarify the facts, quickly, and above all transparently. I hope that the opposing party, if I can put it that way, will be prepared to give us all of their information, because it’s not a good policy to concoct revelations every two weeks. We expect from Mr D’Amato the same loyalty that we have decided to demonstrate.

5. Do you think that the truth will be revealed?

With a committee put together as well as ours is and with our brief we should be able to place replies alongside the questions. I’m expecting purely factual replies. The political interpretation that Switzerland will submit them to will be the government’s business.

Denis Barrelet, 24 Heures, 31 December, 1996.