Almost all EG’s “commentary” was communicated through slight penciled tick marks, checking off passages of particular interest; less often, he added an occasional brief marginal comment, encouraging a trend of thought in one direction as opposed to others. Thus, pages 7 and 39 show EG’s marginal comment “interesting” and his characteristic marks. (All pages so marked are included; I redacted a few marginal comments I later added to the typescript.)

EG’s comment on the footnote on the bottom of page 47 takes issue with my denial of the genuine “performative” force of baseball fans (as distinct from the umpire) shouting their hope or opinion that a base runner is out. EG’s note reads: “but their out has a performative element too, no? — i.e., commitment to emotion.” (In this, EG extends the scope of J. L. Austin’s original conception of a performative speech-act, in which saying “x” is perforce doing x, as in the marriage vow “I do.” He thus reads the term in a way that embraces enacted or emotive performance in a “dramaturgical” sense as much as a socially binding authoritative sense.)

EG’s concluding comments on page 52 and the backside of that page read as follows:

This paper could be viewed as an effort to treat surrealism as a central prefigurement of the intellectual life to come, but that isn’t quite a frame topic. In process some weaknesses are exhibited:

1. A literary focus on individual artists and critical comments made about them by various hands. This is the wrong frame for social science.

2. Very great diffuseness.

3. An over-willingness to rely on popular commentators of no professional status in social science.

4. In consequence, it would be too easy to see the paper as an unorganized outpouring.

Over

5. Moves back and forth between description and high moralizing.

6. Uses technique of formulaic history.

But it has merit.

1. Surrealism is a great topic and its connection to Garfinkel, et al. is useful and new.

2. Material on homosexual camping is very interesting.

3. Could have been on the ironic self view as a key (time on, etc.).

B++
THE UNCERTAIN TRIUMPH OF SU REALISM

Michael Delaney
Anthropology 529
Dr. Irving Goffman

December 20, 1970
Now in terms of frame analysis, the definitional meaning-structure of a given activity and what can go on within it, there is an obvious distinction to be made between the plastic arts and the "living" arts, e.g. theatre. Dali's works for the most part played with the internal frame structure within the prefigured ground of the literal picture frame. Duchamp's ready-mades shifted attention to the definition of picture-viewing as an activity and the meaning and value of an art-work. His works present an interesting middle ground, a suspension of interest between the object per se and the meaning imposed upon it from without its self-contained frame of reference.

There were also the gentle, whimsical activities of Breton as when he unconcernedly ate lunch in the theatre, pretending to disattend the bemused reactions of other theatre-goers and the more malicious pranks of disruption and commotion-causing.*

More relevant to the contemporary scene, however, are the events first "put-on" by the Dadaists, in which the principle of aggressing against the audience reached its archetypal status. In *Relache* by Picabia, held in 1924, controlled pandemonium raged:

Spotlights were beamed directly into the eyes of the spectators, making it difficult to see what was taking place onstage. Unstage, the dancers went through their movements. A naked man and woman, standing motionless in the poses of Cranach's Adam and Eve, were intermittently illuminated, while downstage, a man dressed as a fireman constantly poured water from one bucket to another. A man, also unrelated to the dancers or the other performers, was sitting on a chair near the edge of the stage, and occasionally he would stand and walk back and forth. 16

*Breton likened his activities to "experiments" in some sense in the scientific spirit. Garfinkel's experiments using his students closely parallel many reported in the surrealist literature. It would not be at all incorrect to label them "surrealist experiments."
In addition, the surrealist film face Entr'acte was shown during the entr'acte. How modern it all seems! Strobe lights, intermittent "nonsensical" activity, unrelated mechanical animation—even mixed media. And this, of course, only a prelude to Artaud's super-spectacle light shows which have eventuated in more modern times to acid-rock sense-orgies and Happenings.

Underlying all these activities there is a curious hovering between the epistemological poles of Realism and Nominalism. Art is art because it is defined as art. Speech is magic and word becomes flesh.

Above all, the surrealists pioneered the conscious withholding or manipulation of the typified frame signals of theatre-going. The acts are geared to an audience but that audience is deprived of the framing brackets which would allow a meaningful interpretation of what is going on. (But note well: the key feature and the chief source of glee is, like in a practical joke, the asymmetrical awareness context, the crucial distinction between the aggressor and the aggressed against.)

These performances are set up so as to indeed systematize confusion, in large measure by emitting a multiplicity of multi-tiered and contradictory cognitive signals, and so creating something approaching a free flow of frames, quickly shifting as in a dream state, and permitting no solid grounding. The audience becomes a spectator of its own cognitive rape.

If the performance comes off, there is no resolution, most certainly no catharsis. The frame is not cleared and the activity is left in suspended animation, unconsummated, anomic. The audience is left to sort out its responses to what has happened to it more than to certify what indeed it has witnessed.
In the theatre, these early performances presaged the movement away from the (thing)play to the activity playing (which, for adults is likely to include elements of aggressive fantasy.) This separates the Dada-surrealist productions from the carefully manipulated, ever-so-tenuous framing devices used by Pirandello.

By striking out against the basic rules implicit in traditional theatre-going and art-viewing, surrealism began its seminal assault on the underlying structure of rule-governed behavior. Of course, such a project could never fully succeed, but as we shall see, it has certainly helped confuse a wide range of behaviors. At this point, the Cheshire cat had gotten out of the bag, if only its unreadable grin was showing.

That depriving the audience of frame brackets soon became accepted as a hallmark of the surrealists, is nicely illustrated by the film critic Parker Tyler. He relates how a 1915 film, La Folie de Docteur became labeled "surrealist" because "the 'framing story' footage was missing from the print." The sequence leading up to a scene using anamorphic images had been lost and the audience saw only the hallucinatory scene. 18 (Incidentally, Tyler notes how losing that footage was "a perfect example of doing and undoing by the operation of 'objective hazard.'") 19

In all this, the audience is not left completely without defenses. Given the theatrical setting, they would usually have at least the bare minimum option of walking out (an option that is not granted in other fabricated situations such as interrogations and the "living theatre" of People's Courts.) The basic modes of response would appear to be three: tedium, outrage, or fascination. Furthermore, they can attempt to isolate the intentions of the perpetrators and thus re-ground what they have been subjected to. If the producers of such events can be typified as "unpredictable."
Camping is a particularly slippery case of time-on behavior. In a short little state of behavior, it conveys a whole raft of multi-level signals and yet manages to sustain a frame coherence all its own. Among the signals thrown off, in the in-group, anyway, may be that (1) the individual is "gay", (2) he mocks his gayness and the extreme tenuousness of the gay life, (3) he ambivalently acknowledges the straight perjorative definition while (4) ambivalently mocking it and mocking himself for not being "straight", i.e. mocking what it mocks which is himself, (5) giving vent to a certain despair cloaked in perverse irony.

An interesting issue arises here, that of expressive competence and the availability of culturally sanctioned expressive channels. For how is one to address a love-sex object with a completely "straight" face, the the very vocabulary involved seems to disallow the deviance in question. There is no clear channel of expressiveness provided in the repertoire of legitimate meanings. One consequence of this depletion of expressive competence may be the compensatory vocabulary of gestures, themselves camp derived. The question raised is not so much whether "true feelings" are inside, but rather the problematic nature of any such feelings, given the culture's expressive opportunities. "Proper" means have to be caricatured, transmogrified, in order to be pressed into service in situations abhorrent to the sanctified meanings.

Even camping can be camped up as in the vulgar subvariety of "satire which is funny because it makes no effort to imitate anything well; rather it is a calculated semislander by a parodist with his own sub rosa personality to exploit." 57 Such camp, or rather camping, lacks detachment, role-distance. Take the case of one of Warhol's Superstars: Mario Montez, whose main bit is an impersonation "theoretically inspired by Maria Montez, a second-
Goodman reveals all (or so it seems) about himself which gives him the advantage of employing *ad hominem* arguments against his opponents, and one might add, the glorious ego-trip of being more fucked-up than anybody else, and letting them know. There is a certain problem of audience response, however. Does one clap at a self-degradation ritual? 63

"Tell it like it is" is another demand for frame exposure, but this the exposure of an assumed hypocrisy, especially in a highly charged situation of clashing viewpoints. If usually frantic efforts are made to keep up the polite face so as to prevent any puncture in the tense membrane of interaction, this nasty piece of business challenges the very authority of the occasion, the "ground rules." It provokes, that is to say, rather than conciliates and often, like the put-on function

when the moment of reconciliation is in sight, at the point when dialogue might begin--to prevent dialogue, to guarantee continued estrangement, and to protect the integrity of a beleaguered minority position.64

All the more true when there hovers the spectre of assimilation, the great fear of co-optation which is a rather classic instance of the double-bind writ in social terms.

The problem in semantic terms is that such expressions are portmanteau, dialectical words which are swiftly snatched by the opposition and are shortly found plying the airwaves selling vaginal deocerants and the like. (Of course, there is a reverse appropriation as well, which may or may not be a mocked-up version of the media original.) In short, the words are infinitely plastic. Some might want to question, for instance, the unproblematic truth guarantee of CBS' *news* show, "That's the way it is."

Perhaps, then, nothing need be said about "blow your mind."
This new eruption signals other-direction with a vengeance, a narcissistic circle of like-minded ego buffs, who de-sacralize themselves in the game of exposing their little frame strategies, using their egos as the counters. (There is also a distressing willingness on the part of the T-groupers to spillover their ego-involvements in other small group activities, as Freudian chat was all the rage of last generation's pseudo-exposures.)

We then confront the problem of invoked spontaneity, reports of feeling-states which declare, "I'm sincere...", "I'm telling the truth...", "I'm only kidding..." These might be called quasi-performatives, a further debasement of Austin's "ugly" word.*

* Austin explicitly cautioned against opening up the notion of performatives to all manner of loopholes, "perjurers, and welchers, bigamists, and so on...It is better perhaps to stick to the old saying that our word is our body." (P. 236 in "Performatives" in his Philosophical Papers, Oxford, 1970.) But the disadvantages he wanted to bracket off are precisely what interest us here. Austin eventually concluded that performatives were indeed trivial and he went on to overthrow his dichotomy of performative-constative utterances. Alexander Sesonske then resuscitated the notion as a cross-cutting term in Austin's new trichotomy. Austin equivocated on the point of the explicit and implicit performatives and seemed to fall back on the tabooed appeal to grammar. He collapsed the implicit 'into' the explicit, which simply would not wash. Part of the trouble is that any utterance can be prefaced by the words, "I state that..." and that is reflexively true no matter what the truth value or even sensibility of the predicate.

Sesonske pointed out that performatives can only be legitimate when certain formal relations apply, those in which the words that are the deed must be spoken for the event to occur, whatever the grammatical form. Furthermore, the speaker may be held accountable for the existence of the necessary conditions, implying the requirement of duly constituted authority. In his graphic example, the fans may shout "Out!" but only when the umpire utters it (a true performative) is the runner out. Cf., these arguments in Philosophy and Ordinary Language, Charles E. Caton, ed. (Urbana, Ill. 1963). To say that "Every statement in one way or another is a performative utterance," is indeed provocative but also the cause for some uneasiness.
Given our culture's love-affair with its version of Freudianism, people are continually on the lookout for discrediting signals. The Chinese, who are crafty in such matters, have this bit of wisdom from the Tao Te Ching: "He who defines himself is not distinct." People can be highly sensitive to inverse signaling. Even if the speaker's side gestures all fit when he says "I'm serious...", we may be inclined to ask why did he refigure his utterance and thus anticipate our suspicions? Could it be that the speaker is ambivalent enough so that his self-reported state is a form of reassurance, as if striving for that "reinforcement from within"? Or is the speaker in a gaming posture, which will indicate a new set of alignments, for surely there is a difference between an interaction perceived as spontaneous and one perceived as a strategy session for some ulterior motive. We have different norms for each, and different punishments for those who break the rules: a deceiving president may be readily forgiven while a lying lover may be shot.

Everyday life brims with possibilities for the onset of such emotional-cognitive anomie, subjecting interactants to all sorts of fits and starts. R.D. Laing calls them "knots, tangles, fankles, impasses, disjunctions, whirligogs, bings." He gives us the story of Narcissus as lived by Jack and Jill:

To undistort herself, she finds Jack to distort her distorted image in his distorting mirror.
She hopes that his distortion of her distortion may undistort her image without her having to distort herself.

Caught in a reverbrating double-bind, the interactants may find themselves locked into interlocking mazes where clarification becomes progressively (or is it regressively?) less possible.

Perhaps we can recall Dali's systematized confusion at this point. Even he had to admit that he could not distinguish when he was spoofing and when not—and neither could his audience.
Nevertheless, while any system of thought and its implicit recommendation for a certain type of consciousness, must be held accountable for its contents, such movements are but crystallizations of a reality that already exists in the minds of a people which simply await articulation. That surrealism tried to synthesize a new mode or relating to a world gone awry speaks well for its moral impulse. The problem now is to contain its incipient nihilism.

We live in a recursive age which as Lifton has done so well to remind us is an adaptation, a survival technique. If we have all become partipant observors of our own lives, and re-cycled our attention to a reality once-, twice- or more removed from its living immediacy, this may indeed be because we are all, in this age of Overkill, in some sense "survivors."
   e. anti-biological from animal health 
   But it has merit. 

1. Surveillance is a great topic + so 
   connection to Gandhian stuff is useful 
   to me. 

2. Material on homosexual activity is 
   very interesting. 

3. Could have been on the prime seep view 
   as a Key (Time & etc.)