Egon Bittner: Introduction to the Special Issue[1]

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This *festschrift* issue of *Ethnographic Studies* pays tribute to Egon Bittner (1921–2011), a phenomenologist and sociologist who made extensive and fundamental contributions to ethnomethodology, ethnography, organisational sociology, the sociology of the professions, and to the study of police and police work.

Providing a time line of inquiries, identifying continuities and commonalities in a writer's work, is subject to a form of 'analytic irony': such a discernment is a reconstruction based on a particular reading at a particular time, where this reading is made under the auspices of particular, occasioned relevances. Furthermore, such discernments are ad hoc and made for the practical purposes of writing an introduction or editorial notes. While it is possible to discern an empirical/programmatic relationship to Bittner's studies, e.g., of organisations, professions and police work, it is only one among many readings. Given the internal coherence of Bittner's work it may be apposite to say that there are *coincidences* or *family resemblances* between items of his work rather than attempting to stipulate any particular trajectory. Some of these coincidences are serendipitous; some coincidences are contemporaneous as well as analytic.

Hence, in homage to Bittner, this special issue exhibits a range of discussions on the perspicacity of Bittner's writings. The form of this tribute is the publication of a series of commentaries on Bittner by eminent scholars who are experts on Bittner's work, and the reprinting of a selection of Bittner's own papers. These include the publication of an early fieldwork report, marking the first time that this document has appeared in its entirety. This report, *Larimer Tours*, is particularly fitting for this journal because it marks a juncture between his remarkable fieldwork skills and the development of ethnomethodology.

POLICING'S WORK: CONSTITUTIVE ETHNOGRAPHIES OF POLICING

The overlaps between the fieldwork sites (police tours in major US cities), subject groups (beat cops and skid row districts that constitute their beat), and analytic approach between the *Larimer Tours* report and his cognate studies of skid row policing and peace-keeping (Bittner 1967a; 1967b) are evident and considerable. Indeed, Bittner acknowledges the formative nature of the observations made here, in Denver's skid row district, for his subsequent studies with the San Francisco Police Department (Bittner 1987).

In that there is a discernible association between his 'sociological' work and his 'police studies' work, we can see how the ramified issues of 'competence' and 'membership', which were explored by Bittner in his Ph.D. (1961; see Garfinkel 1967: 57, n. 8) and became key concepts of the Garfinkel and Sacks (1970) paper, provide leitmotivs for this special issue: competent membership as an ordinary person in society, with the attendant natural, common sense categorial incumbencies that are part of being an ordinary person in society; competent membership as a sociologist – both as a member of society and as a member of a community of sociologists; and competent membership as expressed in professional incumbencies, e.g., police work, psychiatry, organisational employee, manager, etc.

These predicates found expression in his use of the term *workmanship*: workmanship encompasses the issues of profession and professionalism, authority and authorisation (that someone is recognised to have the *bona fides* for a particular decision or task), and *competence* as an unstated aspect of organisational work. As Bittner stated, workmanship 'involves the maintenance of minimally acceptable levels of knowledgeable, skilled, and judicious performance. The criterion of workmanship, in the sense intended here, always allows—indeed, calls for—reference to standards of excellence that cannot be fully formulated in advance of the occasions of use' (Bittner 1983: 2–3). We may discern an elaborative relation between Bittner's work on organisations and his organisation-specific studies on police 'forces', then. The ethnomethodological explication of (what Garfinkel called) the 'routine grounds' of organisational work, summarised and praxiologised in 'The Concept of Organization', highlighted how members are conferred with particular areas of authority, responsibility, knowledge, expertise, and decision-making powers. In *Larimer Tours*, we see Bittner's observation of competence-in-action. His accounting of police officers' ongoing activities on skid row, and dealing with the men on skid row, is attuned to the display of interpersonal skills that are not to be found in police manuals (Bittner 1967a; 1967b). Bittner glosses these skills as workmanship, which 'consists of the ability to call upon resources of knowledge, skill, and judgement to meet and master the unexpected within one's sphere of competence' (Bittner 1983: 3).

Indeed, the 'workmanship' of the practitioners he observed is reflected back onto Bittner himself by contributors to this special issue, in their various accounts of settings and incidents of his activities as a scholar.

PLACING BITTNER

Reading Bittner's papers, or scanning through the bibliography of Bittner's works that appears in this issue, it is simple to assert that much of Bittner's writing was 'police' research. However, if we just read the titles of articles, or titles and abstracts, what sense do we make of the articles and what is the nature of the pre-allocating work (or 'triage', to use Rod Watson's term) in the service of discerning relevance-to-our-project-at-hand?

Bittner has been accorded different 'bibliographic profiles', as he himself was aware (Bittner 1990a: 2–3), both as a 'criminologist' or 'police scholar', and as a 'phenomenologist' or 'ethnomethodologist'. As Sharrock and Read (2002) argue for the treatment of Thomas Kuhn, a greater appreciation of Bittner's contributions to scholarship and to various research communities is gained by approaching his work not as discrete corpora but as a coherent, mutually elaborating, hermeneutic whole. While suggesting these bibliographic profiles are compatible and overlapping, discussions of policing using Bittner's work-as-relevant-to-policing miss Bittner's works that sustain the influence of Harold Garfinkel, Aron Gurwitsch, Edmund Husserl, and particularly Alfred Schütz. Awareness of his phenomenological and ethnomethodological background is 'necessary as they underlie the Bittnerian view of policing' (Manning, in Brodeur 2007: 107).

For example, prior to interview with Bittner, Jean-Paul Brodeur (2007: 110) had hypothesised that Max Weber had been a key 'influence'[2] on Bittner, as evidenced in 'The Concept of Organization' (Bittner 1965) and 'Objectivity and Realism in Sociology' (Bittner 1973). Bittner's use of Weber throughout his work problematises simplistic appeals to 'influence': Bittner knew Weber's work extremely well, of course, reading both the original German text and English translations, and he cited Weber extensively. Reading his articles, however, it is clear that whilst he had a great respect for Weber, Weber's works served as perspicuous and sociologically relevant sources for critique. To use Garfinkel's terms, Max Weber's work was accorded 'corpus status' within professional sociology and professional sociological theorising. The high profile of Weber's *oeuvre* enabled Bittner to set his own arguments into a more recognisable relief.

This works the other way, of course: discussing Bittner's writing on police work can be informed and elaborated by readings of his writing on ethnomethodology and organisations; yet so too his contributions to sociology can be informed by his writings on police work. For example, Bittner's ongoing engagement with

competence throughout his work on psychiatric accounts, organisations, doing sociology; his writings on police work expand upon and follow-through this engagement.[3] Ironically, in a discussion about police competence, Nigel Fielding (1984) treats Bittner's work not as a corpus but as discrete corpora, and thus misses entirely his body of writing on competence in police work.

AREA KNOWLEDGE: BITTNER ON SKID ROW

One of the foremost themes in Bittner's work, which is heavily implicated in his concerns about 'workmanship', is *area knowledge*. Bittner formulated 'area knowledge' as a core concern in his essay 'Some Elements of Methodical Police Work', reprinted in this issue but first published in his book *The Functions of the Police in Modern Society* (Bittner 1970: 88–94), where he says:

> stories are told with minute precision, mentioning specific names, places, and dates, and they are told in great profusion. That is, many people are known in considerable detail. In addition to this, patrolmen know the shops, stores, warehouses, restaurants, hotels, schools, playgrounds, and all other public places in such a way that they can recognize at a glance whether what is going on in them is within the range of normalcy.
>
> (Bittner 1970: 90)

'Area knowledge' was a summary statement of his ethnographic observations with police officers and organisational incumbents. It encloses the attribution of 'normal appearances' (Cicourel 1968; Sacks 1972) and derives, largely, from his participation in the 'Larimer Street' inquiries at the invitation of Edward Rose.

    This section of our Introduction describes the Larimer Street project, its contribution and significance to ethnomethodological and urban inquiries, as background to Bittner's *Larimer Tours* report. It is concerned with highlighting the epistemological and methodological contours of what would become 'ethnomethodological ethnography', developed as ethnographic[4] method by Edward Rose, a professor at the Department of Sociology, University of Colorado at Boulder, and complemented by the ethnographic report by Bittner.

    Rose led a team of researchers[5] on an ethnographic study of a discrete neighbourhood in Denver. Rose was asked to produce a report of the skid row district (Larimer Street) by the Denver Urban Renewal Authority. The particular interest of the Denver Urban Renewal Authority was the impact of relocating the skid row district elsewhere in Denver, to allow for the redevelopment of the Larimer Street area. The final report, titled *The Unattached Society*, an analysis and gloss on the achievements and practices of people who dealt with skid row, was

published as the inaugural issue of this journal (Rose 1997). However, despite the radical nature of the inquiry, this sponsored report released in 1965 was over-shadowed by 'more conventional' treatments of skid row districts and by studies of 'more infamous' skid rows in the sociological literature (Bahr 1970; 1973).

Rose invited Bittner to join the team – it would provide Bittner with access to the phenomenon of policing in cities, which had started to interest him during his Ph.D. whilst he was working at Langley Porter Neuropsychiatric Institute.[6] The outcome of Bittner's involvement in the Denver Urban Renewal Project is *Larimer Tours*, a fieldwork log, rich in phenomenological detail, derived from 'tours' taken along Skid Row and its surroundings in a police patrol vehicle. These are Bittner's fieldwork notes as he read them aloud.

Urban ethnographies determine the geographical scope of inquiries, often with outline maps of bounded areas (for the benefit of readers, presumably); but these maps do not capture the social and ecological contours of a neighbourhood. A significant contribution made by Rose's team to ethnographic (and ethnomethod-ological) fieldwork is the exploration of spatial boundaries *and how these are oriented to by people themselves*, both users and non-users of skid row.[7] Wherever a neighbourhood is located, 'by far the most important *society* is made up *on the street* by the [people] themselves' (Rose 1965a: 105, emphasis supplied and brackets added). *The Unattached Society* topicalises the routinised use of public space within and outside of the Larimer Street environs, explaining what spaces are constitutive of the skid row district – at different times and for different people.

In doing urban ethnography, fieldworkers engage with accounts of the bound-aries of an area; though the fieldworker must question: the boundaries and lineaments of an area, *according to whom*? Such inquiries would provide pur-chase on 'ratified accounts' and authorised versions of boundaries. For an adequate treatment of the boundaries of skid row districts, it is requisite to consult users, people who visit there, who are the experts on its extent and contents:

> Anyone who counts himself as a resident of Denver's skid row may say that it extends on Larimer Street to Eighteenth or perhaps a block beyond. He may immediately qualify this statement by noting the several skid-row hotels, missions and other facilities located for his use, not right on the street, but within a block or two.
>
> (Rose 1965a: 18)

This involves the development of an analytic program that entails the considera-tion of multiple, situated accounts. The ethnographic report on Denver's skid row,

which was mediated *in toto* by the language of its residents and of people who had contact with them, is instructive for researchers trying to locate and demarcate bounded urban areas:

> Two blocks on Larimer Street clearly represent in physical terms a small part of the City of Denver. In social terms they fully and strongly represent all that any skid row in any city of America constitutes: a permanent settlement of homeless men plainly set apart from the city.
>
> (Rose 1965a: 20)

The methods in *The Unattached Society* identify the area with the authority of those who know best – exactly where it is and exactly what it consists of: 'Essentially it is the street open to observation and comment' (Rose 1965a: 25).

Like Garfinkel, Rose distanced his work from formal analysis, the methodological flaws inherent in *ex cathedra* pronouncements, and the limitations of social research which is itself distanced from the social world it purports to study:

> It is easy for a man on Larimer to notice the great distinction between the peer society in which with good fortune and fair health he can *play* a part simply as a person and the social and economic order of the greater society in which as a menial to a highly limited extent he is allowed to *fulfil* a part that is not of his doing or the doing of anyone like him.
>
> Everyone notices such a difference in his own life between parts to be played and parts to be fulfilled. But each man on the street can note the distinction, not only in his individual experience, but *in the two societies* that envelop him. He can see himself very plainly as dissociated from the general community. It's just as easy for that convivial lot of men among whom he is thrown to be seen by him as an unattached society.
>
> (Rose 1965a: 51–52, emphasis supplied)

In Rose's terms, people do not need the sociologist to tell them what is going on: the latter *re*-describes an eloquently 'well-described world'. Rose was impatient with modes of 'qualitative' sociological research that were just 'different' forms of formal analysis, still characterised by the sociologist/ordinary person dichotomy, and that failed to address Znaniecki's 'humanistic coefficient'.[8]

Bittner's (1973) considerations of 'objective' and 'subjective' rationalities are relevant to the 'Larimer Street' project because he addressed the prosecution of urban ethnographies as an exemplar to highlight the natural language-saturated and cohort-dependent nature of fieldwork:

the taking of leave from objectivism was heralded as a genuine return to what is generally accepted to be the fundamental percept of all social science inquiry, the recognition of the relevance of the perspective of the actor. Above all, however, the newly liberated research stood for the revival, or the reinstatement into its rightful place, of realism in sociology of the kind associated with the celebrated achievements of the Chicago School in the 1920s.

(Bittner 1973: 117)

However, Bittner maintained that the turn away from 'objectivity' was becoming replaced, insufficiently, with approaches to sociology that fell short of the standards of inquiry required for the practical purposes of sociological *analysis*. Weber's work is accorded corpus status within traditional sociological theorising. Bittner used Weber's formal-analytic position both as a foil and as a means of locating his arguments for heterodox sociology. For instance, taking a reading of Weber's (1947) writing as presenting the recognisable case for his arguments, Bittner suggested that:

if anything said about social reality is to make sense, especially if it is to make unambiguous sense, it must be said in ways such that the point of view is either implicitly obvious or explicitly explained. The question is, of course, whether the researcher's immersion in the reality he studies and his emergence into the description he renders satisfied the requirement of making his point of view explicit.

(Bittner 1973: 118)

CATEGORIES: SURVEYING LIFE ON THE STREET

The inquiries that make up the Larimer Street project are characterised by observing and interviewing people, yet the refinement of information elicitation techniques is problematic: setting the parameters for people's interpretation of questions necessarily fails 'to keep 'the natural frame of reference of the subjects' intact' (Cicourel 1964: 108). Structuring interviews and 'devising' questionnaires obtain outcomes that are problematic for the research.

The rigour of the survey is diluted considerably by its reliance upon unstated 'general knowledge' about the group studied, particularly about how subjects perceive and interpret meanings in their daily activities.

(Cicourel 1964: 108)

Aprioristic assumptions and theoretical commitments influence the design or structuring of research questions, which in turn structure people's answers. In effect surveying and counting will 'force the subject to provided precise responses to events and issues about which [the subject] may be ignorant or vague' (Cicourel 1964: 105)

Further to Cicourel's arguments that the categories of a survey may be disjunctive with the persons and the setting, Rose notes that there is movement *between* categories. Skid row is saturated with categories, which are ubiquitous and mutable. Men on the street and people who deal with these men orientate towards these categories. Men make distinctions about themselves and each other using categories. A sample of these descriptions and distinctions includes 'newcomer' *versus* 'old-timer' (Rose 1965b: 62; 67–68); 'tramp' *versus* 'bum' (67–68); 'professional' *versus* 'amateur' (67–68); 'cowboys' and 'gandy dancers' (70); 'young cops' and 'benevolent cops' (91–92). People familiar with skid row use these same categories in their arrangements, descriptions and ordering of the street: 'young policemen' (Rose 1965c: 7; 17) and 'rooky' (10–11); persons who engage in particular criminal activities, e.g., 'fence' (19) jack-rollers and creeps (27), 'thieves' (28–29) and 'bootleggers' (30); 'vagrants' (45); 'working stiff' and 'live one' (61–62); 'permanent citizens' and 'spot jobbers' (64–65).

As Watson argues, the *Unattached Society* project:

> emphasizes that although linguistic categorizations are crucial organizing devices on Skid Row, there is a considerable amount of 'confusion' and 'slippage' in the categorical identities that Larimer Street men assign to each other. There is a central issue of multiple categorization, or transfers of category-incumbency and so on, with the result that public identities may shift even within the course of a single day and anyway are subject to plurivocal variations in definition. This renders even the more elementary operations of survey work particularly problematic and, derivatively, throws a great deal of indeterminacy into survey data.
>
> (Watson 1997: xi)[9]

Recognising the distortions caused by statistical methods, Rose argues that 'we are trying to reach judgements that come out of discussions with human beings rather than out of tables' (Rose 1965d: 4). The assessment and description of life on the street, as experienced by those who live that life, requires an approach that brings the research team into direct, concerted contact with people on their own terms. Accordingly, Rose tells us that 'our basic instrument is the interview. Our concern is not so much to build up a survey of an average man on the street as to get the picture of where the parts fit together in a human fashion as a person gives the story' (Rose 1965d: 4).

So instead of inventing categories and codes, the categories for analysis are provided by people themselves (Rose 1965a: 54–66). Rather than being competitive with people's understandings and interpretations of the street, *The Unattached Society* uses these categories explicitly as organising procedures upon which to build an analysis.

SIGNIFICANCE OF *LARIMER TOURS*

Larimer Tours is a record of fieldwork without any analysis to gloss or provide any 'stylistic unity' (Bittner 1965) to the notes. A contents page and headings were inserted into the text at Rose's office at the Institute of Social and Behavioral Sciences, University of Colorado, Boulder. These, and the introductory statement by Edward Rose, are the only (post hoc) features of the report that confer a 'preferred reading' of observations. In this respect, the document looks 'strange'.

Providing an analytic gloss on the document, as this section within an introduction to a special issue does, and as Anselm Strauss did in selecting extracts from the document for publication (Strauss 1968), hides another remarkable feature of the *Larimer Tours* report, that is *how* it came to fruition. This was not a report written or worked up for publication at all. One member of the research team, Anthony Gorman, monitored a recording device in a room in a flop house on Larimer Street while Bittner talked. As can be seen in the transcript, Gorman occasionally interjected with a question, but he took notes throughout and ensured that the recording device worked properly during Bittner's talks. Bittner talked to his field-notes of observations that he had made while he was with police officers. The text was edited after the recording was transcribed, so that the extensive headings to blocs of talk could be inserted in order that it conformed to the style of the Larimer Street project reports. *Pace* Harvey Sacks' (1995: 654) observations on process versus product sentences – such as pauses and continuers – and the headings, printed here is what Bittner spoke into the microphone.

Bittner (1987, reprinted this issue) informs us how his participation in the Larimer Street project served as inspiration and source material for his published 'skid row' ethnographies (Bittner 1967a; 1967b).

THIS SPECIAL ISSUE

As the first paper (Carlin and Slack) in this *festschrift* argues, Bittner's writing is both compact and dense with (what are now regarded as) core concepts in ethnomethodology, explicating some of the auspices and organising principles for ethnomethodological and ethnographic inquiries. Bittner's work 'sets an agenda' for ethnomethodological studies, not in a prescriptive sense of limiting what may

or may not be 'proper' topics of ethnomethodological studies, but in opening out a range of areas for ethnomethodological inquiry. Yet Bittner's explications moved beyond the phenomenal scope of inquiries by showing how sociology's epistemological, methodological, and theoretical commitments implicated the purview of sociological studies, or, as Alan Blum stated, 'the methods and procedures of sociology are applicable to the empirical practices of sociology as an event-in-the-world' (Blum 1970: 334). In turn, however, these are not limited to topical or phenomenal purview but provide analytic purchase on the sociological approach to topics. Ethnomethodology may have been recognised either as a corrective enterprise that would provide 'improvements' upon existing sociological methods and studies (see Coulter 1974; Lynch 1993, on Cicourel 1964); or as a form of inquiry that was aligned to the incorporation of members' interpretations within sociological studies, perhaps by virtue of its critiques of scientific, objectivist forms of sociology. However, Bittner (1965) showed that ethnomethodology was an *alternate* rather than a corrective approach to the study of sociological topics.

Furthermore, Bittner (1973) showed that approaches that had been recognised as correctives to objectivism in sociology, such as symbolic interactionism, maintain a methodologically ironic position *vis-à-vis* a members *versus* analyst relationship: 'The claim to realism – of faithfulness to reality – is important because its consideration makes available for analysis the manner in which objects come into view and are seen as objects of research interest, and realism can therefore be considered as the methodological equivalent of positivist objectivity' (Bittner 1973: 117).

In this overview paper, Carlin and Slack suggest that Bittner's papers are not open to a strict compartmentalisation but that his 'policing' papers are topic-specific elaborations of his 'sociological' work. Carlin and Slack outline contexts – such as the 'canons of objectivity' or 'canons of scientific method' dominant in professional sociology, and Bittner's work with Harold Garfinkel and Edward Rose – for Bittner's development in ethnomethodology and introduce various themes that are found across Bittner's work. Bittner was engaged in assessing the adequacy of these accepted canons for doing rigorous inquiry as disciplinary achievements, and this became a hallmark of his writings.

Bittner, Garfinkel, and Rose all remained steadfast in their insistence upon analytic rigour. Contrary to the initial reviews of *Studies in Ethnomethodology*, to which Roy Turner (this issue) refers and subsequent commentaries on the field, this nascent field of inquiries was attempting to introduce clarity and rigour into sociological investigations, not intending to counter-balance, dilute, nor repudiate existing forms of inquiry.[10]

PERSPICUOUS SEEING: A LEGACY

In planning this issue we approached a number of eminent scholars we knew to have had a strong relationship with Bittner and his work. We tried to be as non-directive as we could as editors in not imposing a structure on pieces. Of course, in assembling a cohort to invite to write contributions for this special issue we were aware of some basic contours of professional relationships, relationships based on co-authorship, colleagueship, teacher-student, supervisor-supervisee, and geographical proximity.[11] But, as any fieldworker can report on talking with people rather than administering a questionnaire, the depth and range of relationships, occurrences and 'meaningful matters', to use Edward Rose's felicitous phrase, that have been made available through these contributions, are unexpected, far-reaching and profound.

For on top of such revealing personal tributes, such as George Psathas and Roy Turner, we read careful expositions of aspects of Bittner's corpus, which stand as tributes to his intellectual achievements and teaching abilities, by Bob Anderson and Wes Sharrock; Graham Button; Aaron Cicourel; Douglas Harper; John Lee; Peter Manning; Howard Schwartz; Susan Silbey; and Rod Watson. Watson was invited to contribute but, due to teaching commitments in São Paolo in Brazil, he was unable to provide a written contribution. Maria Wowk suggested a discussion instead; an edited transcript of his conversation with Wowk closes this section of the issue. Watson provides an intellectual history of Bittner that places Bittner's works in context in terms of the development of ethnomethodology over the last thirty years. Watson and Wowk show how Bittner's phenomenological sensibilities, together with his engagement with ethnomethodology gave a perspicuous way of seeing. Both Watson and Wowk, and Anderson and Sharrock, advert to Bittner's continuing relevance today, for doing sociology and for doing workplace studies.

We have selected a range of Bittner's own papers for inclusion in this tribute. We have discussed *Larimer Tours*, and the *tour de force* that is 'The Concept of Organization'. As a direct confrontation with the foundational work of Max Weber, this paper provided a (recognisable) sociological basis for a swathe of investigations that were launched by Garfinkel's 'studies of work' programme (Suchman et al. 1999). (As Watson (this issue) cautions, however, the relation to Bittner's – and thereby Weber's – 'take' is becoming increasingly distanced in current workplace studies.) However, we have also included other pieces that are rarely seen, and have some bearing on current developments in ethnomethodology and sociology. Thus, our for-all-practical-purposes selection work in doing editing[12] provides for the distinct 'bibliographic profiles' mentioned above.

Bittner's Ph.D. thesis is a remarkable read, written at the Langley Porter Neuropsychiatric Institute. Bittner examined admissibility criteria for psychiatric patients in the Los Angeles area. Although each chapter is an engaging study, we selected one of the 'methods' chapters – 'The Settings and Procedure of the Study' – because it seemed to be the most self-contained chapter of the thesis (other chapters are well embedded and this methods chapter doesn't depend on a reading of adjacent chapters); and, crucially, because of the family resemblances between this and the studies on which he collaborated with Garfinkel (1967).

As discussed above, outcomes of his police ethnographies – observations that form the bases for much of his discussions of police work – include 'workmanship', 'competence', and 'area knowledge'. Accordingly, we have selected some sources in which Bittner's iterations of these aspects are formulated. 'Some Elements of Methodical Police Work' is a chapter from his book, *The Functions of the Police in Modern Society*; and 'Legality and Workmanship: Introduction to Control in the Police Organisation' is a summative statement of the 'adequacy problems' facing members of the policing professions. In 'Legality and Workmanship', Bittner was acting as *rapporteur* on papers in police research collected together by Maurice Punch but his overview stretches beyond considerations of the state of the art of police research. Bittner's commentaries for practitioners – for teachers and students of policing research – are 'grounded' in his early police research. These papers, and his characterisations of the field in 'The Relation of Police Work to Scientific Scholarship' also reprinted in this tribute, are thus 'always ethnomethodologically informed' commentaries, to use Rod Watson's phrase (this issue).

In their conversation in the memorial, Watson and Wowk (this issue) also consider Bittner's relationship with Conversation Analysis. With a title that nods toward the work of Stanley Cavell, in 'Must We Say What We Mean?' Bittner explicates some aspects of everyday talk using a phenomenological sensibility. The consonance between Bittner, Cavell, Garfinkel, and Sacks et al. is the utterly contexted nature of ordinary language and the inference we can draw from that language in terms of what is said and meant – but only in and as a part of that context. Silence too is communication in that inference is made in context re that silence and what it means. The paper ties together a number of features around the indexicality of language and the utterly contextual aspects of meaning. This is, of course, something competent society members trade on, and what Bittner adds is a bringing together of these facets of context to show how ordinary language is a society-member's phenomenon. While we cannot gloss or allude to all the connections that his discussion makes relevant,[13] this paper stands as one of the only works where Bittner refers to the analysis of conversation as an emergent topic.

We are also privileged to reprint 'The Availability of Law', by Susan Silbey and Egon Bittner. This article derives from Silbey's Ph.D. research, with Bittner her supervisor. As Silbey (this issue) notes in her moving discussion of the supervision experience, however, she felt that Bittner's input into the research that went into this paper could only be acknowledged through co-authorship. Nevertheless, the continuities between the case-specific work of the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office of Consumer Protection to 'use law or regulation intended for any purpose that will do the job at hand, which happens to be resolving customer complaints', and police 'peace-keeping', are evident and manifold.

When journal articles reached a certain threshold of citations, whereby a significant mass of other scholars had referred to an individual paper, the Institute of Scientific Information (ISI) accorded that paper the status of a 'citation classic'. Authors of 'citation classics' were invited to discuss their papers for the ISI publication *Current Contents*. Bittner received this accolade for his (1967a) paper, 'The Police on Skid Row: A Study of Peace Keeping' that had been published in the *American Sociological Review*.[14] We have included this piece not only for Bittner's cautionary notes on the use of counting references; it is also a personal testimony, where he describes the background to some of his skid row ethnographies, including *Larimer Tours*.

One of Anselm Strauss' hopes for sociological analyses of organisations was a balance between reliability and transferability of studies through the development of models for conceptualising organisations and organisational phenomena (Strauss et al. 1964). The next paper in this special issue achieves such a sought-after balance without concession to formal-analytic modelling, theorising, or advocating a 'blanket' approach to ethnographic research. Sheena Murdoch presents a discussion of Bittner's contributions to the study of organisations and organisational socialisation. Murdoch traces the inquiries from Bittner's (1965) paper 'The Concept of Organization' through Peter Manning's (1971) famous paper on organisational socialisation, in which Manning relied heavily on Bittner's account. Using the dichotomised approach to organisational research, identified as 'the normative paradigm' and 'the interpretive paradigm' (from Wilson 1971) to analyse fieldwork data, Murdoch demonstrates how these paradigms have persisted both in organisational research and in the organisation that provides the context for her observations.

Murdoch attempts to prosecute a non-methodologically ironic, explicative symbolic interactionist study, given the admonitory notes by Bittner (1973). In attending to the dangers of analytic ironies, e.g., perspective by incongruity (Burke 1965), category mistakes (Ryle 1966), and conflating analysts' interpretations with members' practical, worded activities (Bittner 1973), Murdoch realises an organisational ethnography that elaborates upon the agendas provided by 'The

Concept of Organization'. In contrast to some organisational ethnographies, however, neither symbolic interactionism nor ethnomethodology are imposed as what Frederick Crews (1986: 159–178) calls 'master transcoding devices' in the analysis of events within the organisation. That is, the organisation is seen for what it observably-reportably accountably is and not through the distorting lens of theory or the converting technologies of method.

Finally, we are delighted to reprint Ian Anderson and John Lee's article to conclude this issue. Their paper is highly distinctive in discussing epistemological and methodological issues faced by fieldworkers in practice while moving beyond stories of 'practitioner problems' and the methodological 'confessional stories' that are often the 'corridor talk' (Rabinow 1997: 50) of the discipline, written up as if under the flag of convenience 'reflexivity' it had a message beyond fieldwork being messy and contingent, and arrogates a mandate to talk about the fieldworker implicated in the texts he/she writes rather than explicating members' practical activities that constitute the setting.[15]

Indeed, they ironicise the 'textbook approach' to participant observation but go much further than others[16] in explicating the situated, contingent nature of participant observation as ethnographic method. In a wide-ranging paper that is suffused with overlaps of Bittner's work, they move adroitly from the unexplicated practices endogenous to fieldwork to the unexplicated practices endogenous to the analysis of fieldwork, including the under-developed examination of 'cases'. For sociologists, what are 'cases'? How are 'cases' identified and made identifiable *as* 'cases'? What analytic/rhetorical purposes do 'cases' serve?[17] This, then, is not some species of reflexivity but an explication of the processual aspects of the work of fieldwork and as such is more instructive.

Furthermore, they address their analyses to the continued attempt to meet recognised criteria of good sociological work – problematising the canons of scientific method – that characterises Bittner's work.[18]

Anderson and Lee quote from Bittner's (1965) 'The Concept of Organization' and iterate that this paper marks an organising principle for their research. However, readers may also discern echoes of 'Objectivity and Realism in Sociology' (Bittner 1973) in their discussion. Bittner argued that 'if the field worker's claim to realism and to respect for the perspective of the actor are to be given serious credence, then it will have to be made clear what form they assume when they are a function not of a natural attitude of the actor but of a deliberately appropriated 'natural attitude' of the observer. That is, if it is true that the quality of an object or event – its meaning – does not attach to them objectively but is instead discernible only within the frameworks of socially organized settings, and there only from a perspective of specially oriented interest … then a field worker must somehow *contrive* an appreciation for these objects and events' (Bittner

1973: 118, emphasis supplied). Likewise, Anderson and Lee are dissatisfied with the presentation of ethnographic reports as unproblematic when the doing of participant observation in the settings and organisations (an actors' association and a political party) they report required of them, on an ongoing basis, to engage with their own and with others' 'membershipping practices', which may in turn be conceptualised as topics and resources (Zimmerman and Pollner 1971). For the prosecution of research that adheres to the 'canons of scientific objectivity' (Bittner 1973: 114), the production and reproduction of membershipping practices is incredibly undermining:

> what we have found ... is that the world the sociologist encounters is so organised as *necessarily to involve the researcher* in enlisting the support and persuasions of his subjects in the production of *any* version, or *any* description of *any* part, of the social organisation that he encounters. This unanalysed involvement of the participants in furnishing the results of the researcher's enquiries, because unexamined and perhaps unexaminable, renders the would-be scientist's analytic description into the status of polemic or scientifically unwarranted argument.
>
> (Anderson and Lee, emphasis supplied)

As they go on to say, the choices for the researcher then become to preserve the 'disjuncture', i.e., to take membershipping as a resource; or, to use Howard Schwartz' (2002: 106) phrase, preserve the 'phenomenological intactness' of members' practices, i.e., to turn membershipping into a topic of inquiry.

The 'unexaminable', necessarily inevitable and worldly collusions between the observer and observed are interactionally produced yet edited out of professional sociological accounts, to the satisfaction of the professional sociological community. The mutual impacts between the observer and that which he or she observes are constitutive of yet written out of sociological accounts. They are, as it were, fieldwork's dirty laundry, existing to be written out of what is written up. In the course of their respective projects that Anderson and Lee report upon, it was not sufficient to 'take the member's viewpoint' because the member's viewpoint, and the import of iterations of members' viewpoints, changed. Herewith another of the analytic continuities with the 'Larimer Street' project, as shown in *Larimer Tours* (Bittner, this volume) and demonstrated particularly in its final report (Rose 1997). As Rod Watson (this issue) points out, an individual's self-determinations of identity, and self-selection of identities from among a range of identities, for responding to particular questions, was contingent upon the flow of talk within the interview setting.

CONCLUSION

How, then, to read this special issue? The reader must plot their own course through the work while keeping in mind the analytic mentality employed by Bittner in his works. It is the sensitivity of this analytic mentality that makes it so powerful and makes Bittner's work so rewarding. We find here a model of how to do the work of explicating the world in a way that does not render persons strangers to themselves nor seeks to advance some overarching theoreticist agenda with its attendant ironies: the world stands in no need of repair from social science and it was a hallmark of Bittner's scholarship that he saw this and conducted studies in which worldly phenomena speak to us unalloyed. If that is not the object of our inquiries we wonder at the value of doing sociology.

NOTES

1. Our thanks go to Egon Bittner. Before this Issue became a memorial, we had asked him if we could publish his fieldwork report Larimer Tours in its entirety, and he was enthusiastic and very supportive of this venture. Thomas Bittner and Deborah Seys have provided us with background material regarding their father, as well as important advice and encouragement, for which we are extremely grateful. We could not have done this without them.

When we suggested this project for a special memorial issue we received support and advice from Alex Dennis, George Psathas, Howard Schwartz, Philippe Sormani, and Rod Watson. Susan Silbey and Maria Wowk have gone to extraordinary lengths to help us.

The editors discussed the 'Larimer Street' ethnographies at length with Rod Watson and the late Edward Rose. Andrew Carlin also acknowledges discussions with members of Rose's original research team: Jon Driessen, the late Tony Gorman, and Frank Leuthold.

We thank each of the contributors, who responded so positively and quickly with extremely high-quality contributions to this memorial. We have benefited from their advice and suggestions as to what a proper memorial for Egon Bittner should look like, and they have worked to realise a fitting tribute; we have been constantly amazed at their generosity.
2. For considerations of scholarly communication and disciplinary histories, 'influence' is a gloss, which is a potential ethnomethodological topic in itself. Approaches to the study of influence range from criticism (Bloom 1975; 2011) to historical (Harrington 2007; Merton 1965) to informational (Cronin et al. 1993; Cronin and Shaw 2007), i.e., as a phenomenon for informetrics.
3. In a sense, Bittner's corpus on policing can be regarded as 'applying' the notion of competence. See Bittner (1990b).
4. As Schegloff (1999: 6) puts it, 'ethnography in the service of the ethnomethodological program'. The Larimer Street project was nearly a decade before Rose began to differentiate his work from Garfinkel's ethnomethodology by describing it as 'The Ethno-Inquiries'.

However, he was already differentiating his work from 'conventional' ethnography which he regarded as another form of 'professional sociology'.

5. The editors discussed the 'Larimer Street' ethnographies at length with Rod Watson and the late Edward Rose. Andrew Carlin also acknowledges discussions with members of Rose's original research team: Jon Driessen, the late Tony Gorman, and Frank Leuthold.

6. See his *Current Contents* entry (this issue).

7. For a famous statement on boundaries in cities, and how they are oriented to by residents and non-residents of bounded areas, see Suttles (1968).

8. On the study of members' practices in relation to Znaniecki's 'humanistic coefficient', see Rose (1962): 'Proper verification practices of the physical scientist include elimination of the humanistic coefficient so that ontologies and ontographies are achieved that seem to be culture free, and even person free. In contrast, the cultural scientist makes deliberate use of that coefficient, of impressions of the outlooks of others, so as to recognize ethno-ontologies and ethno-ontographies. The specified parts of ethno-ontographies [are called] here collective representations in culture' (Rose 1962: 174).

9. See Watson and Wowk (this issue).

10. See, for example, the contributions of Garfinkel, Sacks, Rose and Sudnow in Hill and Crittenden (1968).

11. For a discussion of proximity and author collaboration, see Cronin (2008).

12. As Coulter (1990: xiii) reminds us, '"editing", too, is a form of practical action'.

13. Indeed, this is a problem faced in the work of doing editing, that producing editorial notes is characterised by a version of what Garfinkel called the 'etc. problem': whilst we would like to outline connections for readers that this and other papers potentiate, there is always more that could be said and it is perhaps unfair to readers to articulate these. This is because editors' selections of themes to highlight, and attempts to encompass possible relevances, are subject to 'ad hoccery'; furthermore, editorial notes become an 'instructed reading'. To use a famous example (Watson and Sharrock 1991) in these ways editors' glosses are like tourist guides: telling readers what to expect from particular papers, how to read them, and what to get out of them.

14. At the time of Bittner's invitation to comment on 'The Police on Skid Row', the *Social Science Citation Index* documented that his paper had been cited in over 175 publications.

15. Rather, they see their membershipping work on participants' membershipping work as a form of reflexivity, as acknowledged by Bittner (1970; 1973): 'in order to describe a culture, the researcher occasions a corpus of further categories which he bases upon his use of his original categorisations. … The researcher is thereby doing membershipping work, in this case assigning 'left wing' membership, on the membershipping work he has already done, in this case assigning 'city party' membership' (Anderson and Lee, this issue). For close analysis of Bittner and reflexivity, see Anderson and Sharrock (this issue).

16. For example, 'It seems something of a commonplace among research sociologists that texts on methodology are only of very limited utility in study design, certainly they contain

no templates which can be applied unproblematically for the resolution of particular research problems. There is an obvious reason for this namely that the appropriate methodology for any given study can only be chosen with reference to situational factors, factors specific to the study in question' (Bloor 1978: 545).

17. For complementary dissections of cases in other methods, *viz* participant observation and conversation analysis, see Becker (1958) and Watson (2010).

18. While we cannot discuss it here, the work of science and technology studies sheds light on the contingencies of 'science' and its achievement.

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