

# Cultures of seeing: pedagogies of the riverbank

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Abstract:

In this article we seek to contribute to research on the visual, visual methodologies and the senses in social sciences. Our concern is with shedding some light on the social organization of vision. The empirical material is a 'walking with video' which is also a 'seeing with video'. The empirical material is used, firstly, to examine how one person instructs the other into how to look for and find something, along with how the person being instructed is able to demonstrate that they have successfully seen the thing, and how in turn the instructor can assess whether the novice had indeed seen what they claim to have seen. Secondly, and perhaps more unusually, a tutorial exercise or pedagogy of seeing is included which helps the reader experience certain features of looking and seeing which are not easily accessible through reading a text alone.

Keywords: vision, perception, ethnomethodology, fish, conversation analysis, video

*One of the most important points to grasp is that these two terms ‘sense-data’ and ‘material things’, live by taking in each other’s washing – what is spurious is not one term of the pair, but the antithesis itself. (Austin 1962: 4)*

## **Pedagogies of vision**

What we would like to do in this article is take you ‘walking with video’ as Sarah Pink recently wrote of doing in this journal (Pink 2007). Walking with a fly fisherman along the banks of a river. Walking with one of the authors and his father, the fly fisherman, and seeing fish with them, as witnesses to the recurrent work of a father teaching his son how to find the fish in the river. In taking you walking video our aim is not empathy with experience but rather a pedagogy and an experience (Bjelic 2004). Analytically our target is not only to describe the appearances of fish, but also to provide the experience of learning to see a fish in a river. Lynch and Bogen characterise this as a shift from the collection of epistemic knowledge to knowledge acquired through *phronesis*:

Unlike episteme – the geometrical method of deducing proofs from axioms-  
*phronesis* takes its departure from the conventional recognisability of a  
perspicuous case. (Lynch 1996: 15)

That is to say, drawing on one concrete example of coming to see something previously hidden, we explore how it is that we come to forget or even deny the possibility of *not* ‘being able to see what is right in front of our eyes’. Examining this perspicuous case allows us to reassess the grammars of seeing, to reconsider the role of the psychological and the social as constituent parts of the visual. While the concern of this paper is with ‘visual methodologies’, we will explore *vernacular methodologies* (Lynch 1993). We will not seek to document professional methodologies that allow us, as researchers, to re-do studies in another place or on another topic – the steady work of maintaining and reflecting upon the orderly reproducible course-based ways of social science seeing if you will. Rather, the methodologies that we will focus on here are the ordinary methods of seeing that usually pass us by unnoticed. Our focus is on visual skills, how we learn to see things that we could not see before, and how we teach those methods to others.

While our focus is on the visual, our ‘consistent emphasis on visuality and the business of looking does not isolate sight from the other senses but attends to the ways in which vision is embodied and connective with other sensory registers’ (MacDonald 2006). Or more appropriately, as we will find, practices of looking are deeply inter-twined with and reliant upon practices of talking together, reading a text and following instructions. In a more geographical register, these *multiple* modes of sensing the world are bound up with local and historical architectural arrangements for apprehending & exhibiting things. To mention a number of studies of that attend to the central importance of the places with associated practices of seeing: laboratories (Latour 1988 (orig. 1984); Lynch 1990), prisons (Foucault 1977), motorway traffic (Livingston 1987), hospitals (Hartwood et al. 2001; Mondada 2003; Sharrock and Anderson 1979) landscape, the testing of nuclear missiles (MacDonald 2006) and VR environments (Heath and Luff 2000)). Science studies have produced numerous

insightful studies of detecting and identifying features only available with equipment rarer than the human eye and training in professional vision. Goodwin has examined (1995) how oceanographers map the bottom of the sea and how students come to see the colour black (1997). In this work, as well as the paper here, seeing is documented as a situated practice that depends upon the material configurations of places as well as the routine practices of teaching, learning, doubting, accepting, confirming, ratifying etc. what we see (Cavell 1998). To examine the grammar of seeing we will use video footage not only as documentary evidence but also as a 'tutorial problem' that will provide some technical access to a social practice of seeing (Garfinkel and Livingston 2003). In particular we can pry apart what might be different from instructions to see an 'X', or just following those instructions, as opposed to actually seeing an 'X', in situ or even by watching a video. The differences between experiences on the riverbank, and for you reading this paper are this secondary topic for our paper.

Though we have forgotten how much we had to learn as babies to see even a square, it is vital that we bear in mind that seeing (and related practices such as recognising, detecting & identifying) are acquired skills (Ryle 1949). As adults we perhaps only really come upon learning to see in specialised settings or via disruptions to our vision. It is this reason that we take for our data in this paper an experience where we initially ought to struggle to see something (and we must apologise to fly fishers at this point for whom this exercise will be a moot point). The investigation of seeing we wish to do in this paper is video guided, in order to return, re-examine and ground more abstract accounts of vision. This sort of field study of vision has a pedagogical urge, a drive to teach the ethnographer what he is talking about in terms of seeing, looking and not being able to see. Dusan Bjelic (2004) has pioneered this approach in a 'social science' book that rather than accepting textual accounts of scientific practice, requires readers to re-do classic experiments. In re-doing Goethe's critique of Newton's theory of colour using prisms & Galileo's pendulum experiments Bjelic's concern is that we come upon an experience of scientific *practice* which is essentially and inescapably missing from reading about that practice. This is not simply first hand experience though it is also the important doubts, uncertainties and design that give experiments initially their 'discovering' nature and later defences against defeat by observers and other scientists. That is to say, in reading reports of experiments, long since established as foundational, one loses the sense of them as exploratory or confirmatory activities. Bjelic tries to put that uncertainty back into our understandings of experimental work. In an analogous way to Kuhn's historical descriptions of the black body problem (Sharrock & Read 2002) Bjelic attempts to understand how a theory makes sense and holds together, even though it is now treated as epistemic knowledge.

## What do we mean to see

‘Seeing’ has many uses, notably as an accomplishment verb, in other words, when asked if we see a house, we look *first* and *then* see a house (Cavell 1998 (original 1979); Sharrock and Coulter 1998, 2003; Wittgenstein 1953; Ryle 1949). We can fail to see what we were looking for. “I could not see the house for all the trees that had grown in front” or “it’s too far away for me see whether it is a house or not”. Or as a report on success: ‘I saw the fish!’ Or as a response showing comprehension:

“The seminar series is no longer on Mondays”  
“I see”

Alongside being a verb of success and failure, seeing has its uses amongst a family of visual terms: ‘Glancing’, ‘observing’, ‘scrutinizing’, ‘staring’, ‘spotting’, ‘watching’, ‘regarding’, ‘looking’, ‘gazing’ and more. There are many verbs of visual orientation, seeing is itself particularly rich and well-used in its possibilities even before it is modified by prepositions and adverbs. By reminding ourselves of this we can start to shift away from thinking of seeing as the name for a foundational process or singular sense. Equally in examining how we sense and make sense of the world we can be wary of the imposition of the grand mental process that appears underlie our experience of the world - perception. It seldom seems to strike those of us researching vision and the senses how odd perception is as a choice for referring to seeing things. How often do we find ourselves saying “I perceived a romantic comedy on the TV last night” or “I perceived a four bedroom house for sale in the property pages.” It is odd for good reason of course since part of its purpose has been, since Galileo’s first speculations on the difference between scientific properties of objects and our bodily experience of them, to part the study of optics from human experience.

Let us undertake a first pedagogical exercise using diagrams from gestalt psychology’s theory of vision. In doing so we will come upon features of space that, while not parting experience from optics, use optics to reveal apparatuses which allow us to see (Gurwitsch 1964; Lynch 1993). In Gurwitsch’s famous diagrams we have firstly a dot:

•

The dot sits by itself. A thing. A very simple thing. Then add another dot:

• •

The dots are, to all appearances, identical, so there is nothing on the ‘sign’ to tell it apart from the other ‘sign’. Yet, one is to the left of the other, one is to the right, we no longer see two individual dots we see a ‘pair’ of dots. Famously, at the heart of the gestalt concept, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. If we add some more dots:

• •   • •   • •   • •

Once again each dot is identical, and now we have not only, ‘to the left of’, we have ‘a row’, ‘next to’, ‘centre left’. These proliferating possible spatial formulations emerge from a contexture of mutually supportive details. Gestalt psychology teaches through this diagrammatic exercise that we see the *whole* immediately and can differentiate it into parts later. The gestalt arises from nothing ‘behind’ the appearances or in any individual point but only by the reference of one point to one another. Gestalt psychology, as Lynch warns, all too quickly rushes from its pleasing optical puzzles (which include the faces/candlestick image) to foundational laws of perception:

The spatial predicates elucidated by the demonstration have a certain existential flavor, but by holding constant the relations between the text and its embodied reader the demonstration too easily allows us to suppose that we are seeing a set of relations in a disembodied space. (Lynch 1993: 127)

Spatial phenomenon raised by gestalt psychology as “a figuration of details” (Garfinkel 2002: 167) have been investigated by ethnomethodological studies in competition with phenomenology through a ‘worldly’, ‘material’ or ‘practical turn’. As Garfinkel advised his students (Lynch 1993) - misread phenomenological texts as giving you instructions for empirically guided projects, because ‘what phenomenal field could be talking about with definiteness and usability of sense and reference, of correspondence to objects, and the rest, is weakly foreshadowed by reading the text’ (Garfinkel 2002: 167).

### **Tutorial in fishing a river**

There are limits on what we can ask you to do here in an article, we cannot start a course of piano instruction as David Sudnow (1978) once suggested, or, as would be the case here, an apprenticeship in fly-fishing. We cannot take you to a river in search of fish with an experienced fly-fisherman. Moreover, as we will learn in a moment, we could not teach you about seeing fish on any old day. What we can do is have you ‘walking with’ and seeing with one of the authors being taught how to find trout and salmon worth catching. In what will follow we will run through illustrated transcripts of an afternoon’s basic lesson in identifying the presence of a fish in a river.

When this paper is given as a talk, there is the opportunity to use video-clips of a river to instruct the audience in seeing fish. In such a form it has the possibility discussed in our introduction of the audience entering briefly into an apprenticeship themselves and coming upon certain phenomena differently than ever happens in reading about it in a paper. Consequently, we have placed copies of the videos online and encourage the reader to download because they can make good use of them later in the paper.

[http://www.geos.ed.ac.uk/homes/elaurier/video/find\\_the\\_fish.mov](http://www.geos.ed.ac.uk/homes/elaurier/video/find_the_fish.mov)

The video began with a request to Eric’s father, who has been fly-fishing since he was a boy. Would he be willing to be filmed while pointing out fish in the river? He was, but it took several weeks before shooting went ahead. The tuition begins immediately

in that the first thing to learn is what kind of day is a good day to go see fish. As Eric was told, a good day for seeing fish is one with summer sun, a 'hatch' of insects and fish 'rising' everywhere. Several weekends were abandoned when they turned out wet and cold with a scarcity of fish rising. The 'perfect day' for an apprenticeship in looking for and finding fish emerges from the many bad days surrounding it. This assessment of the weather and the time of year is starting to learn fly-fishing and seeing's work within it.

In reading the transcripts what we want you to come up against are the real difficulties we have in the relationship between 'Peter's instructions on how to see a fish' and 'following Peter's instructions'. Seeing fish in the river is not an easy thing to do even on a day like the one filmed, purposefully chosen, as we have already noted, in order that, firstly, there will be plenty of fish to show a novice and, secondly, that there will be enough to capture some fish on film regardless of whether Eric manages to see them at the time or not. And we also want to say the surface of the river is a perspicuous setting for learning about looking and seeing. Not least, of course, for Heraclitus's familiar remark on change, flux and the passing of time: one cannot step into the same river twice. Heraclitus's philosophy, that all things flow ceaselessly changing, sounds very appropriate for a post-structural social science with its orientation to a world of flows and movement. However, Heraclitus was not only concerned with the flow of the water, his counterpoint was that the river remains *stable* even as new water successively pours through it.

### **Transcript 1**

*Not long after they have arrived on the riverbank, Peter stops walking and inspects an area ahead where he tells Eric that there is 'a big stone' and then after a moment adds that there is also a fish. Eric asks him to point out the stone.*

Peter:

see the



see the flat space  
The flat a/  
The flat water



And then  
(2.0)  
There's sort of a rough bit in the  
middle



Eric: Yep

Peter: Now that's a fish lying behind a  
stone



The first instructions given by Peter in how to look at the standing features of the river and begin to make sense of its surfaces, is to see that the skin of the water has visual properties of roughness and flatness. That, in relation to one another, one should notice, and use, smooth patches and textured patches. We see also a smooth patch at the *back* and a rough patch in *front*, they acquire spatial predicates in relation to one another as in Gurwitsch's gestalt (1964). Moreover these territories stay where they are, even though the river water is constantly flowing through them.

As they stood arranging themselves as a pair to look *up* river, in our shared view, in the projected field of the camcorder, Peter uses gestures that furnish his talk with further indexing details (see transcript 1). As he begins: 'see the' his first pointing goes toward the area toward which we are to look. Very quickly as he repeats 'see the', he flattens his hand out, rotates it, while describing it as the flat expanse of water (see above). 'And then' marks out that we will something consequent is to follow, the index finger follows pointing out... It is at this point there is an almost dramatic pause as the finger continues to point and nothing more is said. Certainly, emphasis is being placed.

What he then describes as the feature we are now looking at and waiting to hear a description of, is 'a rough bit in the middle'. Eric confirms he has seen it with a quiet 'yup'. These gestures made by Peter are *not* like a form of sign language, where the flat waving hand means 'flat surface' and the pointing finger means 'point' (Goodwin 2003). We examine the surface of the river to help furnish us with the sense of what he may be pointing at, even as the pointing itself is bringing to our attention such features. We look to the 'rough bit in the middle' that Eric's dad finishes by pointing to. In doing so Peter brings it to our attention as a 'domain of scrutiny' (Goodwin 2003). What is of equal importance is the sequential arrangement of the gestures being made where one directs our looking toward the zone where something is to be seen. What follows is a gesture that is easily seen as contrasting with the first as the hand flattens out and circles. Before we make the mistake of fixing on a point we are being assisted in seeing not a tiny feature but rather the expanse of an area. When Peter went on to add that the choppy area in the distance will have a fish lying behind a stone, he returned to pointing to pick out a small feature within that larger expanse circled by the earlier gesture. Once again the sequence is important, this point is intelligible in relation to the open hand before it. As we close-in on the feature that we are going to be instructed in seeing here, a further subtlety in the pointing is used. As he says 'now that's a fish' he shifts where he is pointing slightly to the left which is 'behind the stone', finishing his shift with a waggle of the finger. A waggle that is closer in purpose to the tapping of a feature on a map or a diagram in that it marks out 'here is the thing' we are talking about which, today, is a fish.

What Peter and Eric then did was to shift their (and our) viewing position to a spot closer to the fish behind the stone. A simple reminder here that practices of looking and seeing, be they for fish in rivers or for houses in suburbia, commonly involve the movements of the observer (what J J Gibson (1979) called ambulatory vision) rather than a single static viewpoint. A point obvious to those who study cultures of hunting which is usually taken as a distraction by those studying the psychological aspects of vision (Ingold 2000).

Having identified where there is a candidate fish, Peter can bring his apprentice closer-in on it to continue the tuition on seeing the elusive beast. There is more to be taught than simply the presence or absence of a fish. At this distance Eric is having his usual troubles differentiating fish from rocks and the closer location will potentially help train his eyes in differentiating between the two. As we will see below a 'change of perspective' re-arranges the spatial contextures of the river, as items that are 'near' now become items 'to the right', items that are far become, items 'to the left'.

In making remarks on *how* we look at the river, we have also been passing on practical instructions, though in reading them in an article it is likely you have not examined them for their follow-ability, clarity and consistency as instructions for spotting fish in a river yourself. In what follows we will be furnished with further instructions by Peter, looking over Eric's shoulder, so-to-speak.

Transcript 2: The 'V'



F: You see you've got two, two rocks there and it comes to a V (1)  
They will, they will, down at the breach of the V  
There's a big one down at the breach of the V  
(1)  
On this side of the V

(5)

You'll s/  
You'll be able to pick it out much better  
There you are see. Look! Look! There's two there rising.

(2)

E: Where the duck is

(2)

F: Well he's at, he's at one part of the apex of the V and the other apex of the V  
is over here

E: Uh huh

F: and it's down. See the V it forms, the natural V

- E: Yeah
- F: The V. It's at the gusset of the V
- E: Oh, okay.
- F: See look there's a big one rose right at the junction  
(3)  
There look! He's still rising. He's feeding.

We are further up the riverbank adjacent to the location of the fish and it is a good spot for tutoring the untrained eye. Peter begins by linking entities that should be obvious to us: the 'rocks' with the marks they make on the surface of the river. In looking at the video-still at the beginning of the transcript there is nothing that is obvious for us to identify. One thing we have to begin to use in seeing this two dimensional river is that objects under the water will cause certain patterns to emerge on its surface. What we beginners see first is the steady ripples that the rocks form and extrapolate downwards to 'rocks'. The experienced fisher just sees rocks.

We are also left struggling with an ambiguity in that we can find several 'V's in the stretch of river ahead. Peter progresses at first with the assumption that Eric has correctly located the 'V' in the details of the river ahead and goes on to locate a fish in relation to the V. There are several pauses in which a confirmation could be supplied by Eric. All he comes up with having seen is the 'duck' (marked with an arrow on the video still below). So his father redoes how to see the V in the features of the river, using the duck as a place to start. He orients the:

V → <

by saying the duck is at its apex. Once this is done and Eric affirms that he is now following the instructions. Then the instructions continue: to follow the line of the '<' to its gusset (being most commonly known as a reinforcing strip at the bottom of a pair of pants (figure 2). This, then, is to be the domain of scrutiny:

*Figure 2: Where to see the fish*



## Timing

To Eric at the time (and the co-author later) on their first looking at the river you can't 'tease the animal out of the ripples' to adapt a phrase. Meanwhile Peter does not talk about ripples at all, he talks about the fish directly: "look there's two rising". There are properties of the ripple that make it fish or rock that we have to learn before we 'see the fish'. All ripples have a rhythm to them, the rhythm of a fish is not that of the ripple of flowing water from the stones. If we examine the transcript we can consider how Peter's talk synchs to and thereby helps make visible the moment that the ripple first appears and then tracks its gradual drift and erasure by the flow of the river. Simply, Eric's dad begins his instructions (above in the first transcript) 'there you are see' synchronously with the fish-ripples appearing. There are several pauses where Peter waits for Eric to give an indication that he has seen the fish. After differentiating the V of the rocks from the fish and then using it to locate a much more precise zone where Eric should see the fish, Peter says 'see look there's a big one' as another ripple appears, a 'big' ripple presumably easier for novice. By Peter's timing of his 'see look' Eric is being given resources to project forward and be anticipating how a ripple will appear as intermittent. Not the dum/dum/dum/dum of rocks but dum/dum (pause) dum (shorter pause) dum etc. in a developing 'random' timing. Though as we will learn in a moment the timing is not seen as 'random' to the fly-fisher's eye.

\_\_\_\_\_ Transcript

F: See look there's a big one rose right at the junction (5) there look! <he's still rising, He's feeding>

E: So that's those ripples I can see in-between the

F: Yeah they're intermittent [but]

1 →

E: +  
[That's] it! That's one. [There's another there]

2 →

F:  
((sniffs))

+  
[That's it, you've] got it

E: Okaaay.

If we go a little deeper into the wordings Eric's dad is using, he begins with 'see look' (or most often 'look') and this is then followed by a characterisation of the fish's movement that will produce what Eric is still seeing as ripples amongst ripples – the 'rise' - and when these ripples are rapid & ongoing – 'he's feeding'. What is hopefully striking, as we have noted already, is that the ripples are not dealt with as ripples by the fisherman, they *are* a big fish. They are the actions that the big fish is doing – 'rising' & 'feeding'. It is the novice that deals with them as ripples since he still cannot see them with the skill of the fly fisher.

Finally to his excitement and relief Eric witness-ably, exhibit-ably sees a fish in this extract, he breaks in on Peter's description of fish ripples as 'intermittent'<sup>1</sup> with 'that's it. That's one.' His interruption's accountability lying in its coincidence with the appearance of a fish-ripple in the gusset that they are both looking at. And his claim that he has seen a fish is the thing that his dad has been waiting for, and has been making conversational space for, for a long time before. It is a report that Eric has not made until now. At '1' a fish-ripple is still appearing and has not yet been carried away and at '2' Eric redoes hear-ably 'seeing' the fish as 'another one' at the point the ripples appears (where this is really a matter of microsecond timing). Note also the 'here' and 'now' (i.e. indexical) force of 'that's' and 'there's'. If Eric's timing were out of synch with the ripples then his father has this mismatch to analyse as his not having seen the fish. The two matches with the timing are enough for Peter to begin to establish that Eric has 'seen' the fish. Yet Eric is still persisting with seeing ripples in the sense that he says 'that's another one' where this pronoun was first established as a ripple and is not established anywhere else as a 'fish'. Though 'another one' is part of his job of *re-doing* seeing a fish-ripple to exhibit to his dad that he is in fact seeing what his dad has been trying to show him how to see.

Overlapping speech, the two speakers talking at the same time, is used to exhibit them seeing the same thing, since it is a thing that happens also at the same time they are speaking. We suspect it is not inconsequential that 'th' words are used by both viewers to start off their talk, on the same foot as it were, and find within hearing that beginning that they are convergent. Where were the confirmer (Eric's dad) to begin with 'N', even in its beginning this would hear-ably be divergent, and project-able forward as 'No', 'Not' etc. which would be selected from the limited set of responses a person will do when confirming.

### **Tutorial in seeing fish**

For those who have an interest in what Bjelic (2004) calls 'a pedagogy' of seeing fish in the river rather than talk of seeing fish it will be necessary to either find yourself a

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<sup>1</sup> Several times earlier during the trip the importance of the different rhythms of turbulence producing ripples and fish producing ripples has been emphasized but the sense of those descriptions of the ripples remains to be found by Eric, until this moment.

good salmon river on a warm summer's day with plenty of insects hatching or to now open the copy of the video footage that accompanies this article. Bjelic's pedagogy is not a theory of teaching, it is the practical link that transfers knowledge from body to body. He also warns about the change of style that ensues:

‘to represent the body-instrument link not in a historical context but as a practical pedagogy requires a change of the genre of writing too. The text is instructive, dry, technical, in a word ascetic. But the ascetic nature of this pedagogical and a-historical text performs an important historical function. It removes pleasures from reading and returns them to the body-instrument link, that is to the pleasure of pedagogy, of practices. P87 (Bjelic 2004).

In seeing the video, one can make a start on understanding what the pleasure of pedagogy might be. If you watch the video and immediately see the ‘the big one’ that is quite an accomplishment and you are clearly quick on the uptake (or you *have* been fly-fishing already). If not then you will have to watch the video alongside the transcript as we have done to try and learn how one might see the fish, to be taught as Eric was alongside his dad.

In a sense the exercise here is to stop attempting to generalise Eric and his dad as, say, ‘expert and novice interaction’, ‘gestures configuring spaces’ etc. The unusual pursuit we are trying to do, or at least it seems unusual to us (and distinctive of later work in ethnomethodology) is to move from instructions to *following* instructions. The point of this being that there things you will come upon in doing the seeing as <following instructions>, or as what is called instructed-seeing<sup>2</sup>, that you can never come upon in talking *about* seeing or *imagining* what seeing the fish might be like.

If you did see ‘the big one’ the video can be expected further to see if it is possible to see other fish the video. While later in this paper we include an annotated still that marks out where the other fish lie, in not seeing fish one comes across the incompleteness of Pete's instructions. As the video rolls onward there is something we can call, for lack of a better term, a *preceding* the seeing of a potential ripple. You are looking around as a novice looks around for the first time and this is quite a special thing because you cannot use a previous accomplishment here. The looking is frustrating and heavy with the weight of potential failure. When the paper is given as a lecture, the speakers are waiting, they know where it is, your looking is accompanied by the authors waiting for you to see what he or she sees (as blindingly obvious).

If you have listened to the instructions, you should find you are now hearing them in quite a different way in following them. Looking to find their sense in a way that was different from sitting back in your chair with no task to bring them to.

Then, at some point, hopefully before you skip ahead to the conclusion in frustration, there are the emergence of ‘ripples that are not the rocks’, they might be the fish's. They are the *first* ripples you have waited for. You wait for more. You are waiting for more. Where there was a ripple there is now no ripple, an absence appreciable by the preceding presence. *Now* that are you looking at the river after a ripple, it has this

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<sup>2</sup> Where instructed seeing is just one of infinite specific instructed-actions.

quality that there is no ripple. That no more might come. That it might have been nothing. That it might be your imagination. That it was just a one-off random rock ripple.

Then there is another ripple on the smooth surface. With this second ripple an *interval* is created between the two ripples. With this second ripple comes confirmation. The first ripple now becomes more definitely the *first* ripple. The two function as the beginnings of a series. A third ripple comes. They start to have a place they are happening, they start to have a rhythm.

For those of you who had a try at the pedagogy you can look down the page to the 'ANSWER' transcript. For those who were willing you will have another kind of confirmation that you have perhaps seen ripples that indicate a fish's presence.

Let us note one of the curious properties we come upon once we have seen the fish for ourselves. Once you yourself have seen the fish-ripples then they have a *visibility* that they did not have when you began looking for them. If we play the video again, you can find them again and you *cannot not find them*. The ripples themselves, as it were, have not changed since you first watched the video. Yet there they blindingly are! How could you not see them, they are *so* visible. The instructions being given have a developing coherence to them, where we do not leap straight to seeing a fish but rather learn first how look at the static features of the surface of the river and then pursue the rhythm of ripples. Once we have seen the ripples, we can see them *again*. We can see them again not only because we can replay the video clip, we can find them occurring in find-ably the same spot (though not exactly the same spot) and we can locate fishy ripples elsewhere.

Transcript  
the ANSWER

F: Look there's three along here  
see

(4)



E: Three small ones along the front  
you mean



**Ripples and dots**

In the time that Peter takes to pick out three further fish at the front and in the time it will take for Eric to respond to his father, the three ripples made by the fish will drift to the left and disappear into the turbulence created by the rocks. The novice is unable to exclaim when he sees these next looked-for ripples because there are not yet anymore appearing. So in this case he responds with a sentence to exhibit his orientation to the same three by adding a spatial formulation which was not in the first statement – that they are ‘along the front’ – and by adding that they are small (where

the first was 'big'). His response can be quickly analysed by Peter as a correct formulation of the three he has pointed out, which are in the developing course of action, accountably smaller and 'in front' of the 'big one'.

In this clip, then, the acquiring of the seeing-of-fish continues between Eric and Peter as Eric has to try and redo his spotting in a different part of the river ahead of them. We have used this clip as the test river, in the pedagogical exercise with you, when you were to try and follow Peter's instructions and see fish for yourselves. There they raised problems of follow-ability, completeness, visibility, consistency and so on. The clip was being refashioned there by us as instructors for exhibiting for us in a different way as instructors (not as novices) whether *you* had been able to follow *our* instructions in seeing fish. We had given you already where the 'big fish' was: at the gusset. If you were able to point out these three smaller fish then, either by timing with the video, or/and the location of your pointing with a still image we could confirm that yes, you had been able to re-do [seeing fish].

### **Concluding remarks**

In this article we have examined the ways in which an experienced fly fisherman instructs a novice in looking at the surface of a river. Expert and novice were watching the river and listening to one another to monitor how the other was producing their "seeing" (or not) of the fish - while also producing an action (pointing) and monitoring the effect this has on the other. They were using 'local methods' to produce seeing fish and examining them as the means for what do next. The novice sees that the expert is still seeing fish, so he continues his inquiry into what other methods does he need to see the fish. The fishing tutor is watching his tutee to see if he has finally managed to see a fish, and then analysing what & when the tutee says to see if he really has seen a fish or is still missing the mark and working out other ways he could formulate the appearance of the fish's ripples on the river surface. And what happens here is only the very beginnings of entering seeing with fly fishers' eyes in the sense that the tutee is still struggling with the problem of seeing fish at all, while the expert sees fish catching flies, sees big ones and small ones. From these marks on the surface of the river she or he builds up to being able to make assessments of the intelligence of the fish that he might one day pursue with rod, line and waders in the midst of the river.

Our attendant concern here has been and continues to be with various visual phenomena that can only be come upon through a 'walking with' that is also a *becoming*, in this case, becoming a fly-fisher. Methodologies, be they social sciences' or not, are one of the phenomena that require their enaction to come upon what they are. They are not the foundational Methodologies as might be taught in a methodology course, they are the infinitely rich array of methods that offer the possibility of an equally rich assortment of agencies. What this gives us then is how becoming competent in looking at a river is part of what provides for the possibility of fly-fishing.

To close, let us return briefly to a Gurwitsch-like way of rendering the marks that mark seeing the fish on the surface of the river. We will make dots of them as a

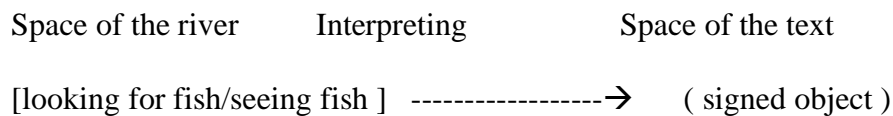
developing sequence of three stages. One of their features we want to render is their drift to the left and the other is their expansion from dots to rings.



Now let us use the same device to mark three dots popping up unseen by Eric and his dad while they are busy watching ‘the big one’.



And briefly trace the transformation that leads us to this apparent ‘general feature’ which is a Gestalt rule as:



These three signed objects highlight some general features which supplement Peter’s instructions, instructing us to see that firstly the fish-ripples drift and expand and, secondly, they do so together. While in one sense you might want to say that the signed object is a start on producing a general model, ethnomethodology wants you to go the other way to *the event’s accountability at source*. Garfinkel (2002) argues that “In their studies of structures (on whatever scale) the social sciences have as their stock in trade the design, administration, explication and interpretation of signed objects” (p162). What ethnomethodology investigates is the autochthonous order at source, at the very site of its production, where by contrast gestalt psychology (and more obviously perceptual psychology) seeks to supplement or ‘ground’ that order with its theoretical foundations. To do an ethnomethodological investigation involves noting the inevitable loss of the phenomenon as it is interpreted and/or translated into a signed object (indicator/code/ideology/model). The



does not allow you to recover the specifics of <looking for fish>. Where has the variable perspective on the river gone? Where has the V gone? Where has the relation between these fish-ripples and the ripples of turbulence gone? Where has their rhythm gone? By looking at the video we come upon much that is missed in the process of modelling or formalising practices of seeing. This is not to say that video is therefore *video verité*, providing un-mediated access to events elsewhere. It is a rendering nevertheless and while phenomenal intactness is the ethos of phenomenology it is inescapably lost. Big or small, the fish even though they are added to the video record, they are the ones that get away.

I

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