

Introduction of Douglas W. Maynard for the Cooley-Mead Award

Steven E. Clayman¹ and Virginia Teas Gill²

Abstract

On the occasion of Douglas Maynard's selection as recipient of the 2018 Cooley-Mead Award, this essay provides a brief overview of his scholarly career. His diverse and expansive contributions to social psychological theory and research and his tireless mentorship of students and colleagues are both reviewed.

Keywords

conversation analysis, Cooley-Mead Award, Douglas W. Maynard, ethnomethodology, social psychology

Doug Maynard is a most worthy recipient of the Cooley-Mead Award from the Social Psychology Section of the American Sociological Association (ASA). It bears emphasis, however, that a hallmark of his career is its remarkable range, which transcends the sectional divisions of ASA and scholarly boundaries more broadly.

Doug earned his PhD in sociology from the University of California, Santa Barbara in 1979, working under the direction of Don Zimmerman. He joined the faculty at the University of Wisconsin-Madison that same year, was tenured and promoted to associate professor in 1985, and became a full professor in 1989. In 1992, Doug joined the Department of Sociology at Indiana University; in 2000, he returned to UW-Madison, where he is Conway-Bascom Professor of Sociology and Harold & Arlene Garfinkel Faculty Fellow.¹

Doug is at heart an interactionist in the tradition of Erving Goffman, Harold Garfinkel, and Harvey Sacks. But his work also reaches beyond interaction per se, into fields spanning law (Maynard 1984), medicine (Heritage and Maynard 2006), science studies (Maynard et al. 2002), and everyday conversation (Maynard 2003) as well as research methodology (Maynard and Schaeffer 1997) and social theory (Emirbayer and Maynard 2011).² So as we celebrate his reception of the Cooley-Mead Award, we note that Doug also would be a plausible

²These references are exemplary and far from exhaustive.

¹University of California, Los Angeles, CA, USA

²Illinois State University, Normal, IL, USA

Corresponding Author:

Steven E. Clayman, Department of Sociology,
UCLA, 231 Haines Hall, Los Angeles, CA 90095-
1551, USA.

Email: clayman@soc.ucla.edu

¹Both authors of this introduction were mentored by Doug when he was at University of Wisconsin-Madison in the 1980s–1990s.

contender for a half-dozen other section awards. We commend the Social Psychology Section for getting there first and beating the rest to the punch and also for recognizing work that has this kind of boundary-spanning import and significance.

That said, Doug is an apt choice for this particular award. More than any other scholar of whom we are aware, his work combines the analytical tools of ethnomethodology and conversation analysis with sensibilities and interests that are broadly shared by the community of social psychologists. As he uncovers the practices and structures of interaction, he is always asking what this means for individual participants and their place in the world: for their public identities, their relations to and with one another, and the practical problems and tasks they face in their lives.

This approach has had enormous payoffs in so many research areas. It has made the study of conversational news delivery and reception, for instance, a vivid and context-sensitive window into social relationships from the familial to the clinical-professional (Maynard 2003). This work has far-reaching practical implications for anyone facing the often difficult task of conveying good or bad news to a recipient who may be unprepared to receive it (e.g., Gill and Maynard 1995; Maynard 1996).

The same approach has illuminated the more anonymous relations that sustain the survey interview, on which so much social science research depends (Maynard et al. 2002). Here the implications bear on the conduct of social scientific research itself, suggesting ways to improve the quality of survey samples and survey data (e.g., Maynard and Schaeffer 1997, 2000).

To this list we might add projects on plea bargaining (Maynard 1984), police-suspect interactions (Maynard and

Schelly 2017), argumentation and conflict among children (Maynard 1985a, 1985b), topical talk and social relationships (Maynard and Zimmerman 1984), educational testing (Marlaire and Maynard 1990), tissue donation requests (Weathersbee and Maynard 2009), and a wide range of theoretical (Emirbayer and Maynard 2011; Maynard and Clayman 1991) and methodological commentaries (Hollander and Maynard 2016; Maynard 2006). Then there is Doug's current work on autism as a medical and social phenomenon (Maynard and Turowetz 2017, forthcoming), which is the topic of his Cooley-Mead address (Maynard 2019).

These projects are not just important substantive contributions. They have expanded the reach of social psychology into areas that were not much recognized before Doug came along, reshaping our collective sense of what the field is and what it can achieve.

They also stand as a reminder of something that the wider discipline of sociology certainly knows but has a habit of forgetting: that direct interaction between persons is in a very real sense the engine room of social life, to borrow a phrase from our colleague John Heritage. It is a primary site of action and meaning-making, the place where social identities, relationships, and structures are enacted and reproduced as well as contested and at times transformed.

Doug's lifetime contributions to distinguished scholarship in social psychology also include his mentorship of two generations of students. These include his undergraduate and graduate students at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and Indiana University, whose work he guided and supported in an intensive fashion.

If you know Doug only from his research, you might not realize how much time he devotes to teaching and what a superb teacher he is. He sets

a high bar for his students, one that reflects his respect for them and their potential as sociologists. He insists they work through data with meticulous attention to detail and provide solid evidence for their claims. He challenges them to write clearly and address the implications of their work for significant social issues, theoretical concerns, and practical questions. In turn, he reads their work with great care and gives copious, incisive feedback that builds up rather than tears down.

He encourages his students to build bridges within sociology. This means ensuring they are expertly trained as ethnomethodologists and conversation analysts but also broadly trained so they can have cross-disciplinary conversations and collaborations. He urges them to take social psychology prelims, participate in the social psychology section of ASA, and submit to *Social Psychology Quarterly*. His legacy is students who can participate and thrive in the broad and diverse community that is sociology and social psychology.

Doug's reach as a mentor has, of course, extended beyond his own students—via visiting professorships; the seminars, workshops, guest lectures, and master classes he has taught around the world; his supervision of postdoctoral students and mentoring of junior faculty; and the countless conversation analytic data sessions he has hosted, where novices and experts alike are welcome.

Those who have been fortunate enough to work with Doug in any of these capacities will tell you that he behaves with unfailing decency and integrity. Whether you are a new undergraduate or a famous scholar, he treats you the same. Whether in a public setting or behind closed doors, he speaks about others with respect.

This respect extends to the questions that scholars ask in other subfields and disciplines. He recognizes that there are

many types of valid questions we can ask about social life and that no one approach can address every question. He wants to know what else we can learn, what more we can see when we ask: What are the orientations of participants in interaction? What practical challenges and interactional dilemmas do they face? How do they address these challenges and dilemmas?

Those who have worked with Doug in a mentorship capacity have been inspired by his passion for research and teaching, the seemingly boundless energy that fuels it, and the self-discipline that allows him to be so productive. These qualities have not diminished as the years have passed; rather, they seem only to be increasing. And they continue to inspire.

Taken together, these efforts in research and mentorship amount to a substantial and far-reaching contribution to the field of social psychology. The Cooley-Mead Award is a well-deserved honor for this lifetime achievement, and we congratulate Doug Maynard for receiving it.

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Steven E. Clayman is a professor of sociology at the University of California, Los Angeles. His research addresses the interface between human interaction and social institutions, with an emphasis on journalism and politics. He is the coauthor (with John Heritage) of *Talk in Action: Interactions, Identities, and Institutions* (2010) and *The News Interview: Journalists and Public Figures on the Air* (2002).

Virginia Teas Gill is a professor emerita of sociology at Illinois State University. Her research focuses on social interaction in a variety of medical settings, including primary care and surgical contexts. She is the coeditor, with Alison Pilnick and Jon Hindmarsh, of *Communication in Healthcare Settings: Policy, Participation and New Technologies* (2010).