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ABSTRACT

RULE ANALYSIS AND SOCIAL ANALYSIS

by

Laurence Paul Hazeli

This thesis investigates the use of rules in the analysis of language mastery and human action, which are both viewed as social phenomena. The investigation is conducted through an examination of two analyses of the use of language in everyday social life and documents how each formulates a different understanding of rule-following in explaining linguistic and social action. The analyses in question are 'Speech Act Theory' and 'Ethnomethodology'.

The principal idea of speech act theory is that social action is rule-governed, and the theory attempts to explain the possibility of meaningful social interaction on that basis. The rigidities imposed by the notion of rule-governance frustrate that aim. The thesis then turns to an examination of ethnomethodology and conversation analysis and contrasts the notion of rule-orientation developed by that perspective. From that examination it becomes clear that what is on offer is not just a greater flexibility in the use of rules, but a restructuring of the concept of analysis itself.

It is argued that re-structuring amounts to a reflexive conception of analysis. Its meaning and implications are enlarged upon through a close scrutiny of the later philosophy of Wittgenstein, particularly his concern with the nature of rule-following in his 'Philosophical Investigations'. The thesis argues that his concern with rules was motivated by his insight that their use as 'explanations' of action said as much about the formulator of the rule as the activities the rules were held to formulate.

The thesis concludes by outlining the meaning of this analytic reflexivity for social scientific findings.

RULE ANALYSIS AND SOCIAL ANALYSIS

Laurence Paul Hazell

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However, there is a much larger list of people who have been unable to render me that kind of help and yet whose support has been as crucial in completing and presenting this thesis. Writing is essentially a lonely job, and can sometimes be a dispiriting task as well. I have been very fortunate in having friends who, whilst they could not always see the point of my labours, nonetheless gave the support which enabled me to get the job done.

INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

This thesis investigates the use of rules in the analysis of language mastery and human action. Both language mastery and human action are viewed as social phenomena, and moreover, as inseparably related to one another. The investigation is conducted through an examination of two analyses of the use of language in ordinary, everyday social life. Each analysis employs the concept of rule in explaining the practice of language-mastery and social interaction, but each views the idea of following a rule in a different way. By a close examination of that difference this thesis sheds some light on the variety of ways that the idea of rule-following can be understood, and suggests why that variety should not be reduced by analysts to a single, 'preferred' version of what it is to follow a rule.

The fundamental reason for this pluralist outlook is that the work of the analyst, in assembling an account of language mastery and social interaction, is itself an instance of the phenomena of investigation. Consequently, it is argued that the relationship between an analyst^s and its subject matter is itself characteristic of the linguistic and social relationships which form the topic of inquiry. The thesis claims that just as these relationships cannot be reduced to or derive from a single form of relationship, so too, no single form of rule analysis or body of rules can adequately describe or explain the diversity of practices that constitute linguistic and social life. That claim is made out by examining the actual consequences of theorizing linguistic and social life as governed by a single body of rules.

So the central claim of this thesis is that understanding the nature of social analysis is itself crucially important to a proper understanding of the nature of language mastery and social life. It is argued that social analysis has to be understood as a reflexive achievement of competent language masters and members of society. This understanding is not only of relevance for those who construct the analysis, but also for those who employ it to make the social world accountable, since their endeavours as readers or users of the analysis is an instance of that same membership as well. Thus a reflexive understanding of analysis is contrasted with what can be termed a 'depictive' idea of analysis, where the rules are viewed as the determinants of the linguistic and social phenomena from which they are extracted.

The idea of rule-following developed in the body of the thesis is used to account for and justify the variety of perspectives that characterize the discipline of sociology. However this is not intended to stifle the criticism of one sociological approach as compared to another, because that work of criticism is seen as essential to the task of understanding society. Rather, the pluralist standpoint developed here is directed at countering a tendency to view the task of social analysis as susceptible of one, single mode of execution. My argument, detailed by an examination of the concept of rule, is that such a view is an illusion generated by the very work of analysing phenomena. But this is not meant to undermine say systematic or causal ~~acc~~counts of social processes, much less contrast them unfavourably with interpretive perspectives. The pluralistic standpoint adopted in this thesis is not selective, even though the insights upon which it is based originate in one particular kind of social analysis. The thesis simply argues that, whatever the mode of analysis, analysts must pay proper attention to the

sociological features of their own research practices: to remember that they too, like their subjects, make artful use of rules.

Chapter One examines the analysis of speech and social action proposed by John Searle in his book Speech Acts, together with other publications that have elaborated and modified the ideas it contains. Searle's analysis is a good starting point because it provides the philosophical footings for viewing language use as an instance of human action and for analysing both as a social phenomenon. Searle's principal argument is that speech is rule governed. To demonstrate this his theory requires the postulate of literalness in order to provide a determinate tie between the governance of rules and the meaning of a speech act. However, this postulate creates rigidities about the meanings actors can communicate which contrasts unfavourably with the actual flexibilities of language use in ordinary spoken interaction. The chapter examines an important modification which he has made to the original theory in the light of this problem, but concludes that this is really more in the way of a response to the theory's internal difficulties than an explanation of how speech and social action make sense in the social world. In consequence the thesis looks to an alternative source for an understanding of the difficulties of speech act theory.

Chapter Two argues that this alternative is to be found in the work of Harold Garfinkel, Harvey Sacks and the writings of other ethnomethodologists and conversation analysts. Their recognition of the pervasive indexicality of language is contrasted with Searle's notion of literalness and this in turn provides the basis for indicating the salient differences between their concept of rule orientation and his notion of rule governance. The view that meaning and sense depend upon an indefinite set of interactional and situational considerations is elaborated by examining the type of

analysis this perspective undertakes. This shows that not only is the purpose of their inquiry the same as Searle's (viz. to provide an account of the phenomena of language mastery), but also that it is to be articulated through an analysis which possesses the same degree of systematicity and generality. Given that the prosecution of a general and systematic analysis is the underlying reason for many of the problems in speech act theory, the question is posed as to why ethnomethodology and conversation analysis do not merely replicate its problems in an alternative terminology. The answer suggested is that Garfinkel and Sacks' recognition that analysis itself partakes of the same features of rule-following as the language use it investigates, restructures the concept of analysis.

The philosophical implications of this reflexivity of rule analysis are examined in Chapter Three by looking at three different approaches to its meaning and implications. The first is the work of Blum and others who have collaborated in putting forward a conception of reflexivity which is fundamentally incompatible with any form of systematic inquiry. In consequence the differences between speech act theory and ethnomethodology/conversation analysis elaborated in Chapters One and Two, are merely regarded as different expressions of positivism which conceal the real resources of language mastery in the technology of their respective forms of inquiry. The second approach argues that the notion of indexicality is fundamentally incompatible with the concept of rule, and accordingly that there cannot really be a reflexive rule analysis where the notion is employed. Instead there is an irreparable vagueness of meaning generated by using the concept of indexicality which contradicts the fact that meanings are stable, available across situations and through time. It is claimed that there are in fact rule-governed devices but that no postulate of literalness is required (cf. Searle), because speakers'

employment of these devices need not be as univocal or determined as speech act theory requires. The variety of ways these devices can be used is claimed to properly describe what is meant by the reflexivity of rules in ordinary communication and analysis.

This idea that the reflexivity of rule use is best conceived of in terms of an elasticity of usage anchored in a core of determinate rules is claimed to be compatible with, if not an expression of, Wittgenstein's later philosophy. The third approach comprises an assessment of this claim by looking to see what understanding of the reflexivity of rules is present in Wittgenstein's work. The result of this examination is to see his writings as compatible with the indexical conception of language and rule. However, in order for this claim to be properly substantiated, a way has to be found to reconcile the profound unsystematicity of his investigations with the systematic empirical inquiries of ethnomethodologists and conversation analysts. It is argued that Wittgenstein's philosophy, unlike Blum's, is not hostile to examining language either systematically or empirically. Rather, one important purpose of Wittgenstein's investigation of rule-following is to alert his readers to the fact that such tasks construct a picture of languages rather than delineate its essentials. The latter task is criticized as an illusion generated by the concreteness of our everyday language and moreover reliant for its portrayal and intelligibility on unexplicated resources of extant language mastery. But the former task can serve the purpose of illuminating the salient features of language mastery so long as it is remembered, and can be analytically documented, that this former task represents an instance of what it describes. The spelling out of this 'reminder' discloses Wittgenstein's understanding of the reflexivity of rule analysis, which is compatible with and further illuminated by,

the work of Garfinkel and Sacks and other ethnomethodologists and conversation analysts.

CHAPTER ONE

LANGUAGE AS RULE GOVERNED SOCIAL ACTION. THE THEORY OF SPEECH ACTS

I. Philosophical Preliminaries

The concept of rule is central to John Searle's analysis in Speech Acts⁽¹⁾. He says:

The hypothesis of this work is that speaking a language is engaging in a rule governed form of behaviour. To put it more briskly, talking is performing acts according to rules. The procedure which I shall follow is to state a set of necessary and sufficient conditions for the performance of particular kinds of speech acts and then extract from these conditions sets of semantic rules for the use of the linguistic devices which mark the utterances **as** speech acts of those kinds.

(Searle, 1969, p. 22)

However, before elaborating this analytical scheme, Searle discusses some rather specialized philosophical issues. The reason for his discussion is twofold. Firstly, the philosophical assumptions and methods he attacks have exercised a considerable influence on the analysis of linguistic competence and Searle is thus making plain where speech act theory stands on these matters. Secondly, he is serving notice that Speech Acts is intended as a contribution to the philosophy of language (as the sub-title of the book announces) and is therefore not confined to what some members of the philosophical community might see as the subsidiary interests of psychology or socio-linguistics.

In viewing language as a rule-governed social phenomenon, Searle sees himself as redrawing the map of the relationship between philosophy and the linguistic and social sciences. This re-orientation also necessitates some remarks about the relation between language and philosophy. He draws a distinction between linguistic philosophy on



the one hand and the philosophy of language on the other. The former, we are told, is concerned with solving particular philosophical problems by examining the ordinary use of particular words. It is primarily the name of a method. By contrast, the philosophy of language is the name of a subject and its concern is to give philosophically illuminating descriptions of general features of language like reference, meaning and truth.

Although I shall sometimes employ the methods of linguistic philosophy, this book is an essay in the philosophy of language, not in linguistic philosophy.

(Searle, 1969, p. 4)

According to Searle, the methods of linguistic philosophy principally comprise data for the philosophy of language. The conclusions of the latter form of inquiry should hold for any possible language.

This indicates that the analysis of language mastery in Speech Acts is neither going to be a matter of a-priori speculation about its nature, nor straightforward empirical scrutiny of its use. The method of investigation will rather consist in isolating the fundamental unit of linguistic intercourse (the speech act), analysing its ruled constituents, and through this process of analysis determine how communication is actually accomplished. In fact, Searle is critical of analyses that presume a clear and categorical demarcation between the a-priori and empirical elements of language. An initial indication of trouble about the distinction is that different approaches assume very different positions on what they take to be 'abundantly clear' about ordinary language use. As we shall see shortly, Searle regards them as prone to substituting dubious metaphysical theories for the analysis of actual speech practice. For him this is most clearly visible with

regard to construals of the concept of meaning. On the one hand, it is presented as an intuitive faculty with its seat 'in the mind'. On the other, it is taken to be something purely extensional with a minimum of behavioural operations to internalize and manifest it. It is all a question of inner mentation or external determination, with the consequence that both options deny meaning any analytically significant relation to the intentional and conventional aspects of language use. So Searle's task is to present an analysis in terms of the linguistic construction of reality, in opposition to conceptions which view language as shaped by its external environment, or linguistic action as merely the countersign of thought.

A major criticism of the extensionalist view of meaning, according to Searle, is that there can be no concession to the fact that language has no one particular standard of exactness to which all words and statements must conform. In opposition to extensional theorists of meaning like Quine, to whom Searle devotes a considerable degree of critical attention in the opening pages of Speech Acts, Searle quotes Wittgenstein's claim⁽²⁾ that language is comprised of a diversity of different usages by speakers. Searle says that this means not only the absence of one standard for all word usage, but also that our use of words may have varying degrees of exactness according to the context or purpose for which those words are employed. In other words, satisfactory linguistic communication takes place quite independently of any criterion of 'exactness' or 'semantic adequacy' that some philosophers propose. Moreover, the absence of such criteria indicates to Searle that our use of terms is 'projective'. In fact, even a philosophical concept like analyticity:

does not denote a closed class of statements; it is not an abbreviation for a list, but ... has the possibility of projection. We know how to apply it in new cases.

(Searle, 1969, p. 8)

This capacity to 'project' exemplifies for Searle the ruled character of language. Novel circumstances do not defeat users of language. The rules of the language provide users with the resources to make sense of and respond to them. So, in critically considering other philosophies of language, Searle is pointed in the direction of his central hypothesis.

These criticisms alert Searle to the need for speech act theory to be visibly consistent with the competence manifest in actual speech practice. Searle is well aware that a 'Quinian' would look upon that requirement with suspicion because conformity with it seems to amount to nothing more than paraphrasing linguistic utterances in terms of social actions and institutions:

It might be objected to this approach that such a study deals only with the point of intersection of a theory of language and a theory of action. But my reply to that would be that if my conception of language is correct, a theory of language is part of a theory of action, simply because speaking is a rule-governed form of behaviour.

(Searle, 1969, p. 17)

Clearly the charge is one of circularity, which Searle announces himself when he tells us that the 'tacit ideology behind these objections is that non-extensional explications are not explications at all' (ibid. p. 10). He responds by saying that a simple paraphrase, for example that a 'Hello' is a greeting is hardly the terminus of 'explication' that he is proposing. That would be no advance on the presupposed understandings of the concepts which, he says, in fact mark Quine's

analysis. The problem is given careful consideration in Speech Acts because Searle recognises that he has to tread a thin line between on the one hand dissecting a speech act into its necessary and sufficient conditions, and on the other maintaining a simultaneous reliance upon the intuitions of the native speaker. The first activity is a step in the direction of Quine's approach, while reliance raises difficulties about when an adequate degree of explanation of linguistic competence has actually been achieved. Therefore, to say of the speech act 'Hello' that it is a greeting, is to make a classificatory not analytic move.

In the characterization of the example, I used the word "greeting", which is the name of an illocutionary act, and so the example would be circular if it were presented by itself as an analysis of meaning, since the notion of greeting already involves the notion of meaning.

(Searle, 1969, p. 49)

However, an analysis in terms of rule will, we are told, avoid this problem because it makes no 'explicit use in the analysis of any term that involves "means" as part of its own meaning' (ibid).

In this discussion, Searle locates a substantial problem for any programme of linguistic analysis. It is that analyzers, as language masters, have to work from within the competencies they are trying to explain. His criticisms of Quine's arguments are specifically directed to showing that even logicized and highly technical accounts of language are reliant upon extant mastery in the very respects they question. What is needed is an alternative to either radically dismembering our linguistic intuitions, or a wholesale and unexplicated use of them. Searle's argument is that working up an analysis in terms of rules may resolve these difficulties because it can exhibit how the topic of

analysis is at one and the same time the resource for its expression. This relationship is important because a theory of speech competence must be able to say that:

... since the linguistic characterizations ... are themselves utterances in accordance with the rules, such characterizations are manifestations of that mastery.

(Searle, 1969, p. 12)

The claim then is that this circle of understanding is a condition of inquiry, not a problem which it must overcome. However, Searle is aware that this approach is open to legitimate and serious objections which must be answered if he is to achieve the balance he desires between the explanation of language mastery as a possibility, and our extant capacities as language masters.

The heart of the matter is visible in the quotation which opened this chapter when he says 'the hypothesis of this work is that ... talking is performing acts according to rules'. The question is to what extent this hypothesis can in reality actually be 'a hypothesis'? That is, would it not be better characterized as a presupposition or even a definition of what speaking a language is? Later in the book Searle says:

I want now to explain further ... the hypothesis ... that speaking a language is a matter of performing speech acts according to systems of constitutive rules.

(Searle, 1969, p. 38)

That sentence clearly raises the presumption that his hypothesis has to be proved. Yet, later on the same page, when discussing the relation between certain illocutionary acts and language per se, we are told:

But the fact that one can perform some illocutionary acts while standing outside a natural language, or any system of constitutive rules ...

(ibid. emphasis mine)⁽³⁾

Now that seems to assume precisely what has to be demonstrated inasmuch as in the space of half a page what appeared as yet to be settled about language, transpires to be what language is. Searle is alive to this problem and sets out his reasoning as follows:

I did not attempt to prove that hypothesis, rather I offered it by way of an explanation of the fact that the sort of knowledge expressed in linguistic characterizations of the kind exemplified is possible ... There is nothing circular in this procedure, for I am using the hypothesis of language as rule governed intentional behaviour to explain the possibility of, not provide evidence for, linguistic characterizations.

(Searle, 1969, p. 16)

This is a claim that the notion of proof has to be understood in a special way when considering a phenomenon with which the analyst and audience are not only intimately acquainted, but which is the very means for the expression of their knowledge about it. Here, a hypothesis about language is itself a linguistic characterization as Searle has defined it; a characterization of the conditions that make speaking a language possible. To characterize is at least in part to define. Nevertheless the 'proof' of an analysis of language mastery lies in measuring it against our ordinary use of language. Thus, if speaking a language is a rule governed form of behaviour, and analysis supplies the rules for successful performance of the speech acts of language, then the warrant for the validity of the rules can only lie in our recognition that the rules do underlie the speech acts we produce. In other words, the substance of proof is a theoretical re-production of the phenomena of talk which we recognise (or fail to recognise) as our linguistic capacities. This could never satisfy formal methodological criteria for adequacy of explanation. However, to abide by such criteria when trying to understand language mastery

is merely a gloss for the same 'recognition' that Searle announces to be the 'test' for his theory.

So in our era of extremely sophisticated methodologies, the methodology of this book must seem naively simple. I am a native speaker of a language. I wish to offer certain characterizations and explanations of my use of elements of that language ...

This method places a heavy reliance of the intuitions of the native speaker. But everything I have ever read in the philosophy of language, even work by the most behaviouristic and empirical of authors, relies similarly on the intuitions of the speaker. Indeed, it is hard to see how it could be otherwise since a serious demand that I justify my intuition that 'bachelor' means unmarried man, if consistent, would also involve the demand that I justify my intuition that a given occurrence of 'bachelor' means the same as another occurrence of 'bachelor'. Such intuitions can indeed be justified, but only by falling back on other intuitions.

(Searle, 1969, p. 15)

This relationship between intuition and explanation can be compared to the provision of a grammar. That can be contrasted with mere paraphrase which might be likened to a vocabulary. Of course, the knowledge provided by a vocabulary can be useful and explanatory, even as regards something as simple and obvious as a 'Hello' being a greeting. For example, there would be sense of relief rather than redundancy if a phrase book informed you that an otherwise angry sounding Italian had with the word 'Pronto', simply greeted you. However, in such a case as this, linguistic ignorance is resolved by indicating the meaning of this utterance. The question Searle must answer with his theory is how a speech act such as 'Hello' is understood as a greeting. In other words, the capacity to mean must be accounted for by the analysis. Yet that analysis always stands within the competencies it is explaining, and this is why the comparison with the idea of a grammar may be seen to be apposite

because the account must elaborate the linguistic properties which enable a competent speaker to learn and use speech acts, without presupposing the results of that learning and use. While knowing how to speak is a necessary condition of analysing language, 'the grammar', the results of that analysis, are in the nature of a discovery all the same. Once again, Searle feels constrained to comment upon the nature of this concept in giving an explanation of language.

It bothers some people that I claim there are rules of language we discover even though, I claim, we have been following them all along. But ... in order to explain adequately a piece of human behaviour we have to suppose that it was done in accordance with a rule, even though the agent may not be able to state the rule and may not even be conscious of the fact that he is acting in accordance with the rule.

(Searle, 1969, pp. 41-2)

II Communicative Competence and Performance

If talking 'is performing acts according to rules', Searle also considers language to have a point, and this is the transmission of information between a speaker and a hearer. This may seem so obvious as to be hardly worthy of comment, yet Searle considers that many theories of language have failed to give proper emphasis to what he sees as the prime function of language, namely communication between speaker/hearers. As we shall see, the relationship between speaker and hearer as a social fact is of considerable analytic importance because it enters in to the formulation of rules for the speech acts. Without this dimension of interaction in the explanation, many ordinary, everyday utterances between people would be quite unintelligible. Emphasis on the social facticity of language, on the reciprocal

recognition and use of rules for speaking, is an important consideration in Searle's views on the demonstrability and validity criteria for his theory. The 'hypothesis' and its 'proof' lie in mutual recognition that the rules underlie the speech acts we produce. It is not a question of formal deduction from an axiomatic system, because language is a mutual recognition of sense and meaning by people engaged in communicating. Given that the aim of the theory is to elaborate how communication is possible, it is vital to avoid occluding the practicalities of speech practice when analysing the rule structure that 'underlies' those activities. Searle makes the point like this:

Now, being rule governed, it (language) has formal features which admit of independent study. But a study purely of those formal features, without a study of their role in speech acts would be like a formal study of the currency and credit systems of economies without a study of the role of currency and credit in economic transactions. A great deal can be said in the study of language without studying speech acts, but any such purely formal theory is necessarily incomplete. It would be as if baseball were studied only as a formal system of rules and not as a game.

(Searle, 1969, p.17)

This is worth bearing in mind because the extraction of the ruled conditions for a speech act in fact transpires to be quite a technical business. However, although what follows does evidence Searle's intellectual debts to formal philosophy and structural linguistics, the appearance of the theory should not serve to obscure his commitment to a social and interactive conception of language mastery.

According to Searle, rules operate on at least three levels in the performance of most speech acts. Firstly, there are rules which govern the utterance or production of a well-formed sentence. Then there are a set of rule formulable statements which define the

conditions for successful reference and predication, so ensuring that an utterance actually expresses a proposition. Thirdly, there are rules determining the conditions for the actualization of a particular illocutionary force with which the utterance and the expressed propositional content are delivered. To illustrate these distinctions, Searle takes some simple sentences.

1. Sam smokes habitually.
2. Does Sam smoke habitually?
3. Sam, smoke habitually.
4. Would that Sam smoked habitually.

(Searle, 1969, p. 22)

In characterizing these utterances, one can begin by saying that the speaker has uttered a sentence in the English language. Secondly, in each utterance the speaker refers to an object 'Sam' and predicates of that object the expression 'smoke(s/d) habitually'. Then we can mark illocutionary distinctions by noting that in 1. the speaker is making an assertion, in 2. asking a question, in 3. giving an order, and in 4., somewhat archaically expressing a wish or desire. So, in using any of these sentences, the speaker is performing at least three distinct acts. He is performing utterance acts which include both the use of morphemic elements and the utterance of the complete sentence; then he is performing propositional acts which mark the referential and predicative elements of a sentence; and finally he is performing illocutionary acts such as 'stating', 'questioning' 'commanding' and 'promising'.

It is crucial not to regard these distinctions between different kinds of act as denoting individual events in speaking that speakers have, say for reasons of efficiency, elected to do in the one

utterance. In other words, they are not:

things that speakers do, as it happens, simultaneously, as one might smoke, read, and scratch one's head simultaneously, but rather that in performing an illocutionary act one characteristically performs propositional acts and utterance acts. Nor should it be thought from this that utterance acts and propositional acts stand to illocutionary acts in the way buying a ticket and getting on a train stand to taking a railroad trip. They are not means to an end; rather utterance acts stand to propositional acts in the way in which e.g. making an 'X' on a ballot paper stands to voting.

(Searle, 1969, p. 24)

However, whilst the differences between them do not actually correspond to separable elements of speech acts, they are, nevertheless, vital components of competent speech. For example, if it was not the case that speaker/hearers could detach the referential and predicative elements in a sentence and hold them constant across different illocutionary acts, difficulties would be encountered if they were first warned and then threatened about something they were doing. And if utterance acts were identical to propositional acts, speaker/hearers would find it difficult to carry out the familiar manoeuvre of saying the same thing in a different way (taking the earlier example; 5. Mr Samuel Martin is a regular smoker of tobacco., which would be the same propositional act as the other four examples, the same illocutionary act as 1., but a different utterance act altogether). So, although the distinctions are in one sense purely technical, they are clearly of great practical importance as well. This is perhaps most plain to see at a general level in the support they lend to the idea that utterances can say different things.

... the performance of the same utterance act by two different speakers, or by the same speaker on different occasions, (need not) be a performance of the same

propositional and illocutionary acts: the same sentence may, e.g. be used to make two different statements.

(Searle, 1969, p. 24)

This commitment to the flexibility of speech act meaning is intimately related in Searle's view to the constitutive nature of the rules that underlie their performance. As the concept of constitutive rule has an important place in Searle's analysis, it merits some explanation. It is best explained by contrasting it with the notion of regulative rules. Regulative rules regulate antecedently or independently existing forms of behaviour. Constitutive rules constitute (and regulate) an activity the existence of which is logically dependent upon the rules. Examples of regulative rules are readily found; etiquette demands 'that the knife is to be held in the right hand' (for right-handed people, anyway); an army manual states that 'Officers must wear ties at dinner'. Searle says that generally they may be paraphrased as imperatives, most of them having the form 'Do X', or 'If y do X'. By contrast, constitutive rules have the form 'X counts as y', or 'X counts as y in context C'. The rules of games provide an ample source of examples. The rules of football do not 'regulate' football but define it, a ball between the posts is a goal because the rule book says so. The physical acts of a ball passing between posts, or an arrangement of wood figures on a chequered board, have meaning as 'a goal' or 'checkmate' by virtue of the rules. Thus, when Searle emphasizes that the components of the complete speech act are not 'means to ends', but stand in relation to one another like the way in which 'making an "X" on a ballot paper stands to voting', the constitutive formulation is made abundantly clear.

What this ultimately points to is the centrality in the theory of speaker/hearer's actions in issuing and recognising the intended quality of what is said, together with seeing how its setting and circumstances (to whom it is said, in what way and so forth) will affect its meaning. In other words, the point of this emphasis has less to do with some narrowly technical issue concerning the modality of the rules to be used in linguistic explanation, than with finding an analytical device that will reflect the centrality of human interaction to the phenomenon of language. Although Speech Acts is a technical work, 'technique' follows in the footsteps of Searle's conception of language. All the same, Searle recognises that an emphasis on the active, practical and indexical qualities of language can bring with it other varieties of analytic blindness. He illustrates this blindness with examples which also serve to elaborate his own perspective.

We have seen that Searle suggests that each complete speech act may contain at least three subsidiary acts. He adds to the tripartite distinction between utterance, propositional and illocutionary acts a fourth; the perlocutionary act which is the consequence or effect of the utterance on hearers. For example, by arguing a speaker may persuade or convince, and in asserting may get the ~~speaker~~^{HEARER} to realize something. This is obviously an important component of speech competence as Austin realized, but nevertheless, one that Searle believes has been latterly awarded too much weight. Grice's account of perlocution⁽⁴⁾ Searle finds problematic because it operates as an external rather than integral feature of a speech act. His basic problem according to Searle is that he attempts to give an analysis of meaning in terms of perlocution. For Grice, to say that a speaker meant something by

an utterance is to say that the speaker intended the utterance to produce an effect in the hearer by means of the recognition of this intention. Though correct in Searle's view for stressing the importance of the link between meaning and intention, it does not explain how the meaning is conveyed. In other words, although the act of communication involves recognition on the part of the hearer of the intention to communicate by the speaker, the 'by means of' i.e. language, remains unanalysed. Added to this a strictly perlocutionary account of meaning has bizarre consequences, for example, that eavesdropping on others' conversation, or another's soliloquy, ought to be unintelligible. Consequently, Searle sees Grice's account of meaning in terms of perlocutionary effect to be 'randomly related' (Searle, 1969, p. 45) to the meaning of words in the language. The notion is properly understood as something conveyed in addition to the meaning of the utterance, thereby allowing for the fact that not all speech acts are perlocutions.

When I say 'Hello' and mean it, I do not necessarily intend to produce or elicit any state or action in my hearer other than the knowledge that he is being greeted. But that knowledge is simply his understanding what I said, it is not an additional response or effect.

(Searle, 1969, p. 46)

Searle's criticisms of Grice can be given an even sharper focus if one relates them to the issues he takes up with Quine. Searle, as we have seen, considers Quine's indeterminacy thesis to presuppose the very criteria he argues are problematic. We have also seen Searle is aware of a mirror inversion of Quine's arguments where an 'analysis' of an act only succeeds in paraphrasing it into other terms. To argue that 'Hello' is analysed by saying that it is a greeting, would involve using the latter concept explicatively when its own meaning is what

makes sense of the explanation. Analogously, even if it were conceded that each and every speech act possessed an associated perlocutionary effect, this would still tell us nothing about meaning. Even if we went so far as to define understanding as the perlocutionary effect of an utterance, thereby bestowing on it a relevant degree of conceptual purchase for an analysis of meaning, we would not have shifted the problem of perlocutionary meaning to the concept of understanding.

The characteristic intended effect of meaning is understanding but understanding is not ... a perlocutionary effect. Nor can we amend Grice's account so that meaning is analysed in terms of understanding. That would be too circular, for one feels that meaning and understanding are too closely tied for the latter to be the basis for an analysis of the former.

(Searle, 1969, p. 47)

What is missing in his view is an account of the rules that constitute the meaning of the speech acts in virtue of which rules those speech acts are understood. It is the existence of these rules which allow communication between speaker and hearer to take place and whose analytic extraction provides an account of how a speaker means and how a hearer understands. Searle expresses this as two simple propositions.

- 1) Understanding a sentence is knowing its meaning.
- 2) The meaning of a sentence is determined by rules, and those rules specify both conditions of utterance of the sentence and also what the utterance counts as.

(Searle, 1969, p. 48)

Grice's perlocutionary effect is replaced by Searle's notion of the illocutionary effect of an utterance in terms of hearer's recognition of speaker's intention to produce that effect by virtue of the rules for the use of the expression. So, in the case of the simple speech act

'Hello', the analysis would determine the rules which specify the speech act's conditions of utterance and those rules will manifest the intention to greet hearer on the part of speaker.

Speech Acts also establishes a clear distinction between a proposition and the expression of a proposition. On this issue Searle, although clearly indebted to the work of Austin, finds him wanting. He is concerned to distinguish them because whilst asserting and stating are acts, propositions are not. The importance of this issue lies in the differentiation of the truth (or falsity) of a proposition from the illocutionary act which contains it. Of course, the expression of a proposition is a propositional act but you,

... cannot just express a proposition while doing nothing else and ... thereby perform a complete speech act. One grammatical correlate of this point is that clauses beginning with 'that' ... which are a characteristic form for explicitly isolating propositions are not complete sentences ... Notice that I do not say that the sentence expresses a proposition; I do not know how sentences could perform acts of that (or any other kind) ... in the utterance of a sentence the speaker expresses a proposition.

(Searle, 1969, p. 29)

This claim that it is speakers, not sentences, which express propositions indicates once again how Searle's rule governed theory of meaning is essentially interactive and institutional. This claim also separates Searle's theory from those which consider meaning and communication to be the product of combinatory operations (whether syntactic or psychological) which function through truth assertion by correspondence with some independent state of affairs.⁽⁵⁾

However, Searle's rejection of correspondence theories of meaning does not entail a collapse of the distinction between the assertion of a truth and the truth of an assertion. Speech act theory is a rejection of the view that meaning can be analysed in terms of truth

conditions, but at the same time it is calculated to avoid a serious error about truth and meaning which Searle locates in Austin's account.⁽⁶⁾ The rationale for Searle's criticism is that while he is in large agreement with Austin's performativist analysis of communication (after all he acknowledges it as a major inspiration), its weak link is the theory of truth Austin promulgated.⁽⁷⁾ That weak link is something emphasized by correspondence theorists who use it to indicate the conceptual inadequacies of performativism generally; a sort of guilt by association. Searle wants to remedy this and, as we shall see, succeeds in turning his critique of Austin back upon them.

For Austin the sentence 'I am going to do it', has one meaning (it is one locution) and a potential for different illocutionary forces; it could for example be a statement, a threat or a warning. For Searle, it expresses one proposition but is capable of possessing a number of meanings, each of them the performance of different illocutionary acts. Searle regards Austin's locutionary/illocutionary distinction as unwarrantable because the:

... description of the act as a happily performed locutionary act, since it involves the meaning of the sentence, is already a description of the illocutionary act, since a particular illocutionary act is determined by that meaning.

(Searle, 1969, p. 407)

In Searle's view, the abstraction of locutionary meaning from illocutionary force means that, on the one hand the performance of an act is disconnected from the meaning of that act, whilst on the other it conflates the distinction between the content of a proposition and the locution in which it is embedded. This, says Searle, commits Austin to the erroneous view that the act, for example, of telling the truth can be either true or false.

Once again the speech act 'Hello' will serve to exemplify Searle's position in contrast to a truth conditional analysis and Austin's performativist account of meaning. An analysis in terms of truth conditions runs into immediate difficulties as far as referential correspondence is concerned because there is no independent state of affairs for 'Hello' to correspond to. The alternative approach where 'Hello' corresponds with 'HELLO' in meta-language L, is, according to Searle, a definitional accomplishment completely reliant for its sense on the already understood meaning of the analysandum.⁽⁸⁾ Austin, we are told, would fare little better with his analysis of this simple speech act. 'Hello' is a one word sentence and therefore does not possess the usual verb formulation and referring expression (e.g. I am pleased/to meet you), which Searle thinks must have provided much of the motivation for the illocutionary/locutionary distinction. Consequently, 'Hello' can either be analysed as a locution with a particular meaning, or as an illocution with a certain force, but a practical demonstration of the distinction in the present case would hardly make sense. Austin's attempt to abstract locutionary meaning from illocutionary force is about as sensible as trying to extract unmarried men from bachelors. His insight that asserting a proposition is as much an act as the making of a promise, when combined with the divorce of meaning from illocution, is what leads him to equate propositions with the act of asserting them. Thus, the mistaken idea that meaning can be understood in terms of truth conditions is compounded by the view that an act of assertion can be either true or false. Ultimately either would entail that rules are true or false, an outcome that would have the effect of dismissing Searle's central idea that speaking is rule governed action. In any event, the notion

that rules are true or false is a category mistake: rules are followed or abrogated.⁽⁹⁾ For Searle there are acts of truth telling and acts of promising, but truth is not an act and the performance and illocutionary force of an assertion or a promise, etc., is not something distinct from its meaning. The analysis of meaning in terms of truth conditions reduces acts to truth. Austin's theory conflates acts with truth. Both views distort something of fundamental importance for Searle, that

... an assertion is a (very special kind of) commitment to the truth of a proposition.

(Searle, 1969, p. 29)

In this way, the idea that speaking is an activity which involves commitments can be combined with the fact that a truth which is asserted is not true by virtue of its assertion. Meaning analysed in terms of truth conditions cannot cope with the first intellection, while Austin's performativism commits him to the second.

III The 'Full Dress' Analysis of a Speech Act

Searle's discussion of the relationship between truth and meaning makes it evident that his theory has implications that go beyond the immediate project of accounting for how language mastery is possible. Yet it is equally clear that these epistemological issues are integral to the theory. The relationship between truth and meaning has been intimately bound up with ascertaining the nature of communication in the history (particularly the recent history) of philosophy, even if that relationship has been overemphasised or wrongly explicated in Searle's opinion by his philosophical forbears. By contrast, speech act theory places no less emphasis on the psychological domain of intentionality and the sociological domain of interaction to account

for the mastery of language. We have already seen the way in which rule use and uptake are crucially dependent on intention in the analysis of the illocutionary effect of an utterance. As we turn to what Searle terms the full dress analysis of a speech act, some elements of the role of interaction in the constitution of meaning will also become evident (although the importance of interactional features of communication will not be fully realized until we come to look at his analysis of the indirect speech act).

Searle gives a detailed analysis of the speech act of promising which, he argues, involves the satisfaction of nine conditions if a sincere and non-defective promise is to obtain.⁽¹⁰⁾ The FIRST condition requires that both speaker and hearer (hereafter S and H) are both competent speakers of the language, that they can make and understand utterances and that they suffer no physical impediments to that end. This condition also excludes what Searle terms parasitic discourse, for example story-telling and play-acting in which promissory utterances may be made but not literally meant as the issuance and acceptance of a promise by S and H. The SECOND condition isolates the propositional content from the rest of the speech act, formally, 'S expresses the proposition that p in the utterance of the sentence T.', and thereby allows the analysis to concentrate on the illocutionary force of promising. However, this is not to say that the proposition is unaffected by its illocutionary mode because the THIRD condition requires that the proposition predicates a future act of S. Searle says:

I cannot promise to have done something, and I cannot promise that someone else will do something (although I can promise to see that he will do it).

(Searle, 1969, p. 57)

Of course, it is quite common to promise to another that we have done something in everyday talk. Searle does not discuss this issue directly but it seems likely on the basis of the above quotation that what we promise is the veracity of our assertion, not the act to which the propositional content of the assertion refers. This view is backed up by the FOURTH condition which individuates promises from other acts which may be uttered with the same sequence of words. A promise, we are told, is a pledge to do something for you, not to you, so an utterance of 'I promise I'll beat you up' is properly understood as a warning or a threat. Utterances like these are cast in promissory form according to Searle because the locution 'I promise' is amongst the strongest illocutionary force indicating devices provided for commitment in the English language and so is quite often used for that purpose alone. The point of condition four is that the thing promised must be something that H wants (or would like), and that S must know or believe it to be the case. The FIFTH condition states that it must not be obvious to S and H that S will do the thing promised in the normal course of events. This ensures that the promissory act has a point. For example, if I promise to do something which I am going to do anyway, the promise will either be puzzling or defective. Searle has an apt example. Consider a happily married man who promises his wife that he will not leave her in the next week; although doubtless true, it would hardly be reassuring. The SIXTH condition states that S must intend to do the act A, and Searle calls this the sincerity condition. However, he regards insincere promises as promises nonetheless. The difference is that the speaker has no intention to execute the promised act, but only purports to. S takes responsibility for the intention and

so the illocutionary act remains an expression of intention though not sincerely held. One could not sensibly say: 'I promise but I do not intend to do A'. This is closely related to the SEVENTH condition, that S intends the utterance of the words 'I promise', to place him/her under an obligation to do A. Searle calls this the essential condition because it:

distinguishes promises (and other members of the same family such as vows) from other kinds of illocutionary acts.

(Searle, 1969, p. 60)

However, although the seventh condition is essential to promising, from a communicative point of view it only establishes that S's intention is articulated by the utterance of T, and it is left to condition EIGHT to stipulate how that utterance makes S's intention manifest to H. This establishes the uptake of S's intention by H, in virtue of the meaning of the item which S utters which conventionally associates it with the establishment of the knowledge that a promise has been made (this is Searle's amended Gricean analysis in terms of illocutionary effect). Therefore, S intends to produce in H the knowledge that the utterance places S under an obligation and recognition of this consists of H's realization of S's intention by virtue of:

the semantic rules (which determine the meaning) of the expressions uttered ... such that the utterance counts as the undertaking of an obligation.

(Searle, 1969, p. 61)

The achievement of communication described in condition eight is stipulated in condition NINE to the effect that the semantical rules of the dialect spoken by S and H are such that T is correctly and sincerely uttered if and only if all the previous conditions obtain.

This last condition seems a little odd in its apparent desire to confirm or stipulate that T will only be correctly and sincerely uttered if all the previous conditions are adhered to. Looked at uncharitably, it might appear an attempt to guarantee the validity of the analyst's endeavour by making his theory into a prerequisite of language. That is not the view taken here. But it is worth dwelling on this condition for a moment because what it is meant to guard against is something that becomes significant later in the chapter. The point of the condition is to eliminate the kind of counter examples one might provide by showing that uptake on H's part was accomplished independently of the semantic means referred to in condition eight. Searle gives an example of what he means. He takes the case of an American soldier in the Second World War who attempts to deceive his Italian captors in thinking he is a German agent working behind American lines, by uttering to them the words, 'Kennst du das Land wo die Zitronen bluhent?', the only words of German he knows, remembered from a poem at school. The soldier is relying upon the Italian's ignorance of the German language to convince them of his authenticity because he wishes them to hear the words 'Knowest thou where the lemon trees bloom' as 'I am a German agent, release me'. If he is successful in this ploy, we have an example of where meaning will be realized in terms other than those of the semantical rules of the language. It is worth noting that Grice's perlocutionary effect is not rehabilitated by such an example, because, as Searle points out, the success will not consist in the uptake of the agent's intention but on the soldiers' assumption that the German words mean what they take them (and he hopes they will take them) to mean. Indeed, in this example were his primary intention to be made manifest, his capture would be assured.

An accomplishment such as this Searle argues to be parasitic on the achievement of communication described by the conditions. The continuing inadequacy of Grice's analysis in a situation which looks favourable to its concept of meaning is used by Searle to highlight his argument. However, whilst this particular example looks entirely consistent with Searle's theory since the success of the agent's ploy depends upon the expectation of his adversaries that he is abiding by the semantical rules of his language (i.e. German), when Searle turns his attention to utterances within a language that do not happen to conform to the conditions formulated as rules, the theory begins to look distinctly unwieldy. As we shall see, the problem arises in part from the degree of determinacy in the theory, which for Searle is the mark of explanatory adequacy, an approach to understanding meaning clearly evident in his commentary on the ninth condition in that:

it guarantees that H understands the utterance, that it ... it entails that the illocutionary effect K is produced in H by means of H's recognition of S's intention to produce it, which recognition is achieved in virtue of H's knowledge of the meaning of T.

(Searle, 1969, p. 61)

What this means is that the meaning of an utterance is entirely determined by the rules which are extracted from the conditions. Not all the conditions are directly relevant to the speech act of promising since some apply to utterances generally (conditions one, eight and nine). Thus, the FIRST rule of the speech act is derived from conditions two and three, and states that a promise is to be uttered only in the context of a sentence of some larger stretch of discourse. Searle calls this the propositional content rule. Rule TWO formulates condition four, and states that the promise is to be

uttered only if H would prefer S's doing A to his not doing it, and that S believes this to be so. The THIRD rule is derived from condition five and states that the promise is to be uttered only if it is not obvious to both S and H that S will not do the act in the normal course of events. Searle calls these two the preparatory rules. Rule FOUR formulates the sincerity condition (six) and states that the promise is to be uttered only if S intends to do the act, whilst rule FIVE states that the utterance of the promise counts as the undertaking of an obligation. This is derived from condition seven and therefore comprises the essential rule.

These rules have an ordered character. Rules two to five only apply if rule one is satisfied, and the essential rule only if rules two and three are satisfied as well. Another important feature is that rule five is constitutive in form (x counts as y in context C), whereas the other rules are regulative, taking the form of quasi-imperatives (utter a promise only if certain other specified states obtain). Accordingly, this means that the essential rule determines the others insofar as it establishes what illocutionary force marks the utterance.⁽¹¹⁾ Searle considers that the analogy between excavating the rules of games such as chess and his own analysis:

is holding up remarkably well. If we ask ourselves under what conditions a player could be said to move a knight correctly, we would find preparatory conditions such as that it must be his turn to move, as well as the essential condition stating the actual positions the knight can move to. There are even sincerity conditions for competitive games, such as one does not cheat or attempt to 'throw' the game ... There are usually no propositional content rules for games because games do not in general represent states of affairs.

(Searle, 1969, pp. 63-4)

It will be helpful to briefly consider the analysis of another speech act in order to compare its rules with those of 'promising'. Take the simple speech act 'Hello' which has already been met in other connections. This act has neither propositional content nor sincerity conditions and rules. Its preparatory condition rules to the effect that S has just encountered H, whilst the essential rule states that the sentence 'Hello' counts as a courteous greeting of H by S. It is a simple speech act, certainly 'simpler' than promising, a fact which the analysis mirrors and this together with other examples of the same co-variance indicate to Searle that the theory must be working along the right lines. However, in the next section we shall meet an example of saying 'Hello' which requires a degree of complexity (not to say ingenuity) from the theory which makes the idea of explanatory simplicity look well nigh redundant.

IV. The Problem of Indirect Speech Acts

In the first section of this chapter, the philosophical footing of speech act theory has been elaborated, and in the second and third how a speech act is analysed by the theory. In this section these two directions of investigation are united in examining firstly, how Searle has developed his theory to cope with what he terms indirect speech acts, and, secondly, why the presuppositions of the theory require this development. Put bluntly, the theory faces a problem. On the one hand the analysis in terms of conditions for speech act meaning requires a concept of literalness which will ensure a determinate relation between the act of utterance and the rules which govern its issuance and uptake on the part of S and H. On the other hand, we have seen that Searle is well aware of the

contextual properties of language use in actual communication. The achievement of explanatory closure requires that a speech act has a fixed unvarying meaning if the rules Searle enunciates are to account for linguistic competence, whilst the actual practices of that competence by members in the linguistic community proceed in what looks like complete indifference to that requirement. Faced with this situation, Searle has only one option if he is to maintain the coherence of the theory and a commitment to analysing actual speech practice, not some philosophically reduced version of it, which after all is a professional manoeuvre we have seen he clearly rejects. That option is to argue that there are a class of paradigmatic direct speech acts which provide the foundations upon which the flexible meanings of everyday (indirect) speech are erected. In this way, the basic conditions and rules of a speech act are preserved being, so to speak, laminated by a different kind of analysis that can still ultimately explain any speech act in terms of the rules. As we shall discover, one major problem is that the class of paradigmatic acts, in order to preserve their analytic status, become so hedged about with restrictions that they are effectively alienated from anything recognisable as ordinary talk. In other words, the analysis of indirect speech requires a concept of direct speech so univocal in meaning that it comes to look suspiciously like a gloss for a theory which is seriously out of step with Searle's acknowledged criterion for valid explanation, viz. the intuitions of the native speaker. Of course, it must always be borne in mind that in accounting for how language mastery is possible, we seldom deal with theories that fail to work, but rather with theories that cannot convincingly explain how they work. That is extant competence becomes, as mentioned in the first section of this chapter, a resource for explanations, not the topic of explanation. Or, as Searle puts it:

the general difficulty in correctly formulating knowledge that one has prior to and independent of any formulation; of converting knowing how into knowing that.

(Searle, 1969, P.14)

An example of indirection in speech can be given by elaborating the 'Pronto' example discussed above in relation to the theory's explanatory task. There it was mentioned that a phrase book knowledge, whilst not the terminus of explanation for speech act theory, could nevertheless be useful and explanatory on occasion. A situation was envisaged where an angry-sounding Italian barks the word 'Pronto' at you. No-one, I suggested, would disagree that it was both useful and explanatory to know that with this utterance the person had merely greeted you. But for Searle, this is not an explanation in the sense he desires because it merely resolves a particular linguistic ignorance by indicating the meaning of the utterance in H's native language. Explanation in Searle's sense is achieved by showing how meaning is the upshot of underlying rules (the rationale of the theory), and enumerating the rules which determine how the speech act is meant and understood by S and H (what one might term the product of the theory). Now though, envisage the situation in the following way. H, not speaking Italian, is led by the general demeanour of S to believe that S intends him some harm which the utterance announces. Nimble with the phrase book he is relieved to find that the word only means 'Hello'. But the relief is short-lived, because in this part of Italy the word in fact means 'Empty your pockets'; in this area 'greeting' a stranger carries with it a demand that you unburden yourself of wallet or purse. Note in this case that the issue of S and H speaking different languages is not truly relevant to the example. Somebody might say 'Hello in a London street and mean exactly the same thing. Searle puts the matter this way:

There are ... cases in which the speaker may utter a sentence and mean what he says and also mean another illocution with a different propositional content ... The problem posed by indirect speech acts is the problem of how it is possible for the speaker to say one thing and mean that but also mean something else. And since meaning consists in part in the intention to produce understanding in the hearer, a large part of that problem is that of how it is possible for the hearer to understand the indirect speech act when the sentence he hears and understands means something else.

(Searle, 1969, pp. 59-60)

In Speech Acts the cases of indirection which are examined are principally examples where one illocutionary force (e.g. that of a promise) carries another (e.g. a threat or a warning). Although significant, this does not strain the original theory overmuch, as the other elements of the speech act remain constant. But in the 'Pronto' example above, a propositional content is introduced into a speech act which, according to its analysis, possesses none at all. However, in that work readers are given a pretty clear indication of how Searle's analysis will develop when we are told with regard to the speech act of 'promising' that the author will ignore:

marginal, fringe, and partially defective promises. This approach has the consequence that counter examples can be produced of ordinary uses of the word 'promise' which do not fit the analysis. ... Their existence does not 'refute' the analysis, rather they require an explanation of why and how they depart from the paradigm case of promise making.

(Searle, 1969, p. 55)

Whilst Searle would hardly be prepared to argue that indirect speech acts form a 'marginal' class of utterances, it is evident nevertheless that what the analysis must achieve is something akin to a 'rehabilitation' of these deviant utterances by explaining how their departure from the rules, which the theory stipulates as governing meaning, is possible.

Given his critique of theorists like Quine, Searle is well aware of the pitfalls of pursuing analytical developments simply in order to save his theory. His strategy comprises a combination of criticizing philosophical work that might be seen as repudiating his explanatory aims; fleshing out the idea that language mastery comprises a basic set of acts in order to strengthen the principal thesis that rules determine meaning; and lastly, constructing an analysis which involves the use of practical reasoning to purchase the kind of flexibility of meaning which an account of indirect speech will have to possess whilst leaving the rules unaffected by it. Thus, with regard to the 'criticism', we are told:

There are not, as Wittgenstein (on one possible interpretation) and many others have claimed, an infinite or indefinite number of language games or uses of language ... there are rather limited limited number of basic things we do with language.

(Searle, 1976, pp. 22-3)

The idea of a boundless plethora of language games would deny the role for rules in determining the meaning of utterances which the theory gives them. Instead of forming a structure capable of rigorous specification, one would have to make an appeal to rules which had a flexibility of application to an utterance equivalent to the multitude of uses to which an utterance, as Searle acknowledges, can in fact be put. For Searle, this would not be explanation at all, because explaining how something is possible is, at bottom, a reductivist enterprise. The success of an explanation of language mastery ultimately depends:

on whether we can reduce all illocutionary acts to some very small number of illocutionary types.

(Searle, 1969, p. 64)

Thus, the metaphysics of explanation itself exhibits how language actually works. The analysis of a speech act is not an abstract theoretical picture, it is meant to actually delineate the mechanisms that make possible ordinary talk. The acquisition of basic rules which the original theory specifies, furnish the neophyte communicator with the wherewithal to build and understand the more complex utterances of everyday interaction. So the apparent rigidity of the paradigm utterances when compared with actual speech practice are, in fact, to be seen as a token of their fundamental character. The theory's explanation and language learning, although very different enterprises, are really like grasping two ends of the same piece of string. This approach to the problem of indirection is looked upon by Searle as far more plausible and convincing than, for example, an analytic manoeuvre like separating illocutionary force from propositional content, which would have provided a resolution to the 'Pronto' example even if only in theoretical terms. But, then, that would have had to stand as an exception to Searle's view that illocutionary force can modify propositional content (see p.21 above) and run counter to the criticisms he made of Austin's locutionary/illocutionary division. Instead, a whole new level of analysis is presented for the phenomenon of indirect speech, which employs practical reasoning about social conventions to explain it on the basis of the rules already excavated by the theory.

V. The Analysis of Indirect Speech

Searle takes the following conversational exchange as an exemplification of 'the general phenomenon of indirection'.

(1) Student X: Let's go to the movies tonight.

(2) Student Y: I have to study for an exam.

According to the theory, the first utterance constitutes a proposal in virtue of its meaning, in other words a direct speech act. The utterance of (2) in that context would normally constitute a rejection of the proposal, but not, says Searle, in virtue of its meaning. It is simply a statement about Y, about what he or she has to do. He continues:

Statements of this form do not, in general, constitute rejections of proposals, even in cases in which they are made in response to a proposal. Thus, if Y had said:

(5) I have to eat popcorn tonight.

or:

(6) I have to tie my shoe.

in a normal context, neither of these utterances would have been a rejection of the proposal.

(Searle, 1976, b p.62)

So the rejection in (2) is literally a statement about what Y has to do, even though its conventional meaning in that context is a rejection of the proposal in (1). And, of course, 'context' refers to something wider than a prior utterance in 'direct' form to set up the meaning to be taken from the indirect speech act. For example, the utterance 'Can you reach the salt?' need not be dependent on any prior utterance for its meaning, but rather on a setting or circumstances to transfer its form from that of a question into a request to pass the salt. This example also indicates that the issue of an utterance's 'literal' form need not necessarily be of any great significance when considering the question of meaning. As

Searle concedes, it takes some ingenuity to imagine a situation where the utterance would not count as a request.

The next step is to introduce some terminology. With regard to (2), Searle says that the primary illocution is the rejection, and ~~the~~ secondary illocution is the statement to the effect that Y has to study for an exam. (13) Given that the theory will provide an analysis of the secondary act, the question is how is the primary illocutionary effect achieved? In general terms Searle describes it thus:

In indirect speech the speaker communicates to the hearer more than he actually says by way of relying on their mutually shared background information, both linguistic and non-linguistic, together with the general powers of rationality and inference on the part of the hearer.

(Searle, 1975, pp. 60-1)

What this amounts to specifically is a further set of conditions, in addition to those which, as rules, govern the uptake of the secondary illocution. However, as the general description indicates, these conditions are in fact inferential steps in a reasoning process for deriving the primary illocutionary effect from the secondary illocutionary act. What Searle rather artlessly terms 'a brief reconstruction' is set out as follows:

Step 1 I have made a proposal to Y, and in response he has made a statement to the effect that he has to study for an exam.

Step 2 I assume that Y is cooperating in the conversation and that therefore his remark is intended to be relevant.

Step 3 A relevant response must be one of acceptance, rejection, counter-proposal, further discussion, etc.

Step 4 But his literal utterance was not one of these, and so was not a relevant response (inference from steps 1 and 2).

Step 5 Therefore, he probably means more than he says. Assuming that his remark is relevant, his primary

illocutionary point must differ from his literal one (inference from steps 2 and 4).

This step is crucial. Unless a hearer has some inferential strategy for finding out when primary illocutionary points differ from literal illocutionary points, he has no way of understanding indirect illocutionary acts.

Step 6 I know that studying for an exam normally takes a large amount of time relative to a single evening, and I know that going to the movies normally takes a large amount of time relative to a single evening.

Step 7 Therefore, he probably cannot both go to the movies and study for an exam in one evening (inference from step 6).

Step 8 A preparatory condition on the acceptance of a proposal, or any other commissive, is the ability to perform the act predicated in the propositional content condition.

Step 9 Therefore, I know that he has said something that has the consequence that he probably cannot consistently accept the proposal (inference from steps 1, 7 and 8).

Step 10 Therefore, his primary illocutionary point is probably to reject the proposal (inference from steps 5 and 9).

(Searle, 1975, p. 63)

Searle does acknowledge that all of this may appear somewhat pedantic but insists, if anything, that the inferential process is still underdescribed. For example, the role of sincerity is not discussed, or the ceteris paribus conditions that would need to be attached to various of the steps. Something else he notes is that the outcome of the inferential process is 'probabilistic', since Y's utterance need not necessarily constitute a rejection. Y might have gone on to say, 'I have to study for an exam, but let's go the movies anyhow'.

The concept of 'illocutionary point' is also new terminology introduced by this theoretical development, but Searle does not

explain it in this particular article. However, in a later publication, he says:

Illocutionary point is part of, but not the same as illocutionary force. Thus e.g. the point of requests is the same as that of commands: both are attempts to get the hearers to do something. But the illocutionary forces are clearly different. In general one can say that the notion of illocutionary force is the resultant of several elements of which illocutionary point is only one, though, I believe the most important one.

(Searle, 1976, p. 3)

This is yet another indication that the analytic importance of classifying speech acts is given greater weight in explaining indirect speech, in fact, to the extent that it seems to erode the distinction between the classification and the analysis of utterances made in the original theory. But against this view must be borne in mind Searle's comment in Speech Acts that the explanation of language mastery would ultimately depend on whether illocutionary acts could be reduced to 'some very small number of illocutionary types' (Searle, 1969, p.64). In other words, this move is foreshadowed in the original theory in spite of the distinction between analysis and classification which it contains.

However, what cannot escape notice is that as Searle faces the problem of explaining how a plethora of meanings can attach themselves to a direct speech act, the analytical framework develops what might be termed a compensating tendency by categorizing speech acts into fewer and larger classes. It also seems likely that this pull in opposite directions is what leads to the effective bifurcation of a concept like illocutionary force, plainly evident in the above quotation, a concept which was of central significance in Speech Acts.

In other words, what Searle wants us to see as a 'development' of the theory might rather be seen as evidence of theoretical stress; stress encountered in trying to simultaneously maintain the thesis that all speech acts are realizations of underlying rules, and face the fact that ordinary talk seems to be undertaken in spite of that theoretical requirement.

It is no contradiction to what has just been said to concede that the theory will always be able to explain the facts of linguistic usage, if by 'explain' one means provide an analysis of the utterance using the theory. As we shall see shortly, the theory in conjunction with the reasoning steps can secure an analysis of sufficient flexibility to cope with the meaning of a speech act that in particular circumstances negates the rules of its direct form. So to that extent the explanation will always be able to formulate what the native speaker already knows as a language master. And the notion of explanation, as an account of the particular (utterance) by means of the general (nature of utterances manifest in the paradigmatic speech acts), is preserved. But when the analysis makes explicit the use that is to be made of 'relying on mutually shared background information' and 'general powers of rationality and inference' (Searle, 1975, pp. 62-3), perhaps the intuitions of the native speaker might be better understood as unacknowledged resources for explanation rather than just criteria for assessing the 'rightness' of the explanation. In other words, Searle's philosophical insight that analysis always stands within the competencies it is explaining, is obscured by his desire to provide a rule governed analysis of language-use. This is particularly apparent in the difficulties he encounters when trying to ascertain the precise role of the reasoning steps in his analysis of indirect speech acts.

IV. Implicit Reasoning in Indirect Speech Analysis

Searle makes the same point about the reasoning steps of the indirect speech analysis as he does about the rules which underlie direct speech acts: no-one would consciously make such inferences in actual communication. People do, of course, infer things in the course of ordinary communication, but obviously Searle does not want to claim his analysis is a mirror of those activities any more than claim that speakers run through the conditions and rules of direct speech acts when making an utterance. However, the comparison between the rules and the steps on the question of the speaker/hearers awareness of them also serves to point out where they differ. To bring this out fully, it is worth repeating the basic claim of the theory in the context of the extension made by the indirect analysis. Searle says that we follow rules in communicating even though we may not be aware of them in the activity of speaking or, on reflection, be able to formulate them. Leaving aside whatever philosophical difficulties there may be about following something without being conscious of it, he nevertheless clearly demonstrates the capability of rule formulations to constitute semantic relationships and regulate their use.

What this capability is meant to demonstrate is that despite a speaker's lack of awareness of the rules, or ability to formulate them, the explanation cannot be represented as some mere theoretical analogue of the wherewithal of linguistic communication. The conditions formulated as rules, together with the reasoning steps for indirectives are meant to be the actual constituents of language mastery. This is what Searle is saying when he claims a speech act to be a 'realization' of its underlying rules. However, if a speech

act is a matter of 'realizing' underlying rules, it is not obvious in terms of the theory how the reasoning steps can either be compared to or operate alongside the rules at all.

To begin with the steps are not based on anything like the conditions of a literal speech act from which its rules are extracted. They are better characterized as based upon maxims about the nature and appropriateness of things and activities in certain circumstances. With regard to the main example above, one might be: 'do not go to the cinema when you have to study for an exam'; another, this time more abstract and general: 'replies must be relevant to the utterance to which they are a response'. Whereas conditions are formulated as rules, the steps depend on the maxims. That is a very different kind of relationship. Added to this is the difference in 'outcome' between the application of the rules and the steps. Rules, we are told, have a determinate relationship to the meaning of the utterance, the steps, as we have just seen, a probabilistic one.

Of course, Searle introduced the analysis of indirect speech in order to give flexibility to a theory which had achieved the required degree of explanatory explicitness, but as a result was troubled by a rigidity and restrictiveness with regard to the form and meaning of expressions when compared with actual speech. Consequently, there are bound to be differences between the rules and the steps, which are in themselves unproblematic as long as one adheres to the idea that communication comprises a basic structure of direct speech acts upon which is erected a superstructure of indirect ones. Given that conception, the differences between the nature of the rules and the steps are explicable in terms of their structural position, and this, in essence, is how Searle manages to say that the rules and

steps are functionally identical and yet analytically different. However, what the analysis still does not make clear is that if meaning is a matter of realizing underlying rules of the direct speech act, how do speaker/hearers appreciate that the meaning of the utterance sometimes requires the engagement of the indirect reasoning steps?

Answering that question from the viewpoint of a native speaker is easy enough. I know and presume that 'everyone' knows that the reply 'I have to study for an exam', to the suggestion, 'Let's go to the movies', is most probably a rejection of that proposal. Furthermore, I can construe further senses into these utterances which I presume others would recognise; for example that the reply was directed to extracting sympathy or commiseration from X (the decision as to whether to go to the movies having yet to be taken); or take the reply as an invitation to cajole Y into going with reasons like 'it's good to relax just before an exam'; or perhaps Y's response may be a way of ascertaining the true intent of X, e.g. 'If she/he's wanting to go with me, she/he'll not take "no" for an answer'; or it might be that Y's response contains an unvoiced counter-proposal such as 'I have to study for an exam and so do you!' Presumably this list of possible meanings would end sometime, but the boundary does not appear to be at all definite, one reason being that each alternative sense invokes further possibilities of what the sentences may mean. Furthermore, if we are to take seriously the idea of 'mutually shared background information' cueing speaker/hearers into these alternative meanings, it seems quite conceivable that all of them could be recognised by the speakers in the one exchange.

In terms of the theory, understanding the meaning of an indirect speech act relies 'crucially' on the fifth step as Searle makes clear. This allows the hearer to detect that the speaker 'probably means more than he says'. What is noticeable, though, is that step 5 makes no reference to any rule governed element whatsoever, which is to say that the meaning of the utterance is understood in terms other than those of rule realization. Of course, Searle would see no substance to this point as a criticism, since the direct speech act and its 'governing' rules provide the foundation for the inference involved in step five. But what is significant here is that apart from the supposition that speech acts are governed by rules, the rules of the 'direct' speech act contribute nothing to the meaning of the 'indirect' act. In the example it is our knowledge about exam revision, going to the cinema and the potential conflict between the two which really provides the basis for understanding that the utterance 'I have to study for an exam' probably counts as a rejection of the proposal to go to the movies. From this perspective, the analysis of indirect speech looks like something that is principally concerned with saving the original theory from a plethora of counter-examples. It is the supposition that 'I have to study for an exam' must be a self-referential statement and not the rejection of a proposal, that requires the detailed analysis to transform it into what speaker/hearers would ordinarily take it to mean in such a situation. In other words, for the theory the speaker must 'mean more than he says', rather than just then and there that 'I can't go'.

There are also other problems. Given that it takes Searle ten steps to derive one 'primary' (indirect) illocution from one

'secondary' (direct) speech act, presumably the analysis that could represent some or all of the possible meanings (noted in the previous paragraph but one) as a cohort in the one utterance would be correspondingly lengthier and more complicated. As the analysis is regarded by Searle as an account of the wherewithal of our actual linguistic competence, such complexity becomes increasingly difficult to reconcile with Searle's criterion of the linguistic intuitions of the native speaker as the litmus test for a theory's adequacy.

The analysis that could provide for the statement to be a rejection of the proposal, also perhaps an invitation to cajole and possibly a reminder as well that the inviter, like the invitee, had to study for an exam, would presumably take many pages of reasoning steps if the extraction of one 'indirect' meaning is anything to go by. No doubt it could be said that all this pointed to was the inadequacy of the concept of linguistic intuition as a criterion for theorising the possibility of language. After all, the physiological requirements of the muscles in my hand for typing this sentence would no doubt take many pages to describe fully, yet the sentence itself takes only a few lines. But it is Searle himself who rejects the rationale for that kind of argument when he argues for the philosophical propriety of relying on our intuitions as native speakers.

Nevertheless, it is important to appreciate the true extent of the semantic flexibility which Searle's analysis of indirect speech acts gives to the theory. Unless this is recognised, the critique of Searle's work can take the form of trying to find utterances that the theory is incapable of analysing, instead of seeing the deeper problems that lie in Searle's approach to understanding language mastery. As noted earlier, theories of language mastery seldom fail

to work, our native competence ensures that they do as a rule. The real issue is properly explaining how they work, for such an explanation will show what language mastery is, since the theorization is itself an instance of that mastery.

VII Indirect Speech: A Misguided Critique

The failure to come to terms with these deeper problems is manifest in the criticisms made of Searle by Jurgen Streeck (1980). This has the consequence that the proposals he advances for analysing ordinary speech competence really fail to mark any advance on the problems inherent in speech act theory. Streeck does acknowledge that Searle's work signals a significant departure from traditional linguistics insofar as it maintains:

that there can be no absolute distinction between the semantic description of linguistic forms and the analysis of language use in human communication.

(Streeck, 1980, p. 134)

Nonetheless, he regards Searle's importation of a sociological dimension into the analysis of language mastery to be insufficient, principally because the importance which the context of utterances can have upon their meaning, is not accorded proper analytic weight. He calls this 'the principle of context as given', which we are told:

relates to Searle's method of defining categories of speech acts by listing the necessary and sufficient conditions for their performance.

(ibid., p. 138)

Now, this criticism looks precisely like the one that I have just made concerning the supposition that the utterance 'I have to study for an exam' must be a self-referential statement, even if it

functions as a 'rejection' in a particular context. In other words, Streeck is also criticizing Searle's view that there is an inherent meaning to that utterance which is somehow logically primitive to what it means in the actual circumstances of its use.

However, as soon as the detail of Streeck's argument is considered, significant differences between his reasons for the shortcomings in Searle's theory and those presented here begin to appear. He sets about illustrating the deficiencies of speech act theory in this regard by presenting a very simple conversational exchange which he regards the theory incapable of analysing. It is a speech act which has already served various purposes in this chapter:

5 5.1 Hi! (smiling)

 5.2 Hi! (smiling)

(ibid., p. 145)

Its very simplicity is the thing which Streeck says creates problems for a speech act analysis of the utterances. The context of these utterances is that they are a communication between two adults who have just made love. As we have seen, these utterances would in virtue of the rules which realise their meaning constitute speech acts from the illocutionary class 'Greetings'. The rule formulated preparatory condition for this class is that 'the speaker must have just encountered the hearer' (Searle, 1969, p. 64). But, as Streeck points out, in this particular situation that can hardly be said to be the case. Consequently, the rules which Searle maintains must govern the uptake of the meaning of 'Hi' are abrogated, and so it appears in terms of the theory the communication of a greeting would be said to have failed. Yet, as Streeck^c_A says, 'A and B do signal to

one another that they are just encountering each other' (Streeck, 1980, p. 145).

This incompatibility between what the theory says and what we can recognise as a greeting, grounds Streeck's criticism that the interdependence between language mastery and social interaction is not actually represented in Searle's analysis. Streeck proposes that what these utterances formulate is a transformation of realities, a concept borrowed from the writings of the phenomenologist Alfred Schutz (see especially Schutz, 1945). Lovemaking over, the couple make themselves available for ordinary verbal communication.

By exchanging greetings now, A and B allude to the private character of the sexual experience (its ultimately non-communicative quality) and express that they re-enter into the reality of everyday communication.

(Streeck, 1980, p. 145)

Of course, the issue is not whether this was in fact the reason that A and B had for exchanging greetings. It is conceivable that the exchange could preface a continuation of the 'lovemaking reality': the utterances could, so to speak, signal the commencement of 'round two'. Analysis has no concern with what the actual intentions of the subject may have been. The task, on the basis of the information to hand, is to extract how the reasoning represented by Streeck in the above quotation can be seen as an accomplishment which the utterances establish. What the utterances do, we are told, is:

... retrospectively establish a (sense of) context which is at the same time presupposed. The context is not simply given; it is constituted by speakers in part through their speech acts which are at the same time interpreted in the light of this context.

(ibid.)

It is this establishing of the context of the utterances through their issuance which is the foundation of Streeck's account of the practical reasoning which competent speaker/hearers employ to understand those utterances. The italicization of 'now' in the first quotation is explained on this basis. It is not a moment of some logically unrelated measure, for example, like a point on a clockface, but as Streeck says, the constitution of that moment through the speakers' issuance of 'Hi' to one another. This constitution of the utterance context is, according to Streeck what Searle's analysis cannot entertain because this theory requires that a speech act takes place in a given context.

... a certain situational context must be established prior to the performance of the speech act in order for that performance to succeed.

(Streeck, 1980, p. 139)

He takes this to be Searle's view because in speech act theory the necessary and sufficient conditions for the issuance of a speech act are logically equivalent to a statement that the utterance in question has been performed successfully.

Searle's statement that the conditions are logically equivalent, ought to have informed Streeck that the theory does not countenance a temporally prior setting up of conditions as a pre-established context, which the utterances then subsequently inhabit. The statement of the conditions formulated as rules, one of which is constitutive of the performance, signals Searle's understanding^{of} and commitment to the idea that context is constituted by speakers through their speech acts. Whatever other problems may be associated with it, his thesis that the meaning of an utterance is a realization of its underlying rules is nevertheless testimony to the idea that performance

establishes the conditions as determinate of a speech act's context. Nowhere does Searle suggest that utterances correspond to conditions; rather, the utterance announces that the speaker expresses commitment to the state of affairs which the conditions, as rules, formulate. After all, what Searle offers is a performativist account of language where speech acts are understood to do the things they announce, such as 'I promise to pay you five pounds', promises you the five pounds. If Streeck was correct, Searle would be committed to the idea that it is impossible for a speaker to utter 'Hi' and mean it once an encounter was underway because the context ruled it out. This, in fact, is a mirror inversion of Searle's view. In terms of speech act theory the speaker would have abrogated a condition formulated as a rule, not performed a semantic miracle.

Interestingly, this recognition of the abrogation of a speech act type condition is precisely what Streeck says happens when A and B accomplish their transformation of realities.

The preparatory condition is 'exploited' ... to define the 'here and now' according to a model of a situation in which two people meet after a period of separation.

(Streeck, 1980, p. 145)

In other words, Streeck suggests that the contexted meaning of the exchange is accomplished by trading on what Searle terms the literal or direct meaning of 'Hi', which is to say a greeting uttered in conformity with the preparatory condition. In Speech Acts Searle suggests the existence of indexically specific meanings for direct speech acts which, as he summarises it later, consist:

... in indicating the satisfaction of an essential condition by means of asserting or questioning one of the other conditions.

(Searle, 1975, p. 60)

Clearly, Streeck has not, with respect to this example of communication, moved beyond the position Searle took in that work. But we have seen how he regards the analysis presented there as 'incomplete' in certain respects; an analysis which the analysis of indirect speech was meant to remedy. Streeck does mention Searle's article on indirect speech acts but that is all, presumably because he could not see the relevance of that analysis to his example.

However, I want to suggest that Searle's analysis of indirect speech is sufficiently flexible and adaptable to be able to explicate the practical reasoning involved in understanding the meaning of the greetings between A and B in their particular context. The steps (cf. above) could be elaborated as follows:

- Step 1 I have uttered a greeting to B, and in response she/he has uttered the same illocution. (facts about the conversation)
- Step 2 I assume that B is cooperating in the conversation and that therefore his/her remark is intended to be relevant in these circumstances. (assumption that the participants are cooperating in the conversation)
- Step 3 A relevant response to a greeting such as 'Hi' is the reciprocal utterance of a greeting. (theory of speech acts)
- Step 4 A condition/rule of greetings is that they are uttered on first encountering someone. (preparatory condition of the speech act class 'Greetings')
- Step 5 But the circumstance of these utterances is such as to abrogate this condition/rule. (inference from steps 1 and 2)
- Step 6 Therefore in uttering 'Hi', more is meant than the literal act of greeting and so the primary illocutionary point of this utterance differs from the literal act. (inference from steps 2 and 5)
- Step 7 I know that making love is not (primarily) a verbal communication experience. (factual background information)
- Step 8 Therefore we cannot both (primarily) make love and communicate verbally. (inference from step 7)

Step 9 Therefore we may utter this illocution when encountering the same someone on relinquishing one primary communicative mode for another. (inference from steps 4, 7 and 8)

Step 10 Therefore the primary illocutionary point of 'Hi' is probably to transform our relationship from the reality of lovemaking to that of verbal communication. (inference from steps 6 and 9)

Of course, this analysis does not contain anything in addition to what Streeck says about the transformation between lovemaking and ordinary verbal communication. Where it differs is that the reasoning process which it explicates is fully integrated into a theory of communicative competence. Whatever the actual merits of that theory, Streeck's analysis does look decidedly thin by comparison. Neither can it claim much in the way of originality, when one of the chief components of Streeck's explanation of the utterances' meaning involves the 'exploitation' of a speech act condition. Thus it transpires that the relationship which Searle posits between literal and situationally specific meanings is actually employed by Streeck in his analysis of the fragment of discourse which he takes speech act theory to be incapable of analysing.

The reason for this misrepresentation of Searle's analysis may lie in a more fundamental misconception about speech act theory. Streeck claims that Searle's unit of analysis itself marks a failure to see acts of communication as interactively constituted. In examining other data he discovers:

... a speech act whose performance is distributed over three subsequent turns by two speakers who cooperatively establish its illocutionary force.

(Streeck, 1980, p. 141)

Clearly, if this charge is true, Streeck would have another set of grounds for questioning whether Searle's theory could effectively analyse the 'Hi' example. The question is whether such a distribution

is really incompatible with the premises of Searle's theory. For Searle a speech act is not necessarily tied to the actions of a single speaker because there is no necessary identity in his theory between utterer and utterance. The speech act is a unit of discourse, not the property of an actor. Searle's stress on the relationship between intentionality and illocutionary force in his theory does not entail a commitment to the view that one speaker must perform one speech act. The importance of intentionality to the analysis of illocutionary force does not require the analytic introduction of some actor's identifiable intent in speaking, but is rather the corollary of the idea that speech is performance. Perhaps Streeck's misconception of Searle's understanding of what a speech act is, rests on a confusion between the need to elicit the actual intentions of speakers (which as already stated is unnecessary) and the role intentionality plays in the analysis of meaning.

So Streeck is incorrect in his view that speech act theory cannot analyse a paradigmatic act of greeting as a signal of 'reality transformation'. The fragment of discourse between the two lovers does not differ from the offer and indirect refusal to go to the cinema, at any rate so far as analysing it in terms of Searle's theory is concerned. What his critique does achieve, though, is to bring into even sharper focus the issue of how that flexibility can be squared with a rule governed semantics in which it is supposedly based.

VIII Literal Speech and Indirect Speech

The real contradiction in Searle's theory is that it requires a notion of literal speech (in order for a speech act to be a realization of underlying rules) that is entirely out of step with the intuitions

of the native speaker. Its importance is signalled by its transformation into a principle: the principle of expressibility which announces:

... that for every possible speech act there is a possible sentence or set of sentences the literal utterance of which in a particular context would constitute a performance of that speech act.

(Searle, 1969, p. 19) ⁽¹⁴⁾

This in turn supports the notion of rule governance and the logic and organization of the rule system for the communication of meaning which has its foundation in the supposition that:

The meaning of a sentence is entirely determined by the meaning of its elements, both lexical and syntactical. And that is just another way of saying that the rules governing its utterance are determined by the rules governing its elements.

(Searle, 1969, p. 61)

The principle of expressibility is the keystone of speech act theory because it ensures a rule governed relation between the act of utterance on the part of S and the uptake of its meaning on the part of H. For whatever reason a speech act's meaning may become disconnected from the sentence actually uttered, there will be a sentence or set of sentences whose utterance would 'explicitly' indicate the meaning of that act. For example, you might be asked 'Are you going to the cinema', and reply 'Yes'. For Searle, 'Yes' is a truncated version of 'Yes, I am going to the cinema', for 'Yes' alone might be elaborated as 'Yes, it's a fine day', or 'Yes, we have no bananas'. What allows us to retrieve the correct sense of the utterance, according to Searle, is its context, in particular its sequential placement behind the question. We know that it is a relevant response to the question because we can fill in its full literal form by recourse to the conditions and rules for the speech.

act classes Questions/Replies (see note 14). Of course, this raises the issue we have met already regarding whether it is warrantable to claim that speakers have recourse to the conditions and rules to ascertain the meaning of such a response. Or whether such analytic formulations are merely alternative descriptions which are reliant upon our extant capacity to understand the utterances, rather than actually explaining how we know their meaning. That consideration is intimately related to a question raised by Wittgenstein in his Philosophical Investigations as to whether the 'full' sentence 'Yes, I am going to the cinema' is a literal rendition of the meaning of the elliptical response 'Yes'.⁽¹⁵⁾

It might appear that the principle of expressibility would lead to a proliferation of speech act analyses since a response like 'Yes' would always have to be elaborated in order to indicate its literal meaning in a particular context. This, at least, might look as if it squared with Wittgenstein's view that there are a countless multiplicity of language games comprising our language (see Wittgenstein, 1968, paras 23 and 24). In Speech Acts (p. 71), Searle brackets his theory with Wittgenstein's writings, differentiating their 'institutional' basis from 'naturalistic' theories of meaning like Quine's. However, a later publication reveals that Searle's analytic intent is, in fact, quite different. Commitment to the principle is part and parcel of repudiating:

... the illusion of limitless uses of language ... engendered by an enormous unclarity about what constitutes the criteria for delimiting one language game or use of language from another.

(Searle, 1976, p. 22)

Consequently, whatever utterances speakers may conventionally or idiomatically come to regard as, for example, 'promising' or 'apologising', the analyst:

... need only study sentences whose literal and correct utterance would constitute making a promise or issuing an apology.

(Searle, 1969, p. 21)

At one level the principle could hardly be said to be artificial or counter-intuitive. In ordinary human communication the clarification of utterances usually takes the form of issuing more explicit or literal versions of the original statement. For example, it is commonplace of promise-making that, if in doubt of a speaker's illocution, we get him or her to utter an explicit performative, thereby making clear the fact that a promise has been made. On this level at least, the analysis accords with our practices as native speakers of the language. However, I want to suggest that the concept of literalness as the principle of expressibility formulates it, and the commonsense notion of speaking literally, are in fact far from identical. In actual speech practice, 'literalness' is not so much a property or description of a range or class of utterances, as a practical resource employed by speaker/hearers to evaluate the meaning, intent, sense and point of utterances, whatever their sentential form.

Of course, any example can be re-phrased in order to conform with the principle and so meet the criteria necessary for the extraction of the rules which govern the speech act. But then what we are dealing with is merely a particular paradigm of our grammar concretized by the analyst as the foundation of any 'game' within the language. As Wittgenstein points out elsewhere in his Investigations, this leads to precisely the sort of theory Searle develops, where the recognition of the limitless uses of language goes hand in hand with an ever more limited set of explanatory concepts. It is true that such a picture of explanation is itself taken as the paradigm of valid knowledge in

certain philosophies of science (the search for laws of greatest generality and simplicity). For Wittgenstein, on the other hand, the idea that knowledge of the world (natural or social) takes one particular descriptive and explanatory form is an idea that will only eventuate in misunderstanding the phenomenon of investigation. This view can be gathered from remarks he makes on the concept of 'game' which plays such a central role in his later philosophy.

How should we explain to someone what a game is?
I imagine that we should describe games to him, and we might add: 'This and similar things are called "games"'. And do we know any more about it ourselves? Is it only other people whom we cannot tell exactly what a game is? - But this is not ignorance. We do not know the boundaries because none have been drawn. To repeat, we can draw a boundary - for a special purpose. Does it take that to make the concept usable? Not at all! (Except for that special purpose.) No more than it took the definition: 1 pace = 75 cm. to make the measure of a length 'one pace' usable. And if you want to say 'But still, before that it wasn't an exact measure', then I will reply: very well, it was an inexact one. - Though you still owe me a definition of exactness.

(Wittgenstein, 1968, para 69)

The clearest evidence in Searle's theory of this twisting of the phenomenon of investigation in order to fit the theory, lies in the special measures he takes to ensure that a paradigmatic speech act is understood in one, and only one, way. The need to do this lies of course in the requirement that a speech act should be meant and understood via a realization of its underlying rules. However, in order to do this, ordinary linguistic conventions which, as Searle says, express the intuitions of the native speaker, have to be understood in quite an artificial way. For example, Searle has told us that the class of explicit, literal performatives includes the sentence 'I promise that I will come' (Searle, 1969, p. 19). However, in the sequence:

A. How do you get me to throw these parties?

B. I promise that I will come⁽¹⁶⁾

it is clear that B is not promising something to A, but reporting what B regards as A's reason for throwing parties. As we have seen, there are a number of ways in which Searle can try to accommodate a case like this. He has, for instance, suggested that the words 'I promise' are amongst the strongest illocutionary force indicating devices and are sometimes used to convey the intent of the speaker in threats or warnings, e.g. 'I promise I'll beat you up'. However, B's utterance hardly squares with this sort of case because the illocution 'I promise' is not employed to indicate the forceful delivery of the propositional content of B's utterance, but is a formulation that supplies a relevant answer to A's question. Alternatively, one could analyse the utterance as an indirective where the reasoning steps made reference to sequential considerations. This was the strategy adopted in giving a Searlian analysis of Streeck's example. However, in that case, although the act was uttered in very special sequential circumstances, its primary illocutionary force was still that of a greeting. But in this case how much sense can we attach to the suggestion that B is giving an answer (primary act) by way of making a promise (secondary, literal act) as the theory of indirectives requires? B, in fact, is not making a promise at all, and given the illocutionary power of promising noted by Searle, it is difficult to see how its illocutionary force could ever play second fiddle to a mere answer. Of course, there is the option of divorcing meaning from illocutionary force, but this is something we have seen Searle criticize in the writings of Grice and Austin.⁽¹⁷⁾ Nevertheless, these various objections would not finally debar the utterance from being analysed in speech act terms. Probably the best option would be to analyse B's utterance as an indirective,

laying special emphasis on the sequential placement of the utterance in the inference steps.

In the light of this kind of example, it is noteworthy that when Searle examines the promissory act in connection with his famous is-ought derivation (Searle, 1969, Chapter 8), he ensures that the utterance is not prey to such equivocation.

'I hereby promise to pay you, Smith, five dollars.'

(Searle, 1969, p. 177)

The use of hereby, a reflexive demonstrative pronoun, makes reference to what one is doing by or in uttering that sentence. In other words, it is self-referential, equivalent to saying 'with these words "I promise", I promise'. Its introduction eliminates a continuous or tenseless reading of the verb, thereby ridding the utterance of the use it had in the previous example. One cannot construe the sequence

A. How do you get me to throw these parties?

B. I hereby promise that I will come.

as having the same sense at all. Indeed, it is difficult to construe B's utterance as any kind of response to A's question. So, in this way, Searle ensures the literalness of the speech act, but in so doing makes its use non-equivalent to utterances that do not include the reflexive demonstrative 'hereby'. Thus it is questionable whether 'I promise that I will come' is a truncated version of 'I hereby promise that I will come', because their sense can have a degree of variability that Searle's concept of a literal utterance should properly exclude.

There is also a different sort of consideration which Searle makes explicit reference to. It is doubtful whether uptake of the utterances would be identical because of the suspension of idiomaticity in Searle's explicitly explicit performative. He considers the idiomatic qualities of speech to be a very important element to the sense of a

communication and therefore to the realization of the rules underlying a speech act. In the paper on indirect speech he says:

In general, if one speaks unidiomatically hearers assume that there must be a special reason for it, and in consequence various assumptions of normal speech are suspended. Thus, if I say, archaically, Knowest thou him who calleth himself Richard Nixon?, you are not likely to respond as you would to an utterance of Do you know Richard Nixon?

(Searle, 1975, p. 76)

The introduction of 'hereby' could hardly be placed on a level with that example, but it is questionable whether its use is sufficiently common to leave those assumptions of normal speech completely unaffected. After all, one can see that there is a special reason for its introduction; to save the thesis of rule governance from the flexibilities of everyday usage.

Thus the principle of expressibility, which is the foundation for the concept of literal speech in the theory, ultimately requires a repetition of the illocutionary verb in order for the utterance to be unequivocally 'realized' by the rules. The analysis by this stage looks not unlike a performativist version of Tarski's (1944) meta-linguistic truth-conditional analysis of meaning. For the truth of the meta-language, Searle substitutes the rules of the explicitly literal illocution in order to secure the meaning of the expression. In his discussion of reference as a speech act, Searle explicitly criticizes Tarski's theory, saying that its proffered fundamental convention for language, viz: that in any statement we make about an object, it is the name of the object which must be employed, not the object itself,

must square with ... existing conventions. ...
One's reply can be that there is no such fundamental convention.

(Searle, 1969, p.76)

The problem for Searle is that language also seems to lack his proposed fundamental convention about rules underlying the meaning of speech acts. In fact, the powers of sense assembly inherent in language use allows his analysis to instruct the reader to construe the meaning of an utterance as 'a realization of its underlying rules'. If that realization is shown not to be exclusive, then, as we have seen, special measures have to be taken in order to preserve its 'literal' meaning.

Such 'instruction' suggests that the 'hypothesis' that speaking a language is performing speech acts according to rules, in fact acts as quite a restricted definition of what language is. It raises the possibility that the hypothesis and the analysis generated from it may not be explanatory at all. Rather, the extant competence of speakers, supposedly the topic of explanation, is really used as a resource in making the analysis 'explain' the phenomena of language use. That would suggest that what Searle does is concretize the activities of language use as a theoretical requirement for the possibility of an utterance having meaning. That would be to completely compromise the goal of his theory: to explain speech as social action. However, it is important to emphasize once again that these criticisms do not rely upon rendering problematic the concept of literal speech. That is a common-sense notion it would be both difficult and mistaken to dislodge. As already noted, speaker/hearers have constant resource to the possibility of whether their interlocutors literally mean what they say. But it is just that possibility which Searle diminishes when he designates a range of utterances as paradigm literal utterances. For Searle, the exchange:

- A. I hereby promise to pay you five dollars.
- B. Do you mean that literally?

would require that B's utterance was indirect, otherwise the question would be puzzling or defective. The concept of 'literal' itself comes to have as inflexible a sense as the paradigm utterances for which it stands as a criterion. Paradoxically, this then requires a tabulation of 'indirect' senses of literal (or any other concept or expression) which fails to tally with what the theory announces 'literal', etc., to mean. The upshot is a theory which begins by announcing its recognition of the organic and fluid character of everyday language, but ends up by rigidly defining for language users what a word can mean. At best, that is a theory for a dictionary, not for the actual lived experience of speaking and acting in the linguistic community.

IX Speech Acts: A Conclusion

According to the argument of this chapter, the aim of Searle's theory, to provide an explanation of language mastery compatible with the idea of a shared mastery of rules and consistent with the actual practices of language users, fails. The two principal ingredients of this failure appear to be these. Firstly, the idea that rules govern meaning eventuates in a picture of language that is so rigid and an analysis so complex, that evidence for the suspicion that our extant competence is really doing the work that the theoretical explanation is claimed to do, becomes overwhelming. The second, which follows on from the first, is that the nature of explaining language mastery is something that requires a much fuller investigation than it is given in Searle's theory. The principal reason for this may be summarized by saying that where the topic of explanation is actually the means of expressing that explanation, then understanding the nature of 'analysis' may be no less crucial than analysing the nature of our linguistic 'understanding'.

In the next chapter the conception of language mastery and social competence proffered by ethnomethodologists and conversation analysts is going to be examined for an 'answer' to these problems. 'Answer' appears in quotes because it will transpire that the insights of figures like Harold Garfinkel and Harvey Sacks have less to do with finding solutions for such problems than with recognising that such analytical problems themselves comprise crucially important features of language mastery. Their insights, as we shall see, require a fundamental re-appraisal of the nature of accounting for our mastery of language and a thoroughgoing re-examination of the character of rule analysis as well.

CHAPTER ONE - NOTES

1. J.R. Searle (1969).
2. See Wittgenstein (1968), para 88.
3. The concepts of constitutive rule and illocutionary act are explored in the next section of the chapter.
4. Contained in H.P. Grice (1957).
5. The distinction between interactive and truth-telling conceptions of meaning is one of the central issues in contemporary debates in the philosophy of language and social science. It is interwoven with the problems concerning the distinction between causality and intentional action, relativism and the cluster of issues that divide 'positivist' from 'interpretive' sociology. See G. Evans and J. McDowell (1976) for a recent account of the philosophical arguments. C. Hookway and B. Pettit (1978) have edited a collection of essays which translates the arguments into social scientific terms. An excellent overview is provided by Roy Harris (1978).
6. See J.L. Austin (1962a). His objections to Austin's account are to be found in Searle (1968).
7. Austin (1950). Reprinted in G. Pitcher, ed. (1964).
8. Compare Searle's arguments against Quine (above), and Searle's arguments against Tarski's theory of truth (Searle, 1969, p. 76).
9. On this point see J.S. Ganz (1971), pp. 24 and 74.
10. The analysis of this speech act has attracted considerable additional interest because of Searle's claim that its conditions and rules can establish a valid derivation of an 'ought' from an 'is'. See W.D. Hudson, ed. (1969) and A.C. Genova (1970).

11. It may seem contradictory for Searle to say that the essential rule will only be satisfied if the other conditions obtain, and yet that the essential rule determines the others. But the contradiction is merely verbal. One cannot promise unless one could promise, unless one was in a position to promise, and unless one promised something. However, the satisfaction of those conditions would not, in and of themselves, amount to, or constitute, a promise.
12. See also Searle (1975a) which is the same article under a different title.
13. One could suggest that Searle's terminology is rather subtle at this point because the literal act which provides the foundation for the original theory has now become 'secondary'.
14. Note the mention of context in the principle. Contextuality is introduced into the analysis of a speech act through the conditions or steps, and, as mentioned with regard to Streeck's criticisms, is thereby incorporated as an integral feature of speech performance rather than an external circumstance of it.
15. This discussion occurs early on in the work. See the commentary by Rhees (1959).

... you can call 'Slab!' a word and also a sentence; perhaps it could be appropriately called a 'degenerate sentence' (as one speaks of a degenerate hyperbola) ... surely only a shortened form of the sentence 'Bring me a slab' ... But why should I not on the contrary have called the sentence 'Bring me a slab' a lengthening of the sentence 'Slab!' - Because if you shout 'Slab!' you really mean: 'Bring me a slab'. - But how do you do this: how do you mean that while you say 'Slab!' ... why should I translate the call 'Slab!' into a different expression in order to say what someone means by it? ... - But when I call 'Slab!', then what I want is, that he should bring me a slab! - Certainly, but does 'wanting this' consist in thinking in some form or other a different sentence from the one you utter? -

The sentence is 'elliptical', not because it leaves out something that we think when we utter it, but because it is shortened - in comparison with a particular paradigm of our grammar. - Of course, one might object here: 'You grant that the shortened and the unshortened sentence have the same sense. - What is this sense, then? Isn't there a verbal expression for this sense?' - But doesn't the fact that sentences have the same sense consist in their having the same use? - (In Russian, one says 'stone red' instead of 'the stone is red'; do they feel the copula to be missing in the sense, or attach it in thought?)

(Wittgenstein, 1968, paras 19 and 20)

16. I am indebted to D.W. Stampe (1975) for this example.
17. Searle's criticisms of Austin are bound up with the development of his own theory and it is questionable whether the locutionary/illocutionary distinction is as exclusive in Austin's writings as Searle says it is. In 'How To Do Things With Words', Austin says:

to perform a locutionary act is in general, we may say, also and eo ipso to perform an illocutionary act.

(Austin, 1962, p. 98)

There is good reason to suppose that the question, 'If you say that you will come, therein promising to come, have you performed one^{act} or two?', would be regarded as Austin says elsewhere to exemplify the sort of question, 'that gets a philosopher stared at as an idiot'. But, as we have seen, Searle's theory of indirectives is framed in just these terms.

CHAPTER TWO

LANGUAGE USE AND SOCIAL LIFE AS RULE ORIENTED PRACTICAL ACTIVITY

THE PERSPECTIVES OF ETHNOMETHODOLOGY AND CONVERSATION ANALYSIS

I. On Explaining Language Mastery

One way of interpreting the problems faced by speech act theory in analysing ordinary speech practice would be to conclude that language use is simply too rich and complex a phenomenon to even be described, let alone explained, by any theory. In other words, Searle's theory is not incorrect or wrong, its problem is that it is a theory at all. The fallacy of his approach lies not in selecting key principles like rule governance to exhibit the wherewithal of language and social life, but in assuming such principles are there to be found at all.

I am not happy with this view because it has the effect of stopping any attempt to investigate the nature of language mastery. The argument looks basically anti-scientific, in that it claims language and social life to be incapable of being systematically analysed at all. However, it would be more accurate to say that the phenomena of language use are taken to defy theoretical explanation because, as we saw in the last chapter, their features are not reconcilable with particular norms of explanation. That chapter showed that language use was not dissectable into underlying constituents whose properties can be formulated in law-like or rule governed terms. From this, it is taken to follow that to attempt the explanation of language mastery is futile. In other words, one must either give an explanation in the sort of terms Searle proposes, or concede that one cannot endeavour 'to explain' language mastery at all.

In the light of these alternatives, it is clear that what needs questioning is not only the conception of explanation presupposed in a theory like Searle's, but also his methods of analysis. The purpose of this chapter is to examine the writings of ethnomethodologists and conversation analysts in order to see how the concept of explanation and methods of analysis might be restructured.

II. Garfinkel and Sacks's View of Language Mastery

Unlike speech act theory, ethnomethodology and conversation analysis are not presented in terms of an explicit, programmatic theory of language mastery. Instead, emphasis is placed on the empirical scrutiny of actual language use. However, the absence of theorizing in the fashion represented in this thesis by Searle's work is not merely an oversight common amongst those engaged in empirical inquiry, but an indication that a fruitful analysis of language mastery cannot be undertaken in that way. In fact, for ethnomethodologists and conversation analysts, the sense of programmatic is entirely revised:

... wherever practical actions are topics of study, the promised distinction and substitutibility of objective for indexical expressions remains programmatic in every particular case and in every actual occasion in which the distinction or substitutibility must be demonstrated. In every actual case without exception, conditions will be cited that a competent investigator will be required to recognise, such that in that particular case the terms of the demonstration can be relaxed and nevertheless be counted as an adequate one.

(Garfinkel, 1967, p. 6)

What this means is that the kind of concepts employed in theory building exercises of the sort Searle undertakes, are viewed as inimical to a proper understanding of language use. Language mastery is not seen as the possession of interlocking sets of rules coupled to

practical reason when indirect speech requires its involvement, but as manifested in social skills more loosely assembled than the notion of governance could imply, which are recognised and legitimated in the particular circumstances of their use. Garfinkel and Sacks understand language mastery as the competent membership of social settings.

The notion of member is the heart of the matter. We do not use the term to refer to a person. It refers instead to mastery of natural language which we understand in the following way.

We offer the observation that persons, because of the fact that they are heard to be speaking a natural language, somehow are heard to be engaged in the objective production and objective display of commonsense knowledge of everyday activities as observable reportable phenomena. We ask what it is about natural language that permits speakers and auditors to hear, and in other ways to witness, the objective production and objective display of commonsense knowledge, and of practical circumstances, practical actions, and practical sociological reasoning as well.

(Garfinkel and Sacks, 1970, p. 342)

For Searle, we saw that 'the how' of communication is located in the possession and use by every speaker of a set of rules whose use governs the meaning of utterances. It is the existence of those rules which, according to him, allows someone to 'display' their membership of the linguistic and social community. However, the concept of literalness required for the operation of the notion of rule governance, presumes a canonical meaning for certain paradigmatic utterances in order for the issuance and uptake of speech acts to be intelligible to speaker/hearers. For ethnomethodologists and conversation analysts, the basic problem which such a conception of language invites, is the failure to recognise the indexical nature of all uses of language. (1) Consequently, that people are 'somehow ... heard to be engaged in

the objective production and objective display of commonsense knowledge', indicates that the sense and meaning of utterances is not guaranteed by rules, but achieved by speakers in the activity of speaking itself. Whereas for Searle, the intelligibility of the act of speaking ultimately rests on the grasping of rules which are themselves reliant on literal meanings; for ethnomethodologists and conversation analysts, the intelligibility of spoken acts (and social actions in general) is something that can only be made out in the activities of speaking and hearing.

So, instead of the idea that some linguistic expressions possess a literal meaning, Garfinkel and Sacks pose the view that all expressions are indexical. This means that any expression, be it a single word, gesture, exclamation, or phrase, sentence or some longer stretch of discourse, is dependent for its sense upon the context in which it occurs. Garfinkel cites a diversity of authors who have commented upon the indexical properties of language.

Husserl spoke of expressions whose sense cannot be decided by an auditor without his necessarily knowing or assuming something about the biography and purposes of the user of the expression, the previous course of the conversation, or the particular relationship of actual or potential interaction that exists between the expressor and the auditor. Russell observed that descriptions involving them apply on each occasion of use to only one thing, but to different things on different occasions. Such expressions, wrote Goodman, are used to make unequivocal statements that nevertheless seem to change in truth value.

(Garfinkel, 1967, p. 4) ⁽²⁾

However, he is not concerned to sort out or comment upon the philosophical difficulties that indexical expressions pose for their views, but to observe there to be 'virtually unanimous agreement' (ibid. p. 5) that although they are enormously useful, they are a nuisance for those engaged in scientific work.

Of course, the 'problem' of indexicality in professional activities is not confined to philosophy and science. As Atkinson and Drew (1979) note, lawyers view their activities as guided by precedents where the meaning of words has been tried and tested, so that their use in the future is certain and predictable in its results. However, the legal process is imbued with problems of construing documents, enactments and expressions generally. In this respect, a fairer description of the legal process might be to say that it settles a meaning at point x, only to thereby raise an issue of meaning at point y. There are even principles of construction for the interpretation of statutes; a recognition that the most careful and painstaking drafting cannot sidestep the indexicality of language. A canon of construction for lawyers is known by the latin tag noscitur a sociis (a word takes colouring from its neighbouring words). It was used by Lord Scarman in the 'Fares Fair' case. The point at issue was the meaning of 'economic' in the relevant legislation. He said:

... it is a very useful word: chameleon-like, taking its colour from its surroundings. Even in the statute now being considered, the adjective economic ... may have a wider meaning than the noun economy ... I, therefore, refuse to consider the question of the meaning of economic ... as capable of being determined by reference to a dictionary. The dictionary may tell us several meanings the word can have, but the word will always take its specific meaning (or meanings) from its surroundings, i.e. in this case from the Act read as a whole.

(Bromley L.B.C. v G.L.C. [1982] 1 All E.R. 129, 174 per Lord Scarman)

Accordingly, says Garfinkel, the progress of science and knowledge in general, is seen to consist in the substitution of objective for indexical expressions. Furthermore, it is only practical difficulties which impede this substitution in any particular case,

since the distinction between objective and indexical expressions is not only procedurally proper but unavoidable.

(Garfinkel, 1967, p. 5)

However, these remarks have suggested to some commentators that if indexical expressions are bound to a context for their meaning, then objective, scientific expressions are, by contrast, context-free. It is crucial to realize that ethnomethodologists and conversation analysts are not claiming this. They are not claiming that there are two mutually exclusive classes of expression and that the study of social life is hampered by its being an indexical phenomenon. In other words, they would not counterpose scientific investigation to practical action in terms of some epistemological or conceptual difference that marked them off as two completely distinct kinds of endeavour. Rather, they see the distinction as one which is occasioned, in this case, by scientific activity itself.

So, whilst the criteria of knowledge may be very different for theoretical physics as opposed to an ordinary conversation, the inference that understanding and the principles of linguistic communication necessarily differ in consequence, is a view they would regard as dubious and in fact productive of considerable epistemological difficulties. For instance, if I say in the course of helping to bake a cake, 'the sugar is on the scales', would this be any less objective an utterance than the same proposition forming part of a scientific study? It might be argued that the auspices of science make such statements capable of rigorous verification, but it is a discredited idea even amongst positivist philosophers of science that the objective meaning of an utterance can be established by verifying operations. But, of course, that is not to suggest that there are

not differences between two such diverse activities as theoretical physics and cake baking. The emphasis placed on studying actual instances of communication is not the commitment of empiricists, but the recognition that the wherewithal of language mastery is something which is made and found in the practical circumstances of its use. It is in this sense that the substitution of objective for indexical expressions (something which is no less common in everyday activities than it is in science) remains a practical achievement, that is to say, 'programmatically in every particular case.'

As a result, there is no question as to 'Whatever should be done with indexical expressions?'⁽³⁾, because they are not a problem for, but a condition of, all communicative activities. The analytical task is to specify the methods whereby members of a social setting furnish that setting with its objectivity, an objectivity which has less to do with criteria proposed by philosophers and scientists than with the mundane activities of making visible 'objective facts' in a social situation. This is to see that the:

recognisable sense, or fact, or methodic character, or impersonality, or objectivity of accounts are not independent of the socially organised occasions of their use. Their rational features consist of what members do with, what they 'make of' the accounts in the socially organised actual occasions of their use. Members' accounts are reflexively and essentially tied for their rational features to the socially organised occasions of their use for they are features of the socially organised occasions of their use.

(Garfinkel, 1967, pp. 3-4)

Clearly, these remarks on objective and indexical expressions have some affinity with Searle's views. He, too, is critical of accounts of language mastery which propose strict criteria of meaning and sense in the name of a philosophic propriety or scientific

adequacy which ordinary language use manifestly fails to satisfy. His attack on Quine is an attack on a theory which involves a complete reconstruction of linguistic competence in order to satisfy its own proposals on criteria of meaning. But, as the last chapter made clear, Searle's own commitment to the existence of paradigmatic speech acts involves the use of objective expressions which are employed as a resource for theory construction. From the perspective of ethnomethodology and conversation analysis, the result is that the theory fails to topicalize the features of language mastery which allow it to work as a systematic analysis of that mastery. That is the reflexive and essential tie which Garfinkel refers to in the quotation above. Paradigmatic typification, the method adopted by Searle, tacitly relies upon competent language use in achieving a 'systematic' and 'general' account of that competence. It is summed up neatly in the following quotation:

In a search for rigour the ingenious practice is followed whereby (indexical) expressions are first transformed into ideal expressions. Structures are then analysed as properties of the ideals, and the results are assigned to actual expressions as their properties, though with disclaimers of 'appropriate scientific modesty'.

(Garfinkel and Sacks, 1970, p. 339) ⁽⁴⁾

Thus, the problem as Searle put it of 'converting knowing how into knowing that', is not viewed by ethnomethodologists and conversation analysts as simply a troublesome characteristic of humankind's self investigation. Rather, it is an important manifestation of the accounting practices which comprise the mastery of language. But this perspective on the relationship between linguistic competence and its analysis comes with what looks like serious problems of its own. For example, it might appear to be

the case that if members' accounts are 'features of the socially organised occasions of their use', then such reflexivity must effectively write off any general account of language mastery. On the one hand, this seems to presuppose an utterly relativistic epistemology (one might call it situational solipsism), while on the other, looking clearly inconsistent with the scope of the rules and devices which conversation analysts in particular have formulated. If such criticisms could be sustained, then not only would the epistemological foundations of ethnomethodology and conversation analysis be extremely suspect, but also the findings of the disciplines would bear no relation to their conception of how membership is possible.

However, these apparently fatal criticisms are really based on a misunderstanding. This is the idea that since all utterances are indexical, that must mean that 'meaning' is confined to some predetermined context. But although erroneous, it is nevertheless illuminating because it shows that context has been construed in such a way that it excludes the recognition that analysis is a reflexive enterprise. This point needs spelling out carefully. A moment ago, when referring to the idea of 'context' which I believe underlies the criticisms, I predicated the concept with pre-determined. That was deliberate since it was meant to contrast two views of context. One is as some hermetically sealed entity which an analyst, or for that matter anyone going about their everyday activities, confronts as an outsider. The other views 'context' as a device used by members and analysts alike for recognising the sense of activities. In other words, 'context' does not refer to a state which some utterances are in, but rather a recognition by language users in general that they do not necessarily share the meaning and use of any utterance. This

conception does not imprison meaning within a context. It widens rather than diminishes the meanings an expression can have.

So to take the view that all utterances are indexical is not to say that the meaning of an utterance is sealed off from anyone who did not participate in that particular context. The recognition of the pervasiveness of indexicality means that the boundaries of context are constructed by members to ascertain the meaning of an expression. 'Context' is not like a fence within which meanings can then make sense. It is better likened to a tool which members use to make utterances and activities meaningful to them. In fact, the idea that because sense-making is a collaborative activity undertaken in particular social settings, this entails that the meanings available in those settings are unavailable outside them, is scarcely intelligible. The reason for this is that it makes the notion of context itself quite incomprehensible since it would have the effect of making its boundaries equivalent to the limits of language (this is what I meant earlier by 'situational solipsism').

Thus, the recognition that all utterances are indexical, is not like saying that there is an epistemological barrier between utterances in different settings. What it really connotes is the idea that meaning and understanding are activities. Searle, whilst claiming to see speech as action, nevertheless views meaning to be the product of a pre-ordained structure of rules. Any such theory tacitly relies on the very features of language mastery it claims to explain if the rules are to be taken and followed in the 'right' way. Of course, that reliance is not in and of itself an object of criticism. Rather, it is the failure to perceive its implications for analytic activity which marks a critical failing in a project like Searle's. As noted earlier, the philosophical insight (which Searle certainly shares)

that knowledge of any fact, including linguistic facts, involves a process of evaluation, is restructured by Garfinkel and Sacks into the view that all uses of language are indexical. This indexicality of language means in turn that persons engaged in communicating have to achieve that communication methodically. It is to the substantive study of these ethno-methodologies that the chapter now turns.

III Analysing Members' Use of Rules

The issues covered in the previous section should have outlined the reasons why the analyses of ethnomethodologists and conversation analysts need not be any less general or systematic than Searle's theory of language mastery. It is not the scope and rigour of Searle's theory which is the problem, but the assumptions about language and its explanation that are carried along with it. Whereas Searle imposes rules on the activities of speech practice, Garfinkel and Sacks seek to explicate how rules as such are used by members in social settings to locate the sense of the interactions which comprise them. Given the pervasiveness of indexicality, it follows that social interaction cannot be analysed by specifying rules for the issuance and uptake of speech acts, even if those acts can be seen as particular instances of rules of greater generality. As we saw in the last chapter, this is not a viable way of attempting to explain the indexical phenomena of 'indirect' speech. All that does is highlight the multiplicity of ways a rule can be followed, and that realization is fundamentally incompatible with the principle of rule governance.

For ethnomethodologists and conversation analysts, the mastery of language is seen as comprising methods which are employed by members in social settings. To be sure, those methods are explicable in terms of rules. But it is the methodic practices of the members

of social settings in the activities which make the setting meaningful, and not meanings guaranteed by the rules, that are the focus of this study. Those methods illustrate the diversity of ways a rule can be followed. That diversity is viewed as a condition of competent membership, not, as Searle saw it, a pervasive nuisance for theoretical explanation. As we have seen, such theorizing not only freezes the essentially active nature of language mastery. It also fails to recognise that analysis itself is no less a social activity of making phenomena 'observable and reportable' than the mundane practices of everyday life.

In particular, what this means is that analysis is not viewed as the exclusive preserve of the professional investigator. Rather, it is taken to be a ubiquitous feature of social interaction. The mastery of language is seen by Garfinkel and Sacks to consist in the analytical work members do in actual social settings. The phenomena of language mastery are members' methods for constituting meaning and sense, not a grasp of rules they are deemed to possess, which in and of themselves are able to explain that mastery. Rules, in consequence, are not seen to govern understanding but to orient it. Consequently the professional analyst's task is not,

to stipulate what rules members really were 'following' or 'governed by', but to locate rules which they might be 'orienting to' and using and producing a recognisable orderliness in some setting.

(Atkinson and Drew, 1979, p. 22)

One immediate implication of this shift from governance to orientation is that it signals the acknowledgement of an ineradicable plurality of readings of the meaning or sense of utterances. Atkinson and Drew put the analytical consequences this way:

... while an analyst may not be able to arrive at the sense of what participants were actually orienting to in some particular context, his members' competences enable him, like them, to make a sense of what was going on by analysing the structure and location of speakers' utterances.

(ibid., p. 32)

It is vital that this inherent defeasibility of the meaning of any utterance is not confused with the problem of correctly detecting the intention(s) of the party who is speaking. Ethnomethodologists and conversation analysts do not deny the importance of the intentions of members in speech and social action generally. It is, after all, a notorious fact that a significant proportion of social interaction is taken up with what might be called ascertaining the intent 'behind' things said and done. Nevertheless, for that fact to have the significance it does, means that the wherewithal of meaning and sense cannot be equivalent to grasping the intentions of the speaker in speaking. In particular, the concept of indexicality must never be confused with the intentions a speaker may have or convey in making an utterance, as criticisms of the concept have sometimes appeared to suggest. In other words, intention cannot act as the sole foundation for meaning since the intended sense of utterances is something which is made manifest by the methods members use and monitor in making the utterance meaningful. In consequence, the criticisms directed against Grice's account of meaning by Searle, which were reported in the previous chapter, would be shared by ethnomethodologists and conversation analysts too.

Hence the analyst's task is to specify the methods which enable participants in a setting to assemble or construct the (intended and unintended) sense(s) of the interaction in which they are immersed. Something which immediately distinguishes this task from the approach

adopted by Searle is that the primary focus is not placed on the utterance of the individual speaker, but on the social interaction of speakers. The data base does not comprise examples thought up by the investigator, but consists in transcripts of actual conversations. The complexity of interaction which these transcripts can reveal provide considerable ammunition for the claim that the 'armchair sentences' of philosophers and theorists are hardly likely to provide an adequate basis for the analysis of language mastery. Nevertheless, it is important to avoid the temptation of making the criticism of the armchair sentence stronger than that because otherwise one can get perilously close to arguing that it is somehow less a phenomenon of language mastery than those reported in the transcript. A further temptation is to then couple that with even more dubious claims about the accuracy inherent in transcribing what happened in a social setting.

In other words, the recognition of the constructive features of professional analytic activity can be all too easily replaced with a form of empiricism. Ethnomethodology and conversation analysis do not involve and are not compatible with a claim that there is a 'bedrock' of linguistic and social life which a correctly formulated analysis uncovers. In consequence, to suggest that any particular instance, or any kind of instance of language mastery, is representative of language per se, not only contradicts the constructive conception of language mastery clearly visible in Garfinkel and Sacks's writings, but also once again the idea that accounts are reflexive phenomena.

IV The Machinery of Analysis

The basic analytical concept of conversation analysis is sequence. It denotes a level of analysis that deals with relations between

utterances rather than the constituents of the single utterance.

Jefferson makes it clear that it is these sequential relations which must be considered as the formators of meaning rather than the rule constitution of the single speech act when she describes sequencing as:

... a type of organisation that is probably analogous to the sentence and that may provide for predictive monitoring by a recipient.

(Jefferson, 1973, p. 55)

Whereas sequential considerations only arise in Searle's theory when ordinary usage frustrates a 'literal' understanding of the speech act, here interactional sequences are seen as establishing the sense of the utterances. Moreover, the sequential relations which are found in conversations are considered to have a general and systematic character. In other words, there is taken to be a set of rules which enables the activities of speaking to take place. However, those rules do not underlie the meaning and sense of utterances but are formulated as rules of use of the interactants. This is not to say that these rules are any more the subject of immediate knowledge for the ordinary speaker than those formulated by Searle. The claim is that their use is manifested in the activities of speaking by members' orientation to them.

The visibility of the rules of use and their connection with the relation between specific instances of interaction and the general scope of conversational rules and devices is discussed by Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson in terms of a research problem. Discussion in these terms is deliberate and instructive. Given the recognition that analysis itself is just as much a social activity of making phenomena 'observable and reportable', the professionals' task is viewed as an instance of the ordinary member's 'problem' of making the world meaningful and sensible.

To begin with, a problem for research is that it is always 'situated' - always comes out of, and is part of some real sets of circumstances of its participants. But there are various reasons why it is undesirable to have to know or characterise such situations for particular conversations in order to investigate them. And the question then becomes: What might be extracted as an ordered phenomenon for our conversational materials which would not turn out to require reference to one or another aspect of situatedness, identities, particularities of content or context?

(Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1974,
p. 699)

However, it is just at this point that the perspective looks as if it is really recapitulating the elements of Searle's theory. Where Searle talks of speaker/hearers realizing underlying rules, Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson speak of what can be extracted from conversational materials in order to exhibit how members communicate with one another. Unless some rationale for construing their analysis in a different way from Searle's is to hand, the shift from 'act' to 'interaction' and from 'rule' to 'sequence' will not amount to anything more than terminological changes.

In other words, the value of altering the focus of inquiry from the single speaker to cohorts of speakers, and the consequential shift to studying the importance of utterance relations must be grounded in a different conception of analysis. If it is not, then all you have is a restatement of the presuppositions of Searle's theory expressed in different terminology.⁽⁵⁾ This is why the restructuring of the concept of analysis undertaken in Garfinkel's Studies is crucial to a proper understanding of the rules and devices for conversational interaction which the perspective has subsequently developed. Fundamental to that restructuring is Garfinkel's view that the relation between the specific conversational interaction and the general rules and devices formulated by the analyst 'remains

programmatic in every particular case'. What investigators 'extract' from the conversational materials they study are not rules which delineate the necessary and sufficient conditions of speech performance as Searle argues. As we saw in the last chapter, that gives to the rules an objectivity and determinacy they can hardly be said to possess. So, why members are viewed as 'orienting-to' rules is not merely to purchase a degree of flexibility by, so to speak, loosening the bolts of the analytic framework which could be said merely to have been 'overtightened' by Searle's theory. Rather, the concept of rule orientation marks Garfinkel's recognition that the 'objectivity of accounts ... their rational features are features of the socially organised occasions of their use'.

Thus, the rules and devices which are extracted from interaction are general in terms of their scope and yet their application remains something that is made out in the circumstances of their use. Rules are not seen to underlie the possibility of meaning since that view brings the indexicality of language into conflict with the analytic use of the rule. Instead, the generality of the rule formulations of ethnomethodologists and conversation analysts are oriented-to by members as they work to assemble the sense of utterances in particular social settings. What this concept of rule is intended to capture is Garfinkel's insight that:

members take for granted that a member must at the outset 'know' the setting in which he is to operate if his practices are to serve as measures to bring particular located features of these settings to recognisable account. They treat as the most passing matter of fact that members accounts, of every sort, in all their logical modes, with all of their uses, and for every method for their assembly, are constituent features of the settings they make observable. Members know, require, count on, and make use of this reflexivity to produce, accomplish, recognise, or

demonstrate rational-adequacy-for-all-practical purposes of their procedures and findings.

(Garfinkel, 1967, p. 8)

What Garfinkel is recommending is that any social setting be viewed as a self-organising phenomenon and that the intelligibility of rule analysis be regarded in that way too. In other words, to reconceptualize the relationship between rules and their use requires that analysis is also viewed as an occasion for making the world accountable. In this way ethnomethodologists and conversation analysts seek to preserve the object of a theory like Searle's, viz., to understand the wherewithal of speech competence, but without allowing the prosecution of that task to hamstring the flexibility of actual speech practice. So, although the scope and generality of the rules and devices formulated in this perspective may look indistinguishable in those respects from Searle's analysis, the understanding of analysis is entirely different. That 'understanding' is no mere ancillary to the analysis of language mastery. It is something which is vital to its proper comprehension.

In the light of these remarks on the quotation from Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson's paper, we can now return to the elaboration of the rules and devices themselves. The common property of all types of sequencing from those which are characterised performatively, such as Greeting sequences, Announcement, Offer, Invitation and Correction sequences, etc., to those which are characterised technically as Side sequences and Insertion sequences, is speaker turns. Turns at talk are not only regarded as vital to the orderliness of conversational activities, but also as essential to the meaning and sense of those activities. The importance of turns at talk lays particular emphasis

on participants monitoring of the conversation. This, taken together with Jefferson's stress on the importance of sequencing quoted above, shows that rather than seeing speech as the consequence of the possession of rules, the perspective regards conversational activity itself as the location for the production of the phenomenon of language mastery.

So, instead of the actor being taken to arrive on the social scene in full possession of the requisites of membership, ethnomethodologists and conversation analysts provide a conception of language mastery which is indivisible from and equivalent to mundane social interaction. This identity between language mastery and social action captured by Garfinkel and Sacks in their explication of the concept of member, differs fundamentally from Searle's avowal that his theory views language as social action. To begin with, the theory's grounding in sentence semantics ensures that the analytical role of the social, though important, is secondary. Or, as we have seen, it does until a point is reached when the theory's success in explaining utterances becomes problematic because of their flexible usage. Then, the role of social factors gains very considerably in importance although Searle attempts to preserve consistency with the thesis of rule governance by making the analysis of 'indirectives' retroductive in character. The basic problem is that if the theory is to work, speech has first to be idealized so that the analysis gains a sufficient purchase on utterances in order to account for them in its terms.

Viewed in this way, the stress placed on studying actual occasions of language use is crucial since the resources for assembling the sense of utterances, the topic of study, are of importance to the analyst because they are of practical importance to the mundane speaker.

Again, this is not to claim that the rules formulated by this perspective are, to any greater degree, a subject of actual knowledge than the rules formulated by Searle's theory. But, since speakers are viewed as orienting to rules, their activities do not have to be explained as something which the rules determine. The conceptual difficulty with Searle's account on this point is that his explanation of action relies on something which is unconsciously internalized and unwittingly employed in actual performance. Searle's view of his explanatory structure as a prerequisite for speakers' talk clearly contrasts with the view taken of the relationship between speech and analysis in the following quotation.

... in so far as the materials we worked with exhibited orderliness, they did so not only to us, indeed not in the first place for us, but for the co-participants who had produced them. If the materials (records of natural conversation) were orderly, they were so because they had been methodically produced by members of society for one another, and it was a feature of the conversations that we treated as data that they were produced so as to allow the display by the co-participants to each other of their orderliness, and to allow the participants to display to each other their analysis, appreciation and use of that orderliness.

(Schegloff and Sacks, 1973, p. 299)

Thus, whilst ethnomethodology and conversation analysis need not abandon any of the rigour, systematicity and generality of a theory like Searle's, these qualities do not have to be construed as built-in features of the utterances themselves. Consequently, one of the most important features of conversational 'orderliness', taking turns at talk, can be portrayed in systematic and general terms without impinging on the freedom of speakers 'to turn' as they please. Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson characterise the turn-taking system as:

... a basic form of organization for conversation - 'basic' in that it would be invariant to parties, such that whatever variation the participants brought to bear in the conversation would be accommodated without change in the system, and such that it could be selectively and locally affected by social aspects of context.

(Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, 1974, p. 700)

They describe the relationship between its invariant nature and the context dependency of its use as requiring the following features to be incorporated by the analysis.

Depiction of an organization for turn-taking should fit the facts of variability by virtue of a design allowing it to be context sensitive; but it should be cast in a manner that requiring no reference to any particular context, still captures the most important general features of conversation.

(ibid.)⁽⁶⁾

^{d)}
One of the most general and systematic features of the turn-taking systems is the next speaker selection rules which Atkinson and Drew (1979, p. 38) have formulated in the following way:

Firstly, a speaker may, if he chooses, construct his utterance so as to select next speaker by using certain allocation techniques - only one of which and infrequently used is to utter next speaker's name. The person thus selected, and importantly only that person, has rights and obligations to speak next.

Secondly, if a current speaker has not so allocated, then the second rule operates which is that at a first point in a current speaker's turn at which completion may be detected, that person may select themselves by speaking first, and thus become first speaker for ensuing moves.

Thirdly, if current speaker has not selected and no-one self selects at an initial completion relevance point, current speaker may, but does not have to, continue until one of the first two rules operates and transfer to next speaker is effected.

The following transcript extract furnishes two proximate instances of the first rule.⁽⁷⁾

WJS-I (7)

→EP Now P ... B ... you are worried about aren't you
MT Yes a ha
FT Mm hmm=
→EP Who was the third one
MT Umm C ... W ...
(0.7)

Both of EP's utterances are constructed so as to elicit a response from MT in this sequence. Slightly later in the same transcript, we are presented with an example of the second rule where completion is detected some time before the turn is actually completed and as a consequence there are a few moments of speaker overlap.

WJS-I (9)

EP I wonder if that was because you felt they weren't applicable
or because you wanted to focus on something else
→MT er I I I thin_ well I: thin: k it probably
was_ y'know um as I say this n: a couple of weeks ago now.
hhh um_ and_ I seem to recollect thinking at the time

Here is a likely instance of the third rule.

WJS-I (18)

MT I think at the time he was just being bloody minded- that's what it=
EP Mmhmm
→MT= came down to you know (0.6) umm (0.6) . thh although as I say
at the time_er it was:: th-th-the_ few occasions I must admit
it wasn't

MT's two pauses of (0.6) duration interspersed with an 'umm' followed by an inhalation and phrase 'although as I say', indicate that the speaker continues his utterance after a completion relevance point.

The inherent defeasibility of these formulations means that the activities which they rule are perpetually available under the auspices of other rules. This indicates that the rules do not determine any particular linguistic phenomenon such as a pause in speech as necessarily an instance of one (the third) rule, and similarly allows concepts within the formulations like 'initial completion relevance point', to be something which interactants decide rather than rules stipulate (e.g. when a response is an interruption). For example, the conversational interaction that immediately follows the example of the first rule has a texture which is sufficiently intricate to suggest that the participants may not be all orienting to the same rule, or at least orienting in the same way to one particular rule of the next speaker selection set.

WJS-I (7/8)

1 FT Right
 2 MT Thats right
 3 EP Now what did we do about her last time (because) that =
 4 MT No I was
 5 EP= doesn't ring a bell=
 6 MT= I withdrew I withdrew her referral form because_ because umm=
 7 FT Thats right
 8 FT= its here=
 9 MT= As E... sai- O yes there thats right as E.. says you see_ e-her=
 10 EP I see
 11 FT told me to inquire about
 12 MT= trouble's basically that she's b-backward in-rr-tt-the academic
 13 sense (0.4) um so I mean there's nothing there's nothing wrong=
 14 FT no its not that really

15 MT= with her personality or behaviour or anyth:: .hh she's a very canny=
16 EP Mmhmm
17 MT= little kid
18 FT (higher tone) She is really
19 MT Yes she is_ very mmm
20 EP Mmm
(0.5)

MT's pause on line 13 is seemingly treated as a completion relevance point by FT, yet MT continues his utterance in a manner which suggests that he may not have completed his turn and consequently that the pause is a response to FT's interruption which he re-interrupts (8). Analysis of the utterances in the earlier part of this fragment could also have its effect on the understanding of this sequence. One could consider FT's and EP's interjections whilst MT is talking to be a sub-conversation where lines 7, 8, 10 and 11, comprise a series of turns between just these two. Line 14 could then be seen as a continuation of line 11, or perhaps a response to an unvoiced turn of EP's (9), thereby allowing the pause on line 13 to be a signal for attention by MT rather than to do with the speaker selection rules as such.

So the rules are not only speaker relative inasmuch as analysis can detect where speakers may employ the rules differently in a fragment of interaction, but they also allow quite different characterizations of the progress and sense of those interactions and therefore what counts as a 'turn completion point', 'pause', 'interruption' and so on. This means that the rules operate on a turn by turn basis although their formulation is cast in universal terms, and demonstrates that this systematic feature of conversational structure is not elicited

at the cost of ignoring the individual activities which make up that structure. Atkinson and Drew, following Garfinkel, have put the matter this way: actors are to be viewed

as practical rule using 'analysts' rather than
as pre-programmed, rule governed 'cultural
dopes' ...

(1979, p. 22)

which they say is how they have been portrayed by 'traditional' sociological models. Thus, this relationship between the specifics of practical action and a level of utmost generality is one example of how the commonality necessary to the stability and communicability of meanings goes hand in hand with viewing the rules as followable, modifiable, contravenable, or even as something for speakers to undermine. After all, flouting a rule is no less orientation to it, and is certainly no less meaningful in social settings.

This interrelationship between the meaningfulness of what is said and the orderliness of saying it also indicates this perspective's conception of the actor. The most important feature of this conception is that whilst there is a focus upon the particulars of each individual's contribution to a social setting, the actor remains in a sociological frame of reference. In other words, this approach is not reductionist in that the attention so afforded is not the starting point for an explanation of the speaker's actions in terms of his or her motives. However, the next speaker selection rules exemplify how the wherewithal of communication can be portrayed in systematic and general terms and yet avoid a determinacy which could only crudely and unconvincingly deal with the unending originality of talk. Therefore, instead of these rules comprising a self-contained system in the ways in which Searle's are taken to constitute the necessary and sufficient conditions for the issuance of a speech act, full cognisance is

taken of the fact that even the speaker selection rules rely on a complex of information for their detection and ascription by members and analysts.⁽¹⁰⁾ For instance, what differentiates the claim that in WJS-I (18) the pause signal speaker's completion of the turn whereas in WJS-I (7/8), the pause on line 13 does not, is partly to do with semantic evidence that in the first case MT repeats information just given, whereas in the second he still has information to impart.

Of course, such evidence is no more basic to the meaning and sense of the exchange than the sequential environment which is formulated in part by the next speaker selection rules. The analytical use of rules by ethnomethodologists and conversation analysts is a display of the philosophical insight that no rule shows its own application and, as a consequence, that no utterance or set of utterances of necessity mark the employment of a particular rule. If matters were other than this, then there could, in principle, be one correct account of a conversational exchange. The implication of this would be that Jefferson's earlier noted stress on the monitoring of conversation would in many circumstances be redundant or perhaps confined to those persons who have a less than perfect mastery of language. However, her use of that concept is not intended to denote some imperfection in the speaker's grasp of language, much less connote some difficulty with language as a means of communication. Rather, it refers back to the idea that our understanding of utterances whether as an analyst or an ordinary member, is viewed as an accomplishment; as a job of work which consists in employing different speech systems in order to 'assemble' the sense of what is said.

V Rule Use and the Interdependence of Rule Systems

Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, when remarking upon the relationship between the speaker selection rules and other systems, make clear that the recognition of an instance of one of those rules itself relies on the network of relationships formed by the other speech systems. Even taking turns at talk cannot be determined by reference to the next speaker selection rules alone.

And while a party selected by the use of such a technique will be constrained in what he says in the turn so allocated (e.g. being under some constraints to 'answer' if the technique employed to select him was 'question'), these constraints are given by the organization of the 'types of sequences whose first parts serve as the 'current speaker selects next' techniques and not by the turn-taking system per se. That the conversational turn-taking system does not constrain what occupies its turns frees the turns for use by other systems, and those systems components are then subject to the organizational contingencies of the turns that they occupy.

(Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson,
1974, p. 711)

One of the most explicit references to the interdependence of these systems is made by Schegloff and Sacks at the beginning of their paper on conversation closings:

Our aim in this paper is to report in a preliminary fashion on analyses we have been developing of closings of conversation. Although it may be an intuitively apparent feature of the unit 'a single conversation' that it does not simply end, but is brought to a close, our initial task is to develop a technical basis for a closing problem. This we try to derive from a consideration of some features of the most basic sequential organization we know of - the organization of speaker turns. A partial solution of this problem is developed, employing resources drawn from the same order of organization. The incompleteness of that solution is shown, and leads to an elaboration of the problem, which requires reference to quite different orders of sequential organization in conversation - in particular the organization of topic talk, and the overall structural organization of the unit 'a single conversation'. The reformulated problem is used to locate a much broader range of data as relevant to the problem of closings, and

some of that data is discussed in detail. Finally, an attempt is made to specify the domain for which the closing problems, as we have posed them, seem apposite.

(Schegloff and Sacks, 1973, p. 289)

What those two quotations about the interdependence of speech systems illustrate is that the relationship between systems is criterial for the recognition and use of the rules which comprise them. Even the briefest of utterances, which might look devoid of semantic import altogether from the perspective of a theory like Searle's, will require reference to more than any one order of organization for its analysis, as Jefferson's paper 'What's in a Nyem?' demonstrates. Its topic is the equivocal pronunciation of affirmatives and negatives, and her analysis suggests ways in which this phenomenon 'is to be treated as a serious resource in the construction of interaction'.⁽¹¹⁾ What the paper shows is that the lax pronunciation of 'yes' and 'no' responses are employed as a resource by members in, for example, avoiding direct commitments in answering questions, pointing to the obviousness or irrelevance of prior remarks, or signalling a disinclination to continue with the current topic of conversation or perhaps the interaction altogether. In exhibiting members' use of this device, Jefferson begins by showing how the sequential organization of the utterance can be used to decide which member of the set is being used.

/TG:3:r/ A telephone call

1 Ava: You sound very far away

2 (0.7)

3 Bee: I do:?

4 Ava: Ne:uh

5 Bee: nNo: I'm not

Jefferson suggests that while,

Ne:uh has acoustic features which might urge for a hearing of /No/, its sequential features (that it occurs in a position in which affirmation of a queried prior utterance is acceptable) provide for a hearing of /Yes/.

(Jefferson, 1978, p. 135)

Conversely, the sequential organization's characterization may itself be altered by the use of one of these lax affirmative/negative tokens. Jefferson notes that:

A standard massively occurring sequence (comprises) a statement followed by a query followed by an affirmation of the queried statement.

(ibid., p. 138)

But in the fragment of interaction above, Ava's 'Ne:uh' can be used to construe the /statement ... query ... affirmation/ sequence as one signalling complaint at the obviousness or un informativeness of Bee's prior remark. The general tripartite sequence categorization remains pertinent to the description of these utterances, but does not offer a complete enough description of them for the purposes of Jefferson's paper. That requires her telling us that Ava's opening remark is a touchy one since Bee is not at home and is unwilling to say where she is. In other words, a salient contextual particular has to be supplied by the analyst if the analysis is to offer a convincing account of how these lax tokens are used by members in interaction.

Consequently, even within the confines of one working analysis such as Jefferson's brief paper, the analytic portrayal of the interaction alters as the focus switches from the properties of one type of speech system to another, and as the scope of practical or contextual considerations employed by the investigator widens or

narrows. Even the examination of a conversational minutiae like 'Ne:uh' provides an illustration of what Atkinson and Drew meant by saying that the perspective analysed the 'structure and location' of utterances in order to arrive at their sense. For all the technical sophistication which is brought to bear on reporting and analysing spoken interaction, and for all the attentiveness to detail, the rules distilled from those endeavours are reminders, not determinants, of how people speak and act because those rules are themselves reliant upon members to follow them and see their significance and point.⁽¹²⁾ Turner makes the same point, but this time by reference to the materials used in, rather than the components of, the analysis.

The sociologist inevitably trades on his member's knowledge in recognising the activities that participants to interaction are engaged in; for example, it is by virtue of my status as a competent member that I can recurrently locate in my transcripts instances of 'the same' activity. This is not to claim that members are infallible or that there is perfect agreement in recognising any and every instance: it is only to claim that no resolution of problematic cases can be effected by resorting to procedures that are supposedly uncontaminated by members' knowledge.

(Turner, 1971, p. 177)

The quotation from Turner regarding members's knowledge and the use by Jefferson of contextual particulars to explain that Ava's opening remark is 'touchy', brings us before the issue of how commonsense knowledge is employed by members to facilitate communication. The analysis of this 'component' of membership as an orderly and systematic feature of speech practice is particularly important since, as Turner has just pointed out, reliance upon it by the sociologist is inevitable. Therefore, it is vital to make its use in communication an object of analysis if it is not to become a wholly unexplicated

resource in accounting for how other speech systems rules are being used. However, it is necessary to point out straight away that what Turner has to say about the sociologist's reliance upon his or her membership remains essential to the documentation and analytical employment of 'commonsense knowledge systems' as well. In other words, there does not come a point when the analyst, by reference to other members' practices, thereby completely accounts for the wherewithal of his own. No analytic portrayal of members' use of commonsense knowledge can exhaustively delineate either its extent as a corpus of knowledge or the ways it can be invoked by members in their everyday practices.

The reason for this is not because 'commonsense knowledge' happens to be a large territory which it will take considerable effort and time to document. Neither is the reason that because members' methods are particularly complex, they will take great diligence to specify. Both, incidentally, happen to be true, but neither will serve to explain this lack of closure. Garfinkel spells out the reason in Studies in Ethnomethodology when commenting upon his students' failure to exhaustively describe what had been talked about in a brief exchange between husband and wife. As he successively imposed higher and higher standards of 'accuracy, clarity and distinctness' on his students' efforts, they found the task increasingly laborious. When, finally, he imposed the requirement that they assume he would know what the husband and wife talked about only from what could be garnered from their description, they gave up complaining that the task was impossible.

Although their complaints were concerned with the labouriousness of having to write 'more', the frustrating 'more' was not made up of the large labour of having to reduce a mountain with buckets.

It was not their complaint that what was talked about consisted of bounded contents made so vast by pedantry that they lacked sufficient time, stamina, paper, drive, or good reason to write 'all of it'. Instead, the complaint and its circumstances seemed to consist of this: if, for whatever a student wrote, I was able to persuade him that it was not yet accurate, distinct, or clear enough, and if he remained willing to repair the ambiguity, then he returned to the task with complaint that the writing itself developed the conversation as a branching texture of relevant matters. The very way of accomplishing the task multiplied its features.

(Garfinkel, 1967, p. 26)

The experience of Garfinkel's students has a lesson in it for the kind of analysis which regards the use of language as something capable of specification in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions. The 'troubles' faced by the students is borne out in the development of Searle's work which begins by announcing that:

The meaning of a statement is entirely determined by the meaning of its elements ... (which is) ... just another way of saying that the rules governing its utterance are determined by the rules governing its elements.

(Searle, 1969, p. 61)

but later on has to concede that for indirect utterances, the analyst and audience are required to make assumptions about interactants:

mutually shared background information both linguistic and non-linguistic, together with the general powers of rationality and inference ... (Searle 1975^b pp. 60-1)

In other words, the apparent explanatory completeness of the theory has to be supplemented by the sort of thing 'anyone' knows. For Searle, the mundane quality of such knowledge means that its use is not theoretically significant. But for Garfinkel, this failure to appreciate the crucial role such knowledge plays in lending sense and application to the rules formulated by any analysis, means that the value which can be extracted from portraying linguistic and

social practices in terms of rules is lost in the pursuit of an explanatory rigour which is totally unconnected with the actual character of language use.

The incorporation of commonsense knowledge as a topic of study puts an end to any idea of saying that the matters considered so far such as sloppy pronunciation, or even the speaker selection rules, merely deal with the pragmatics rather than the semantics of communication. A speech act theorist might be tempted to concede that whilst ethnomethodology and conversation analysis had a lot to say about the 'practicalities' of communication which could modify the theory, they were nevertheless incapable of undermining it because no analysis of meaning was undertaken by the practitioners in these disciplines. But from this perspective, the semantic/pragmatic distinction runs a very considerable risk, exemplified by Searle's theory, of reifying some elements of social action into essential rules whilst relegating others to incidentals of communication. As explained in the last chapter, Searle's analysis of indirectives does not so much reflect the character of members' practices, as it does the shortcomings of a theory based on that kind of distinction.

The complete interdependence of the semantic and pragmatic dimensions of speech is well illustrated by Schegloff's contention that sequence does not refer:

... merely to 'subsequent occurrence' in the sense of the successive position of the hands on a clock, but rather to a specifically sequential organization - a property called 'conditional relevance' (that holds) between the parts of a sequence unit.

(Schegloff, 1972, p. 76)

The location of utterances in time is a necessary factor in understanding their conditional relevance. Conversely, for the

brute fact⁽¹³⁾ of 'subsequent occurrence' to have significance for members, requires that such occurrences can be understood within a framework of conditional relevance. Schegloff portrays this interdependence very clearly in the following quotation:

When one utterance (A) is conditionally relevant on another (S), then the occurrence of S provides for the relevance of the occurrence of A. If A occurs, it occurs (i.e. is produced and heard) as 'responsive to' S, i.e. in a serial or sequenced relation to it; and, if it does not occur, its non-occurrence is an event, i.e. it is not only non-occurring (as is each member of an indefinitely extendable list of possible occurrences), it is absent, or 'officially' or 'notably' absent. That it is an event can be seen not only from its 'noticeability', but from its use as legitimate and recognisable grounds for a set of inferences (e.g. about the participant who failed to produce it).

(ibid.)

One immediate consequence of this complete interdependence revealed in that quotation is that the perspective can give a much more integrated account of conversational silence than speech act theory (see below).

One variant of this organization of utterances has been referred to more generally by the term adjacency pair. Mention has already been made of different sequence types (e.g. Greeting; Announcement; Offer, etc.) and in an extract quoted earlier Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974, p. 711) exemplify some considerations about turn-taking by reference to the sequential organization of questions and answers. Their analysis places emphasis on interactional features that distinguish these types of utterance pairs from one another in addition to differences in their semantic form, and in consequence manages to avoid the sort of problems which confront Searle's classification of utterances. For example, in the following exchange the two part structure and semantic character of this greeting would

be viewed completely differently if it occurred as an exchange, say between a teacher and a student in a foreign language lesson.

(Two acquaintances passing in the street)

A: Isn't it a warm day?

B: I think so.

Searle can portray the difference using indirect speech analysis although, as we saw in Chapter One, the idea that sentences are semantic markers for underlying rules really amounts to little more than a fiction of the theorist. But as soon as the employment of silence as a conversational resource becomes the focus of analysis, then this fiction becomes entirely implausible, as there is no secondary act in Searle's terms to form the basis for inferring the indirect primary one. Some examples will illustrate this.

To the ordinary speaker, it is clear that the absence of this adjacency pair's second parts will have very different meanings for interactants. To not reply to a greeting may involve deliberate rudeness, whereas not to reply to the same utterance as a question in a language lesson could be taken to indicate B's ignorance of what A said, or at any rate ignorance of some relevant response to it. And the ramifications do not end there; consider the likely implications of A's repetition of the utterance. In the first case, if A repeats the utterance it may involve further loss of face if the silence was a deliberate snub. In the second, A may lose control of the situation if the utterance is not repeated, since to try and elicit some response from B may be crucial to the maintenance of A's authority which in turn may be crucial to the maintenance of classroom order. Nevertheless, it is just at this point that a speech act theorist could point to the need to ground an analysis of meaning in Searle's

'paradigm' utterances, given the endless ramifications that are inherent in the sort of considerations that have just been mentioned. (14)
In short, it would be argued that the analysis of meaning would be hopelessly cluttered up by paying attention to these sorts of issues even if 'commonsense' makes it plain that those considerations can have a large part to play in understanding the meaning of that utterance.

Of course, what this argument comes down to is a restatement of Searle's view that a 'core' analysis of meaning is both logically and theoretically primitive to considering the part that commonsense knowledge might play in modifying meanings in particular circumstances. In other words, 'semantic' and 'pragmatic' considerations have to be bifurcated analytically after all. In addition to the arguments that have already been made against this proposal, it is now worth considering Schegloff's comparison of conversation analysts and conventional sociologists' approach to knowledge in his paper on the use of place terms as resources for the achievement of communication.

It has been part of the program of one approach in the sociology of knowledge that accounts, descriptions, theories, etc., are to be examined most importantly not with respect to the objects with which they seek to come to terms, but with respect to the circumstances of the producers of the account or its audience. To understand how some account comes to be offered, an investigator should look not to the objects being addressed; they will not explain the production of the account. It is to the circumstances of its production (its environing class structure, Zeitgeist, psychic states, cultural values, professional ambience, etc., in traditional studies) that one must look to understand its occurrence. I have argued here that formulations of location are used by reference to, and hence exhibit or 'reflect', the situational or contextual features of their production. That a formulation is 'correct' is, in this context, the least interesting of its features, for it would be equally true of a range of other formulations. Not any 'correct' formulation will do. 'Right' formulations are 'right' in part by exhibiting the particulars of the situation of their use. These notes may then be read as bearing not only

on issues in the study of conversational interaction, but also (if the two are separable) as an essay in the sociology of commonsense knowledge.

(Schegloff, 1972, p. 433)

The conventional sociologist's approach as described by Schegloff really amounts to a mirror inversion of Searle's. Where Searle begins by isolating the 'elements' of the speech act which the theory determines to be its essentials, the conventional sociologist looks to a cultural or intellectual environment to explain the nature of the subject matter of his or her inquiries. Both, in their respective fashions, refuse consideration to contextual particulars as an analytical resource because the 'pragmatic' features of context inhibit the sort of explanatory closure which has been taken to be necessary to accomplish a warrantable account of the phenomena investigated. 'Context' for the conventional sociologist is merely an aspect of 'environing class structure or Zeitgeist', or some other feature: or in Searle's case, it is the product of underlying rules which, in realizing the meaning of an utterance, determines the sense of any 'circumstantial' use. How such constructs are actually recognised and employed in everyday life is not awarded serious consideration. What this indicates is that members' understanding and use of categories like class or culture no less than their understanding and use of rules, is something which these accounts fail to consider.

Thus, the sociology of commonsense knowledge, as Schegloff terms it, is part and parcel of the study of conversational interaction, which is to say that an account of the wherewithal of communication is completely bound up with epistemological issues. Moreover, the analysis of this interdependence between knowledge and communication

is itself an instance of what it describes, and accordingly, must be viewed as a 'located' or 'contexted' phenomenon in its turn as well. Of course, ethnomethodology and conversation analysis, just like speech act theory, must employ a set of theoretical concepts to illuminate the workings of language use. The concept of indexicality, the formulation of the next speaker selection rules, and the notion of adjacency pairs are testimony to that. The perspective's focus on the mundane does not mark some sort of boundary which the tools of analysis must not overstep. One persistent misunderstanding of ethnomethodology and conversation analysis is that they are 'anti-theoretical'. The problems with Searle's theory have nothing to do with the activity of theorizing as such. Rather, it is his failure to see in theorizing just the sort of indexical qualities he notes in ordinary communicative activities. Consequently, there is no evaluation of the impact of this feature on the idea of analysing language mastery in Searle's theory at all. The only mention of it is the oblique reference to the peculiar character of explaining something which you already perfectly well understand, or as he puts it, 'converting knowing how into knowing that'.

This reflexive understanding of analytical concepts does not merely preserve consistency with Garfinkel and Sacks's view of language use. As noted earlier, understanding the reflexivity of analytical frameworks is of fundamental importance to the perspective's account of how members communicate with one another. What this means is that ethnomethodology and conversation analysis constitute in their own researches an example of commonsense knowledge at work. So the concepts these disciplines use to elicit 'the how' of membership display that membership through the use made of them by the analyst. The reliance which the analyst and reader must place on their own



native competence, as Turner said, is the embodiment of this reflexivity. His claim that the sociologist 'inevitably trades on his members' knowledge' is not meant to bar theorizing, but rather to emphasize that no theoretical procedures are 'uncontaminated by members' knowledge'. What the critique of conventional sociological theorizing in Garfinkel and Sacks's work is intended to show, is that this apparent 'problem' with theorizing is the key to understanding how members make and understand utterances, give warrantable accounts, construct theories, and the rest. In other words, the 'contamination' is the indispensable condition of theorizing and analysing the phenomena of language mastery.

VI The Use of Rules as Membership Categorization Devices

This lack of differentiation between semantic and pragmatic elements of members' practices and analytic and mundane kinds of knowledge, is exemplified in the notion of membership categorization device. An examination of the perspective's use of this concept will show its view of the complete integration between knowledge (of states of affairs) and the mastery of language.⁽¹⁵⁾ The idea of 'membership categorization device' can be introduced by the following consideration. When people are involved in any speech activity such as describing, evaluating, warning, etc., they categorize items in a way which, for a given culture, implies that certain characteristics and certain relationships hold between the items mentioned in the utterance. Such categorizations do not have to be conclusive. For example, in the following exchange, B's query about John and A's response to it show that the categorization 'my friends' may or may not include John.

A. Me and my friends went to the cinema last night.

B. What about John?

A. No.

A's response 'No' is insufficiently explicit as to whether John is a good friend who did not go, or somebody who is not, or is no longer, a friend at all. The finality of the negative may indicate the latter, but alternatively might indicate, for example, annoyance at B's question. B, who is a witness to the intonation, style of delivery, prior interaction (if any), surrounding circumstances, biography of the parties, etc., etc., will probably be clued to which (if any) of these possibilities is the correct one.

However, as the aim of analysis is not to decide which sense of the utterance actually obtained, as mentioned earlier, the discovery of this intended and received sense is not a goal of the perspective. The point of the analysis is to alert us to the possible senses that the utterances could have and exhibit how members are able to detect those senses. Consequently, although a membership categorization may have only one sense for the participants in a 'here and now' situation, it is in no way restricted to that singular sense for them. This is necessarily true for the analyst as his or her viewpoint perforce involves another set of considerations alongside those of the interactants. So, the very analyzability of membership categorization devices (hereafter MCD's) is indicative of their character and, again, points to the reflexive nature of analysing language mastery. What this means is that the organisation of an MCD must be such as to be able to impart a specific sense in a certain context, and yet be so constructed that other senses can be readily ascertained from it as well. This also means that the use of a particular device may 'flag' other information about the speaker,

what is spoken about, the situation in which the MCD is used and so forth. This 'back channel' feature of MCD's can then not only offer an account of how a particular communication is accomplished, but also, for example, how general facts of social structure are communicated by categorizations in talk.

Something of this multiplicity of features is described by Sacks in his investigation of the interaction between potential suicidees and staff at an emergency psychiatric clinic. He exhibits the methodicalness of the clinic procedures, not primarily in terms of its organizational particulars or as a consequence of surrounding societal facts, but through an analysis of the use of categorization devices to establish the conclusion that 'there is no-one to turn to'. Consequently, the aim of the research is to:

... construct a description that provides the reproducibility of the conclusion a suicidal person may reach - I have no-one to turn to - (which) involves us in attempting (a) to locate the collections of membership categories in terms of which the help for suicidalness is formulated, and (b) to describe the ways such collections are used to determine whether there are eligible persons available (to give 'help').

(Sacks, 1972, pp. 31-2)

Accordingly, what enables a commonplace clinic interaction such as:

(1)

S1 You don't have anyone to turn to

C1 No

S2 No relations, friends?

C2 No

to be meaningful, is not a Searlian formal body of rules, but a no less elegantly organized set of categorization devices to facilitate that conclusion ... 'no-one to turn to'.

In a series of numbered propositions beginning with a definition, Sacks elaborates a set of rules which constitute a device.

1.1.1. By the term categorization device we mean that collection of membership categories containing at least a category that may be applied to some population, containing at least a Member, so as to provide, by the use of some rules of application for the pairing of at least a population Member and a categorization device member. A device is then a collection plus rules of application. (16)

1.1.2. It is our task to show that for any population N (where N is equal to or larger than 1), there are at least two categorization devices available to Members, each of which (devices): (a) can categorize each member of the population N in such a way that one does not get for any Member of the population (population Member + no category member), where (b) no member of either device is a member of the other. Any device that satisfies constraint (a), will hereafter be called a Pn-adequate device, type 1.

(Sacks, 1972, pp. 32-3)

However, Sacks immediately makes clear that Pn-adequates do not comprise all the devices available in the language. If analysis attempted to retail this analytic characterization as a condition of competent membership, it would reduce Members' categorizations to the passive operation of a calculus. The complexity of some utterances and the possibility of indecisiveness on the part of the utterers means that categorization may not only overlap, thereby abrogating condition (b),⁽¹⁷⁾ but also that:

1.1.3. ... many devices that a categorization devices by reference to (1.1.1.) are not Pn-adequate ones ...

(ibid.)

Thus, even in terms of their definition, MCD's are inherently defeasible. This means that whilst they can perform the task of describing salient features of social interaction, they are not in

and of themselves determinative of the interaction studied. The device has to be employed by the analyst in order to exhibit the membership practices of some group of speakers. This offers a very clear contrast with the elements of a speech act which are held to determine the necessary and sufficient conditions for its performance and intelligibility. The ensuing rigidity of the theory is, as has been argued, a result of trying to make the role of native competence in understanding the theory something which the theory itself determines. Sacks's opening propositions indicate agreement with Turner's insight that a proper understanding of language mastery must look to the relation between analysis as an 'accounting procedure' and the analyst as a native speaker, i.e. as a producer of 'accounts'.

On the other hand, it is already apparent that Sacks's analysis is no less formal than that proposed by speech act theory. Here, though, formal considerations are not introduced simply to serve the explanatory purposes of the analysis. As we saw with Searle, what this leads to is a trimming of the use of language until the remainder fits the explanatory framework. For Sacks, formality is a tool in that it supplies a means for portraying the competence of members through the use of our own native mastery. In Garfinkel's words, it serves to render the commonplace 'anthropologically strange' in order that salient elements of communicative practices, which might otherwise remain un-noticed, are placed in an analytic framework so that 'the strangeness of an obstinately familiar world can be detected' (see note 12).

This relational conception of explanation between on the one hand the analytic framework, and on the other, the ineluctable reliance upon extant membership, in fact exhibits a further development of

the idea of language use as performance. The elicitation of membership categorization devices as 'describably methodical' clearly exemplifies the idea of meaning being a product of the use of rules. Whereas for Searle the idea of speech action remains a theoretical characterization of communication, in Sacks's work, the idea is actually embodied as a feature of the production of the account of members' usage. The 'grasping' of the meaning of an action is displayed in the methodical use of the devices and that is a job of work for each and every member on each and every occasion of the use of the device. This contrasts very strongly with the passivity of the grasping of sets of rules in Searle's analysis. In consequence that,

Members' activities of categorization are not only describably methodical but also that activities are done methodically, is quite essential to the ways they are seen as graspable by Members ...

(Sacks, 1972, p. 37)

Thus, following or being in accordance with a rule is susceptible of the kind of axiomatization that Sacks finds in categorization devices. However, this formality does not dismiss the fact that 'following' or 'being in accordance' with a rule is something which is made out in the following or being in accordance with them.

This understanding of rules is clearly replicated in the formulation of the regulative rules of the devices. These Sacks terms 'rules of application'. But again, any application of the rules is a member's achievement, not the result of some property of the rule which determines or otherwise governs that achievement. Take, as an example the consistency rule.

If some population of persons is being categorized, and if a category from some device's collection has been used to categorize a first Member of the

population, then that category may be used to categorize further Members of the population.

(Sacks, 1972, p. 33)

Clearly, this rule does not regulate action imperatively. The italicized 'may' is not only permissive, in that it furnishes members a licence to warrantably re-deploy the device for further categorization of a population. It is also possibilist in the sense that an alternative categorization device or no device at all could be employed at that point. So neither the 'definitional' (constitutive) or regulative rules of the device govern the actions of a member, much less entail that his or her utterance by virtue of the rules mean such and such and only that.

Of course, non-use of the consistency rule may be significant insofar as it signals by the absence of its continued use a difference noted at the beginning of this section like:

A. This is my friend Paul, and this is John.

However, analytically and practically, we are not dealing with the necessary consequences of rule abrogation and its entailed semantic consequences which Searle's theory requires. One reason, as we have seen, is how the interdependence of the rules of the different systems have particular and located ramifications on the employment or non-employment of the rule in question. Garfinkel emphasises this in the Purdue Symposium when replying to questions about the status and definitiveness of the rules Sacks elaborates. It is clear from his reply that at least some of his questioners have characterised Sacks's rules in a manner that would be appropriate for speech act rules.

We now have gone through a procedure in which you have elicited rules out of these sentences. It is now proposed that these structures are to be treated as prescriptive rules with which to recover from any sentence you might now encounter the possibility of a similar structure in their particulars. You are

talking in the way in which linguists would talk of the structural features of a sentence. These sentences are not 'iffy' sentences. One does not merely dream up a sentence knowing already what a good sentence would have to be. Instead, one encounters it anywhere in these transcriptions as something a person has actually said ... The way to see the import of the analysis is to have materials which can be considered given these findings as resources to use to accomplish an analysis.

(Hill & Crittenden, ed.,
1968, p. 45)

What is surprising to anyone familiar with conventional forms of analysis is the rigour of conversation analysis. Perhaps it is the unwillingness to associate this rigour with a commitment to the idea of the reflexivity of analysis which has led to the view that ethnomethodology and conversation analysis are incompatible. In fact, Sacks's elaboration of the structure of MCD's is accomplished with greater economy than the formulation of the conditions and rules for speech acts. Of course, the basic reason for Sacks's comparative economy is that given the analytic acceptance of the reliance on existing competence in understanding the analysis, Sacks does not have to try and delineate it as 'conditions' or 'reasoning steps' in the way Searle attempts to. This overall difference in the understanding of the relation between rules and actions is clearly exhibited by Sacks's criterion of reproducibility which he describes 'as a set of rules which give me back my data' (Hill & Crittenden, eds, p. 42). The criterion is quite unlike Searle's idea of a generative mechanism in a set of rules that, if activated, necessarily constitute some particular utterance and meaning. Sudnow succinctly expresses this difference in the Purdue Symposium when he says:

The test of our analysis is to reproduce reality.
This is not the object of our research: it is the
test of it.

(ibid., p. 70)

By being the test rather than the object, Sudnow points to the importance of the reliance that is placed on our native competence, not only in assessing the 'rightness' of the results of analysis, but also in providing the resource for formulating that analysis in the first place.

VII Rules as Findings about Members' Practices

So the findings of ethnomethodology and conversation analysis are recognised as something which is facilitated by the relationship between the rules of the devices and our extant mastery. The reproduction criterion has no affinity with the idea of distilling rules that ensure the meaning and orderliness of members' interactions, because it is acknowledged that the reproduction itself relies on members to follow the rules and see their import. Consequently, rules cannot determine what is there to be found in members' interactions in an analysis, any more than those rules could determine the utterances and actions of members themselves. Where analysis purports to do more it simply gets out of step with the actual practices of members whilst using those practices it is supposedly explicating as an unacknowledged resource. For Searle, the only relevant action which lies outside the scope of his analysis is the choice of whether to speak or not and what to say or answer (e.g. in the negative or affirmative). In this sense, a speaker is only master of those elections. From there on the conditions and rules of the speech acts take over. But for Garfinkel and Sacks the rules of the devices are the tools of language masters which are used in an indefinite variety of ways to create meaning. At the end of the day, the analysis of the devices could just as easily become the 'victim' of that mastery just like the commonsense

expectations of his students became the victim of Garfinkel's experiment about writing 'more' in Studies (see above).

The work performed by our extant mastery which remains effectively unexamined in a theory like Searle's, is a theme that Garfinkel returns to time and again in the Purdue Symposium. Near the beginning of the session, he puts the issue in general terms in response to remarks made by his 'conventional' sociological questioners:

The sin is not that you are wrong. The sin is that you circle back to use the same devices of practical reasoning to recommend the scientific character of a finding, which makes it a very puzzling ... not wrong ... but a very puzzling enterprise with respect to how those scientific arguments now come to be seen. It is not the question of so-called infinite regress. It is not that when you circle back, you, therefore, lose the reasoned character of your argument. You merely gain. What happens is that your argument remains reasonable within the same unexamined members' devices for making out the discourse as rational, or clear enough for practical purposes.

(Hill & Crittenden, eds, 1968, p. 29)

That extract, particularly the last sentence, pithily expresses how the indexicality of language use requires a reflexive understanding of analysis. Garfinkel describes the use of members' knowledge in a way which has the effect of making the sort of explanation of language mastery which Searle desires, amount to little more than an exposition of what his theory deems language mastery to be. In other words, Garfinkel is also making the point that the indexicality of language cannot be conceived as something additional to the mastery of Searlian rule governed utterances, because the sense of that conception is itself indexically made out as rational in the analytic discourse.

Sacks gives a powerful illustration^{fraction} of what Garfinkel is saying in his well-known analysis of the 'story' offered by a two and three-quarter

year old girl. Employing visual prompts, the little girl narrates the scene like this:

The baby cried. The mommy picked it up.

His analysis of this story exemplifies the use of membership categorization devices in this type of work and will therefore provide a practical example of how the sort of insight regarding indexicality and analysis which Garfinkel has made ties in with the analysis Sacks conducts. However, before embarking on the analysis proper, Sacks reminds us that indexicality is not to be equated with subjectivism even if the observations about the story which follow are those of a particular subject (i.e. Sacks himself) and are not the only observations which could be made (either in terms of correctness or completeness).

... if these observations strike you as a ranker sort of subjectivism, then I ask you to read on just far enough to see whether it is or is not the case that the observations are both relevant and defensible.

(Sacks, 1974., p. 216)

The first observation Sacks makes is that he hears the 'mommy' who picks up the baby to be the mommy of that baby. He asks us to note that the second sentence does not contain a genitive; the child did not say Its mommy picked it up, or variants of that identifying reference. The second observation is that we, the hearers, would also understand the sentences in that way. In other words, the sentences are implicative, even though on a strict reading of the words themselves, the family connection between mommy and baby is not made. (18)

His third observation is that the sequentiality of the statements replicates our understanding of the occurrences the sentences describe. That is, that the baby first cried and then its mother picked it up. Of course, the reader is not being asked to agree with Sacks about these observations in the usual sense of that term, but rather to

see whether their knowledge of linguistic usage squares with the observations insofar as they are warrantable implicatures of the two sentences.⁽¹⁹⁾ The fourth observation possesses a general importance for conversation analysis inasmuch as:

To recognise that some form of words is a possible description does not require that one must first inspect the circumstances it may be characterizing.

(Sacks, 1974, p. 217)

Sacks is emphasizing a point made earlier in this chapter; namely that the indexicality of language use does not mean tying the meaning of words to the boundaries of some actual context. Rather 'context' is something which is itself constructed in part by members' categorization activities; which activities can include further categorization of the initial devices and so on. In fact, one could say that the constructive quality of categorizing itself indicates that the 'boundaries' of a context are not to be confused with any idea of a 'contexted' boundary of sense.

The importance which Sacks attaches to avoiding making context into a determinant of sense is connected to the implicative quality of his 'observations'. Those observations are what 'anyone knows' if they speak the same language as the little girl. The fact that the story is uttered by such a young speaker is significant. A Searlian might say that the little girl's sentences are uttered by her in a manner consonant with Searle's direct speech act analysis, which might suggest an empirical confirmation of the view that the direct speech act was the primitive unit of linguistic competence. In other words, a re-statement of the earlier arguments that Sacks's observations describe a more mature level of competence which depend upon the mastery of 'paradigmatic' utterances in order to be understood. However, the plausibility of this ~~argument~~ argument diminishes

considerably when one considers that it would be necessary to presume some insulation of the little girl from the competence of the community she addresses. That is, we could assume that at this stage of her linguistic development, she was working toward a mastery of 'paradigmatic' acts in Searle's terms, the further development of which would employ the genitive, make use of indirect speech acts and so on. But that involves taking the 'implicative' use of language in her surroundings at the moment as being of less significance than the tenets of speech act theory. Such a view is, of course, implausible.

What Sacks tries to capture with his observations is how the little girl's utterances rely on our competence to determine their sense and reference. What is noteworthy with respect to these particular circumstances is our willingness to coax little children into the language community through our understanding of their utterances; an 'understanding' of language which we obviously convey to them. If later the little girl is 'corrected' by being informed about the use of the genitive, it will be on the basis of that understanding that she is able to make use of the instruction at all. In the light of considerations like this, Sacks's task for analysis, namely to elicit how the sort of observations that comprise what 'anyone knows' are there for 'anyone to see', join together issues of acquisition of, and competence in the use of language. He specifies the task in this way:

What one ought to seek to build is an apparatus which will provide for how it is that any activity which members do in such a way as to be recognisable as such to members, are done, and done recognisably.

(Sacks, 1974, p. 218)

So, even in terms of these initial observations, we can see in a practical way how the 'linguistic intuitions' of the speaker, as Searle terms them, do not only supply criteria for the validity of analysis but actually constitute the topic of analysis. What members of a language community 'know intuitively' are the linguistic practices of that community and so the analyst's task is to explicate the practices which manifest themselves as those intuitions. Whilst such an analysis may involve the same degree of dissection as that found in speech act theory, we have seen that not only is that dissection of a very different kind, but that it also involves very different considerations about the nature of analysing language mastery.

VIII Analysing 'The Baby Cried'

On the basis of the observations, Sacks develops an analysis of the MCD's in the little girl's story along the lines suggested in his (1972) article.⁽²⁰⁾ Employing its analytical scheme he develops propositions 1.1, through to 1.1.3.2. by considering a device whose application to members is completely general. This, not surprisingly, is the sex categorization device which is also extremely simple, its collection being the two categories 'male' 'female'. Its universality with regard to at least human populations is explicit though unvoiced in categories of the family device such as 'Mommy', 'Daddy', 'sister', 'brother' and implicit in categories such as 'parent', 'child' and 'baby'. Sacks notes that a collection consists of categories that 'go together', for example neither of the collections just considered would include 'centre forward' as a category. However, this does not amount to a strict exclusionary rule, since the flexibility, adaptability and inventiveness of language use means that any such

'exclusion' can be flouted. For example, a parent might say of a son, 'He's the centre-forward', meaning he's the bright, successful member of the family unit. Conversely, the use of familial terms in football teams (and other collaborative enterprises) is a common phenomenon. This element of boundary crossing is recognised by Sacks to be intrinsic to the use of MCD's and in consequence must be intrinsic to the analyst's conception of them.

The analytic recognition of this flexibility does not mark a weakness in the concept of MCD's. Rather, it is a mark of the strength of the notion, because the existence of 'collections' as something oriented-to by members, provides an anchor for reference that does not have to be achieved expressly by members. The parent can say, 'He's the centre-forward' because the 'family' MCD provides the context for employing the football categorization to describe the son. Of course, the value to be attached to that categorization is also a matter for negotiation between interactants. Said by the father, it might, for example, be simply an expression of fatherly pride. Said by the mother, it might be ironic (she endures a football-mad household), or even an implied criticism like, 'he's a show-off'. Related to this sort of consideration is another important feature of MCD's which Sacks notes. This is that if someone adds to the list of categories applicable to a member, it will not necessarily entrench reference or provide a fuller description. For example, the universality of the sex categorization device can make its use (a) pleonastic, or (b) indicative of further categorization.

(a) My mommy is female.

(b) My mommy is female. (uttered to child with homosexual parents)

Such constraints illustrate the economy rule (see Sacks, 1.1.5.2.) which he casts in negative and permissive form.

... and it is not necessary that some multiple of categories from categorization devices be employed for recognition that a person is being referred to, to be made; a single category will do (I do not mean by this that more cannot be used, only that for persons to be recognised, more need not be used).

(Sacks, 1974, p. 219)

More positively, the economy rule generates relations between different categorization devices and their contexts which is exemplified in the example above between the sense of utterance (a) and utterance (b). The importance of the rule is considerable.

1.1.5.3.

The economy rule permits us to partially formulate one central socialization problem. Once a child has reached that stage of learning, he makes utterances like:

.....

Once there was a baby pig. He played with his Mommy. He went to Mommy. Mommy went to Daddy.

From such a point, the child's task of becoming adequately socialized to doing categorizations of Members consists in learning (a) what categories must be added to 'Mommy', 'Daddy', and 'baby' to complete the collection of which they are members; (b) of adding to their apparatus of category collections ... and (c) of learning proper occasions and rules of use of each of the devices.

(Sacks, 1972, pp. 34-5)

No longer does the child face the task of procuring adequate reference in description. Though the lack of a genitive in the two sentence story 'The baby cried. The mommy picked it up'. may not satisfy the precision of adult formulations (much less those of a logician), it nevertheless indicates a grasp of the family categorization device which Sacks exhibited with his first observation: viz. that he hears

the mommy as the mommy of the baby. Such a grasp is the foundation for the combinatorial tasks of reference and description which he then tells us,

have been solved when infants can make such utterances as:

Pussy scratched. He cried. He's a bad boy.
He banged. He stopped crying. He's a good
boy. He cried again.

(ibid., p. 31) ⁽²¹⁾

The working of the economy rule is intimately associated with the use of the consistency rule (Sacks, 1972, 1.1.4.) which, as we have seen, is not cast in imperative form either, but rather:

tells us that if the first person has been categorized as 'baby', then further persons may be referred to by other categories of a collection of which they are a member ...

(Sacks, 1974, p. 219)

However, in this weak form, 'the consistency rule may exclude no category of any device' (ibid.) and Sacks introduces what he terms the consistency rule corollary which operates as a hearer's maxim. It holds:

if two or more categories are used to categorize two or more members of some population, and those categories can be heard as categories from the same collection, then: hear them that way.

(Sacks, 1974, pp. 219-20) ⁽²²⁾

This maxim clearly operates as a constraint upon the consistency rule and Sacks tells us that coupled to others it alters the 'may' to a 'must' in its formulation. Earlier I argued that the permissive form of Sacks's rules block the determinacy inherent in Searle's rule formulations. The question now is whether the corollary and its associates effectively dismiss that argument?

That question can be expressed in the following way. If Sacks is to rigorously delineate how we understand his observations to be implicatives of the little girl's story, then the rules he elaborates must be able to constrain some possible hearings we can generate (e.g. like hearing 'the mommy' and 'the baby' to be unrelated). The problem is to provide a constraint that can be distinguished from Searle's rule determinacy. What we are dealing with, then, is a specific instance of the general problem that has been examined in these two chapters, namely, that an adequate analysis of the phenomena of membership itself generates troublesome restrictions around the very freedom and inventiveness it seeks to investigate. In this respect, it is noteworthy that the constraint 'if those categories can be heard as categories from the same collection, then: hear them that way', does not formulate a necessary meaning which the maxim 'governs'. When Sacks says the maxim transforms a 'may' into a 'must', the modality of the latter is not to be equated with the necessary and sufficient conditions of a speech act. Those conditions require that only one meaning can be attached to a rule governed utterance because the rules are taken to be constitutive of meaning ab initio. For Sacks, on the other hand, the rules in his analysis, even when stated in a maxim like this, are concerned with trying to restrict the possible meanings that may otherwise be attached to any utterance.

In consequence, Sacks's analysis of 'the how' of language mastery can never foreclose on the meanings that members may generate in their interactions. The consistency rule corollary's 'must', does not transform the maxim into one of the ingredients of a determinate account of how members' use of an MCD is to be heard. In fact, the

constraint it introduces could always be challenged, or seemingly employed by a member, only then to be repudiated as soon as someone hears it that way. To strain the example somewhat in the direction of absurdity, but in order to make the point:

- A. The baby cried. The mommy picked it up.
- B. Isn't mommy kind to her baby?
- A.** Did I say her baby?

Sacks makes the point somewhat more elegantly later in the article when elaborating what he means by saying that the analysis specifies in part how sense is assembled.

... 'in part' because for the materials at hand it happens that there are other means for providing that the same hearing can be made, means which can operate in combination with the foregoing otherwise sufficient ones, to further assure the hearings we have observed.

(Sacks, 1974, p. 221, emphasis added)

Clearly, this quotation takes us to the heart of the difference between the way Searle and Sacks view language and its use. For Searle, we have seen that analysis is a matter of providing enough conditions and rules to get past the post of semantic certainty. For Sacks, analysis is a matter of tracing possible ways in which a mutuality of understanding is achieved collaboratively by members. The semantic certainty claimed by Searle's theory would not be viewed by Sacks as something which is constituted from the ruled elements of a speech act. Rather, those elements would be seen as really doing the job of trying to cut down the meanings that can be attached to the speech act (as we saw in Chapter One). In consequence, the maxims in Sacks's analysis actually perform the same role as Searle's speech act rules, namely, as instructions for hearing. The difference is that they are acknowledged as such in Sacks's work.

An examination of Sacks's analysis of his second observation (viz. that not only he, but we (any native speaker), hear the mommy to be the mommy of the baby) indicates how the firmness of the consistency rule corollary lies alongside the requirement for the defeasibility of any rule which analysis locates. Sacks begins his account of how this observation is heard by noting that the category 'baby' may not be combinably usable with regard to a single person. For example, a woman might refer to someone as 'my baby' with no suggestion that she is using the category that occurs in the stage of life device (whose collection includes 'baby', 'child', 'adolescent', 'adult'). Her baby is a fully fledged adult. Here the listener is directed to her endearment for the person referred to, not that person's immaturity. In the little girl's story such ambiguity is not present. In consequence, the task for Sacks is to elicit the resources that make us hear the story as we do. He points out that neither the economy rule nor the consistency rule (or combination) show:

the legitimacy of hearing the single term 'baby' as referring to a person located by reference both to the device 'family' and to the device 'stage of life'.

(Sacks, 1974, p. 220)

The rules examined so far secure adequacy of reference and provide for the hearing of categories as members of the same collection but they, together with the corollary, do not in and of themselves delineate why the meaning of the sentences is as the observations describe. To rectify this, Sacks adds a further modification to the consistency rule (cf. Sacks, 1972, 2.2.4/5) which specifies some more relations that can obtain between categories from different collections. The corollary has provided for the hearing of categories as members of the same device. This modification rules:

... if a hearer has a second category which can be heard as consistent with one locus of a first, then the first is to be heard as at least consistent with the second.

(ibid.)

This rule provides a foundation for (1) the combined reference (i.e. 'family', and 'stage of life') of 'baby' being heard, and (2) for the genitive relation between 'mommy' and 'baby' also being heard. As regards the second point, Sacks concentrates his analysis on what he terms a central property of these devices which is that they are duplicatively organized (cf. Sacks, 1972, 1.1.6.1. to 2.2.2.2.).

I mean by the use of that term to point out the following: When such a device is used on a population, what is done is to take its categories, treat the set of categories as defining a unit and place members of the population into cases of the unit. If a population is to be treated and then is counted, one counts not numbers of daddies, numbers of mommies and numbers of babies, but numbers of families - numbers of 'whole families', numbers of families without fathers, etc. A population so treated is partitioned into cases of the unit, cases for which what properly holds is that the various persons partitioned into any case are 'coincumbents' of that case.

(Sacks, 1974, pp. 220-1)

He then formulates this property as another hearer's maxim.

If some population has been categorized by use of categories from some device whose collection has the duplicative organization property, and a member is presented with a categorized population which can be heard as 'coincumbents' of a case of that device's unit, then: Hear it that way.

(Sacks, 1974, p. 221)

Sacks notes the generality of this maxim, and that for the purposes of the current analysis, it 'is of far more general scope than we may seem to need'. This comment is noteworthy because of a previous remark in which he says that his analysis does not deal in generalities. An explanation for this apparent contradiction can be found later in

the article when Sacks talks about how his analysis may seem altogether too complicated for the utterances examined:

... we invite the reader to consider that our analysis has intendedly been 'overbuilt'. That is to say it may turn out that the elaborateness of our analysis, or its apparent elaborateness, will disappear when one begins to consider the amount of work that the very same machinery can perform.

(Sacks, 1974, p. 224)

In the light of this comment, it seems that the previously referred to 'generalities' concern generalizations made about language use by virtue of theoretically imposed requirements for communication. If that is so, then Sacks is once again drawing attention to idealized descriptions of how members communicate that are rooted in the analyst's extant competence, and how those descriptions fail to inquire into the way those resources furnish theoretical generalizations with their warrantability. In consequence, the scope of this maxim and the others is 'general' in the sense of the 'amount of work' they can perform, since any analysis of how members communicate will account for the particular instance of communication by means of general rules. What Sacks seeks to avoid is the imposition of generalizations about the make-up of speech forms by the employment of what ultimately transpire to be rather vague generalizations about the constituent parts of any act of communication. In this way, the generality of the maxim is intended to remain sufficiently analytically specific in order to secure how we understand what the observations say we will hear in the little girl's sentences, while at the same time ensuring that such 'generality' does not exclude the work members do in making sense of utterances.

However, given that this could be the right way to interpret what Sacks means by the generality of his maxim, it only brings us before

the problem of understanding what he means when he says that it is also formal and predictive. As regards saying that it is formal, this appears to refer to the point made earlier that rules and the uses to which they are put are not localized phenomena; that is, they are not purely creatures of the circumstances of their use. Clearly, this characteristic is closely allied to the generality of the maxim, particularly the way that generality provides members with resources for interpreting their utterances, rather than the maxim simply stipulating what the employment and relations between particular membership categories amounts to in terms of overall meaning. 'Formality', then, is not to be construed as though it were a property of the rule which somehow established or guaranteed the meaning of utterances. The formality of the maxims is better understood as enabling members to use them like tools. Like a tool, a particular rule can have many different uses and can be used to construct many different things. But any particular 'construction' is not something which the rule encapsulates any more than, as Garfinkel says, any instance or form of analysis is the final, correct, or only way to explicate members' activities. To make of rules anything more than this is, as we have seen, to break the essential reflexivity between analysis as a member's activity, and the members' activities which analysis studies.

The use of the term predictive elaborates this understanding of rules still further but requires a slightly more extended commentary because the word has come to be closely associated with the verification procedures of hypothetico-deductive inquiry. The first thing to say is that Sacks's use of the term does not re-instate any of the explanatory commitments associated with those methodological proposals. He

clarifies the meaning of the concept in his work when commenting upon the italicized 'can be heard' in the quotation before last. Sacks notes that some duplicatively organized devices have proper numbers of incumbents for certain categories of any units. For example, a family has but one father, a kingdom but one monarch, a football team but one centre-forward, etc. From this it follows that:

If more incumbents of a category are proposed as present in the population than a unit's case can properly take, then the 'can be heard' constraint is not satisfied and a prediction would not be made.

(ibid.)

In other words, 'prediction' is the meaning which the categorization apparatus produces through the relations it establishes between the incumbents of categories. This is why the maxim:

... permits us to predict, and to understand how we can predict, that a statement such as 'The first baseman looked around'. The third baseman scratched himself', will be heard as saying 'the first baseman of the team of which the third baseman is also a player' and its converse.

(ibid.)

Accordingly, if the little girl had said, 'The baby cried. The mommies picked it up', the rule for hearing a categorized population as coincumbents of a device's unit would be abrogated and the prediction would fail. (23)

With the notion of category bound activities (cf. Sacks, 1972, 3.0 ff) Sacks sets out to analyse the first point (viz. how the combined reference of 'baby' is heard). He tells his readers that:

By the term I intend to notice that many activities are taken by members to be done by some particular or several particular categories of members where the categories are categories from membership categorization devices.

(Sacks, 1974, p. 222)

Sacks notes as an obvious fact for native speakers that 'cry' is bound to the category 'baby' as a member of the collection from the 'stage of life' device, but once again stressing that this fact only serves to pose a problem for the analyst. As Turner puts it, Sacks 'trades' upon his and our knowledge as competent members of a culture for the awareness of this, but faces the task of eliciting how it possesses that facticity in our talk.⁽²⁴⁾ Accordingly, what the analyst needs:

... is to construct some means by reference to which a class which proposedly contains at least the activity category 'cry' and presumably others, may have the inclusion of its candidate members assessed.

(ibid.)

However, this proposal is immediately qualified in order to circumvent it ruling out alternative meanings that the sentences could have. For example, the story could be about a crying adult who has fallen in the street and is picked up by 'the mommy'. Of course, that is a far-fetched construal of the sentences. But the point is that it is a possible meaning of those sentences. The qualification runs as follows:

We will not be claiming that the procedure is definitive as to exclusion of a candidate member, but we will claim that it is definitive as to inclusion of a candidate member.

(ibid.)

What Sacks seeks with this analytic construct and its qualification is not only a portrayal of how members 'bind' categories and activities together, but also how that binding can then be employed to break that tie in order to create further categorizations of members' activities. Once again, the analytic construction of a system which enables members to assemble the sense of their utterances must stand

four-square with the fundamental flexibility of members' activities. The aim of the analysis is to show how 'system' (analytic construct) and (members') 'action' can be seen in a framework of rules without implicitly fettering the freedom of the latter by means of the constraints which will necessarily inhere in the former.⁽²⁵⁾ As an illustration of this flexibility, consider how the binding of 'cry' and 'baby' can be employed to refer to incumbents of later positions of the stage of life device (e.g. child, adolescent, adult). This is commonly used to praise or degrade the activities of members. The binding of these categories makes it available to members as a method for noticing the fact that an incumbent of that category may not, in circumstances that would warrant it, actually be crying. This can secure the proposal that the infant is, 'acting like a grown-up'. Alternatively, an older child's tears may be degraded by coupling them to the behaviour of an infant: 'Only babies do that'. The procedure is not confined to the categorization devices that have been examined for the purposes of illustration. For example, membership of a sexual category can be hinted at by the use of an occupational role.

.....

- S. What interests did you have before?
- C. I was a hair stylist at one time. I did some fashions now and then. Things like that.
- S. Then why aren't you working?
- C. Because I don't want to I guess. Maybe that's why ... I'm afraid to go out and look for a job ... I'm afraid of myself because I don't know. I'm terribly mixed up.

- S. Have you been having some sexual problems?
- C. All my life.
- S. Uh huh. Yeah.
- C. Naturally. You probably suspect - as far as the hair stylist and - either go one way or the other. There is a straight or homosexual, something like that.

(source: Sacks, 1974, p. 223)

Here, 'hair-stylist' is a candidate for binding C to the category 'homosexual', a fact which C acknowledges in his last utterance.

Something which is closely related to this binding of categories, together with members' artful ways of sundering the ties which others expect to hold, is the extent to which a 'specific vagueness of reference' is intrinsic to our use of them. In Studies, Garfinkel demonstrates that adequacy of reference does not depend on the precision of the category employed, as that might be formulated by a linguist or philosopher. In fact, the request for such precision is seen to be a nuisance by members. In the following experiment, the persistent refusal of the experimenter to tie categories together in a commonsense manner by insisting on a high degree of precision in their use by her subject, occasions open hostility toward her.

CASE 3

On Friday night my husband and I were watching television. My husband remarked that he was tired. I asked, 'How are you tired? Physically, mentally, or just bored?'

- (S) I don't know I guess physically, mainly.
- (E) You mean that your muscles ache or your bones?
- (S) I guess so. Don't be so technical.

(After more watching)

- (S) All these old movies have the same kind of old bedstead in them.
- (E) What do you mean? Do you mean all old movies, or some of them, or just the ones you have seen?
- (S) What's the matter with you? You know what I mean.
- (E) I wish you would be more specific.
- (S) You know what I mean! Drop dead!

(Garfinkel, 1967, p. 43)

It is possible to say that the wife was merely trying to get her husband to say plainly what he meant. Her questions really do no more than elicit the unstated presuppositions in his statements. However, we do not see her utterances as a laudable analyticity, as an attempt to remove the many ambiguities which can be seen in what he said. We all know she is being hopelessly pedantic. In this setting, the resolution of these ambiguities is not looked upon as the exercise of a keen mind to which deference will be paid or admiration felt by members. It is not a seminar or a law court. Such forensic questioning, as the husband makes clear, is not to be tolerated.

However, what Garfinkel and Sacks also want to keep in perspective is that if the circumstances of this very interaction were altered (say E had just had a row with S), then we could just as easily find a point to E's utterances. Such category precision might be construed in terms of 'putting on pressure', either because the 'irrelevance' of the questions would itself create a situation of hostility between questioner and answerer; or the pursuit of such detail could be construed as a badly managed attempt to normalize relations. The analyst's problem is not to find a particular and certain meaning in the words uttered by members. Rather, the problem lies in showing how a particular meaning is located by members from an indefinitely large set of possible meanings.

In order to show how the combined reference for baby is heard in the little girl's story, Sacks still has to formulate the claim about the definitive inclusion of members to categories from other devices as a maxim or rule for competent speakers.

If a category bound activity is asserted to have been done by a member of some category where, if that category is ambiguous (i.e. is a member of at least two different devices) but where, at least for one of those devices, the asserted activity is category bound to the given category, then hear that at least the category from the device to which it is bound is being asserted to hold.

(Sacks, 1974, p. 224. cf. Sacks, 1972, 4.2)

This maxim provides for hearing 'The baby cried.' as making reference to at least the incumbents' membership of the 'stage of life' device. The consistency rule corollary ruled that a category could be heard as a member of more than one device and so coupled 'baby' with the family device. The combination of these rules secures membership of 'baby' with both devices and thereby shows how the story is heard as Sacks's observations describe.

IX. The Significance of 'The baby cried'

Perhaps one of the most significant things about the analysis of the little girl's story is how remote that story is from ordinary conversational interaction. Comprehending it involves no 'two-way' conversational elements at all, and yet Sacks chooses this simplest of examples of a 'one-way' communication in order to display the mechanisms members use in conversational activity. This fact in and of itself is indicative of the ubiquity of the conversational rules which Sacks brings to light in his paper. It also provides perhaps the starkest contrast with the problems that beset Searle's theory.

Earlier, I noted how the simplicity of the sentence structure of the story might tempt a Searlian to argue that they had been uttered in a manner consonant with the rules for a direct speech act. Leaving aside any difficulties that would arise in actually making that argument (especially the referential problems of the non-use of the genitive in the second sentence), plainly whereas for Searle's analysis such a simplicity of utterance in effect comes to the rescue of the theory, in Sacks's case the analysis used for exhibiting the wherewithal of complex conversational interaction is equally capable of providing an account of this tiny fragment of language use. In other words, Sacks does not only provide an analysis which possesses internal consistency, it also manifests a continuity in its approach to the phenomena of language use. After all, the story for Sacks and for ourselves is something reported on the printed page, yet this reading of a text comes within the purview of his analysis. By contrast, Searle's theory, as the analysis of indirect speech acts makes abundantly clear, is not only internally inconsistent, it also faces intractable problems in trying to cope with the multitude of different ways language can be used.

This final comparison between speech act theory and conversation analysis brings us to a consideration of Sacks's fourth observation, namely, that for members the little girl's sentences are recognisable as 'a possible description'. The fact that some form of words, 'can apparently, sound like a description' (Sacks, 1974, p. 217), has importance not only for ordinary everyday activities but for the practices of social science as well.

Were it not so, both that members have an activity they do, 'describing', and that at least some cases of that activity produce for them, forms of words recognisable as at least possible descriptions

without having to do an inspection of the circumstances they might characterize, then it might well be that social science would necessarily be the last of the sciences to be made do-able. For, unless social scientists could study such things as these 'recognisable descriptions', we might only be able to investigate such activities of members ... when social scientists could employ some established, presumptively correct scientific characterizations of the phenomena members were presumably dealing with ...

(Sacks, 1974, p. 218)

Sacks makes the importance of 'doing descriptions' relevant to social science via a discussion of the concept of norm. He agrees with conventional sociology's claim that norms provide a structure for the interpretation of social reality. But, whereas conventional sociology looks to those norms both as a determining constraint on that 'reality' and as a guarantee of its sense, Sacks views norms as procedural features of the actual production of social reality and social interaction. In consequence, social order is seen to consist in the recognisability of members' activities through the collaborative employment of, inter alia, the devices examined in the previous pages of this chapter. Although Sacks does not make the point explicitly in his paper, it is implicit in his discussion that what conventional social scientists have done is employ 'established, presumptively correct scientific considerations' as if they exhibited the foundations of members' 'recognisable descriptions'.

Sacks prefaces his analysis of how the little girl's story is a recognisable description by offering some considerations on how we see describable occurrences. He invites readers to suppose that they are standing somewhere and see a person crying. He suggests that if we can, each of us will see what happened as 'a baby cried', and continues:

Suppose again you are standing somewhere and you see two people you don't know. Suppose further that one cries, and the other picks up the one who is crying. Now if I can I will see that what has happened is that a baby cried and its mother picked it up. And I take it that you will if you can, see that too.

(Sacks, 1974, p. 224)

Sacks uses the term 'people' as its neutrality will not prejudge the outcome of the 'if ... can' constraint regarding the categories 'baby' and 'mother'. As we have seen, Sacks concedes that the one who cries may, by reference to the stage of life device, be seen to be an adult. He also points out that members could use categorizations like 'male' and 'female' which are usable irrespective of the person's incumbency of a category from the 'stage of life' or 'family' devices. However, this leads him to observe that we would not, in seeing the scene, see that 'a male cried', if we could see that 'a baby cried'. The neutrality (in this context) of categories like 'people' or 'person' draws attention to the work we do in tying activities to an identifying reference, even though there is no independent evidence for that identification. Consequently, Sacks suggests the following viewers' maxim:

If a member sees a category-bound activity being done, then, if one can see it being done by a member of a category to which the activity is bound, then: See it that way.

(Sacks, 1974, p. 225)

The observation of one person picking another up at the inception of that other's crying is used by Sacks to remind us of the norm which he formulates as: 'A mother ought to soothe her crying baby'. He argues that as competent members our knowledge of this norm has already been displayed in the analysis when used to furnish the

genitive hearing of 'The baby cried. The mommy picked it up'. This suggests another viewer's maxim which can operate without the use of any device's categories and is in consequence primitive to the property of duplicitive organization as well. The maxim reads:

If one sees a pair of actions which can be related via the operation of a norm that provides for the second given the first, where the doers can be seen as members of the categories the norm provides for that pair of actions, then: (a) see that the doers are such members and (b) see the second as done in conformity with the norm.

(Sacks, 1974, p. 225)

Thus Sacks's formulation of these maxims is bound up with the norms of the society in which the witnessed event or conversational exchange took place. Members' use of the maxims in witnessing or participating in social situations serves to warrant the 'correctness' of their observations. No-one seeing 'the baby cried', will ask whether the other who picks it up is the mother of that baby, although of course they could, and will, where say the age of the candidate mother makes her incumbency of that category unlikely. Nor will they ask whether she picked it up because the baby was crying. However, where the expectations of norms are not fulfilled, such questions may be asked. For example, where the second person in picking up the first makes the latter cry, viewers might question that person's incumbency of the category 'mother'. Each of us orients to the way we know others will see and hear us. Our competence as societal members is bound up with seeing for ourselves how others will see us. It is this mutuality which secures the possibility of a mastery of language since language is a collaborative phenomenon. For Sacks, the recognisability and orderliness of the social world relies for its reproduction (as a ceaselessly occasioned phenomenon) upon members'

use of norms manifested in their utterances and interactions by the mechanisms he specifies. It is by virtue of those mechanisms that:

A string of sentences which may be heard, via the hearer's maxims, as having been produced by use of the viewer's maxims will be heard as a 'recognisably correct possible description'.

(Sacks, 1974, p. 226)

It is clear that for Sacks the formulation of these maxims suggest features about norms which the conventional sociological literature fails to address. The normative analysis undertaken in sociology replicates the understanding of rules as governing utterances in that

... the focus on norms is on the conditions under which and the extent to which they govern, or can be seen by social scientists to govern, the relevant actions of those members whose actions they ought to constrain.

(Sacks, 1974, p. 225)

Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that the work sociologists do in searching out and delineating norms is not criticized as such. What is problematic from Sacks's point of view is the operationalization of normative analysis in the discipline. So, for example, there is no criticism of the fact that a sociologist may choose to study a very complex social situation with the result that the delineation of its norms is a very protracted and complex business, and certainly by comparison with formulating something as obvious as 'mothers ought to soothe crying babies.' After all, in Sacks's own work one can readily appreciate that the elicitation of the economy rule and consistency rule may have involved a considerable amount of research time and effort on his part. Neither, of course, is there any criticism of the fact that the norms sociology unearths may be concealed from the awareness of members, since the conversational

devices which Sacks explicates could hardly be said to be a matter of common knowledge amongst members either. As we have seen, the perspective offers a no less modelled system of actual interaction than the most abstract of sociological approaches. It is no part of Garfinkel and Sacks's critique of sociology to claim that ethnomethodology and conversation analysis somehow get closer to the realities of social life. The analyst as member is already as close to that reality as it is possible to be. It is a misunderstanding of the perspective that it seeks to offer a phenomenological intimacy about members' everyday lives. By contrast, what it aims to study is, amongst other things, the accomplishment of that biographical work by members.

In consequence, the basic problem with the understanding of norms in conventional sociology is that the fact they may be concealed from the awareness of ordinary members is taken to licence the view that they operate like invisible strings on the sociological actor. This is how norms come to be viewed as constraints that govern the actions of members, just as Searle's speech act rules govern the issuance, uptake and meaning of utterances. As a result, the members become no more than passive recipients of the 'instructions' of the theory or analytic framework which thereby effectively construes rules or norms as performers of the acts and creators of the meanings. The main thrust of Garfinkel and Sacks's critique is that this amounts to a sociological category mistake since it is persons not rules or norms who perform and mean. It also displays how the modelled character of any analysis can be reified into a constitutive property of membership, or in philosophical terminology, how analysis can predicate of the object of analysis what lies in its mode of

representation. Garfinkel and Sacks, quite appropriately, refer to this as the constructive practices of sociology. Such constructivism is in one sense inevitable since any analysis is but one more occasion for making the world a reportable phenomenon, in this case for the practical purposes of sociology. In consequence, the critique of sociology is not directed at the discipline's constructivism per se, but rather that its analysis of the social world is not understood by the discipline itself as a re-presentation of the social world. Understanding the character of that re-presentation in the activity of analysing provides an account of salient features of the mastery of language since:

The fact that natural language serves persons doing sociology - whether they are laymen or professionals - as circumstances, as topics, and as resources of their inquiries furnishes to the technology of their inquiries and to their practical sociological reasoning, its circumstances, its topics, and its resources. That reflexivity is encountered by sociologists in the actual occasions of their inquiries as indexical properties of natural language.

(Garfinkel and Sacks, 1970, p. 338)

X Ethnomethodology and Conversation Analysis: A Conclusion

Ethnomethodology and conversation analysis have been examined in this chapter as a positive response to the problems that result from attempting to explain the phenomena of language mastery in the manner adopted by Searle. Although a critique of sociology is offered in the writings of Garfinkel and Sacks, this thesis has chosen speech act theory to exemplify the sort of analysis which is the focus of their criticisms. There are three reasons for this. Firstly, the topic of Searle's analysis is language mastery and for Garfinkel and Sacks, as we have seen, the concept of membership means the possession

of that faculty. Secondly, Searle prosecutes his theorizing with an explicitness and an attention to philosophical and analytical questions which is more rarely found in the sociological literature. In other words, Searle is a very powerful adversary. Thirdly, of course, it is his use and understanding of the concept of rule in analysing the wherewithal of language mastery and social action which makes his work especially relevant to this thesis. So his work is not only a very important contribution to the field of language studies in general, it also provides perhaps the best comparison with the understanding of rules and language found in ethnomethodology and conversation analysis, moreover from a writer who shares the view that language is social action.

In this chapter I have argued that what the writings of Garfinkel and Sacks offer is not only an alternative conception of the mastery of language, but one which also posits a crucially important internal relationship between the conception and methods of analysis and the subject matter of that analysis. The recognition of how we understand analysis, since the latter is itself an instance of language mastery, is exemplified in Garfinkel and Sacks's view that analytical frameworks are themselves indexical and reflexive phenomena of language mastery. Whilst it can be seen that this insight shapes their whole approach, it is nevertheless the case that a systematic account of how communication is possible is also undertaken. In the minds of some commentators, this twin emphasis on the reflexivity of analysis and a commitment to the formulation of a speech systematics seems at least very dubious if not flatly contradictory. Given that the former seems to receive more attention in the writings of ethnomethodologists and the latter is undertaken more positively by conversation analysts, there have been suggestions, as noted at the

beginning of this chapter, that what Garfinkel says and what Sacks advocates, cannot be squared one with the other.

As noted earlier, in Chapter Three, this question of the compatibility of ethnomethodology and conversation analysis is going to be looked at explicitly. It will be done by focusing on the arguments presented in a paper which argues that they ought to be separated. This paper explicitly addresses the philosophical issues that underlie the two conceptions of rule-following and the understanding of language mastery disclosed in these two chapters. In doing this, it also raises the question of whether a reflexive understanding of analysis can be compatible with such a positive task as elaborating the systematics of speech practice. In order to address this issue from a different standpoint, the next chapter also examines the views of Alan Blum on analysis, theorizing and their reflexive nature. However, the person whose work occupies a central place in answering this question is Wittgenstein. His philosophy will be examined and employed to secure a philosophical footing for the research practice inspired by the writings of Garfinkel and Sacks.

FOOTNOTES

1. Searle, of course, does recognise the particular and located character of certain uses of expressions, but explains them as 'indirect' departures from 'direct' literal meanings.
2. See Marvin Farber, The Foundation of Phenomenology, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1943, pp. 237-8. Bertrand Russell, Inquiry into Meaning and Truth, New York: W.W. Norton & Company Inc., 1940, pp. 134-43. Nelson Goodman, The Structure of Appearance, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1951, pp. 287-98.
3. See the article by B. Barnes and J. Law, 1976.
4. Searle puts it like this:

In short, I am going to deal only with a simple and idealized case. This method, one of constructing idealized models, is analogous to the sort of theory construction that goes on in most sciences, e.g. the construction of economic models, or accounts of the solar system which treats planets as points. Without abstraction and idealization, there is no systematization.

(1969, p. 56)

He also manages an 'appropriate modesty' whilst claiming consistency with the facts, which, in turn, ensures a programme of work for future.

It is important to emphasize that I have by no means demonstrated the thesis being argued for in this chapter. I have so far only suggested a pattern of analysis that is consistent with the facts. Even supposing that this pattern of analysis could be shown to be successful in many more cases, there are still several problems that remain ...

(1975, p. 75)

5. This is what Streeck's proposals, discussed in Chapter One, really amount to.
6. A notable feature of these quotations is that the systematics of turntaking are set out in 'would' and 'should' terms. In other words, the system is modelled, a fact which is announced explicitly in the paragraph immediately following these quotations.

To merit serious consideration, it seems to us, a model should be capable of accommodating (i.e. either be compatible with, or allow the derivation of) ... grossly apparent facts ...

7. Proper names have been deleted from these transcripts (e.g. Mr S: P B) as this was a condition laid down for the tape recording and transcribing of these interactions.
8. These alternatives by no means exhaust the possibilities of rule-orientation and also raises the issue of the transcriptionist's representation of the interaction which itself can play a large part in making such determinations. For example, if the sequence is transcribed:

<u>MT</u>	her trouble's basically that she's b-backward in--rr-tt-the
	academic sense
<u>FT</u>	no its not that really
<u>MT</u>	um so I mean

we can ascribe the rules differently to the speakers. Here it appears that FT correctly detects the completion, followed by a similar detection by MT who begins a new turn.

9. The interactants had a good deal of paperwork in front of them which often formed the topic of sub-conversations where (initially at least) to avoid interrupting current speaker, these persons would point to relevant paragraphs to be read by another. In

this way, they could carry on communicating whilst another speaker held the floor.

10. The ascription of motives to a speaker's utterance may be one consideration in that 'complex' of information which will be used by the transcriptionist and analyst in order to organize and make sense of the utterances. However, this is very different from basing the analysis in speculations about the motives of speakers and thereby letting the analytical structure merely provide a gloss for looking at interaction on an idiosyncratic or biographical basis.

11. G. Jefferson, 1978, p. 138.

12. Garfinkel puts it this way:

Despite their procedural emphasis, my studies are not, properly speaking, experimental. They are demonstrations, designed in Herbert Spielberg's phrase, as 'aids to a sluggish imagination'. I have found that they produce reflections through which the strangeness of an obstinately familiar world can be detected.

(1967, p. 38)

13. See Anscombe (1958) and A.D. Genova (1972) on the concepts of brute and institutional fact.
14. For example, in the classroom, there may be a world of difference in not forcing a reply from B, if B is one of a group of adult students as opposed to schoolchildren.
15. See Phillips (1978) for the opposite view, discussed in Chapter Three.
16. When member is used with an upper-case M, it refers to a user of the categorization devices; when with a lower-case m, it refers to a category of some collection. However, Sacks drops this convention in his 1974 paper and I shall follow that change.

17. Sacks notes that (b) is largely introduced for purposes of simplicity and that there are Pn-adequate devices that do have overlapping members.
18. For an analysis of conversational implicature, see Grice (1975). Although Grice develops his analysis along different lines, the following quotation makes evident similarities with Sacks's work.

Suppose that A and B are talking about a mutual friend, C, who is now working in a bank. A asks B how C is getting on in his job, and B replies, Oh quite well I think; he likes his colleagues, and he hasn't been to prison yet. At this point A might well inquire what B was implying, what he was suggesting, or even what he meant by saying that C had not yet been to prison. The answer might be any one of such things as that C is the sort of person likely to yield to the temptation provided by his occupation, that C's colleagues are really very unpleasant and treacherous people, and so forth ... I wish to introduce, as a term of art, the verb implicate and the related nouns implicature (cf. implying) and implicatum (cf. what is implied) ... Conversational implicatures (are) essentially connected with certain very general features of discourse ...

(Grice, 1975, pp. 43-45)

19. In a footnote, Sacks emphasizes that:

In the term collection of categories, collection is not used in the weak sense, as equivalent to the weak sense of set, but is only used to refer to groups of categories that Members of that community do indeed group together. Thus, the issue of whether some particular category is a member of some particular collection of categories is an empirical issue, upon which any particular assertions we make can be erroneous.

(1972, p. 430, n. 5)

20. I shall cross-tabulate Sacks' 1972 and 1974 publications as far as possible. However, this task is hampered by the differences in rule formulation and terminology which he employed in these articles.

21. These materials are procured by Sacks from Children Tell Stories by Evelyn G. Pitcher and Ernst Prelinger, New York: International Universities Press, 1963.
22. Cf. The Category relevance rule i.1.4.and i.1.4.1. (Sacks, 1972).
23. It is perhaps worth considering whether Sacks's use of concepts like 'general', 'formal' and 'predictive' have helped some critics to conclude that the perspective is essentially positivist in character.
24. Sacks's use of the concept of culture in this article is noteworthy (see especially 1974, p. 218). He says that his observations give some sense 'right off, of the fine power of a culture'. Moreover, culture does not 'merely fill brains in roughly the same way, it fills them so they are alike in fine detail'. Evidence for this is that we (native speakers) all hear the sentences as Sacks describes, which means 'that we are dealing with something finely powerful'.

In his writings, the concept also possesses a deliberate vagueness of reference (e.g. a national culture; a convict culture) and implicit in that vagueness there is, of course, the importance of a sociological dimension to the understanding of language mastery, so long as that dimension avoids broad sociological generalizations. For a discussion of cross-cultural validity of the analysis, see Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, 1974, p. 700, footnote 10.
25. As the last chapter has shown, such a fetter is intrinsic to the governance of the speech act rules.

CHAPTER THREE

DESCRIBING THE MASTERY OF LANGUAGE AND MEMBERSHIP OF SOCIETY: THE

REFLEXIVITY OF RULES

I. Conceptions of Rules and the Character of Analysis

At the end of the last chapter, I spoke of two conceptions of rule-following and language mastery described in the first two chapters of this thesis. When I first said to someone that this is what had been portrayed, he asked: 'Is it really two conceptions of rule-following, or simply two conceptions of the place of rules in analysis?' This question bothered me because it seemed to be saying that the distinction that I had drawn between the analytic programmes of Searle, and Sacks and Garfinkel, had given rise to the idea that there were different kinds of rule. Plainly, rules come in lots of different guises. Searle marks what he feels to be a rather basic distinction between rules which constitute activities and rules which regulate pre-existing (i.e. already constituted) activities (see Chapter One). But he is quick to point out in Speech Acts that distinctions in the modality of rules cannot supplant a comprehensive analysis of rule following when he considers the two-way translatability of regulative into constitutive rules (see Searle, 1969, Chapter 2, section 5). This leads him to conclude that:

... since constitutive rules come in systems, it may be the whole system which exemplifies this form (of rule) and not individual rules within the system.

(Searle, 1969, p. 36)

He is not alone in this view. Max Black (1962) issues warnings against elevating the distinction into a metaphysical difference and

Warnock (1971, pp. 37-9) concurs, although he mistakenly considers Searle himself to be guilty of helping to sustain the myth that there are 'two sorts of rules', instead of two ways of formulating them.

What concerned me about the question was whether I had succeeded in portraying the modifier's 'governance' and 'orientation' in such a way they represented two different kinds of rule. If I had, then clearly I had fallen into a trap successfully avoided by all those whose work I was commenting upon, and, moreover, would be relying upon a conception of rules which had been the focus of weighty philosophical criticism. In addition, had this in fact happened, the problem was not going to be confined to the issue of the modality of rules in analysis. I would then also have succeeded in transforming the differences between the analysis of language mastery and social action offered by Searle, Garfinkel and Sacks into a metaphysical gulf between two sorts of analysis which replicated the idea of there being two sorts of rules. Thus, what my questioner was driving at was clear. An elaboration of his question might go something like this: 'You have been stressing throughout this thesis the practical qualities of analytic activity ... how it must be seen as another member's accomplishment for all practical purposes. Yet, in order to do this, it would appear that the concepts you employ and the analytic attitude you adopt is of a different kind than the practical activities of linguistic and social life which form the topic of your analysis'.

In other words, was it the case that in order to get a clear view of members' practices, I had tacitly elevated the members' practice of gaining that view above those other practices? Where Searle elevated some utterances into paradigmatic speech acts in order to make his theory work, had I merely managed to portray the analysis offered by

Garfinkel and Sacks in as privileged and reified a fashion? If that was the case, then one immediate consequence would be that the concept of reflexivity would be effectively nullified by what I had done. The first thing needed was a clearer picture of the nature of the problem. It was apparent straight away that it bore affinities with the issue discussed at the end of Chapter Two, viz. the question of the reconcilability of the positive character of conversation analysis research with the reflexive conception of analysis apparent in Garfinkel's writings. I argued that these inquiries form one perspective (an argument which will be closely examined in Section IV below). Perhaps any problem with my portrayal of rules had its foundation in trying to make that argument out.

II. Theorizing and Positivism

In order to come to terms with these issues, it is worthwhile re-examining speech act theory and comparing it with the understanding of theorizing that is found in the work of Blum.⁽¹⁾ Blum has also criticized ethnomethodological and conversation analytic practitioners for the positivism inherent in their researches. Therefore, such a comparison will help to illuminate the nature of these issues and, given Searle's philosophic credentials, also, perhaps, clarify some ways the word positivism has been used. As noted in Chapter One, the tenor of Searle's theory is exemplified in his marginalization of the problems that surround converting 'knowing how' into 'knowing that', when explaining language mastery. He takes this view even though he is critical of the idea that the only option is to ignore questions about the relationship between explanans and explanandum. The basis of his criticism is that this leaves prediction to signify the

warrantability and correctness of theory. That he considers an insufficiently firm epistemological foundation in the philosophy of natural science: for speech act theory the concept is simply inappropriate. Nevertheless, Searle makes it clear that he is not going to depart very far from scientific method in the construction and use of his theory.⁽²⁾

All the same, there is a clear recognition in Searle's work that the presuppositions of a positivist view of knowledge simply will not square with the epistemological character of actual language use. Rules are not fit subjects for verifying operations and therefore cannot be tested in at all the same way that a putative law in the natural sciences can. This, in turn, means that the (alternative) criterion of falsifiability in the formulation of scientific knowledge is inappropriate too, since the concept is categorically incompatible with rules, as rules are neither true nor false but simply followed or abrogated. Neither will it do to attempt to sidestep that point by acknowledging that while the logical character of a rule may preclude its being true or false strictu sensu, the point of the criterion is to be a safeguard of scientific knowledge, and it can be ascertained whether a candidate rule may yet be (truly) followed by language masters or not.⁽³⁾ That is either merely a truism or eventuates in the claim that analysis can be replaced by a head-counting empiricism.

In this way Searle repudiates any alliance of his work with the positivist tradition as understood in the philosophy of science. However, that, as we have seen, still allows him to retain the degree of determinacy found in speech act theory, which for Searle marks the requisite degree of theoretical closure and explanatory adequacy.

In consequence, the indexical and reflexive features that accompany the explanation of language mastery are 'bracketed' for analytic purposes as the deep but, he believes, irrelevant puzzle that surrounds converting 'knowing how' into 'knowing that'. However, if one looks to the construal of positivism offered by Alan Blum, his collaborators and those inspired by their writings, it is obvious that Searle's work falls squarely within its boundaries. One of the clearest expositions of the meaning of positivism appears in a paper on bias in social research. In the introduction to the volume which contains the paper, the authors say:

Analysis depends on that which enables it to be done in any case, not on the contingent description which, as product, serves to obscure its origins. Analysis for us is generative. It is not finding something in the world ... making sense of some puzzling datum ... or locating a phenomenon worthy of study ... To analyse is instead to address the possibility of any finding, puzzle, sense, resolution, interest, location, phenomenon, etcetera, etcetera. Analysis is the concern not with anything said or written but with the grounds of whatever is said - the foundations that make what is said possible, sensible, conceivable. For any speech, including of course speech about speech, our interest is reflexive ... To analyse the subject of research bias, for example, we do not identify instances or propose remedies. Instead, we try to show the deep auspices - positivism in this case - which makes sensible any actual charge of bias or any urge to remedy it ... So an interest in analysis is an interest in auspices.

(Blum, McHugh, Raffel & Foss, 1974,
pp. 2 & 3)

On a cursory examination, it might appear that Searle shared the same kind of analytic interest. He says in Speech Acts that his concern is to elicit the conditions of possibility of any speech. But Blum et al. make clear a few pages later that the task Searle sets himself to reveal those conditions is not what they have in mind at all.

If our format ... represents our version of rational discourse, then we must say that, as we conceive of

theorizing, the theorist cannot produce a set of standard rules which, if followed, will lead to actual discourse that is rational ... To commit oneself to programming the real world is to give up on theorizing.

(ibid., p. 7)

The reason that by so doing one gives up theorizing, is that such a project conceals the grounds which makes it possible. In this act of concealment, such analysis also concretizes its own nature as a linguistic achievement. Thus, instead of focusing on its own accomplished character an analysis like Searle's seeks to portray others' speech as the product of its own speaking. Latterly, Blum and McHugh have termed this 'Empire-icism'; a desire to rule the world of discourse by stipulating what a proper sentence can be.⁽⁴⁾ The essence of their recommendation for analysis can perhaps be put this way. To say, as a description of their conception, that language exists by virtue of what people do with it would not properly express their view. That description still retains a separation between persons and language which according to them supplies the underlying rationale for a positivist epistemology and methodology. Rather, language is persons doing, which is why analysis can only properly be concerned with uncovering its own auspices.

It is clear that this conception of language and theorizing closely resembles Garfinkel and Sacks's conception of membership. They record the 'great influence of the writings of Garfinkel', but then go on to say, 'though this influence has not worked itself out in our thinking in the ways it has in his students' (ibid., p. 22). Given the emphasis on a reflexive conception of analysis in both types of inquiry, the pressing question is whether the analytic

focus of Blum et al. and Garfinkel's 'students' can be reconciled with each other. It appears that they can not.

Ethnomethodology, as it is practiced by these students, not only fails to supply our programme with its rationale but denies that rationale at critical analytic points. Ethnomethodology seeks to 'rigorously describe' ordinary usage, and despite its significant transformation of standards for conceiving of and describing such usage, it still conducts its inquiries under the auspices of a concrete, positivistic conception of adequacy.

(ibid., p. 22)

So, not only is Searle's work a clear exemplar of positivism, but also the work of ethnomethodologists and conversation analysts described in the previous chapter. The distinctions which have been made between the programmes of inquiry are acknowledged to be there (viz. the 'significant transformation of standards ...'), but for Blum and his collaborators the perspective is as positivist as Searle's and irredeemably so.

It is undeniable that this critique is powerful. It is so precisely because of what ethnomethodology and conversation analysis say about membership; stressing the indexical and reflexive features of language use, the unfinished, wait and see, collaborative quality of communication, whether such speech is 'analytic' or 'everyday'. It is as though Garfinkel, Sacks and their students had caught a glimpse of the true nature of language mastery and its consequences for analysis and then backed off and returned to the familiar well-trodden paths of positivism. But there is another aspect of this power which becomes manifest in the conception of language which their analytic endeavour promotes. Consider first the reply that they suppose followers of Garfinkel and Sacks would make to their proposals:

... ethnomethodologists would regard our task in this paper as a stipulative exercise in legislating the use of a 'concept', while we would treat such an objection as a failure of analytic nerve, as the typical positivist gambit (which goes back at least as far as Protagoras) of refusing to exercise analytic authority, despite the fact that such authority grounds their entire enterprise with its intelligibility.

(ibid., p. 23)

It is a peculiar supposition and all the more so for those who, we have just been told, are interested in 'rigorous description', since it would be a very careless reading of Blum et al.'s paper on 'Motive' to see it as legislative at all. In fact, such a reading is really quite impossible to maintain in the light of an addendum to the paper, written some time after its original publication. There we are told, that in the light of 'our current analytic interests', it cannot be seen as a paper about motives since it 'is really about sociology'. So, if it ever was the case that such a reading was possible, then it is a mark of the 'obsolescence' of the paper reviewed from their current interests; that is as if it were something like an unintended consequence of 'the organization of that paper as a substituting or correcting operation' (ibid., p. 43).

Seemingly then, what Blum and his collaborators are prepared to concede is that if ethnomethodology and conversation analysts were to read the paper as they surmise (i.e. as an attempt to 'legislate'), that may have something to do with the way the paper had originally been conceived and organised. But if these presumed ethnomethodological criticisms of the paper may have their roots in the paper's own attempt to act as 'a substituting and correcting operation', it is abundantly clear that the later position adopted by Blum et al. has even less in common with the perspective. The reader is told:

Our analysis of motive today would provide for the enigmatic world which would produce a concern with motive as an interesting problem. In that world, for example, the analytic segregation of the grounds of clarity (method) creates a preoccupation with method in itself (in rule) as the Good. In that world, the source of any ascription or attribution is only methodic, however, and in the absence of language, it ignores (fails to recognise) the solution that is sought. Any interest in the actual success of collecting, or in the criterion that one is able to accomplish collecting, or in the artfulness of collecting, shows itself in the treatment of method and rule as the Good. This can be seen clearly in our own speech about motive which terminates in its formulation of parameters such as rule. In contrast, we are currently interested in grounds of clarity or language as they become disclosed through any method or speech, whereas these grounds themselves are not the end (as if a determinant solution) but the beginning which authorizes the very problem of motive, or method, or whatever. Thus, our interest is not in a solution because the solution is not an end, only representing or showing the interest and commitment to language, and consequently the end is what is displayed in such a showing.

(ibid., pp. 45 & 46)

The research commitment of ethnomethodology and conversation analysis is taken to be another instance of an analytic concern which is foreshortened by the 'formulation of parameters such as rule'. In finding 'solutions' for its problems, the perspective inevitably concretizes the display of membership used to formulate the analysis in the first place. In other words, 'what is displayed in such a showing', in the activity of theorizing, is transmuted into the product of rules and devices which the analysis unearths. In this way, the grounds of analytic activity are themselves covered over in the search for, and the portrayal of, members' methods.

This very inclusive notion of positivism, which covers any form of inquiry not concerned with its own grounds in the manner specified by these analysts, is described by Blum in terms of the alienation of speech from reason.

The question of speech's Real value as a way of making reference to its relationship to Reason is silenced and the security of speaking is posited as a common position from which we will begin to speak and listen. Speaking is then subjected to some general notion of the method for its production because it is only such a notion that unifies the speaking that is produced by separable, different speakers. The value of a commodity is measured in terms of the methods which enter its production. Speaking has value insofar as it is methodically produced ... Members who act to make their activities observable and reportable are members who orient to their speaking as commodities ... Marx's description ... typifies the alienation to which speech falls heir. Marx's metaphor helps us to see the instabilities of a rational-legal ideal of speaking which drives to unify differences under rules of method developed from an image of commonality ... In this sense, the modernization of thought exemplified in the rise of sociology represents the way in which thinking has become alienated from Being ...

(Blum, 1974, pp. 259-262)

The communal use of language which they say their analysis uncovers is alienated from speakers via the positivistic delineation of 'rules of method'. What they term a positivist idea of society is then created by this form of alienated theorizing, manifesting itself in the discipline of sociology (including ethnomethodology) with its 'rational-legal idea of speaking'. The discipline does not really inquire into the world made by the community of speakers but instead creates an image of various possible societies generated as grammatical consequences of the laws, rules, practices, devices, etcetera, which the discipline formulates.

Clearly, for Blum, the problem of tacitly elevating the analysts's methods over and above those of the ordinary member, is an inevitable consequence of conducting research in terms of formulating rules, specifying conversational mechanisms and so forth. Such analytic activity, for Blum and his colleagues, is necessarily positivist and it is therefore no surprise that a perspective which is prepared to

concede that all analytic frameworks are reflexive phenomena encounters difficulties in reconciling that insight with the positive character of its own findings. From his viewpoint, such tension merely signifies another manifestation of the unease Searle admits about converting 'knowing how' into 'knowing that'. For these analysts, the work of Garfinkel's students and, no doubt, the work of conversation analysts in particular, does effectively nullify the reflexivity of social inquiry.

In fact, in their view, the current practices of ethnomethodologists and conversation analysts really amount to a more pernicious misrepresentation of membership than mainstream (positivist) sociological research. The reason for this is that the apparent reconciliation of the reflexivity of analysis with the conduct of empirical social research makes it look as if they have overcome the problems of positivistic social science altogether. In other words, whereas the inattention to the reflexivity of analysis in mainstream research is a mark of its positivist grounds, Garfinkel's students recognise that reflexivity, but only conceal its import with a more sophisticated variant of positivist method. Consequently, rather than revealing the 'auspices' of their analysis, they are in fact guilty of a deliberate, or at least seriously misguided, attempt to cover them up.

As noted earlier, a significant element of the power of this critique derives from the conception of language on which Blum's view of analysis rests. As we have seen, that conception, expressed simply, is that language is what persons do. It is taken to follow from this that to explicate this 'doing' in terms of rules or mechanisms inevitably involves obscuring the actual grounds of language. The

reason Blum discusses this 'obscuring' in terms of alienation can, in part, be discerned from the personal sense of commitment required by the form of analysis he proposes. Analysis requires personal involvement because the doing of language is the dis-discovery, indeed the creation of community and society by the particular member. This, the essence of our faculty of language, is what is concealed in the 'drive to unify differences under rules of method developed from an image of commonality'. Employing Marx's analysis of capitalism, Blum sets out to show how the use value of linguistic activity is transformed into the exchange value of professional inquiry. Blum further explores the resulting idea of language as commodity in these words:

The image of the material powers of production is an image of a collection of individual speakers ... each orienting to what is present to one as a possession. Under such conditions, speech becomes valuable only when it is seen as a transformation of many possessions into what is commonly possessed. Valuable speech then becomes speech which can be expressed in terms of general conditions for the production of speech, and the notion of commodity personifies the locus of such values. For example, commodity acquires value only through exchanges, and the valid exchange values of a given commodity express something equal because for two commodities (two speeches) to have an equivalent exchange value, there must exist in equal quantities something common to both, i.e. the two speeches must be equal to a third which in itself is neither one nor the other. Exchange value presupposes some standard which is external to the two commodities as two speeches.

(Blum, 1974, p. 260)

This is to be contrasted with the doing of language which reveals the commitment of the individual speaker to the community of speakers.

Blum says:

The kind of labouring in which Marx is interested is a re-creating; through his labour man makes reference to his commitment by 'calling to mind', by re-constituting it, and by evoking it. To say that men relate through their labour is then to say that men relate through their commitments. This is what speaking means in the

strongest sense ... to say. Through speaking, men say and what they say is that they are men. The situation of theorizing is itself a speaking situation. Men speak in order to maximise the salience of commitments which provide for the intelligible character of speaking. It is only through such making reference that men speak with value, i.e. rationally; men who orient to their speaking as commodity accept the security of commitment as a posit - a common position - and protect this position from being explored while simultaneously employing it as a resource to do speaking which merely strengthens the unassailability of the position ... This is why the rational legal interest is essentially conservative: it seeks to conserve the authority created by its own rule, the authority of its common-speaking starting point.

(ibid., pp. 263-4)

If Blum is correct, this means that the form of analysis described in Chapter Two simply recapitulates the analytical problems of Searle's theory described in Chapter One. If analysis does not exemplify the 're-constituting commitment' as described by Blum, then it cannot but endorse the tacit conservatism and authoritativeness of positivism.

III. Systematic Analysis and Reflexivity: Their Compatibility Outlined

The aim of the rest of this chapter is to argue that a reflexive conception of analysis is compatible with the kind of research discussed in Chapter Two. In fact, my claim is that the reflexivity of analysis is better understood in the writings of ethnomethodologists and conversation analysts than in the programme of work Blum advocates. The fundamental reason for this is that the conception of language underlying their perspective is of an endless multiplicity of activities or 'games', in the sense that word is used in the later philosophy of Wittgenstein. As noted at the end of the last chapter, Wittgenstein's

philosophy will be explored in this Chapter in order to secure a philosophical footing for the research practices of ethnomethodology and conversation analysis.

The nature of the argument can be briefly stated in this way. For Blum, the 'doings' of a particular member ground the possibility of language and thereby provide the source of any analyst's authority to talk. This is why any analysis must seek to uncover its own auspices. Garfinkel and Sacks see members' doings as the collective work of making the world sensible and rational for the particular purposes at hand and that, as we have seen, includes the analytic purposes of social inquiry. Consequently, reflexive understanding is not seen as the product of theorists' collaborations, but rather viewed as endemic to members' doings generally. But in saying that, it is important not to misconstrue the conception of language in Blum's work. It would be easy, but mistaken, to view Blum's understanding of language as having its source in the particular member, as if he or she authored their linguistic practice in isolation. Blum's arguments contain no such solipsistic elements. His concern and criticism is directed at the apparently democratic conception of analysis in the writings of Garfinkel and Sacks, through their appeal to the collaborative nature of members' practice. This, for Blum, merely conceals the authorship, authority and partiality of the investigator behind the fact that language is a communal phenomenon. This misunderstanding is revealed in its true colours by the desire to produce a systematic analysis of membership, that is an image of society:

... acting concertedly under the auspices of scientific rules (i.e. a democracy) ... Sociology becomes a metaphor for the rational-legal development of thought and sociological rationality becomes typified in the

reflexivity of the rational-legal agent - the typical, conventional scientific actor.

(ibid., p. 227)

My response to this view can also be outlined briefly. I take a reflexive conception of analysis to derive a large part of its point from the provision of systematic approaches to the study of social phenomena. It is a reminder that the apparent conclusiveness or explanatory adequacy of social scientific analysis is the product of the elections which the analyst makes with respect to his or her data. Social scientific findings are inherently perspectival because the work of the analyst in assembling his or her 'results', is another instance of the 'sense assembly' which members undertake to produce the social world in their everyday activities. As Searle's work shows, a systematic analysis can marginalize the concern with how analytic practice is a methodic recapitulation of the phenomena studied (viz. the problem of converting knowing how into knowing that). But this is not an inevitable outcome of systematic rule analysis.

Hence, the reflexivity of analysis as it is understood in this thesis is directed at that kind of marginalization of the problem; the rationalism of which Blum speaks. But that conception is no more at home with the reflexive analysis Blum and his collaborators wish to pursue, because in this thesis the reflexivity of analysis is understood as having an object, and that object is the work of assembling a systematic analysis of social phenomena in terms of rules. In other words, a reflexive understanding of analysis is necessarily parasitic, as the work of Blum and his collaborators in fact shows.

However, it cannot be denied that my argument has its difficulties. One which immediately springs to mind, given the reliance I place upon the later philosophy of Wittgenstein, is the fact that his later

philosophy is profoundly unsystematic. So, some way has to be found to reconcile that fact with my understanding of reflexivity. In addition, 'reflexivity' is not a word that has a currency in the later philosophy at all, and there is something to say for the view that the concept is alien to the deliberately pedestrian approach he takes to philosophical problems. In essence, my response to this is to say that reflexivity must be looked at in a mundane fashion, in the way I have just outlined.

The next section sets out to make the beginnings of that reconciliation between Wittgenstein's later philosophy and the conception of reflexive analysis offered in this thesis, by considering a paper which argues that the indexical and reflexive conception of analysis in Garfinkel's work ought to be divorced from the systematic analysis of membership offered by Sacks and other conversation analysts. This paper argues that such a divorce would be compatible with the later philosophy of Wittgenstein because Garfinkel's ideas are so close to the solipsism which the later philosophy criticizes. In other words, the paper argues more or less the opposite of the position taken here. Apart from suggesting that the view of Wittgenstein taken in that paper is wrong, and in particular what is said about Wittgenstein's understanding of rules, I shall also suggest that its conception of analysis exemplifies the sort of work which is the object of Blum's criticisms. A consideration of these arguments overall will provide the basis for my view of the compatibility of Garfinkel and Sacks's work with the later philosophy of Wittgenstein.

IV. A Revised Rule Determinism

In his paper, Some Problems in Locating Practices, John Phillips concludes:

A recognition of the actual methodologies of conversation analysis, at present disguised beneath layers of quasi-philosophy based in 'indexicality', could lead to its facing problems that at the moment it skirts around, particularly the perspicuous representation of the rules for action outside and underlying those which may be read in 'short texts', including the manner of the layering and embedding of actual courses of action.

(Phillips, 1978, p. 72)

'Short texts' is an oblique way of referring to the preoccupation with specific instances of social interaction reproduced in the form of transcripts. Phillips says that the potential of the rules and devices which have been elaborated by conversation analysts to determinately explain the possibility of linguistic competence, is frustrated by an unwillingness to depart from the indexical conception of language propounded by Garfinkel. In looking at the discipline, Phillips is confronted by what he sees as the irony of studies which find and formulate the rules which govern language mastery, but whose intellectual commitments, or perhaps more accurately debts, undermine its further development. The argument is clear: if conversation analysis will dispense with the preoccupation of ethnomethodology as understood by Garfinkel, its aim, to document the wherewithal of competent membership, will be realized.

In order to convince conversation analysts that Garfinkel's analysis is a fetter, not a resource, Phillips sets out to show the incoherence of an indexical conception of rule and language. Aware of the empirical inclinations of his target audience, he suggests that the discipline is currently working with two conceptions of 'practice',

... one theoretically specified, another much more broad and inclusive, demonstrated in empirical studies.

(ibid., p. 60)

The theoretical specification, it is not surprising to learn, belongs to Garfinkel and arises from his deliberately articulated 'gulf' between ethnomethodology and orthodox sociology, together with 'the study of related "practices" in other disciplines' (i.e. rule-governed semantics). This self-imposed divorce, we are told, is the result of Garfinkel's conception of meaning which rests upon an

... appeal to 'experience' as the basis for the present 'meaningful interpretation' of a situation of symbol.

(ibid., p. 56)

Experience must refer to the consciousness of a knowing subject and this provides the rationale for asserting that:

The notion of 'indexicality' ... demonstrates immediately the connection between a focus on the 'subjective' and an interest in language.

(ibid.)

He then argues, noting the order or rationality of an event as understood by Garfinkel consists in the substitution of objective for indexical expressions, that this picture of meaning is consistent with the phenomenological notion of intersubjective typification.⁽⁵⁾

According to Phillips, phenomenology begins with a concept of meaning that resides in the unique experience of an individual ego (subjective consciousness) that is brought to common consciousness through a process of typifying reality in concert with a subject's peers. The processual character of this enterprise replicates in its particulars the finding or constructing of an order and meaning which members have to undertake in the repair of indexicality. Both phenomenologists and Garfinkel,

... imply the identity of 'member' and 'theorist' engaged in the same kinds of investigation. Garfinkel deepens and clarifies this identification, stressing that investigation and theorizing are to be located in normal 'talk' about everyday events. Social 'order' or 'structure' is a reflexive consequence of the investigation and theorizing that are thus located.

(ibid., pp. 56-7)

Despite this questionable affiliation of Garfinkel's work with the views of phenomenologists, something which Phillips 'proposes to neglect' anyway, the last quotation does represent what Heritage calls 'a fair and perspicuous representation of the Garfinkelian position'. (Heritage, 1978, p. 80). However, this affiliation between indexicality and subjectivism is in fact immediately attenuated by Phillips in his recognition that the two cannot simply be regarded as identical, if by the latter concept one indicates a logical or existential commitment to a mental or material event that is prior to language or independent of it.⁽⁶⁾ So, as soon as he has made it, Phillips loosens the tie between Garfinkel and any such phenomenological conception of meaning, and in a footnote acknowledges that many ethnomethodologists have explicitly repudiated such subjectivism. Nevertheless, he still feels he can say:

I am proposing only that in his use of 'indexicality' Garfinkel seeks to achieve a representation of the acute variability of perspective with experience which in others is straightforwardly a matter of 'subjective variation', without losing an observable world of data.

(ibid., p. 73, note 5)

This apparent equivocation on the issue of the relationship between subjectivism and indexicality, and, more generally, Garfinkel's affinities with the phenomenological tradition, in fact conceals a clever strategy. By illuminating these apparent similarities, Phillips

endeavours to make indexicality and rule mutually incompatible concepts, and at the same time secure the rationale for re-assigning the 'subject' as a rule possessing entity. In this way, the concept of subjectivity loses the mentalistic or empiricist overtones that it has been given and thereby allows Phillips to restructure the concept as the locus (or Kantian faculty) of the rules which govern language and interaction. In consequence, an actor's competence is construable as the upshot of underlying rules and so it follows that:

The idea of 'practice' and 'practical activity' are in essence typified, recurrent forms of 'social intercourse' with linguistic usages necessarily embedded in them and making them possible. Each device makes possible a 'social function' or the fulfilment of a social task.

Phillips's rules, then, are not simply given or innate, but have to be learned through 'recurrent' social activities. This reconstructs the phenomenological concept of intersubjective typification as a process of acquiring and internalizing the structure of rules that comprise a common culture, allowing, in effect, the logic of rule governance to be fully consistent with a sociological emphasis on their procurement. Such a reconstruction is taken by Phillips to render superfluous the need for a concept like indexicality which is really no more than a counterweight to the over-determined character of some forms of rule analysis.

In other words, the concept of indexicality and its use by ethnomethodologists merely betokens a mistaken response to the determinacy of rule formulations. Instead of the irredeemable vagueness of meaning which accompanies every expression if Garfinkel's analysis is adopted, Phillips says he is proposing a conception of rules and their use which preserves the clarity and explanatory efficacy of rule-governed formulations, whilst avoiding their robotic

determinacy for actual speech practice. And, given that practical activity is the foundation for knowledge of, and the capacity to use, rules, Phillips also considers that he rids the concept of rule-governance of any dubious metaphysical suppositions about how speakers know what the speech community's rules are, or how to use them. In saying that words have situated meanings which must be found by members on every occasion of their use, Garfinkel is taken to be robbing words of their sense, which in turn denies the possibility of applying any rule. The concepts of rule and indexicality are simply incompatible, and as a result there are good grounds for suggesting that Garfinkel's analysis is, in fact, internally incoherent.

Phillips regards his construal of the notion of rule-governance as enabling him to demonstrate the way in which Garfinkel's concept of indexicality 'is a camera obscura'⁽⁷⁾ representation of the actual relation between rule and language. The vehicle for this demonstration is the identity between ordinary and theoretic members which, as we have seen, Phillips accepts is 'an accurate view'. But, according to Phillips, Garfinkel is mistaken in taking 'the professionals' problems as enlightening as to the nature of the members' problems'. Rather, this idea needs to be inverted: seeing,

... the members' problems as enlightening as to the nature of the professional's problems. That is, one might look at the special features of human social life and the problems that arise for those living it, and then assess the problems of professional sociology from that perspective.

(ibid., p. 71)

In other words, the concept of indexicality does not really describe a feature of ordinary membership, but rather something which is made available through the opportunity for theoretical speculation. Extending the Marxian analogy, Garfinkel may be compared to the idealist

philosophers Marx criticized, whose speculations on the relation between man and man were informed by ethical or metaphysical ideas rather than a perception of man's concrete and material relations with his fellows. Thus Phillips's 'inversion' amounts to saying that if the practices of members are understood as governed by rules, then the permanent availability of alternative characterizations, instead of being understood indexically, can be seen to be facilitated by:

... finite and definite mechanisms which are themselves both context-free and yet responsive to context ...

(ibid., p. 73)

Phillips's suggestion that Garfinkel attempts to make theoretical procedures explanatory of ordinary social competence is difficult to sustain in the light of what Garfinkel actually says in Studies and elsewhere. Given his interpretation of Garfinkel's work, it is significant that whereas Phillips is concerned to establish the contradictory status of concepts such as 'rule' and 'indexicality', Garfinkel never employs his analysis in this fashion. That is, he never attempts to assert that an indexical understanding of language use denies meaning to general or even universal concepts. However, Phillips argues that it is a necessary implication of Garfinkel's argument that the meaning and sense of these concepts is rendered indefinitely problematic. Yet this implication is never detectable in Garfinkel's work, where he displays the artfulness of members' use of these terms, not their puzzlement at being confronted with a pervasive semantic indeterminacy. Thus, when Phillips complains that Garfinkel denies:

... the successful use or understanding of a term, could happen 'by rule' or any mechanical recognition procedure ...

(ibid., p. 58)

it is not the practices of ordinary speakers which warrant this observation. Rather, it is the claims of philosophers, linguists and sociologists which supply the sense of this complaint via their interest in determining the conditions of possibility for language use and social action. As Garfinkel says, the indexicality of language is not a problem for ordinary members. But it is an obstinate nuisance for theorists whose analytic frameworks require a language which will afford the degree of determinacy required by their explanatory criteria. Therefore, if a choice is to be made regarding whose ideas appear upside down by reference to ordinary members' practices (i.e. as if in a camera obscura), then it is not difficult to see that Garfinkel's perspective is in fact more remote from this charge than Phillips's own claims.

Consequently, when Phillips's own inversion of Garfinkel's understanding of the relationship between 'professionals' and 'ordinary members' practices is put the right way round again, the claim that the concepts of rule and indexicality are incompatible loses its force. Phillips seems to anticipate this discovery about his argument and he responds to it in two ways. His first stratagem is to offer a consideration of analysts' work which would make their findings compatible with his perspective. Of the studies he considers, e.g. Sudnow (1967), Schegloff (1972), the interpretation offered of Zimmerman's (1971) paper is the most detailed and important.

Zimmerman shows that the 'sense' of a formal rule is discovered only over the course of applying it. Thus, in the welfare agency he studies, the rule: cases are to be handled in strict order of arrival, is 'broken' in numerous instances. Members in the course of applying it, find that it exists to maintain orderly processing of applicants through the office. Hence, to skip a case, in particular difficulties, may be justified in terms of a

broader purpose. He insists that to see some rule as applied by reference to some further set of rules ducks the issue of 'judgemental processes'.

(ibid., p. 60)

However, according to Phillips, what Zimmerman documents as judgemental processes involved in the practicalities of rule use is the 'involvement' in the application of formal rules of a wider, more inclusive set of rules. Although he does not demonstrate this view by reference to Zimmerman's materials, there is no difficulty in principle with making such processes the outcome of applying other rules. The latter's comments about 'ducking the issue' makes that clear. So really, this first response does not go deep enough; merely offering the 'alternative' to Garfinkel's conception rather than demonstrating its coherence and explanatory effectiveness.

This demonstration is the task set for his second response which we are told will be achieved by critically comparing the indexical conception of language with 'certain arguments, in recent philosophy of language' (ibid., p. 61). Given his equivocation over the actual extent of the affiliation between Garfinkel's ideas about subjectivity and those of the phenomenologists, it transpires that the tools of analytic philosophy are going to be used to demonstrate an implicit link in the absence of clear substantive evidence. Thus, whatever practitioners, including Garfinkel, may say about the relationship between ethnomethodology and phenomenology, Phillips argues that there is a philosophical continuity between the thesis of indexicality and the view that the foundation of meaning resides in the unique experience of the individual ego. The philosopher whose work provides the chief resource for this demonstration is Wittgenstein, someone who was himself no stranger to drawing attention to hidden similarities in philosophical

antitheses. However, apart from that, and the authority of his work, there is an additional 'strategic' reason for Phillips's choice. This concerns the claim that there is a convergence between the conception of language mastery in Wittgenstein's later philosophy and Garfinkel's work. The following quotation provides a very clear example.

An awareness of indexical expressions occurs ... in the work of major authors. Consider, for example, Pierce and Wittgenstein, Pierce because he is usually cited to mark the beginning of the interest of modern logicians and linguists in indexicals, and Wittgenstein because his later studies are read to see that he is examining philosopher's talk as indexical phenomena, and is describing these phenomena without thought of remedy, his studies will be found to consist of a sustained, extensive and penetrating corpus of observations of indexical phenomena.

(Garfinkel and Sacks, 1970, p. 348)

Phillips sees his task as showing that this convergence really amounts to nothing more than a 'superficial resemblance', and that a proper understanding of Wittgenstein's analysis of meaning and rule following in language use is consistent with the interpretation which Phillips has given to Zimmerman's study of rule use.

We are told that the essence of this convergence claim,

... rests on the notion that 'meanings' are essentially 'contexted', and not exhaustively or finitely specifiable 'in advance'. The rules which may be located in semantic usage cannot, in principle, specify that usage; for they remain to be applied.

(Phillips, 1978, p. 61)

Phillips adds that additional evidence for this view can be seen in Wittgenstein's own intellectual progress which,

... generally speaking ... was from a view of language as a 'calculus' to seeing the rules of language as necessarily embedded in the practical contexts that make up a way of living or a form of life.

(ibid.)

He continues his characterization of Wittgenstein's ideas by saying that if the way a rule has been applied is questioned, then it may be possible to cite yet a further rule to show how the first is to be interpreted. But he acknowledges that this process cannot continue indefinitely because there comes a point when the competent speaker will say that a particular way of proceeding simply is what the community of speakers do.⁽⁸⁾ That appeal to common practice is not open to justification by reference to some essential set of rules comprising the 'core' of language because the validity or justification of any such finding itself arises from within those practices. In fact, the uses of language are immensely varied and so the idea of a core set of rules resembles the mistaken attempt to find a single fibre running through all linguistic usage.⁽⁹⁾ Phillips suggests that this misconception can be traced to the attempts to construct a reformed, logically constructed language, an aim which Wittgenstein shared in his early philosophical work. This aim, which would provide the philosophical footing for the precise formulation of propositions ignored the fact that:

... precision and vagueness are relative to contexts and practice, and the reform of language is unnecessary, as well as generating acute and pervasive philosophical difficulties.

(ibid.)

The commitments displayed by Phillips in his reading of Wittgenstein make clear that his idea that Zimmerman's 'judgemental processes' can be recast in terms of rules, does not involve the claim that they comprise some essential 'core' of very general rules. The emphasis which Wittgenstein places on practice and usage indicates the social nature of language mastery. Language, says Phillips, is a public

phenomenon because it is the community which makes the application of rules and linguistic usage generally, 'natural' and 'obvious'. However, this is where the surface resemblance between Wittgenstein's philosophy and Garfinkel's indexical conception of language starts to break down, as a result of the latter's view that meaning and interaction are the outcome of work. This work, the repair of indexicality, which Garfinkel says members do in communicating with one another, effectively dismisses Wittgenstein's idea that within a community (a form of life) there are large areas of communication and interaction which are unambiguous and settled matters for members. The practical use of language does not involve a ceaseless overcoming of the 'situated uniqueness' of every expression, because if this was the case with language use, there would never be anything natural or obvious about it. Consequently,

... 'practices' in Wittgenstein's sense of the term
- whatever these might be - could not possibly be
'methods', or 'methodical', or 'artful'.

(ibid., p. 62)

V. Garfinkel and Waismann's 'Open Texture'

Phillips then backs up his attack on this convergence thesis by arguing that a real affinity of ideas can be found between Garfinkel's work and the writings of the linguistic philosopher Waismann. Although Waismann himself is generally regarded as a 'Wittgenstenian', this, Phillips argues, is a view which is no better thought out than the superficial resemblance of outlook between Garfinkel and Wittgenstein. In one of his most well known papers, Verifiability (1952), Waismann says that all linguistic terms have an open texture. The specific point of his argument is that empirical terms do not possess a boundary of application that makes them amenable to being determined by a rule. At one point he asks how we can know that a creature we are disposed

to call a 'cat', really is a cat. For example, would we still call it a cat if it began to speak Old Norse, or grew six feet tall? Phillips asks us to compare Waismann's questions to what Garfinkel refers to as the members' invariable problem of repairing the sense of the other's utterances. Garfinkel's member who can never be 'certain in advance' of how some utterance will be regarded by others is taken to exemplify the views Waismann has about the perpetual indefiniteness that surrounds the application of the category 'cat' to a particular creature,

Perhaps it would not be too much of an injustice to suggest that for Waismann, calling a cat a cat is achieved over unknown contingencies, always subject to the possibility that what it is is at the mercy of what it turns out to be - and so on. We call a cat a cat for all practical purposes, only and unavoidably.

(Phillips, 1978, p. 63)

The absence of a ruled determination for the application of a category, according to Phillips, entails that a member is always confronted by a dilemma about the meaning of terms (and utterances generally). This irreparable 'vagueness' of meaning is, we are told, 'deeply consonant' with Garfinkel's indexical conception of members' practices because:

If the ordered nature of social interaction rests on the categorizations and interpretations of members, as seems indubitable, then it now seems as if those categorizations and interpretations cannot, in principle, be the outcome of the unproblematic and direct application of 'rules': and ethnomethodology establishes its subject matter.

(ibid.)

Phillips's critique of Waismann is, in fact, based upon arguments first developed by Harrison, a philosopher who, we are told, endeavours

'to combine the insights of Wittgenstein and Chomsky' (ibid., p. 66). Phillips employs Harrison's analysis in order to distance his proposals for rule analysis from the theoretical requirements like that of 'literalness' as found in speech act theory, and yet show how the 'acute variability of perspective' that can obtain between members in their linguistic activities is nevertheless the outcome of applying rules. Harrison's (1972) critique of Waismann is used by Phillips to unearth the presuppositions which he sees as underlying Garfinkel's understanding of membership. The most telling similarity for Phillips is built around Waismann's 'rule scepticism' and theories of language found in empiricist psychology.⁽¹⁰⁾ So, in essence, what Phillips sets out to do, given the difficulties of straightforwardly arguing that ethnomethodology has a subjectivist approach to meaning, is to elaborate and seek to justify the more damaging claim that it in fact tacitly rests upon an empiricist epistemology.

Harrison explicates the link between rule scepticism and empiricism by considering the characteristics of a favoured learning device in empiricist theories of language mastery viz. the abstraction of the common properties of a paradigm series. In this situation, the language learner has to decide if a potential member of the paradigm series resembles the already determined incumbents in just those respects in which they constitute a set. The problem is that each incumbent multiplies the possible criteria of membership, given the infinity of features which could provide the basis of a categorization for any collection of objects.⁽¹¹⁾ For Phillips, this exhibits a clear parallel between the learner's problem in empiricist theory and the members' problem in ethnomethodology. Each faces:

... a problematic 'indexical' world where every new instance and next case raises an unspecified range of problems.

(Phillips, 1978, p. 67)

In other words, the language learner in empiricist theory confronts the same difficulties that beset Garfinkel's students in his conversation clarification experiment who, as we saw, in trying to resolve the possible ambiguities in their descriptions complained that:

... writing itself developed the conversation as a branching texture of relevant matters. The very way of accomplishing the task multiplied its features.

(Garfinkel, 1967, p. 26)

Continuing in his employment of Harrison's critique, Phillips then argues that the similarity between these conceptions of meaning is traceable to the elision of a distinction that must be made between knowledge of language and knowledge of the world. Waismann is seen as running together two sorts of vagueness. The first is a consequence of the scepticism that we can have about our knowledge of the empirical world; Harrison terms this epistemological vagueness.

... unless I can completely exclude the possibility that the animal before me is sometimes in the habit of speaking a human language, I must remain in doubt as to whether the word 'cat' is definitely applicable to it. But this possibility is one, by the very nature of epistemological scepticism, it is logically impossible for me to completely exclude.

(Harrison, 1972, p. 132)

This, we are informed, must be sharply distinguished from 'linguistic vagueness'. In this case, vagueness is due to a fluctuation in the criteria for the application of certain terms; a clear example is determining when we should apply the word 'heap' to a collection of objects in a pile. Whilst it may seem that this kind of vagueness can be secured by a rigid definition of terms, such an exercise is

guaranteed to generate the 'acute and pervasive philosophical difficulties' which Phillips has suggested beset the 'calculus' approach to linguistic analysis. Harrison says it is crucial to acknowledge the semantic importance of ordinary usage; for example, that the term 'heap' may be applied unequivocally to a quantity of coal in a merchant's yard. The point is that whether or not something is a 'heap' in this sense is different from epistemological doubts about whether or not it may be a heap at all (it could be the enlarged shadow of Waismann's cat against the wall!).⁽¹²⁾ Our doubts in such cases

... are not epistemological but linguistic: what worries us is not the thought that in reality this could be quite other than it appears, but the thought that one could equally well argue that this ought to be called a heap or that it ought not to be called a heap.

(Harrison, op.cit., p. 135)

Clearly then, the argument is that these sorts of doubts must be clearly distinguished from one another. In the first case, doubt arises because of the incompleteness of our knowledge. But in the second case, it arises because what we do makes it possible for

us to make out an equally good case for something being called and not being called a certain thing. The second kind of doubt has nothing to do with our incomplete knowledge of the object but is, rather,

... a matter of the rules of language not specifying for the present case whether it is or is not the thing in question.

It is crucial to their argument that there is not taken to be something amiss with the rules when such cases arise. There is no suggestion, either in Harrison's work or in Phillips's article, that a reform of the rules should be undertaken where vagueness enters in. Such reform would simply amount to a backdoor reintroduction of the 'calculus' approach, acting now as an attempted repair of ordinary language rather than the hoped for creation of a language lacking all ambiguity.

However, the notion of indexicality, by rendering all usage 'indefinitely problematic', makes its repair replicate a commitment to such precision as necessary for intelligible communication. To be sure, the commitment is differently articulated. In the one case it is said to be achievable by the rigorous delineation of words and their logical relations, while in the other it is taken to be an accomplishment of members on every occasion of their use of such words. Thus by subverting the efficacy of rules, Garfinkel is seen to place himself in the same relation to ordinary language as the logical reconstructionists, albeit with a very different set of recommendations, as to how words can have meanings and sense. So, although Garfinkel rejects 'positivist' sociology, his conception of membership is seen to involve a positivist approach to language. Phillips puts it this way:

Obviously, there is no intention of accusing Garfinkel of espousing an empiricist theory of language. Rather, he explicitly rejects it (Garfinkel, 1967, p. 71). But the empiricist theory is notoriously tempting in disguised and covert versions.

(ibid., p. 67)

So when subjected to a proper philosophical analysis, all the concept of indexicality amounts to is a perplexing and erroneous way of describing the problem of induction. It is not a thesis about language mastery at all really, but simply the product of a confusion between two separate orders of knowledge. The outcome of this analysis secures for Phillips the demonstration of the implicit link between Garfinkel's perspective and phenomenology. By injecting the pervasive doubts that can attend our knowledge of the world into our knowing how to speak, Garfinkel then has to resolve the attendant linguistic scepticism through the certitude supposedly afforded by the unique experience of the knowing subject. If Garfinkel's members are not solipsists in the classical sense, Phillips also appears to suggest that they can be seen as situational solipsists; where meaning and knowledge are co-extensive with some particular social context. This inflation of contextuality into what any member can 'occasionally' mean and know, ruins for Phillips the proper appreciation of the context of a practice.

Thus, by drawing on Wittgenstein's philosophy in particular, Phillips sees himself as demonstrating,

... why a phenomenological input should lead to a phenomenalist output in Garfinkel's work.

(Phillips, 1978, p. 56)

In consequence, far from there being any detectable convergence between the ideas of Garfinkel and Wittgenstein, the former manages to propose a combination of ideas which the latter criticized at great length in his later philosophy. Garfinkel's work may be seen as constituting a massive over-reaction to the calculus approach to language, a reaction which makes the concept of rule effectively useless. This was never Wittgenstein's aim, and Garfinkel, in subverting the role of rules, replaces them with a conception of meaning in which the domain of interaction rescues and repairs each member's essential privacy. By contrast, as Phillips says, rule-following in Wittgenstein is something which possesses an inherently public character.

So, shorn of the preoccupations of ethnomethodology, the work of Sacks and his followers can be seen as the specification of finite and definite mechanisms which constitute the ruled basis for our speech practices. The contextuality of utterances is nevertheless a key analytic component in the perspective since the recognition of a particular conversational mechanism depends on its conversational surroundings. In other words, 'context' is criterial for the understanding and use of conversational rules, unlike in speech act theory where the rules of a speech act are logically primitive to considerations of context. Plainly, Phillips sees his proposals as striking the right balance between the over-determined nature of a theory like Searle's and what he sees as the analytic anarchy in Garfinkel's work. Moreover, the mechanisms elaborated by conversation analysts are seen by Phillips as embodying what Wittgenstein meant by the notion of 'language games'; and an aggregate of such mechanisms as what he meant by 'forms of life'. Citing Harrison once more,

Phillips (1978, p. 68) argues that linguistic devices are to be seen as:

... systems (of rules) each of which determines and is determined by a certain sort of social intercourse. The system of rules, and the type of social intercourse which it mediates, are on this view to be regarded as a single indissoluble unity: a form of life in Wittgenstein's phrase.

(Harrison, 1972, p. 153)

If one takes the comparison between Garfinkel and Searle a little further with respect to Phillips's own position, it can be seen that whereas Garfinkel is looked upon as reducing the facticity of social life to the situated accomplishment of objectivity, Searle would be seen as reifying social facts through his delineation of a class of speech acts as the conditions of possibility for any form of communication. In maintaining that practices are derived from rules, Phillips does not commit himself to Searle's view that a set of rule formulated conditions are jointly necessary and sufficient to express some particular meaning. In Phillips's view, the flexibility of actual usage is based in rule governed mechanisms, but with the crucial distinction that they do not inscribe any particular meaning to an utterance or sequence of utterances. Rather, they have the potential for being used in a variety of different ways to constitute different meanings. This construal of the relationship between rule and context is what Phillips regards as allowing him to maintain that meaning is a contextual phenomenon without relief, but where the flexibility of usage is nevertheless a product of members arranging and combining linguistic devices in novel configurations. The intuitive appeal of this account is considerable, since it appears to provide a way of analytically reconciling how language is at one and

the same time possessed of its massive regularity and certainty, and members' endlessly novel uses of it.

In this way, Phillips says that he can maintain a sense in which members are to be seen as 'methodical' and 'artful' in their doings, and even on occasions how their interactions can be seen to be vague or indexical. However, members' 'artfulness' and 'methodicity' cannot, in Phillips's view, be taken as constitutive of meaning, any more than Searle's speech act rules can. Meaning is, in the first place, facilitated by the already established and commonly accepted devices that, together, make up a socio-linguistic structure, which members then use to construct and locate the contexted meanings of their interactions. This conception of linguistic devices, in conjunction with the argument that there is an undertow of empiricism in Garfinkel's analysis, then provides the basis for explicitly challenging the idea that Garfinkel can be said to provide an inter-actionist account of meaning at all. In fact, ethnomethodology can be seen as tacitly undermining a performativist conception of language mastery because it splits the identity between meaning and action.

... understanding social interaction - grasping its meaning - is much more like understanding some linguistic utterance than it is understanding an enquiry and make some report of the non-human, non-social world ... what it suggests for present concerns, is that the theory of meaning may extend ... beyond understanding language, and into the understanding of interaction ... In short, Garfinkel's misunderstanding of the nature of meaning in language is also a mistaken understanding of the nature of meaning in social interaction.

(Phillips, 1978, p. 71)

Clearly, if Phillips's critique does hit the mark, it constitutes a serious indictment of the semantic and epistemological footings of

ethnomethodology. However, it is noteworthy that towards the end of his article, distinctions which are an obvious corollary of the difference drawn between knowledge of language and knowledge of the world are alluded to in a significantly less confident tone.

Firstly, Phillips observes:

It must have been obvious that the notion of the meaning of some utterance, or what we might call linguistic meaning, has been run together in an indiscriminating way with social meaning, or the meaning of some event in interaction as the members understand it.

(ibid., pp. 70-71)

But this obviousness is short-lived. Phillips concedes that ethnomethodologists would not make a distinction of this kind which, given that article is an attack upon ethnomethodology, is hardly a surprise. But then he says:

Nor ... do I want to hold that it is a clear or useful distinction. The only point now being made is that it deserves much further analysis.

(ibid.)

Now, that remark is very difficult to reconcile with the central plank of his critique, since it consists of the view that the problem with ethnomethodology is precisely that it runs together 'linguistic' meaning and knowledge of the world (including the 'social' world).

Elsewhere there are other signs of difficulty. The most significant of these concerns the implicit contradiction about the status of rules in the mastery of language. We have been told repeatedly that a rule system 'determines and is determined by a certain sort of social intercourse'. This interdependence, we are told, represents an advance on an analysis like Searle's, but without falling into the conceptual anarchy which is said to lie at the heart

of Garfinkel's analysis. In other words, what Phillips proposes strikes exactly the right balance between rule and context, where each has a part to play in the recognition and use of the other. But then in differentiating between "'rule-licensed procedures'" and "'experienced-licensed implications'", we are told:

The ability to mean something gained from a mastery of the first, precedes and is the basis for the second.

(ibid., p. 69: emphasis mine)

Quite where that is supposed to leave the idea that Phillips offers analysts a new way forward is not clear, as that sentence would accurately represent the outlook of speech act theory. So, it appears as if an analysis of language use cannot take the direction advocated by Phillips without ultimately falling back on the primacy of rules as determinants of the meaning of utterances and social interaction generally.

In spite of these problems, Phillips's article does pose questions about the relationship between analysis and language mastery which deserve an answer. In order to work towards one, I shall act on Phillips's suggestion that this whole set of issues 'deserves much further analysis'. Since Garfinkel, and Phillips (and indeed Searle) regard their own analyses as working exemplifications of Wittgenstein's later philosophy, or at least consistent with it, the next section of this Chapter is going to examine that philosophy directly. By now, the reader will be in no doubt that I regard Garfinkel's perspective as the one which is really consonant with Wittgenstein's own views. However, that is hardly the end of the matter. Firstly, that consonance is, of course, itself predicated upon my understanding of Wittgenstein's thought. Quite apart from its notorious difficulty,

one also has to bear in mind the fact that Wittgenstein's work possesses a chameleon-like ability to blend in with whatever one brings to it. The fact that Searle, Garfinkel, Sacks and Phillips all claim consistency with his philosophy is testimony to that. This, in turn, raises the possibility that the meaning of such consistency is itself part and parcel of any author's activity of seeing and commenting upon these apparent connexions. And, if there is mileage in that idea, then it has profound ramifications on the concept of analysis itself.

Then there are a second set of considerations, of a less general character than those above, but nevertheless of great importance in terms of this thesis. For instance, there is the issue referred to earlier of how one is to reconcile the speculative, somewhat hieratic style of Wittgenstein with the rigorous and systematic approach of the conversation analysts. For Wittgenstein at least, such an issue is not something which can merely be glossed over. In his Philosophical Remarks, a work which pre-dates the later philosophy, he distinguishes the spirit of his philosophizing 'from the one which informs the vast stream of European and American civilization in which all of us stand'. And in the Investigations, he explains its workbook style in the Preface like this:

It was my intention to bring all this together in a book whose form I pictured differently at different times. But the essential thing was that the thoughts should proceed from one subject to another in a natural order and without breaks.

After several unsuccessful attempts to weld my results together into such a whole, I realized that I should never succeed ... my thoughts were soon crippled if I tried to force them on in any single direction against their natural inclination. - And this was, of course, connected with the very nature of the investigation. For this compels us to travel

over a wide field of thought criss-cross in every direction.

(Wittgenstein, 1968, p. vii)

And it is just as clear that for conversation analysts there is great premium in elaborating succinct, specific and rigorous descriptions of fragments of interaction which exemplify general conversational processes. That approach is reminiscent of an exact science, not Wittgenstein's philosophy. And, as Wittgenstein makes clear in the quotation above, the style of his work is intimately bound up with what he has to say about the nature of language. Having said that ethnomethodology and conversation analysis form a continuous body of work, it is clearly incumbent upon me to at least attempt to answer that question.

Finally, even if all this reconciling can be achieved, what does that intellectual exercise have to say about the nature of social analysis, and does it have any implications for the conduct of social research. It may be a disappointment (but I do not think much of a surprise) to learn that I believe that it leaves the variety of social inquiry much as it is. As mentioned already, the aim of this thesis is to offer something in the way of understanding analysis rather than propose a new theory, although I do believe that this aim may have just as much to offer by way of a contribution to understanding what a society is. In terms of this thesis, it seems that the most useful way to give an answer to this question is to assess what the indifference of ethnomethodology towards conventional sociology means in Wittgenstenian terms. This assessment will form the conclusion to the thesis.

VI. Rule-Following and Wittgenstein's Philosophy

The question which this thesis does not ask is whether language use and social action are guided by rules. Rather, the question posed is, in what way does our rule-following constitute such activities? It might look as if the first question ought to be answered before turning to the second. But a moment's reflection is all it takes to see that to know how to ask 'whether', requires knowing 'what'. In other words, the principal matter is to provide some account of what it is to follow a rule, and, inseparably bound up with that task, what is involved in providing that account. I believe the issues raised by these questions occupy a central place in all Wittgenstein's writings, whether his topic be the foundation of mathematics or the role of inner processes in the knowing (and communicating) subject. From the elaboration of the rules for a logical syntax based on a calculus of truth functions described in the Tractatus, to the concern with how we can mean and act in everyday life in the Investigations, the concept of rule-following is like a leitmotif in his work.

At the conclusion of the last section, mention was made of the style of his later philosophy. This style contrasts strongly with the precision of the Tractatus. And it is clear that the workbook approach of the later philosophy is not just an author's caution at coming to terms with the deepseated problems he now perceives in his earlier work. What it marks is the attempt to conceive of language mastery and its analysis in a completely new way, and in particular to gain an understanding of the interdependence he sees between a form of inquiry and its subject matter. At one level, the recognition of this interdependence is not something new. The Tractatus posited an internal relationship between a model or theory and what it

represents (secured there by the identity of logical form in different structural representations). However, Wittgenstein also maintained that no theory could represent its own internal relation to what it is a model of. This was expressed as the difference between 'saying' and 'showing'. In the Tractatus it is put like this:

2.171 A picture can depict any reality whose form it has. A spatial picture can depict anything spatial, a coloured one anything coloured, etc.

2.172 A picture cannot, however, depict its pictorial form: it displays it.

(Wittgenstein, 1961)

Wittgenstein continued to believe this to be a well founded intuition. However, whereas in the early philosophy this difference was a consequence of the truth-functional picture of the isomorphism between language and world, the later philosophy's abandonment of that picture necessitated a radical reinterpretation of that intuition. The building of that reinterpretation manifests itself most clearly in the later philosophy's preoccupation with rule-following. Something of crucial importance in this task is Wittgenstein's recognition that an analysis of rule-following illuminates crucial features of the mastery of language in the actual construction of that analysis. The working out of this intellection is, as we shall see, a major theme in the Investigations and it is this which involves retaining, although completely restructuring the idea that analysis does not 'depict', but 'displays' its form of representation. In the later philosophy, the form of representation is language, and moreover language as it is used in everyday and mundane settings. This is why, in consequence, the analysis of rule-following is taken to 'display' the wherewithal of language-mastery.

For present purposes, the starting-point of Wittgenstein's reinterpretation can be seen to hinge on further consideration of a passage in The Blue and Brown Books, concerning a distinction made there between the 'involvement of' and 'accordance with' rules in a simple numerical sequence. In that work, he says:

We must distinguish between what one might call 'a process being in accordance with a rule', and 'a process involving a rule'.

Take an example. Someone teaches me to square cardinal numbers; he writes down the row

1 2 3 4

and asks me to square them ... Suppose underneath the first row of numbers, I then write:

1 4 9 16

What I wrote is in accordance with the general rule of squaring; but it is obviously in accordance with any number of other rules; and amongst these it is not more in accordance with one than with another. In the sense in which a rule (is) involved in a process, no rule was involved in this ... Supposing, on the other hand, in order to get my results I had written down what you may call 'the rule of squaring', say algebraically. In this case, the rule was involved in a sense in which no other rule was.

We shall say that the rule is involved in the understanding, obeying, etc., if, as I should like to express it, the symbol of the rule forms part of the calculation. (As we are not interested in where the processes of thinking, calculating, take place, we can for our purposes imagine the calculations being done entirely on paper. We are not concerned with the difference: internal, external).

(Wittgenstein, 1964, p. 13)

The parenthetical remarks at the end of that quotation are important since the question of the reality and conceptual status of inner mentation was invariably treated by Wittgenstein as a public phenomenon. However, the important matter of current concern is that in the Investigations, Wittgenstein comes to see that the idea of the

'involvement' of rules is an illusion. The attempt to construe rules as somehow immanent in an activity is seen to actually involve the investigators' election of a rule or rules for that purpose. The idea is summarily dismissed in one of the book's briefest paragraphs:

My symbolical expression was really a mythological description of the use of a rule.

(Wittgenstein, 1968, para. 221)

In other words, Wittgenstein shifts the focus of his investigation from the delineation of rules as something underlying our practices, to the elective practices themselves. This shift exemplifies one very important element of the 'turning round' (see Wittgenstein, 1968, para. 108) of his examination of language. It is the activities of rule use which are seen to hold the key to an understanding of language mastery. And one implication of this is that the 'election' of a rule is perceived as one of the ways in which rules constitute practices. Of course, the turning point itself is a reference to the analysis of language presented in the Tractatus. Wittgenstein makes clear right at the start that his new ideas can:

be seen in the right light only by contrast with ^{and} against the background of my old way of thinking.

(Wittgenstein, 1968, p. viii)

Accordingly, to explain his views requires some further account of the approach to language taken in the early work. His main aim had been to expose the fallacy of a metaphysical tendency to 'go beyond' language in order to reveal its nature. In the preface to the Tractatus, he says:

The book deals with the problems of philosophy, and shows, I believe, that the reason why these problems are posed is that the logic of our

language is misunderstood. The whole sense of the book might be summed up in the following words: what can be said at all can be said clearly, and what we cannot talk about we must pass over in silence.

Thus, the aim of the book is to draw a limit to thought, or rather - not to thought, but to the expression of thoughts: for in order to be able to draw a limit to thought, we should have to find both sides of the limit thinkable (i.e. we should have to be able to think what cannot be thought).

It will therefore only be in language that the limit can be drawn, and what lies on the other side of the limit will simply be nonsense.

(Wittgenstein, 1961, p. 3)

A notorious fact about the Tractatus is that by its own criteria it is itself nonsense, something which is acknowledged explicitly at its end (see proposition 6.54). Although the work does not exceed the limits of language in the sense specified in the preface, the analysis had to employ the supposition of 'simples' as the atomic constituents of objects in order to provide what Wittgenstein could regard as a secure enough foundation for reference. Propositions employing these simples were then able to be concatenated by truth functional rules (taken to be immanent or 'involved' though not disclosed in language use) which in turn secured sense and meaning. So, even for the Tractatus, the analysis of language meant standing outside or transcending language, and thus itself had to be categorized as a work of nonsense. But, Wittgenstein, believed, useful nonsense, a 'ladder' for the understanding which exhibits the relationship between language and world, although in so doing saying (or attempting to say) something which only properly shows itself in the form of the proposition.

Nevertheless, this approach to the analysability of language did not entail, as it did for Russell and many positivists, that ordinary language was characterized by major defects, thereby rendering it useless as a vehicle for philosophical analysis and consequently something that was only fit for repair by that analysis. On the contrary, we are told:

5.563 In fact, all the propositions of our everyday language, just as they stand, are in perfect logical order. - That utterly simple thing, which we have to formulate here, is not a likeness of the truth, but the truth itself in its entirety.

(Our problems are not abstract, but perhaps the most concrete that there are.)

(Wittgenstein, 1961)

This statement also marks a continuity between the early and the late philosophy. What underwent a transformation was why that was seen to be so. In place of the attempt to state the nature of the relation between language and the world in the manner outlined above, Wittgenstein simply asserts the centrality of ordinary usage, what we do in language, as constitutive of both what we can know of 'language' and 'world'. Whereas in the Tractatus, nonsense was seen as the inevitable outcome of trying to state the form of language, in the Investigations, the idea that there is a form to language which is there (if only ineffably) to show, is viewed as an illusion.

Before embarking on a detailed examination of how Wittgenstein came to see the illusory character of his early work, it is worth considering the implications of the matters discussed thus far for the distinction made by Harrison and adopted by Phillips, between knowledge of language and knowledge of the world. It seems clear on the basis of what we have considered already that a presumption has

been raised against the consistency of the distinction with the approach of the later philosophy. The way in which the rules of language are meant to underlie everyday experience has strong affinities with the conceptual architecture of the Tractatus where, as we saw, the logic of truth functions is taken to assemble the sense of propositions.⁽¹³⁾ Of course, there are noteworthy differences. As stated earlier, the character of rules and the nature of truth are quite distinct. Yet for all that, the ideas possess a structural similarity, if only because the language-world dichotomy sets the framework for the analysis. The extent of Wittgenstein's repudiation of this framework is intimately associated with the investigation of rule-following in the later philosophy.

It is noteworthy that a reader of the Tractatus is not confronted by what he or she ordinarily thinks of as 'nonsense'. This struck Wittgenstein as something significant in itself, since he saw that he had to tutor his reader to see what was nonsensical about it. Whilst Wittgenstein held no brief for the rightness and perspicacity of our ordinary or everyday understanding, either in his early or late period, he did come to see the need for this tutoring as the harbinger of a misconception. His suspicion on this issue can be seen to develop from two considerations. The first is that for the Tractatus to have meaning for anyone requires the existence of an extant mastery of what it is an analysis of. The second is that the work does describe, if rather formalistically, important features of linguistic competence.⁽¹⁴⁾ That, of course, is not to say that Wittgenstein was a stranger to these considerations when the book was written. Not only are they obvious in themselves, they also encapsulate important linguistic facts which Wittgenstein sought to

explain. But in further reflecting upon them, he comes to see that it is an illusion that sense and meaning can be secured by truth conditions which are totally independent and distinct from the actual recognition of such truth in the use of the propositions. This, in turn, makes him see that the role of extant language mastery in the actual construction and understanding of the analysis in the Tractatus is of crucial internal importance to the sense which the work makes. He comes to see that truth functions do not underlie the sense of propositions. Rather, the analysis can be seen as making those truth functions perform that role. Closely aligned with this insight is another which can be seen to result more particularly from the second consideration (viz. that the Tractatus does, in fact, describe important features of language use). In dispensing with the requirement that there be a single truth function^a form underlying all linguistic usage, a real origin of 'nonsense' in the Tractatus is exposed. This is the view that the rules of one kind of linguistic practice must be taken as supplying the essential rules for all practices.

These reflections are among the principal agents which led to the rehabilitation of the analytic importance of cognition, action and sociation which the Tractatus had sought to exclude. This, in turn, allowed Wittgenstein to come to grips with the tacit commitments in the Tractatus:

... to a host of psychological hypotheses about
arcane mental processes whose relation to reality
was mediated by language ...

(Hacker, 1981, p. 101)

There, all such considerations had been treated as unknown psychic constituents, and although they were taken to have some kind of logical

structure more or less resembling that of the proposition, they were of no philosophical consequence and could safely be reduced to propositional relations.⁽¹⁵⁾ Consequently, how language was understood was divorced from the concern with its formal structure and regarded as a subsidiary matter of purely psychological concern. As Hacker says:

In the later work this is repudiated. The subjects of meaning, understanding and thinking are essential to a proper grasp of the nature of language. For the relations between meaning that p, understanding 'p' and the sense of 'p' are internal. Therefore no psychological explanation or hypothesis can replace a philosophical account of these relations.

(ibid.)

This examination of the Tractatus helps us to see still more clearly why the distinction between 'involvement' and 'accordance' with a rule in The Blue and Brown Books is repudiated in the Investigations. The notion of involvement still retained the commitment to a a prioristic construal of the relationship between the rule and what it ruled; a strict determinacy regarding the rule's employment, unconnected with the actual use and meaning a rule could have for language masters. We have seen already that the concept of 'involvement' is regarded as a 'mythological description' of a rule's use. Wittgenstein begins the dissolution of its appeal like this:

Why do I call 'the rule by which he proceeds'?
- The hypothesis that satisfactorily describes his use of words, which we observe; or the rule which he looks up when he uses signs; or the one which he gives us in reply if we ask him what his rule is, - But what if observation does not enable us to see any clear rule, and the question brings none to light? - For he did indeed give me a definition when I asked him what he understood by 'N', but he was prepared to withdraw and alter it. - So how am I to determine

the rule according to which he is playing? He does not know it himself. - Or to ask a better question: What meaning is the expression 'the rule by which he proceeds' supposed to have left to it here?

(Wittgenstein, 1968, para. 82)

The dissolution goes a long way and raises the question of whether Wittgenstein himself may be described as a 'rule sceptic' (see note 10). If to be a rule sceptic means taking the view that rules do not determine the nature or meaning of linguistic and social practices, then it looks as if Wittgenstein is one. However, the reason for this is not that he thinks rules are in some way inapposite tools for describing linguistic usage, or for that matter an inappropriate vehicle for explaining that usage. The Investigations is full of examples of such descriptions and explanations. In other words, it is not that rules are useless for analytic tasks. Rather, it is stopping rule analysis at that point, which fails to come to terms with 'the how' of rule use. And that, as Hacker says, means ignoring their role in actual communication.

VII. Linguistic Activity and Rule Use in the Later Philosophy

The development of Wittgenstein's concern with the doing of linguistic communication has clear affinities with Garfinkel's perspective.⁽¹⁶⁾ But it is also one of the reasons which leads Phillips to dub the perspective empiricist, because the 'scepticism' about rules seems to leave it with nothing more than the task of providing theoretically unconnected and discrete descriptions of members' doings. For Phillips, this must mean that the affinity is a mere surface resemblance, since Wittgenstein's concept of rule, language game and forms of life correspond to the articulation of

elements of the rule-licensed procedures underlying linguistic practice. But the problem with Phillips's interpretation is finding support for it in Wittgenstein's explication of these concepts. Consider first his comments on the idea of analysing different language games: one (a) where orders are given to bring things using their ordinary (composite) names (e.g. broom, chair, table, etc.), and the other (b) where such orders are given by listing the parts of the objects which comprise the whole (e.g. broomstick and brush; legs, back and seat; etc.). He then considers what it means to say that the second game is an analysed form of the first.

To say ... that a sentence in (b) is an 'analysed' form of one in (a) readily seduces us into thinking that the former is the more fundamental form; that it alone shows what is meant by the other, and so on. For example, we think: If you have only the unanalysed form you miss the analysis; but if you know the analysed form, that gives you everything.
- But can I not say that an aspect of the matter is lost on you in the latter case as well as the former?

(Wittgenstein, 1968, para. 63)

Then consider what can be termed the ontogenetic formulation of this conception of linguistic analysis. At the beginning of the Investigations, Wittgenstein works out his response to Augustine's account of language mastery which, in fact, opens the work.⁽¹⁷⁾ He imagines some builders whose language consists of the words 'block', 'pillar', 'slab', where the utterance of these words constitutes an order to bring them. Wittgenstein is at pains to emphasize that this can be conceived of as 'a complete primitive language' (para. 2). The correlate of this point, though, is not to treat such a language as the kernel of more sophisticated practices, like the foundation stone upon which the rest of language is built. Even if the practice of naming is the first thing we learn, it is an analytic conceit to

construe all other language use as somehow derived from this capacity. The use of language does not need the guarantee or support of such 'primitive' elements any more than it requires the existence of underlying rules. Once again, Wittgenstein seeks to demonstrate how the requirements of analysis can so easily, but fallaciously, be transmuted into some essential feature of language. What needs to be emphasized, instead, is the coeval nature of what can be abstracted as a foundation of language mastery, with whatever feature or usage of language is to be treated as the core or essence of our mastery. But the abstracting, and what is abstracted, are games in language and one is not more fundamental than the other. Thus, whether one pursues a sophisticated and complex analysis in terms of rules or finds the essence of language to consist in the simplicity of 'naming', the problem remains the same, viz. viewing the rules of one language game as the rules for all games.

These two considerations exemplify in their respective fashions one of Wittgenstein's chief criticisms of the Tractatus. As we have seen, its aim was to neutralize the metaphysical tendency to exceed the limits of language. However, in the Investigations, Wittgenstein sees that what the Tractatus in fact achieves is the replacement of that metaphysics with another that closely resembles it. This is the supposition of another language that lies behind ordinary language, what he terms the super language.

Thought is surrounded by a halo. - Its essence, logic, presents an order, in fact the a priori order of the world: that is, the order of possibilities, which must be common to both world and thought. But this order, it seems, must be utterly simple. It is prior to all experience, must run through all experience; no empirical cloudiness or uncertainty can be allowed to affect it - It must be of the purest crystal. But this

crystal does not appear as an abstraction; but as something concrete, indeed, as the most concrete, as it were the hardest thing there is. (Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus, No. 5.563)

We are under the illusion that what is peculiar, profound, essential, in our investigation, resides in its trying to grasp the incomparable essence of language. That is the order, existing between the concepts of proposition, word, proof, truth, experience, and so on. This order is a super-order between -- so to speak -- super-concepts. Whereas, of course, if the words 'language', 'experience', 'world', have a use, it must be as humble a one as that of the words 'table', 'lamp', 'door'.

(Wittgenstein, 1968, para. 97)

Of course, Wittgenstein is not saying that a 'super language' cannot be constructed. That assertion would fly in the face of the fact that he, and others, have achieved just that in various theoretical enterprises. Neither is he saying that the understanding of such languages is, in some respect, questionable or suspect. To articulate that claim would require drawing the bounds of sense in a fashion very similar to spirit to the Tractatus and other works which have pursued that aim.

It is also important to realize that Wittgenstein is not seeking to invert this earlier conception of the relation between ordinary language and its 'analytic' usage. The repudiation of his earlier outlook has been taken to entail this inversion. But this is an erroneous representation of Wittgenstein's thinking since this would merely amount to a reversal of the relation between analysans and analysandum, where rules extracted from everyday utterances now had to be viewed as the foundation of these more specialized uses. Pole (1958) is one of those who regard Wittgenstein as making this claim. Cavell argues:

Pole ... implies that Wittgenstein regards ordinary language as 'sacrosanct', that he speaks in the name of nothing higher than the 'status quo' and that he 'has forbidden philosophers to tamper with (our ordinary expressions)' (p. 57). Other philosophers, with very different motives from Pole's, have received the same impression, and their impatience has not been stilled by Wittgenstein's having said that:

... a reform of ordinary language for particular purposes, an improvement in our terminology designed to prevent misunderstandings in practice, is perfectly possible. But these are not the cases we have to do with.

(Investigations, para 132)

(Cavell, 1968, p. 166)

Wittgenstein does not wish to replace the pivotal role formerly given to a 'super language' by merely re-orienting in favour of everyday usage. In addition to the analytic replication involved, such a re-orientation concretizes the 'prodigious diversity'⁽¹⁸⁾ of everyday language use. The net effect of such a move is simply to deem some ordinary usages as the hallmark or the 'core' of what ordinary speaking involves. To do that is to simply construct another super language out of 'everyday' materials. Something of the prodigious diversity is revealed earlier in the Investigations when Wittgenstein asks:

But how many kinds of sentence are there? Say assertion, question, and command? - There are countless kinds: countless different kinds of use of what we call 'symbols', 'words', 'sentences'. And this multiplicity is not something fixed, given once for all; but new types of language, new language-games, as we may say, come into existence, and others become obsolete and get forgotten ...

Here the term 'language-game' is meant to bring into prominence the fact that the speaking of language is part of an activity, or a form of life.

- It is interesting to compare the multiplicity of the tools in language and of the ways they are used, the multiplicity of kinds of word and sentence, with what logicians have said about the structure of language. (Including the author of the Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus.)

(Wittgenstein, 1968, para. 23)

So, it can be seen that the later philosophy mounts a sustained attack on the idea that there is an essential foundation to the mastery of language, in all the different guises that idea can take, whether it be construed as a logical syntax, set of rules, or some core set of everyday linguistic practices supposedly serving as some kind of archetypes for the rest. We are told that the investigation:

... is directed not towards phenomena, but, as one might say, towards the 'possibilities' of phenomena. We remind ourselves, that is to say, of the kind of statement that we make about phenomena ...

Our investigation is therefore a grammatical one. Such an investigation sheds light on our problem by clearing misunderstanding away. Misunderstandings concerning the use of words, caused, among other things, by certain analogies between the forms of expression in different regions of language. - Some of them can be removed by substituting one form of expression for another; this may be called an 'analysis' of our forms of expression, for the process is sometimes like one of taking a thing apart.

(ibid., para. 90)

The consequence of this perspective is that analysis itself can possess the same diversity as the linguistic practices which form the topic of analysis. Of course, the criticism of such an outlook is obvious and Wittgenstein meets it head on:

Here we come up against the great question that lies behind all these considerations. - For someone might object against me: 'You take the easy way out! You talk about all sorts of language-games, but have nowhere said what the essence of a language-game, and

hence of language, is: what is common to all these activities, and what makes them into language or parts of language. So you let yourself off the very part of the investigation which once gave you yourself most headache, the part about the general form of propositions and of language.'

And this is true. - Instead of producing something common to all that we call language, I am saying that these phenomena have no one thing in common which makes us use the same word for all, - but that they are related to one another in many different ways. And it is because of this relationship, or these relationships, that we call them all 'language'.

(ibid., para. 65)

The singularity of some preferred analytical framework (whatever 'flexibility' may have been built into it by its originators) can mislead those employing it into asking questions like:

'What is language?', 'What is a proposition?' And the answer to these questions is to be given once and for all; and independently of any future experience.

(ibid., para. 92)

The singularity of those questions presupposes 'something like a final analysis of our forms of language' and thereby reduces the diversity of usage which comprises language. One can also put it this way. What misleads the investigator is the presumption of an isomorphism between analysis as one language game, and the host of others which are the object of analysis. For they are related to one another in as many different ways as two or more language-games can be in ordinary usage.

Nevertheless, Wittgenstein does recognise the importance of making comparisons and on the basis of that eliciting common structures because that enterprise forms a significant part of most, if not all, analytical endeavours. In particular, he wants to avoid appearing to discriminate against such analytic practices as these by quibbles

about what the concepts of essence and structure might mean in some generalized sense. After all, Wittgenstein could hardly remain consistent with his emphasis on the diversity of language by seeking to render problematic the language-games that can be played with these concepts. And it is significant that he acknowledges that:

... we too in these investigations are trying to understand the essence of language - its function its structure, - yet this is not what those questions (e.g. 'What is language') have in view. For they see in the essence, not something that already lies open to view and that becomes surveyable by a rearrangement, but something that lies beneath the surface. Something that lies within, which we see when we look into the thing, and which an analysis digs out.

(ibid., para. 92)

So Wittgenstein is not seeking to outlaw a structural or formal analysis of language. Rather, his criticisms are focused upon the analytic understanding of what it is to construct an account of language in terms of its form or structure. Nor is he attempting to divine some 'correct' level of generalization that is to be employed by analysts, and beyond which they overstep some invisible boundary of warrantability and sense. There are no such boundaries. It is a practical, not stipulative, matter whether some generalization about language is useful and illuminating.

Something which is striking in these quotations is the emphasis Wittgenstein places on the contingency of language. He tells us that it is misguided to think that answers to questions about language can be given 'once and for all and independent of any future experience' (para. 92), and that 'new language-games come into existence, and others become obsolete and get forgotten' (para. 23). Earlier, I considered the question of whether Wittgenstein could be considered

a 'rule sceptic' in that he took the view that rules do not determine the nature or meaning of linguistic and social practices. These remarks on the contingency of language support that view, especially in the light of Cavell's description of Wittgenstein's understanding of language mastery which exhibits, as he says, a terrifyingly simple vision of language and society. Cavell expresses it like this:

We learn and teach words in certain contexts and then we are expected, and expect others, to be able to project them into further contexts. Nothing insures that this projection will take place (in particular, not the grasping of universals nor the grasping of books of rules), just as nothing insures that we will make, and understand, the same projections. That on the whole we do is a matter of our sharing routes of interest and feeling, modes of response, senses of humour and of significance and of fulfillment, of what is outrageous, of what is similar to what else, what a rebuke, what forgiveness, of when an utterance is an assertion, when an appeal, when an explanation - all the whirl of organism Wittgenstein calls 'forms of life'. Human speech and activity, sanity and community, rest upon nothing more, but nothing less than this. It is a vision as simple as it is difficult, and as difficult as it is (and because it is) terrifying.

(Cavell, 1968, pp. 160-1)⁽¹⁹⁾

If Cavell has correctly described Wittgenstein's 'vision' of language and community in his late philosophy, it does look on the face of it as if rule analysis is at best marginal, if not entirely irrelevant to understanding language mastery. Cavell rejects the idea that 'projection' (learning and the mastery of language) is a matter of grasping rules, and if that is the case, then it does look as if rule analysis must not only be futile in terms of purpose, but sterile in terms of results. But futility of purpose hardly explains Wittgenstein's preoccupation with rules in the later philosophy as mentioned before. What his philosophy is directed against is not rule analysis as such, but the sterility that accompanies thinking

of rules as explanations of language mastery. Yet I have also said that the later philosophy is not hostile to an account of language in formal or structural terms, and there is little to be gained in trying to deny that the point of such accounts is to explain features of language mastery. Clearly, these conclusions look as if they flatly contradict one another, that is, as though there cannot be room for both in Wittgenstein's perspective.

However, that appearance lasts only until it is remembered that Wittgenstein's interest lies in the activities of rule use, not in what the rules supposedly stipulate regarding the wherewithal of our language mastery. Rule analysis is not seen as delineating how the world and words about it make sense in terms of one another (the aim of the Tractatus). Analysing is an activity which exemplifies (shows) the sense-making process at work. Thus, if Wittgenstein can be termed a rule sceptic as Phillips uses that term, then it is only because he is interested in the practicalities of rule use.

Earlier I argued that the 'saying' and 'showing' distinction was retained in the later philosophy, although in a completely restructured form. It is becoming clear that rule analysis in the later philosophy is seen by Wittgenstein as a display of what language mastery is. The analyst sets about describing his or her object of inquiry in terms of rules and shows how instances of that object (e.g. one of the conversational practices described in Chapter II) can be seen to accord with some rule or rules. My view of Wittgenstein's argument is that what it is to be seen to accord with a rule is a reflexive achievement. This is because 'the accordance' is not simply a matter of finding a rule to fit the practice, but of seeing the rule and practice in terms of one

another; that is, as the accomplishment of that 'fit'. The difficulty of grasping this point is perfectly understandable. As we are caught up within our mastery of language, the relationship between a rule and a practice appears simply to be a matter of finding such a fit, in the manner, for example, that Searle formulates the rules of promising. For Wittgenstein, that is an important use of our language mastery and there is, of course, nothing wrong with it. But the one thing such unreflective use fails to explicate is how the 'fit' is made. Again, there is nothing wrong with that from the everyday standpoint, otherwise it would be akin to measuring a ruler just to make sure that it was twelve inches long before we used it. The regress is obvious and endless.⁽²⁰⁾ But if our aim is not just to use language but rather to understand its uses, then it is, so to speak, the activity of finding such a fit between a rule and a practice which is the topic of the investigation.

It is undoubtedly true that this reflexivity is difficult to state clearly since it seems to require the analyst to remove him or herself from the 'confines' of everyday usage. In the second and third sections of this Chapter I criticized the work of Blum and his collaborators for conceiving of reflexivity in this way. So a potential, and if true, damning criticism at this point is that my interpretation of Wittgenstein seems on the brink of a like 'removal' from everyday usage, and, moreover, one shorn of the philosophizing and moral engagement which gives Blum's work such depth. In addition, it would also appear that my construal of Wittgenstein's thought is in danger of making itself remote from what he actually said. For the philosophical attempt to distance linguistic analysis from everyday usage is taken by him to be one of the chief sources of

misunderstanding of language mastery. This appears to be put very clearly when he says:

Here it is difficult as it were to keep our heads up, - to see that we must stick to the subjects of our every-day thinking, and not go astray and imagine that we have to describe extreme subtleties, which in turn we are after all quite unable to describe with the means at our disposal. We feel as if we had to repair a torn spider's web with our fingers.

(Wittgenstein, 1968, para. 106)

However, it is noteworthy that just before this quotation Wittgenstein adverts to the way language is misrepresented analytically in these terms:

We predicate of the thing ~~what~~ what lies in the method of representing it. Impressed by the possibility of a comparison, we think we are perceiving a state of affairs of the highest generality.

(ibid., para. 104)

In other words, the misrepresentation is the result of employing our extant language mastery in order to construct theories of linguistic competence that represent language mastery is a way that makes no analytic reference to the fact that we already have to possess it in order to understand the analysis (e.g. Searle's marginalization of converting 'knowing how' into 'knowing that').

This is one of the main criticisms of a theory of language like the one suggested by Augustine (see note 18 above), although such tacit reliance on extant mastery is also a focal point of Wittgenstein's criticism of the Tractatus. Wittgenstein reveals this presupposition of an extant linguistic capacity lying behind language in this remark on Augustine's theory.

Someone coming into a strange country will sometimes learn the language of the inhabitants from ostensive definitions that they give him; and he will often

have to guess the meaning of these definitions; and will guess sometimes right, sometimes wrong.

And now, I think, we can say: Augustine describes the learning of human language as if the child came into a strange country and did not understand the language of that country; that is, as if it already had a language, only not this one. Or again: as if the child could already think, only not yet speak. And 'think' would here mean something like 'talk to itself'.

(ibid., para. 32)

This describes how an unreflexive use of our extant competence can employ the very linguistic capacities which it is the aim to understand, in order to explain them. It needs emphasizing once more that the problem is not the reliance upon extant mastery as such. That is inescapable. It is, rather, the tacit employment of that mastery which leads the analyst to the belief that we can describe and explain language mastery in much the same fashion that we might describe and explain some complicated bit of machinery. It is noteworthy that this misapprehension can characterize something as simple and straightforward as Augustine's theory and something as complex and reticulated as the Tractatus.

So I believe that for Wittgenstein the temptation to 'go astray and imagine that we have to describe extreme subtleties' is something engendered by an unreflexive use of, inter alia, rule analysis. The work of analysis is done inescapably from within language, but it is from the ordinary everyday standpoint that the illusion is fostered that it is possible to stand outside language and delineate its constituent principles. In the Investigations, we are told that 'philosophical problems arise when language goes on holiday' (para. 38) and the examples he gives of this tendency often relate to philosophical attempts to 'sublime' everyday linguistic certainties into 'the relation between name and thing' (ibid.).

VIII. Wittgenstein and the Reflexivity of Rules

Wittgenstein begins his examination of this reflexivity by considering a very simple example of rule following which should (if anything will) possess a good degree of fixity and definitiveness of rule application (such fixity and definitiveness being a requirement of Searle's or Phillips's analysis). In the example, Wittgenstein suggests how people might be taught a language of colour by having the sign and the colour set down in a table, say like this:



Clearly, we can see how this table could be used as an aid in teaching the language and also appealed to in certain cases of dispute. It is also possible, Wittgenstein says, to imagine such a table representing the role of memory and association.⁽²¹⁾ So here Wittgenstein sets up in the most primitive terms the minimal conditions for a connection between language and the mental and perceptual faculties, and a table which can be construed as a rule for governing the transition from colour marks to alphabetical signs. If a definitive application of rules is going to work anywhere, it should work here. But straightaway, Wittgenstein remarks:

If we call such a table the expression of a rule in the language-game, it can be said that what we call a rule of a language-game may have many different roles in the game.

(*ibid.*, para. 53)

That is to say, any formulation of a rule can have many different uses. Wittgenstein elaborates:

The rule may be an aid in teaching the game. The learner is told it and given practice in applying it. - Or it is an instrument of the game itself. - Or a rule is employed neither in the teaching nor in the game itself; nor is it set down in a list of rules. One learns the game by watching how others play. But we say that it is played according to such-and-such rules because an observer can read these rules off from the practice of the game - like a natural law governing the play. -

But how does the observer distinguish in this case between players' mistakes and correct play? - There are characteristic signs of it in the players' behaviour. Think of the behaviour characteristic of correcting a slip of the tongue. It would be possible to recognise that someone was doing so even without knowing his language.

(ibid., para. 54)

So, even in such a simple case as the colour table, as a rule there can be many roles the rule can play. Particularly significant for present considerations is the way an observer can formulate rules 'like a natural law governing the play', and the importance of the behaviour of the games practitioners to that endeavour. In the space of one paragraph Wittgenstein makes reference to seeing a rule like a natural law and seeing someone's behaviour as a guide to whether a rule has been followed or abrogated. As philosophical positions about language, rule-governance and behaviourism are commonly thought of as polar antitheses and yet here they are listed among the possible approaches to ascertaining what some rule is and whether some activity can be seen in terms of that rule. Major targets at this point in the Investigations are the supposition of either mental processes or, as we have seen, ostensive definitions underlying and explaining


the capacities of language mastery. Their relevance to the issue of what it is to follow a rule lies in the fact that both have been employed to indicate the wherewithal of language mastery. In so doing, both, to use Wittgenstein's word, have been 'sublimed'. That is, in order to exhibit each of them as the essence of linguistic competence, the role they play in language has been transformed into some overarching capacity upon which basis the power to use language can be explained. Wittgenstein's discussion of each is meant to act like a cautionary tale, not to sublime the concept of rule in the same way.

In the case of ostensive definition, the central problem revolves around construing every word as a name so that the learning of language can be seen to consist in the instructor's pointing to the bearer of the name. Wittgenstein poses two objections to this conception of language mastery. The first is the insuperable difficulty of trying to retail every word or concept as a name,

... what for example is the word 'that'
the name of in the ostensive definition
'that is called ...'?

(ibid., para. 38)

The second concerns the required presupposition that the act of pointing necessary to ostension has, at one and the same time, to be a vital part of language mastery and yet primitive to that mastery. Wittgenstein exposes the tensions of this conception in the following remark which also takes us on to a consideration of mentation as an anchor for our linguistic practices, although, once again (as with the notions of rule-governance and behaviourism), it is significant that he speaks of them alongside one another.

... How does it come about that this arrow  points? Doesn't it seem to carry in it something beside itself? - 'No, not the dead line on paper only the psychical thing, the meaning, can do that.' - That is both true and false. The arrow points only in the application that a living being makes of it.

This pointing is not a hocus-pocus which can be performed only by the soul.

(ibid., para. 454)

We can also ask how does the neophyte speaker know to look at the end of the finger and beyond it, rather than the shoulder of the teacher when he or she ostensibly defines something. In the end, we would have to fall back on something like, 'the common behaviour of mankind (as) the system of reference' (ibid., para 206). However, it is significant that this quotation ends, '... by means of which we interpret an unknown language'. In other words, we would be tendering an explanation 'as if the child came into a strange country (and) could already think, only not yet speak (where) "think" would mean something like "talk to itself".' (see ibid., para 32 above).

In another of the briefest remarks in the Investigations, Wittgenstein says:

An 'inner process' stands in need of outward criteria.

(para. 580)

The point of this remark is that it poses a challenge to the awarding of some kind of special epistemic privilege to what is inner. The reason for this is because it is but a short step from this to the view that what we ordinarily mean by 'language' is merely the verbal or written accompaniment of some already established language secured in the mind. The idea is discussed in terms of an understanding which lies behind what we can see and hear.

We are trying to get hold of the mental process of understanding which seems to be hidden behind those coarser and therefore more readily visible accompaniments. But we do not succeed; or rather it does not get as far as a real attempt. For even supposing I had found something that happened in all those cases of understanding, - why should it be the understanding? And how can the process of understanding have been hidden, when I said 'Now I understand' because I understood? And if I say it is hidden - then how do I know what to look for? I am in a muddle.

(ibid., para. 153)

Something of this 'muddle' can be exhibited by the following considerations. Even if this pre-linguistic 'understanding' were to exist (in the mind?), its very securedness would make it inaccessible to others, quite apart from the difficulty Wittgenstein adverts to of knowing 'what to look for' on the subject's own behalf. It is important not to misconstrue Wittgenstein's criticisms. He is not seeking to repudiate the reality of inner experiences or mental processes as such. Rather, the point is that whatever these are, they cannot provide a foundation for communication. Furthermore, to have knowledge of inner states is something that is made available through our mastery of a common language. This is an especially difficult corner of Wittgenstein's philosophy. However, if it is borne in mind that his interest is not in the aetiology of inner experience, but rather what it is to have and know these experiences, then some of the difficulty evaporates. In this regard, the following quotation is instructive:

In what sense are my sensations private? - Well, only I can know whether I am really in pain; another person can only surmise it. - In one way this is wrong, and in another nonsense. If we are using the word 'to know' as it is normally used (and how else are we to use it?), then other people very often know when I am in pain. - Yes, but all the same not with the certainty with which I know myself! - It can't be said of me at all (except

perhaps as a joke) that I know I am in pain.
What is it supposed to mean - except perhaps that
I am in pain.

(ibid., para. 246)

As stated already, these targets of criticism are intimately bound up with considerations about rules and the way that they can be used to account for the mastery of language. The emphasis on rule-following in the Investigations, on the roles that a rule can play is Wittgenstein's way of providing a brake on the construction of a 'mythology' about rules which would merely replicate the philosophical tendency to 'sublime' ostension or mentation as the foundation of linguistic competence. One of these mythologies is that a rule be construed like an inner voice guiding the subject. However, Wittgenstein does not want to question the fact that sometimes we feel that 'we wait upon the nod (the whisper) of the rule' (ibid., para. 223). It is possible to feel or imagine something like that,

... in a sort of arithmetic. Children could calculate, each in his own way - as long as they listened to their inner voice and obeyed it. Calculating in this way would be a sort of composing.

(ibid., para. 233)

But we are not confined simply to inventing such circumstances.

Would it not be possible for us, however, to calculate as we actually do (all agreeing, and so on), and still at every step to have a feeling of being guided by the rules as by a spell, feeling astonishment at the fact that we agreed? (We might give thanks to the Deity for our agreement.)

(ibid., para. 234)

Wittgenstein is at pains not to deny the reality of such an experience. The question is what are we to make of it; the countersign of some interior faculty, or perhaps a dim perception of the immanence of the

rules lying at the heart of our use of language? The answer we are given is rather different.

This merely shows what goes to make up what we call 'obeying a rule' in everyday life.

(ibid., para. 235)

Following a rule is a practice. It is something which is learnt and understood communally. Wittgenstein exhibits this communal nature of rule-following by means of a question.

Is what we call 'obeying a rule' something that it would be possible for only one man to do only once in his life? - This is of course a note on the grammar of the expression 'to obey a rule'.

It is not possible that there should have been only one occasion on which someone obeyed a rule. It is not possible that there should have been only one occasion on which a report was made, an order given or understood; and so on. - To obey a rule, to make a report, to give an order, to play a game of chess, are customs (uses, institutions).

To understand a sentence means to understand a language. To understand a language means to be master of a technique.

And hence ... 'obeying a rule' is a practice. And to think one is obeying a rule is not to obey a rule. Hence it is not possible to obey a rule 'privately': otherwise thinking one was obeying a rule would be the same thing as obeying it.

(ibid., paras. 199 & 202)

Given this practicality of rule use, the rules formulated by analysis are reflexive simply because the relationship between rules and practices is internal and conceptual. That is, what a rule is (what it means, what its application is, what its scope, etc.) is as reliant upon the existence of the practice as the practice may be upon the rule. Rules do not underlie language use simply because what it is to follow a rule, like what it is to know (you are in pain,

etc.), are a part of what makes up rule-following in everyday life. Consequently, where analysis can mislead itself is to try and achieve a fixity with a concept like rule, which an investigation into what following a rule can be made out to be in our language, shows the concept does not, in fact, possess. In one sense, such a development or special use of a concept is perfectly proper, or, to put it negatively, such inventiveness could hardly be considered illegitimate from a perspective like Wittgenstein's. Nevertheless, when language is, so to speak, turned back onto a study of itself, then such a manoeuvre can lead, on the one hand (when things appear to be going well analytically), to a misrecognition of the reliance we place on our extant competence as something which is really essential in the rule, and on the other simply to paradox, when the multiplicity of our practices deny the rule the singular role the analyst wishes it to play.

However, even if all this can be seen in the right light, there is another analytic 'temptation' which must also be avoided. This may be described as an attempt to 'slacken' the determinacy of a rule-governed account into something more approximate, where the 'approximation' supposedly describes how rules are actually employed in everyday usage. If the reader casts his or her mind back to Chapter One, it will be remembered that Searle suggested that his speech act analysis could be seen in this way since 'idealization' was a prerequisite of any systematic analysis. But once that argument was accepted, we saw how Searle felt able to conceive of rule systems of a greater generality and scope: individual speech acts could be grouped into classes and these, in turn, formed even more basic 'illocutionary types'. A successful explanation of language mastery

was seen ultimately to depend upon this reduction. The irony of this is that the move towards understanding a determinate analysis as an approximation, in fact motivates further idealization, when such idealization and the problems it generated prompted the understanding of analysis as an 'approximation' in the first place. Wittgenstein is very much aware of this manoeuvre because it is something which he indulged in himself in his early work. He puts it like this:

F.P. Ramsey once emphasized in conversation with me that logic was a 'normative science'. I do not know exactly what he had in mind, but it was doubtless closely related to what only dawned on me later: namely that in philosophy we often compare the use of words with games and calculi which have fixed rules, but cannot say that someone who is using language must be playing such a game. - But if you say that our languages only approximate to such calculi, you are on the very brink of a misunderstanding. For then it may look as if what we were talking about were an ideal language. As if our logic were, so to speak, a logic for a vacuum. - Whereas logic does not treat of language - or of thought - in the sense in which a natural science treats of a natural phenomenon, and the most that can be said is that we construct ideal languages. But here the word 'ideal' is liable to mislead, for it sounds as if these languages were better, more perfect, than our everyday language; and as if it took a logician to shew people what a proper sentence looked like ... what lead ... me to think that if anyone utters a sentence and means or understands it, he is operating a calculus according to definite rules.

(ibid., para. 81)

Later on in the Investigations at a point where the concept of rule-following receives an extended treatment, Wittgenstein explicates the problem of construing something and understanding as the upshot of such 'definite rules'. The vehicle for this demonstration is another of his anthropological thought experiments reminiscent of the 'strange country' example above (see para. 32). The aim of this experiment is to turn the notion of the ideal (language; set of rules, etc.) on its

head. This is done by first imagining a situation in which a game (of chess) is conducted by those who have no knowledge of games as such, and then imagining a situation in which the rules are translated into behaviour we find hard to see in terms of the rules.

It is, of course, imaginable that two people belonging to a tribe unacquainted with games should sit at a chess-board and go through the moves of a game of chess; and even with all the appropriate mental accompaniments. And if we were to see it, we should say they were playing chess. But now imagine a game of chess translated according to certain rules into a series of actions which we do not ordinarily associate with a game - say into yells and stamping of feet. And now suppose those two people to yell and stamp instead of playing the form of chess that we are used to; and this in such a way that their procedure is translatable by suitable rules into a game of chess. Should we still be inclined to say they were playing a game? What right would one have to say so?

(ibid., para. 200)

In the first case they are not playing chess, but we see that they are. In the second case, they are, albeit a translated version (which really is no more strange than reading a musical score and then hearing it 'translated' into sound by an orchestra) but we find the idea very hard to entertain. The contingency of rule-following in human activity (here exemplified in the participation in and observation of a game), makes the idea of rule-determinacy indefinitely problematic. Wittgenstein expresses it thus:

This was our paradox: no course of action could be determined by a rule, because every course of action can be made out to accord with the rule. The answer was: if everything can be made out to accord with the rule then it can ^{also} be made out to conflict with it. And so there would be neither accord nor conflict here.

He then describes a species of the misguided idea of analysis as approximation. This is the notion that one could interpolate the concept of interpretation between the rule and its object. The paragraph continues:

It can be seen that there is a misunderstanding here from the mere fact that in the course of our argument we give one interpretation after another; as in each one contented us at least for a moment, until we thought of yet another standing behind it. What this shews is that there is a way of grasping a rule which is not an interpretation, but which is exhibited in what we call 'obeying the rule' and 'going against it' in actual cases.

Hence there is an inclination to say: every action according to the rule is an interpretation. But we ought to restrict the term 'interpretation' to the substitution of one expression of the rule for another.

(ibid., para. 201)

Here, once again, Wittgenstein is focusing on antithetical and yet closely related ways in which we can be misled by an analysis of rules. Just because rule determinacy ends in 'paradox', that does not mean that we then ought to see every application of a rule as an interpretation of it. In the light of the latter part of this remark, a question can be raised as to whether the conversation analyst's notion of rule orientation is a variant of this misguided idea. As was seen in Chapter Two, the rules conversation analysts formulate are said to be possessed of a general character and it may now look as if the practices of members in orienting- to these rules could be just as well described as interpretations of them. If that is the case, then here at least is one instance where conversation analysis and Wittgenstein's philosophy cannot be seen as consistent one with the other.

However, in that chapter it was emphasized that members are not to be viewed as orienting-to rules merely in order to purchase a degree of flexibility by, so to speak, loosening the bolts of an analytic framework that had been overtightened by a theory like Searle's.

This, in essence, is the view put forward by Phillips so that conversation analysis can be seen as consistent with mainstream linguistic analysis and a contribution to it. If such 'loosening' was the substance of the conversation analyst's concept of rule-following, then it appears that orientation would be construable as if members 'interpreted' the rules. But, as that chapter stated, the generality of the rules formulated by ethnomethodologists and conversation analysts are oriented-to by members as they work to assemble the sense of utterances in particular social settings. That is not the substitution of a rule for an interpretation of it: that is rule use.

Nonetheless, practitioners in that perspective do speak of members' interpretive practices and this would presumably include interpretation of rules. And there is a clear sense in which Wittgenstein's own examples of persons applying a rule differently could be spoken of as amounting to different interpretations of a rule. If the later philosophy is concerned to outlaw such usage, then it seems not only that there is a clear divergence between the perspectives on this matter, but also that Wittgenstein's stricture flies in the face of ordinary usage. However, I believe that to view matters this way is to misunderstand Wittgenstein's point. He is not seeking to deny the reality of interpretive practices in the use of rules, but, rather, once again, to forestall an analytic construal of them which could support the fundamentally mistaken idea that the activities of language use rest upon a foundation of determinate rules. That is, if one could say that every use of rule was an interpretation, then it would be possible to retain the rigid framework intact as these 'interpretations' could function like shock absorbers to soak up the flexibilities of actual usage.

In Chapter Two, it was also argued that rule analysis in ethnomethodology and conversation analysis must be seen as part and parcel of a reflexive conception of the relationship between analysis and its object. In this Chapter, I have indicated some strikingly similar insights about that relationship in Wittgenstein's later philosophy. It is clear that the restructuring of the concept of rule is one of the main exemplifications of this insight. However, it is not the only one and I now want to consider a concept which has been used by Wittgenstein in some of the quotations reproduced in the chapter, in order to develop this insight still further and provide an opportunity to make some more connections with the work of Garfinkel and Sacks. The concept in question is that of grammar.⁽²²⁾

IX. The Concept of 'Grammar' and the Work of Analysis

Wittgenstein speaks of his work in terms of grammatical 'investigations', 'notes' and 'remarks' (1968, p. 59, note a; paras. 232 and 574). By this, he means the elicitation of rules in terms of the ordinary descriptions, evaluations, explanations and accounts we give of words, concepts, activities, fictive worlds, natural phenomena and so forth; in fact anything and everything which forms part of the human stock of knowledge. Consequently, it has a much broader sense than the concept of grammar as it is used conventionally. It has a particular relevance to Wittgenstein's understanding of the indivisibility of what we know and how we speak. A comparison between the early and late philosophy will serve to illustrate something of the scope of the concept. The Tractatus was intended as a grammar in this extended sense since the structure of language was seen to provide the key to the structure of reality. An analysis of the former disclosed the

nature of the reality of the latter. As we have seen, in the Investigations language is still the topic of inquiry and it is still the case that the relationship between language and reality is an isomorphic one. However, the reason for this is not because language must imitate the logical form of the world. Rather, it is because the structure of reality is itself a representation of the grammar (in the extended sense) of language. This point is made in a very stark and summary fashion in the Investigations:

Essence is expressed by grammar.

Grammar tells us what kind of object anything is.

(Wittgenstein, 1968, paras. 371 and 373)

Another way to ascertain the meaning of Wittgenstein's notion of grammar is to look at it in terms of the understanding of the task of philosophy in his later period. Typically, he can be at his most obscure when commenting upon this:

What is your aim in philosophy? - To shew the fly the way out of the fly-bottle.

(ibid., para. 309)

The philosopher's job, it seems, is to eradicate misconceptions.

The results of philosophy are the uncovering of one or another piece of plain nonsense and of bumps that the understanding has got by running its head up against the limits of language.

(ibid., para. 119)

This is to be done by giving a perspicuous representation of our grammar, that is, to designate the way we look at things; what Wittgenstein calls our form of representation. And what this work reveals is that:

A main source of our failure to understand is that we do not command a clear view of the use of our words.
- Our grammar is lacking in this sort of perspicuity.
A perspicuous representation produces just that

understanding which consists in 'seeing connexions'.
Hence the importance of finding and inventing
intermediate cases.

(ibid., para. 122)

Earlier, I remarked on the contingency of Wittgenstein's conception of the rules of language and quoted Cavell to the effect that nothing guaranteed our making or understanding of utterances and activities. What Wittgenstein means by a form of representation can tell us more about the nature of this contingency. The first thing to note about a form of representation is its inclusivity. In the remark immediately above, Wittgenstein continues:

The concept of a perspicuous representation is of fundamental significance for us. It earmarks the form of account we give, the way we look at things.
(Is this a 'Weltanschauung'?)

(ibid., para. 122)

To see this inclusivity in the right way, we first have to ask: 'Given that "we do not command a clear view of the use of our words", in what sense is a representation going to be "perspicuous"?' Wittgenstein appears to be saying two incompatible things about language. I believe his answer is that perspicuity will depend upon not attempting to force the form of one representation of reality onto all 'forms'. That, of course, presupposes there to be more than one. Wittgenstein's view that this is, in fact, the case is based in part on his examination of the way analysis can itself force the objects of its inquiry into a mirror of its own image. This, as we have seen, is one of the main points of the critique of rule analysis. However, the concept of forms of representation must also involve a substantive philosophical claim, that is, it is a metaphysical claim in its own right. Once again, this is best illustrated by comparing the 'early' and 'late' philosophy.

The unalterability and uniqueness of the pictorial form in the Tractatus is completely absent in the later conception of the form of representation. In the later conception, our form of representation, the way we look at reality, is seen to be a part of our history. Nevertheless, the later philosophy characterizes a form of representation as fundamentally arbitrary. Even though such a form may have its roots in our historical development, no set of historical circumstances have ensured that we see the world in the way that we do. This would merely amount to a replication of the unalterability of the Tractatus's concept of pictorial form on the stage of human history. The facticity of the world cannot be grasped in its entirety either logically or historically. Instead, Wittgenstein's attention is focused on something which looks much humbler. Certain general assertions which we can make in everyday speech (but, interestingly, mostly do not because of their obviousness to us) look as if they are about the world in a straightforwardly empirical way. However, they are:

... in fact 'about the net and not about what the net describes'. They are a priori, yet they only reflect our form of representation, the conceptual connections which give sense to the sentences by means of which we describe the world.

(Hacker, 1972, p. 147)

In On Certainty, Wittgenstein says:

The truth of certain empirical propositions belongs to our frame of reference.

(Wittgenstein, 1969, para. 83)

But that does not mean that they are necessarily true. Rather, they are necessary to a certain way of seeing the world, not absolutely necessary to any view of the world whatever. One might say, such propositions are contingently necessary. That is, such propositions

are necessary to the possibility of understanding, and yet the propositions could be (and for others, imagined and encountered, may be) other than they are for us.

An example will help to explain this. To relinquish the claim that the world has existed for many years would render problematic most, if not all, of our empirical knowledge. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine exactly how it would, and how much it would, because to take away this part of our frame of reference would leave the matter of assessment deeply indefinite as well. On a more personal level, to seriously doubt whether I have a body is a ground for doubting my sanity or my understanding of what I say. Claims such as I have a body, that the world existed long before my birth, are part of the core of judgements which are interwoven with all the other judgements which we learn in our community. Nonetheless, some beliefs in this category of empirical knowledge have altered through time. The flatness of the earth, its place at the centre of the universe, have been displaced in our cosmology. In On Certainty, Wittgenstein suggests that these unassailable or entrenched empirical sentences can be thought of as a kind of mythology. And he compares the role of these sentences to the rules of a game which are learned practically rather than by explicit enunciation. He describes all this in a telling metaphor.

It might be imagined that some propositions of the form of empirical propositions, were hardened and functioned as channels for such empirical propositions as were not hardened but fluid; and that this relation altered with time, in that fluid propositions became hardened, and hard ones became fluid.

The mythology may change back into a state of flux, the river-bed of thoughts may shift. But I distinguish between the movement of the waters on the river-bed and the shift of the bed itself; though there is not a sharp division of the one from the other.

But if someone were to say 'So logic too is an empirical science', he would be wrong. Yet this is right: the same proposition may get treated at one time as something to test by experience, and at another as a rule of testing.

And the bank of that river consists partly of hard rock, subject to no alteration or only to an imperceptible one, partly of sand, which now in one place, now in another, gets washed away or deposited.

(ibid., paras. 96-99)

For many commentators on Wittgenstein, the attractiveness of this picture depends upon how widely or how narrowly one is prepared to construe 'grammar'. Even if the rationale of the argument is accepted, namely that we mistake the nature of the grounds of our forms of representation by asking factual questions about objects in the world, its conclusions seem to take us towards a view of understanding which is itself dubious. The problem can be put this way. If one accepts what seem to be the implications of Wittgenstein's concept of grammar, then one appears to be committed not merely to anthropological relativism but, as Hacker puts it, to some form of sociolinguistic solipsism. That is, all language will be our language.

... the grounds in terms of which we can identify an alternative conceptual scheme as a conceptual scheme will be whisked from under our feet. Not only will alternative grammars be incomparable, they won't even be identifiable.

(Hacker, 1972, p. 173)

One response to this dilemma is the strategy of demarcating between information and explanation. Whilst the latter can be seen to be dependent upon the grammar of a categorical framework or theory, there is some sense of information for which this is not so.⁽²³⁾ Of course, the problem, in the light of Wittgenstein's later philosophy, lies in

developing and justifying this sense of 'framework-free' information. For Hollis (1968), this must commence by observing a truism. We occupy a common unified spatio-temporal world. There may be differences in perception conditioned by different grammars, but it would be impossible to identify a creature as a language-using animal unless we assume some basic perceptual commonalities. In turn, for that to be possible, it is necessary to assume a degree of common nature if we are going to be able to identify perceptual responses for what they are. Such an assumption is what makes us able to muster a prima facie identification of a language user at all. Then, if one accepts the argument so far, the ability to identify rests upon the ability to grasp the sense of a (possible) sentence which in turn rests upon the ability to discriminate it from other sentences. That ability rests upon a common, if unstated, idea of truth which is itself going to be dependent upon the 'non-optionalty' of laws of logic like non-contradiction and identity.

Hacker himself takes the view that Wittgenstein underemphasized these factors in his later philosophy because of his eagerness to combat the Platonism of his early work. What this underemphasis amounts to is that Wittgenstein threw the 'universalist' baby out with the 'Platonist' bathwater. As a result, the later philosophy:

... led him to obscure if not to underestimate the universal features of thought and the common structural elements of conceptual schemes, and he correspondingly overemphasized the arbitrary features of our conceptual scheme and the parochial implications of the fact that whatever limitations we place upon our concept of thought and language, it is we who place them upon our concept.

(Hacker, 1972, pp. 175-6)

To conceive of 'grammars' as lacking any stable core of elements and principles is, Hacker believes, to claim that there are no restrictions on the concept of a language, and, together with that, no general necessary conditions of the possibility of conceptualized experience of an objective world. However, Hacker is not denying that it is a contingent fact of nature that the world contains sufficient regularity to be an object of empirical knowledge and human communication. Rather, his argument is, given that this is contingently so, it by no means follows that the conceptualization of experience is limited by no bounds of sense.

It seems then that even for as sympathetic a commentator as Hacker, the concept of grammar in Wittgenstein's later philosophy is too anarchic. We have to accept that the diversity of possible grammars are constrained, however minimally, by universal forms (of thought) which provide them with a common foundation. In terms of this thesis, Hacker's Kantian gloss on Wittgenstein's thinking has a familiar ring about it. Hacker's worry that the full impact of Wittgenstein's concept of grammar eventuates in some form of socio-linguistic solipsism, is very similar to the view that Garfinkel's concept of indexicality makes members look like 'situational' solipsists. For Phillips, the anchoring of language use in a firm foundation of rules avoids this outcome. That solution would be unsatisfactory for Hacker as he cannot read Wittgenstein's analysis of rule-following in a way that is compatible with such a proposal. Nevertheless, if Wittgenstein's analysis is left as it is (and it is significant that Hacker does not try and retail his own neo-Kantian gloss on the later philosophy as an element of Wittgenstein's own thinking), Hacker cannot see a viable way to avoid a degree of relativism which is distinguishable from 'socio-linguistic

solipsism'. The supposition of a core of rules will not do, but there must be some minimal constraints which make possible not only the intelligibility, but the very identifiability of alternative grammars. Grammar may be arbitrary in most respects, but Hacker, nonetheless, feels that Strawson must be right when he says:

There is a massive central core of human thinking which has no history - or none recorded in histories of thought; there are categories and concepts which, in their most fundamental character, change not at all.

(Strawson, 1959, p. 10)

It appears then that in addition to their understanding on rules, that Wittgenstein and Garfinkel do have as much in common when one examines the implications of their respective notions of 'grammar' and 'indexicality'. However, what an inspection of this common ground reveals is an implicit commitment to a form of relativism so acute that it is practically indistinguishable from solipsism. Phillips and Hacker suggest, each in their own way, that to overcome this problem requires finding the requisite degree of universality either in a set of rules or in a changeless core of human thinking. Put simply, Wittgenstein and Garfinkel just go too far. Their analyses overstep an admittedly almost invisible, but nonetheless, crucially important boundary of sense which requires there to be some minimum structural similarity in the diversity of linguistic usage, if the concept of language and its uses are to remain a coherent idea and practice. So, in the end Phillips explicitly, and Hacker mutedly, are telling us that despite the importance of the contributions their originators have made to the study of language, these concepts can only make a fit subject of study for those interested in the pathology of the intellect.

There are two things of striking significance about this unanimity. The first is that the very similar arguments put forward by Phillips and Hacker about the relativist problem each perceives is answered in a very different way by each of them. As stated already, it is clear that Hacker's reading of Wittgenstein makes it impossible for him to construe Wittgenstein's analysis of rules in a way compatible with Phillips's supposedly 'Wittgenstenian' proposals for rule analysis. However, this observation is not a cue for re-opening that issue as the reasons for rejecting Phillips's account have been aired already. Rather, the observation is meant to direct attention to the similarity of the analytic role to be played by 'rules' on the one hand, and this 'changeless core' on the other. The second is the perception that the upshot of accepting the implications of 'grammar' and 'indexicality' would involve embracing some form of solipsism. This perception is especially interesting in the light of the fact that the problem of solipsism was a major concern of Wittgenstein's in the later philosophy. I believe that an examination of his views on the subject will allow a rehabilitation of the concepts of 'grammar' and 'indexicality' and show the importance each bears to the understanding of rule-following. And this rehabilitation will in turn also show how the concept of reflexivity is part and parcel of understanding what it is to follow a rule.

X. Rule Following, Solipsism and Private Language

Solipsism is the doctrine that nothing exists save myself and mental states of myself. Wittgenstein's most important argument against solipsism in the later philosophy is his argument against the possibility of a private language. This is directed towards

showing that a conception of language motivated by philosophical scepticism about the existence of other minds terminates in incoherence. So the argument is negative in the sense that it resembles a reductio ad absurdum. Characteristically, Wittgenstein does not indicate explicitly the targets of his attack in the discussion of the impossibility of a private language, but the Tractatus had involved a tacit commitment to such a position. The argument is also positive in a sense as well, something which can be gleaned from the following consideration. Earlier, I said that one way to ascertain the meaning of grammar in Wittgenstein's later philosophy was to look at it in terms of his understanding of the task of philosophy, and reproduced his obscure comment that his aim was 'to show the fly the way out of the fly-bottle'. Some light can now be cast upon that obscurity. The fly in the fly-bottle was originally conceived of as the solipsist. At the time (circa 1935) he writes his Notes for Lectures on 'Private Experience' and 'Sense Data', he put the matter like this:

The solipsist flutters and flutters in the flyglass,
strikes against the walls, flutters further. How
can he be brought to rest?

(Rhees, ed. 1968)

It is this hopeless struggle which is to be relieved by the argument against a private language, which argument, furthermore, forms an integral part of his analysis of the wherewithal of language mastery. This is the positive aspect and exhibits Wittgenstein's commitment to viewing the concepts of rule, grammar and the private language problem as intimately related to one another.

In discussing the possibility of grounding language mastery in ostensive definition or inner mentation, it was shown that Wittgenstein

saw the acquisition, possession and exercise of concepts as something which involved 'the mastery of a technique' (see Wittgenstein, 1968, para 199). Knowing what a word means, possessing a concept expressed by a word or an utterance may be accompanied by mental processes such as an image, or a feeling of familiarity. But the mastery of language is not the sum of such processes, however they might be construed. Instead, it is a capacity, which is to say that a person knows what a word means when he can use a rule for its employment. Nonetheless, as we have seen, language is not 'surrounded' by rules. That idea merely eventuates in paradox. However, the problem lies in seeing this in the right way and in particular avoiding the temptation of providing an alternative anchor in the mind or in outwardly visible behaviour, in order to secure a firmness we are inclined to see as a necessity for communication because of the regularity and certainty of everyday language use. What is emphasised over and over again in the later philosophy is that the orderliness of everyday language does not require some unshakable foundation, which an analysis will reveal. That orderliness lies on the 'surface' of language, it is not something hidden beneath which, as Wittgenstein says, requires 'an analysis to dig it out'.

So a very important irony which the argument against a private language exposes is that the tradition of philosophical scepticism, which finds one of its strongest expressions in solipsism, is a mirror image of the idea that if language is to be possible, it must be grounded in an unshakable foundation of the reality of rules, or mental states, behaviour, or the thesis of extensionality. In fact, Wittgenstein had seen this at the time of the Tractatus.

5.64 Here it can be seen that solipsism, when its implications are followed out strictly, coincides with pure realism. The self of solipsism shrinks to a point without extension, and there remains the reality co-ordinated with it.

(Wittgenstein, 1961)

The reason for this is that the 'self' in the Tractatus represented the constant form of all experience: the unspeakable, unanalysable elements of the ego.

5.362 The subject does not belong to the world:
rather, it is a limit of the world.

(ibid.)

Solipsism is the attempt to say what is transcendental silence. But in the later philosophy, the fly's affliction is not the struggle of trying to articulate that which must remain silent. The way to show the fly the way out of the fly-bottle lies in showing how the self and reality in fact 'coincide' in the community of practical activity and sociation. It is the community which supplies the certainty and regularity which makes communication possible. And it is, moreover, that certainty and regularity which provide the motivation and the resources for the construction of analyses which attempt to reveal the certainties of everyday usage as the upshot of rules; the outward expression of inner awareness; as something determinable behaviouristically, or as something traceable via a purely extensional semantics. These all require different 'therapies', but they have a common aim.

Wittgenstein describes it thus:

It is not our aim to refine or complete the system of rules for the use of our words in unheard-of ways.

For the clarity we are aiming at is indeed complete clarity. But this simply means that the philosophical problems should completely disappear.

The real discovery is the one that makes me capable of stopping doing philosophy when I want to. - The one that gives philosophy peace, so that is no longer tormented by questions which bring itself in question. - Instead, we now demonstrate a method, by examples and the series of examples can be broken of. - Problems are solved (difficulties eliminated), not a single problem.

~~There~~ is not a philosophical method, though there are indeed methods, like different therapies.

(Wittgenstein, 1968, para. 133)

If philosophy is seen to provide the key to reality, then as Wittgenstein says, it is difficult to 'stop doing it'. The reason for this is that if it appears to unearth the essence of things, then the philosophical impulse to account for this revelatory quality of the discipline constantly exercises a desire to analyse its subject matter. This can eventuate in such a radical dismemberment of the subject matter that the result is to bring 'itself into question'. A clear example of this impulse in this thesis, according to Searle, was Quine's analysis of language which, in rendering problematic the use of criteria employed in everyday linguistic usage, eventually made analysis itself something indeterminate. It has been argued here, though, that Searle's work displays a milder form of this obsession; exemplified by the analysis of indirect speech which really only served to maintain his original thesis of rule determinacy. In their respective fashions, and to different degrees, Quine and Searle indulge the same philosophical error. Instead of trying to understand the certainty and regularity of the everyday world (what Garfinkel refers to as its obstinate familiarity) as something provided by the practices of the members of that world, an analysis is sought which can itself provide a foundation for that certainty and regularity. Philosophical

analysis, as a result, becomes a concrete determinant of practice. Consequently, it can never be 'given peace' as it has effectively taken on the role of constant and universal actuation of those practices.

One of the claims which threads through Wittgenstein's discussion is that if that role for analysis is entertained, it, in turn, breeds a scepticism which in its most acute form can only be remedied by a commitment to solipsism. And there is evidence for this view in an analysis like Quine's which is not unlike a return journey from the inner recesses of certainty, with the goal of the journey being the provision of a proper foundation for communication by means of criteria which will operate in an extensionally clear manner. As Searle says, in Quine's analysis the intuitions of the native speaker have become totally alienated from him. And what those intuitions comprise, is the knowledge of the practices of a linguistic community.

However, it is just as important not to fall into another trap in avoiding this alienation of the speaker from the community. Recognition of the importance of a linguistic community to what it is to speak and understand makes it possible to indulge in another sort of error. This has been mentioned already when speaking about the concept of a form of representation in discussing Wittgenstein's idea of grammar. There it was said that even though the later philosophy characterizes a form of representation as something which is fundamentally arbitrary, and even though such a form may have its roots in our history and culture, neither ensures that we see the world in the way we do. To assume that a historical or cultural or any other sociological analysis could perform this role would merely amount to a replication of the unalterability of the Tractatus's concept of pictorial form on the stage of human history and society.

Wittgenstein recognised this as an inherent danger of his later philosophy, given its commitment to understanding language as a social phenomenon. In fact, such significance is attached to this danger that solipsism is not rejected in quite the unequivocal way that his overall philosophical commitments lead one to expect. Consequently, it is extremely important to understand what his argument against the idea of a private language does not say. For although Wittgenstein does not find any way to assert the argument for a private language by means that are other than self-contradictory, he is not content to let matters rest there. The reason for this is that merely pointing out contradictions does nothing to illuminate why the argument is so attractive.

According to Wittgenstein, a major source of the argument's appeal is based in its idea that the point of language is to convey what is going on in the mind of the speaker. Communication consists of an endless bulletin from each speaker about what is going on 'inside' his or her mind. The epistemic certainty which is supposedly afforded by the individual ego manifests itself in this almost boorish emphasis to tell others about the contents of one's own mind. In an explication of the notion of telling, Wittgenstein shows how this reifies the concept of mind.

... But how is telling done? What are we said to tell anything? - What is the language game of telling?

I should like to say: you regard it too much as a matter of course that one can tell anything to anyone. That is to say: we are so much accustomed to communication through language, in conversation, that it looks to us as if the whole point of communication lay in this: someone else grasps the sense of my words - which is something mental: he as it were takes it into his own mind. If he then does something further with it as well, that is no part of the immediate purpose of language.

(Wittgenstein, 1968, para. 363)

However, this explication has an aim which goes beyond its immediate purpose. Its underlying rationale is to show how the use of a concept like rule can replicate such reification when the earlier philosophy's emphasis on the idea of logical form is replaced with the socio-logical emphasis on 'forms of life'. As we have seen, it is crucial to Wittgenstein that the indefiniteness of rules is not repaired by a like determinism in the analytic use of them.

It is in the light of these considerations that one can begin to unravel the reasons why Wittgenstein in his private language argument does not attack the idea of the imaginary soliloquist. Instead, the attitude is directed at a speaker whose concepts are essentially unshareable rather than contingently unshared. What this means is that to infer that the language of a socially isolated individual is inconceivable because language is a social phenomenon is an error. The conclusion does not follow, notwithstanding Wittgenstein's commitment to the idea that language use is an activity which is integral to communal life. Given the commitments of the later philosophy, the pressing question is why is he hostile to this inference? The reason, I believe, is closely connected with another inference which can easily be made and which nevertheless is also one that Wittgenstein does not make. Wittgenstein does not explore what would have to be involved in trying to teach another person the meaning of the terms of one's private language. This paucity of argument stands in contrast to the great deal of attention which he devotes to spelling out the problems inherent in certain conceptions of rule following. And this may be why it has been presumed that Wittgenstein is really saying that an unteachable language is logically impossible. However, this is not an inference Wittgenstein makes. The fact that we must

learn language in order to be 'recognisable as a language-using animal', as Hollis puts it, is something that he is willing to accept. But only on the understanding that it is a contingent fact about our constitution.

It is only when matters are put this way that the necessity of community to communication can be seen in the right way. An examination of the following quotation will explain this more fully:

'What would it be like if human beings shewed no outward signs of pain (did not groan, grimace, etc.)? Then it would be impossible to teach a child the use of the word "tooth-ache".' - Well, let's assume the child is a genius and itself invents a name for the sensation! - But then, of course, he couldn't make himself understood when he used the word. - So does he understand the name, without being able to explain its meaning to anyone? - But what does it mean to say that he has 'named his pain'? - How has he done this naming of pain,! And whatever he did, what was its purpose? - When one says 'He gave a name to his sensation' one forgets that a great deal of stage-setting in the language is presupposed if the mere act of naming is to make sense. And when we speak of someone's having given a name to pain, what is presupposed is the existence of the grammar of the word 'pain'; it shews the post where the new word is stationed.

(Wittgenstein, 1968, para. 257)

On first reading this paragraph, it does look as if Wittgenstein is saying that a child genius's invention of a name for a sensation of tooth-ache is simply not possible. But on a closer reading, it becomes clear that Wittgenstein is saying that if language-use is a social fact, that does not exhaust the possibility that a child genius should invent a name for his sensation. When he says 'it would be impossible to teach a child the use of the word tooth-ache, the impossibility is grammatical. That does not make his invention of a name impossible. The point is that in his community where 'human beings showed no outward sign of pain ...', the name would lack purpose in the language.

As Wittgenstein made clear in his discussion of Augustine's theory (see above), a great deal of stage-setting is presupposed 'if the mere act of naming is to make sense'. Well, in this possible community it may well be that the props for naming are there in all other respects. And if that is so, that it is only 'pain' that has 'no outward sign', then isn't this child not unlike a figure like Freud who in our culture objectified the 'unconscious' for us in an entirely new way.

On the other hand, it may be that 'naming' is unintelligible, perhaps, as Hacker says, even unidentifiable to his linguistic community. However, to then say, 'therefore his meaning pain is impossible', may be to forget that 'possibility' and 'impossibility' have their grammar too. And for this to be understood in the right way, it is important to remember that:

Grammar does not tell us how language must be constructed in order to fulfil its purpose, in order to have such and such an effect on human beings. It only describes and in no way explains the use of signs.

The rules of grammar may be called 'arbitrary', if that is to mean that the aim of the grammar is nothing but that of the language. If someone says 'If our language had not this grammar, it could not express these facts' - it should be asked what 'could' means here.

(Wittgenstein, 1968, paras. 496/7)

In rejecting the implication that such naming is impossible per se, Wittgenstein avoids replacing the determinism of the early philosophy's concept of logical form with a functionally identical determinism of social forms. Yet, in maintaining that the impossibility is grammatical, he does not have to seek reliance upon universal categories as features of any conceivable language. Consequently, he does not derogate from the proposition that 'Grammar tells us what kind of object anything

is' (1968, para. 373), by locating some changeless core of human thinking. And this is how he can maintain that linguistic practice shapes the possibilities of objects without reifying the practices of that community as the 'rules', 'core', 'essence', and so on, of what it is to speak, understand and know.

The certainty and regularity of everyday usage is, in Wittgenstein's view, inherent in the practices of members of the linguistic community. To treat those practices as requiring some anchor beyond the fact of those practices only results in a reification of the analytic practices elected by the investigator. This explains how analysis can look as if it delineates the real constituents of the possibility of speech and social action generally, and yet it is the analysis itself which requires the existence of 'universals', be they in the guise of a determinate set of rules or a changeless core of human thinking. In other words, this kind of analysis provides the rationale for its own reification. It is not seen as an instance of the practices it investigates. Rather, what it delineates is taken as the foundation of those practices. As noted earlier, when discussing Wittgenstein's view of the task of philosophy, this means that the discipline can never be given peace since it effectively takes on the role of actuating the practices of the linguistic community.

Having explicated something more of Wittgenstein's concept of grammar through this discussion of his views on solipsism and the private language argument, it is clear that there are strong affinities between his views and those of Garfinkel and Sacks. What I have described as the charge of situational solipsism levelled against them is not really concerned with finding a level of unshakeable epistemic and semantic certainty for language users, as the charge suggests.

Time and again, both authors make it clear that members have no need for such foundations since their practices construct in a thoroughly practical and ongoing manner all such support they need. If the charge was correctly laid, then the certainty and regularity of everyday language use could only be something puzzling and miraculous for ethnomethodologists and conversation analysts. They accept the fact of such certainty and regularity without hesitation. What interests them is its production. The emphasis on the specifics of interaction in ethnomethodology and conversation analysis is not motivated by scepticism, but rather by a concern to describe the ways members make sense of the world. In other words, their focus is not a result of viewing some particular situation of current interaction as the only forum where meanings can make sense. That would require boundaries to be drawn around the concept of 'a situation', that, if it did not make the concept altogether unemployable, would certainly conflict with the view of meaning which is displayed in the prosecution of ethnomethodological and conversation analytic inquiries.

XI. The Communal and the Systematic

However, if this continuity can be found, then, as mentioned earlier, it only brings us before the problem of reconciling the unsystematicity of Wittgenstein's writings with the highly systematic inquiries undertaken by conversation analysts in particular. Phillips provided the appearance of such a reconciliation by suggesting that Wittgenstein's concepts of 'language-games' and 'forms of life' could be seen in terms of interstitial systems of ruled devices which were analysable systematically. But, obviously, since his views on Wittgenstein's later philosophy have been rejected here, it is not

possible to advance an argument of that kind at all. And it has also been argued in these pages that a portrayal of language in these terms is reliant upon the constructive powers of language which can involve concretizing elements in the system as the real constituents of speech and interaction.

It is tempting to construe this concretizing in terms of the misuse of metaphor. That is, a systematic account of linguistic usage can only be a picture of something, not the thing itself. In this way, the systematicity of analysis is seen as a model, which only those who are crude and unreflexive insist portrays the real constituents of language use. From this point of view, understanding analysis involves being sophisticated enough to realize that any analysis is 'just another account'. And it has to be said that this somewhat jaded perception of the matter does square with the recognition that analysis is an instance of what it describes; even if the democracy of that perception is only shared amongst a few. I believe the incipient nihilism in this outlook is the target of Blum et al's attack, reported in the opening pages of this Chapter and which, together with the focus on systematic empirical investigation, leads to dubbing the perspective as merely another form of positivism. The importance of a critique like Blum's is his recognition that the nihilism is prompted by the disappointment of the expectation that analysis could 'dig out' the underlying constituents of language mastery.

As remarked upon earlier, it is noteworthy that Blum's notion of theorizing, which produces reflexive understanding, is a task remote from everyday activities. Blum and his collaborators argue that the rationality of any systematic form of inquiry means that the reflexivity derived from that investigation is merely a product of its own scientific methods. As a result, such inquiry 'itself becomes a

metaphor for the rational-legal development of thought ... typified in the reflexivity of the rational-legal agent' (Blum, 1974, p. 227: see above). In consequence, it is only an analysis which 'provides for the world which would produce the topic of analysis as an interesting problem', which can get beyond terminating its inquiries by the 'formulation of parameters such as rule', and thereby exhibit the 'grounds of clarity or language as they become disclosed through any method or speech ...' that can truly be called reflexive (ibid., pp. 45 and 46: see above). For Blum then, the idea of the reflexivity of rule analysis canvassed in this thesis is at best ironic, at worst a contradiction in terms. But the power of Blum's reasoning lies in the way the practitioners of 'rational-legal' modes of analysis must, so to speak, necessarily sup with the positivist devil. This is surprising in the light of his recognition of the importance of personal commitment to analytic activity since this implies that no method either safeguards the prosecution of reflexive inquiry or entails a commitment to positivism.

Thus, what is required if a systematic approach is to be reconciled with a reflexive understanding is some alternative to these construals of the analyst's task. I believe Wittgenstein does offer such an alternative and moreover, one that the work of Garfinkel and Sacks can be seen to be consistent with. To fully explicate this alternative, it is first worth examining the idea of an explanatory device as a metaphor or model. Here the idea is that the analyst employs a linguistic device to picture a process that can thereby be rendered intelligible to our understanding. They are ... as if ... pictures, e.g. 'think of the brain as a digital computer ... think of the mind as a computer programme'. Such devices are undoubtedly very helpful and sometimes, as with this particular example, capable of being

highly misleading. Sometimes, though, it is difficult to tell whether such a metaphor is actually being offered or whether in fact what is on offer is a real portrayal of the actual constituents of the object in question. But behind that difference lies something that can be even more puzzling. That is to be able to distinguish what the difference is between an analytic description or explanation as 'literal' or 'metaphoric'.

Consider, as an example, something discussed at length here which will therefore have the virtue of familiarity, namely Searle's principal thesis which opened Chapter One. It was, of course, that:

- 1) ... speaking a language is engaging in a rule-governed form of behaviour.

For that substitute:

- 2) ... speaking a language is as if the speaker engaged in a rule-governed form of behaviour.

It is indubitable that something is being said in the first statement which is not being said in the second (and vice versa). But beyond saying that speech act theory in the second perhaps models speech competence whereas in the first it actually delineates its constituents. I would find it hard to say what difference it would make to the way Searle's theory is to be understood. In Chapter One, because Searle says the first, remarks about idealization notwithstanding, I criticized it on that basis. My point, though, is that if the theory had been explicitly constructed in an 'as if' manner, I cannot see how that, in and of itself, would blunt any of the criticism made there.

We have seen that at the time of the Tractatus, Wittgenstein had seen that no theory could represent its own internal relationship to what it was a model of. The later philosophy concurred in this view that analysis does not depict but, rather, displays its form of

representation. In the early philosophy, this insight is consequential upon a truth functional picture of the isomorphism between language and world. But the later philosophy's abandonment of that isomorphism, it will be remembered, required a radical reinterpretation of that insight. The kernel of this reinterpretation lies in Wittgenstein's recognition that the difference between model and reality is one that is internal to the language-games we can employ. This is why he stresses that:

Our clear and simple language-games are not preparatory studies for a future regularization of language - as it were first approximations, ignoring friction and air-resistance. The language-games are rather set up as objects of comparison which are meant to throw light on the facts of our language by way not only of similarities, but also of dissimilarities.

(Wittgenstein, 1968, para. 130)

Here, quite clearly, something like Searle's concept of idealization is seen by Wittgenstein as a stratagem for impliedly adverting to the 'real' status of the analyst's model, in just the sort of fashion that actually transpires in Searle's theory and the later additions to it. But for Wittgenstein, the object of analysis is one language-game, its analysis, another, and the relation of each to the other is one simply of objects of comparison. In this sense, then, we are always dealing in models, and, if that is so, then we can just as well say we are always dealing with the reality of the games we play in language. For Wittgenstein, the crucial thing to avoid is a dogmatism about correspondence, because that concretizes the very reality of our constructive use of language. He continues:

For we can avoid ineptness in our assertions only by presenting the model as what it is, as an object of comparison - as, so to speak, a measuring-rod; not as a preconceived idea to

which reality must correspond. (The dogmatism into which we fall so easily in doing philosophy.)

(ibid., para. 131)

So, this is not to counsel that we must, perforce, live in a world of shadows because our language gets between us and reality. Rather, what is real is the language-games we play. Consequently, the firmness and concreteness of the everyday world, its regularity and certainty, does not need to be supported either by a structure of determinate rules or a changeless core of concepts. And to question the reality of these abstractions is not to countenance a form of relativism indistinguishable from solipsism, but simply to acknowledge that rules and universals are made sense of practically, rather than followed and employed as though they themselves determined their meaning and sense.

Accordingly, to concede the located and contextualized character of accounting for phenomena, does not mean having to dispense with the employment of general categories or universal terms. Neither is their actual use rendered 'indefinitely problematic', except that is for someone who wishes to construe their existence as testifying to a use of them which is unconnected with the actual features of the way we use them. Yet the reification involved in 'seeing a law in the way a rule is used', or 'of predicating of the thing what lies in the method of representing it', is integral to our use of language. It follows that if the aim of analysis is not to try and better that usage by substituting an improved language, then an analysis of language-mastery will inevitably involve some element of reification of the object analysed. In other words, if this reification cannot be avoided by manoeuvres such as the substitution of a logically

correct language, then it must be dealt with in another way. In one of the more oracular pronouncements toward the beginning of Investigations, Wittgenstein summarizes his outlook on the relationship between language, its analysis and the problem of reification.

The problems arising through a misinterpretation of our forms of language have the character of depth. They are deep disquietudes; their roots are as deep in us as the forms of our language and their significance is as great as the importance of our language. - Let us ask ourselves: why do we feel a grammatical joke to be deep? (And that is what the depth of philosophy is.)

(Wittgenstein, 1968, para. 111)

This remark deserves an especially careful explication and commentary since it cannot be said that its meaning and point lies on its face. The depth of our misinterpretation of language arises (inter alia) in giving an analysis of its use and meaning. But the activity of analysing is integral to our forms of life, and the means of analysis (methodology) comprise important language-games within those forms. Hence, the problems which they generate (looked at here in terms of the concept of rule) display something of the importance of our language. That importance is not confined to just providing us with a means of communication. For, as the notion of grammar and the notion of forms of life advert, what we can speak and know is bound up with that as well. The difficulty here, as one might expect, is to try and say this in the right way. That is, a way which will not either try to determine or confine possible meanings or the contents of possible knowledge, and yet try and illuminate how a way of talking is (a way of) knowing. In reading the following quotation, it is worth bearing in mind the telling metaphor in On Certainty (paras. 96 to 99) about the river of knowledge (see above).

Disputes do not break out (among mathematicians, say) over the question whether a rule has been obeyed or not. People don't come to blows over it, for example. That is part of the framework on which the working of our language is based (for example, in giving descriptions).

'So you are saying that human agreement decides what is true and what is false?' - It is what human beings say that is true and false; and they agree in the language they use. This is not agreement in opinions, but in form of life.

If language is to be a means of communication, there must be agreement not only in definitions but also (queer as this may sound) in judgements. This seems to abolish logic, but does not do so. - It is one thing to describe methods of measurement, and another to obtain and state results of measurement. But what we call 'measuring' is partly determined by a certain constancy in results of measurement.

(Wittgenstein, 1968, paras. 240/1/2)

I take the implications of Wittgenstein's remarks for the activity of analysis to be these. If analysis is rightly understood, then generalization, abstraction and systematization can be employed to illuminate features of language mastery without themselves becoming reified into something underlying that mastery. In other words, what was amiss with Searle's employment of those analytic tools was his failure to perceive the reflexivity of their analytic usage, something manifested in his marginalization of the issue of converting 'knowing how' into 'knowing that'. Yet this failure did not negate an appreciation of the nature of our language mastery when examining his theory, because its misinterpretation of our forms of language nevertheless displayed the character of our language mastery. That is, despite the failure of his principal thesis (viz. that speaking a language is engaging in a rule-governed form of behaviour), speech act analysis showed through that failure salient elements of that mastery.

This was perhaps clearest when examining his analysis of indirect speech where the quiddity of ordinary usage played tricks upon the attempt to delineate how an 'indirect' speech act could be meant and understood. But, as we saw, that captious subtlety of ordinary usage could equally well undermine the attempt to conform that a 'direct' promise, such as 'I promise to pay you five pounds', had an unequivocal and unitary meaning.

This showing of the nature of language mastery through an appreciation of the problems with Searle's theory in turn illuminates how we are to understand the analysis provided by Garfinkel, Sacks and other ethnomethodologists and conversation analysts. In one crucially important sense they do not present an alternative analysis at all, if by that one meant that their rule systems, abstracted conversational devices, and so forth, specified the 'right' components of language mastery. This is why, when Phillips suggested that ethnomethodology and conversation analysis should be shorn one from the other, he got matters entirely wrong. For, if his proposals were the right way forward, his recognition of the reflexivity of rule analysis would have amounted to no more than Garfinkel's acute observation concerning the way the indexicality of language eventuates in the conditions of systematic analysis being cited:

... such that in that particular case the terms of the demonstration can be relaxed and nevertheless the demonstration be counted as an adequate one.

(Garfinkel, 1967, p. 6: see above)

All reflexivity amounts to here is a face-saving formula to reconcile the requirements of a determinate analytic structure with the actual flexibilities of language use. When Blum spoke of the rationality of the rational-legal agent (Blum, 1974, p. 227, see above), it is

construals such as this that he had in mind. So, Phillips's recognition that any system of rules still has to be applied by members, is there principally as a face-saving formula for a structure of determinate rules in much the same manner as Searle's analysis of indirectives.

Blum et al. acknowledge the great influence of the writings of Garfinkel (Blum; McHugh; Raffel & Foss, 1974, p. 22: see above), but, as noted, cannot see how his insights are brought to light in the analytic practices of other ethnomethodologists and conversation analysts. In other words, the work of these practitioners contains nothing more than either another variant of the impoverished conception of reflexivity of the rational-legal agent, or that jaded perception spoken of a few pages earlier which says of any analysis that it is 'just another account'. And, as they so acutely observe, these positions are in so many respects mirror images of one another; the commitment to positivism being merely transformed into the nihilism of jilted expectations at its lack of explanatory success.

Conclusions about how practitioners of these disciplines regard their own work have been drawn in Chapter Two of this thesis. However, it could transpire that Blum et al are entirely right with respect to how practitioners of ethnomethodology and conversation analysis in fact regard their work. Nonetheless, the point and significance of understanding rule analysis in the right way is not something which can be settled by assessing how many practising ethnomethodologists and conversation analysts understand their own analytic practice in a reflexive fashion. The argument presented here presumes that they do, but if that is wrong, then all I say is that their work can be so regarded, and moreover, if it is, then it is consistent with the

understanding of analysis found in the writings of Garfinkel and Sacks. To put it more strongly than this, though, would erode the significance of Garfinkel's insight that analysis involves the substitution of objective for indexical expressions: a substitution that nonetheless 'remains programmatic in every particular case' (Garfinkel, 1967, p. 6).

This is why, in that already mentioned crucially important sense, Chapter Two does not represent an alternative to the analysis of speech and social competence presented in Chapter One. Ethnomethodology and conversation analysis do not specify the 'right' components of language mastery in contradistinction to those elicited by speech act theory. Recognising the reflexivity of rule analysis does not consist in revealing the true constituent rules of speech and social interaction but, rather, in reminding the analyst and reader of what they know and do as language masters. This difference has been aptly distinguished in a way which is reminiscent of Wittgenstein's conception of the work of the philosopher (see Wittgenstein, 1968, para. 127).

... we find it all the more curious that while it is possible to get a sense of the vast interpretive and improvisational skills from reading accounts of conversation analysis; it is not possible to get more than just a sense. ... that this is what conversation analysis has come to ... that it provides a way of talking that is especially powerful in calling up our competences in order to understand the descriptions that hint at a sense of what those competences are. Actually, we would not complain unduly if that is what it turned out to be in the end. We would have grounds for complaint however if it pretended to be something else than a collection of elegant reminders.

(Williams and Chambers, 1978, pp. 25-6)

The conception of ethnomethodology and conversation analysis disclosed in that quotation describes how a systematic analysis of membership can be reconciled with a reflexive conception of analysis.

The value of systematic analysis lies in 'calling up our competences'. In this way, the value of systematic analysis is retained for the purposes Searle made reference to, but it is understanding its relationship with ordinary speaking practices which provides a way of saying, 'what those competences are'.

XII Rule Analysis and Social Analysis: An Indifferent Conclusion

Even if my arguments are sound, what does the intellectual exercise that has occupied these pages have to say about sociology? As I said earlier, I am going to state the implications for sociological work that arise from this thesis via a discussion of the concept of ethnomethodological indifference. This concept has been received by sociologists as more or less a snub to the value and integrity of their endeavours. In return, the writings of Garfinkel, Sacks and other ethnomethodologists and conversation analysts has been dismissed as merely a precocious variety of microsociology. As we have seen, this has generated views about the notion of 'indexicality' which are not only philosophically dubious, but also unwarrantably restrictive as to the forms a social science can take.

Such debate as there has been, on paper and in seminar rooms, has often generated more heat than light, and had the consequence of keeping many sociologists in a state of some ignorance about what Garfinkel and Sacks actually have to say. I believe this to be regrettable because I think they have something to offer about the understanding of sociological analysis which is important for our understanding of society. As this thesis has been written in order to come to grips with the depth of their thought, I want to conclude by stating, as clearly and simply as I can, the understanding of sociology which writing ^{it} has imparted to me.

The best place to start is with what Garfinkel and Sacks say about this indifference. It is noteworthy that their treatment of the concept is to be found under this heading: Ethnomethodology's Interests in Formal Structures of Practical Actions. We are told:

Ethnomethodology's interests, like those of constructive analysis, insistently focus on the formal structures of everyday activities. However, the two understand formal structures differently and in incompatible ways.

(Garfinkel and Sacks, 1970, p. 345)

This 'difference' and the resultant incompatibility do not lie either with respect to the possibility or warrantability of general formulations, structural descriptions or the right 'level' of analysis. Rather, they concern the understanding of how general formulations concerning structural features of a(ny) society count as valid descriptions of and valid knowledge about that society or societies.

Accounts of formal structures are enabled to be done, we are told, 'via sociologists' mastery of natural language', and ethnomethodological studies of formal structures are directed to the linguistic means which enable such formal structures to be described. Garfinkel and Sacks emphasize that the reader should not misconstrue their interest as one which might be seen merely as some adjunct to the task of analysing actual social structures, that is, as if their work was a sociology of sociology's research interests and methods.

Our work does not stand ... in any modifying, elaborating, contributing, foundation-building relationship to professional sociological reasoning ...

(ibid.)

Neither, they stress, is their 'indifference' directed at those orders of tasks, or sociology singled out as a special object of study. There is no sense in which sociological practice is some especially 'faulted'

or 'problematic' order of knowledge which makes it especially worthy of attention. What is interesting about sociology from the ethnomethodological standpoint is its methods for making the world rational and reportable. In this respect, it is no more noteworthy than:

... the practices of legal reasoning, conversational reasoning, divinational reasoning, psychiatric reasoning, and the rest.

(ibid., p. 346)

It is equally important not to construe ethnomethodology's interest in the mastery of natural language as involving a claim that its topic of study concerns more basic social practices than those which might be located by concepts such as class, race, culture, gender and so forth. If this was the right way to view matters, it would be tempting to regard such concepts as 'reifications' of these more basic practices. However, in terms of Garfinkel and Sacks's own claims about the nature of language use, such a claim is without merit. One might as well say that the concept 'broom' reifies the objects 'brush' and 'handle'. As we have seen, Wittgenstein pointed out that this idea is not only essentialist and reductivist, it also ignores the fact that it is the way a concept is used which makes it reificatory. And this is closely connected with one of the most persistent themes in his later philosophy, namely that the discovery of some 'basic' practice or feature of language by an analyst, has its source in the elective practices of the analyst. Consequently, there is no sense in which the indifference is motivated by ethnomethodology's perception that it is a more 'basic' social science, on analogy, say, with the place attributed to physics in the natural sciences. Indeed, its indifference is directed at such claims.

Despite the plethora of sociological perspectives, theories and methods, there have been persistent claims that there could be one particular form of 'adequate' and 'correct' sociological knowledge. Ethnomethodology has been heard as saying that the multitude of sociological approaches is without hope of remedy, and, moreover, that it is indifferent to such a hope. Ethnomethodology is seen to hold a position of thoroughgoing relativism, a view which is then tied to the solipsistic construals of the concept of indexicality spoken of before. The result of this perception is that some practitioners feel able to ignore the corpus of ethnomethodological and conversation analytic writings on what they feel to be philosophical grounds, while others, like Phillips, feel able to cull bits of it here and there to fit in with some preferred 'mainstream' of academic work.

On this issue, some points have been mistakenly run together and others misconstrued. To begin with, there is no ethnomethodological argument saying that the variety of sociological perspectives are irresolvable into a single unified theory. They may, as they stand, possess incompatible understandings of, say, the nature of social action, but there is, for instance, no reason why a choice could not be exercised in building such a theory. In fact, theory building in the natural as well as the social sciences often contains incompatibilities of this kind, and often they seem more fruitful than damaging to the progress of scientific understanding. Ethnomethodology holds no brief for legislating the boundaries of 'legitimate' social knowledge in this sense at all (it is indifferent to that aim), whether this eventuates in a pluralistic or monistic conception of theory and method in sociology. In fact, anything but indifference to this sort of legitimating exercise would conflict with the understanding of

language and social life in ethnomethodological and conversation analytic work.

However, Garfinkel and Sacks's perspective is seen to question the prospects of some unified and general theory of society in another way. This concerns their claims about the substitution of objective for indexical expressions. Now, theorizing does precisely this kind of work: indeed, there would be little point to it unless it did so. But as we have seen, for Garfinkel and Sacks this substitution is an ongoing practical achievement, which makes every member a theorist. Consequently, whilst the prospects of a single unified sociological theory cannot be ruled out, what Garfinkel and Sacks claim is that the very way of understanding that theory would rob much of the point of the intellectual advance its singularity supposedly offered us. Thus they do not question the possibility of a unified theory of society as such, but rather the way in which societal knowledge is construed in such theorizing.

It is worthwhile putting this point in the obverse. It has also been assumed that the ethnomethodological critique of the practices of 'constructive sociology' involved a claim that ethnomethodological practice was the only way to pursue a valid social science. For every sociological theory, method, topic, interest ... substitute ethnomethodology. If this was the instruction to be garnered from what Garfinkel and Sacks say, bearing mind that there is nothing special about sociological reasoning as compared to 'legal reasoning ... divinational reasoning ... and the rest', we would merely be confronted with the case of a study that had swallowed its subject matter. Ethnomethodology involves no claim of this kind at all; it is, to use that word again, indifferent to it. Consequently, the critique of

the practices of constructive sociology only adverts to the fact that sociology constructs a picture of society from the theory and methods employed to find and organize its data into an account,

... that makes phenomena observable-reportable,
that is, account-able phenomena.

(Garfinkel and Sacks, 1970, p. 342)

Now, the point of that insight is not to foreclose on the possible ways of seeing the social world. As Wittgenstein says, even if we can find fault, those ways of seeing 'are as deep in us as the forms of our language'. And that makes them important to understanding what a society is ... what our society is like. With this in mind, it is clear that ethnomethodology could never stand as an alternative, a better approach to understanding society than conventional sociology. In fact, I believe the word ethno-methodology is itself a caution against thinking in that way. Rather, its value for sociology is that it can serve as a powerful reminder of what is involved in sociological theorizing. Those reminders may dent some aspirations for social science, but it is implicit in the arguments of this thesis that only good can come of that. For little in the way of understanding something so complex and indefinite, yet so powerful as society, is to be gained if the mode of study tries to stand beyond the practices which are not only its subject matter, but the very possibility of its intelligibility.

I believe this is one of the reasons why Wittgenstein talks of the depth of philosophy being like a grammatical joke, since this is a way of reminding the philosopher not to 'sublime' the understanding of his subject. In this thesis I have tried to explicate that quality for social analysis by examining the reflexivity of rule analysis. This has allowed us to see that when Garfinkel and Sacks speak of

'constructive' sociology, that is not to say that their accounts of social phenomena are any less constructed, any less a portrayal, rather than the portrayal of the constituents of some social phenomenon. Perhaps one reason for the variety of sociological approaches is a continual dissatisfaction with the 'fit' between some account and those it 'accounts for'. This is not a failure to be remedied, as the reason for it lies in the identity between the accounting practices of the analyst and the practices the analyst studies.

The variety of approaches to studying social phenomena, including ethnomethodology and conversation analysis, can hardly be expected to be less than the variety of social life the discipline confronts as its subject matter. That is not a commitment to relativism in the sense that would rob systematic analysis of its purpose or sociological analysis of its sense. It does no more by way of counselling the prohibition of, say, an understanding of contemporary society in terms of class or gender, than the arguments of ~~this~~ thesis could legitimate some particular form of analysis as the only right way in which society is to be understood. Rather, it suggests looking at social analysis, however it is done, as being an instance of what it describes, in the sense that it is productive of the phenomena it reports.

The indifference of ethnomethodology is directed toward studies of social phenomena that do not involve a recognition of this insight in their researches. There is no hostility, much less incompatibility between that insight and the work of the sociologist. Such reflexivity can only serve to deepen the understanding of social processes in whatever way and at whatever 'level' they are topicalized by the investigator.

FOOTNOTES

1. See Blum, 1974; and Blum, McHugh, Raffel and Foss, 1974.

2. Remember that Searls says his method is one,

... of constructing idealized models ...
analogous to the sort of theory construction
that goes on in most sciences, e.g. the
construction of economic models, or accounts
of the solar system which treat planets as
points. Without abstraction and idealization
there is no systematization.

(1969, p. 56)

3. See Jarvie, (1972), for proposals of this sort and for an explanation
of how those proposals are indebted to the work of Sir Karl Popper.

4. I heard this term used by them at a conference at the University
of Sheffield in July 1978.

5. For an explication of this concept, Phillips refers to P. Berger
and T. Luckmann, (1966). Cf. the use Streeck makes of this concept
in his paper discussed in Chapter One.

6. Phillips, in fact, argues that idealist subjectivism and empiricist
materialism are different expressions of the same epistemology
because both ignore the social dimension of meaning and knowledge.

7. Cf. Karl Marx and F. Engels (1974, p. 47) who use this metaphor
in their famous remark on the inversion of material and ideal
factors in the consciousness of agents in certain social formations.

8. In the Philosophical Investigations, Wittgenstein expresses it thus:

'How am I able to obey a rule?' - if this is not
a question about causes, then it is about the
justification for my following the rule in the
way I do.

If I have exhausted the justifications, I have
reached bedrock, and my spade is turned. Then
I am inclined to say: 'This is simply what I do'.

(Remember that we sometimes demand definitions for the sake not of their content, but of their form. Our requirement is an architectural one; the definition a kind of ornamental coping that supports nothing.)

(1968, para. 217)

9. The metaphor of a fibre running through all language use appears at the end of Wittgenstein's introduction of the concepts of language game and family resemblance in the Philosophical Investigations. The passage offers one of the clearest outlines of Wittgenstein's conception of language in the later philosophy. See Wittgenstein, 1968, paras. 65-67 where he says:

... the strength of the thread does not reside in the fact that some one fibre runs through its whole length, but in the overlapping of many fibres.

But if one wished to say: 'There is something common ...' One might as well say: 'Something runs through the whole thread - namely the continuous overlapping of those fibres'.

10. The notion of rule scepticism is coined by H.L.A. Hart in The Concept of Law, 1961, p. 132ff.
11. As Phillips notes, such problems are usually explored in terms of the features of natural objects. The problem can be extended to the comprehension of natural numbers. For example, if membership of a set of three figure mathematical objects must not include as a constituent the number 3, the empiricist's learner cannot, of course, have a rule to that effect but must discard potential incumbents possessing that number by the perception '3' stimulating the operation 'non inclusion of the candidate'. Clearly though, one of the problems of this kind of account of meaning is that the exclusionary operation itself presupposes the learner's recognition of that which the analysis seeks to exclude.

12. The Greek for 'heap' is soros; a reminder that the problem has a history that extends back beyond the preoccupations of twentieth-century analytic philosophy. The sorites is a chain syllogism (e.g. a cat is a quadruped, a quadruped is an animal, an animal is a substance; therefore a cat is a substance) which leads by gradual steps to semantic indefiniteness or absurdity. It is based on exploiting the absence of precise, especially numerical limits to the application of terms (e.g; 10,000 lumps of coal = a heap; 9,999 lumps of coal = a heap; ; 1 lump of coal = a heap.)
13. As mentioned, Phillips sees his analysis to be an extension of the work of Bernard Harrison (1972) which is explicitly directed toward unifying the work of Wittgenstein and Chomsky. In a powerful article on the private language argument in Wittgenstein's philosophy, Saul Kripke says:

... the Investigations ... is hostile to any attempt to analyse language by uncovering a hidden deep structure. In this last respect, modern transformational linguistics since Noam Chomsky, has been closer to the Tractatus than the Investigations.

(1981, p. 305, n. 43)

14. As Kripke says:

The simplest, most basic idea of the Tractatus can hardly be dismissed: a declarative sentence gets its meaning by virtue of its truth conditions, by virtue of its correspondence to facts that must obtain if it is true.

(1981, p. 273)

The problem was Wittgenstein's complete generalization of this idea, which is dubious even with respect to declaratives. The later philosophy's emphasis on usage completely altered the approach of finding some factor 'by virtue of' which some sentence or class of sentences possessed meaning.

15. In the Tractatus, we are told:

5.542 It is clear, however, that 'A believes that p', 'A has the thought p' and 'A says p' are of the form "'p" says p': and this does not involve a correlation of a fact with an object, but rather the correlation of facts by means of the correlation of their objects.

5.5421 This shows too that there is no such thing as the soul - the subject, etc. - as it is conceived in the superficial psychology of the present day.

(Wittgenstein, 1961)

16. Wittgenstein quotes, with approval, Goethe's disavowal of St John's gospel.

Language - I want to say - is a refinement,
im Anfang war die Tat ('in the beginning was the deed').

(Wittgenstein, 1976, p. 420)

17. In the Confessions I.8., Augustine says:

When they (my elders) named some object, and accordingly moved toward something, I saw this and I grasped what the thing was called by the sound they uttered when they meant to point it out. Their intention was shewn by their bodily movements, as it were the natural language of all peoples: the expression of the face, the play of the eyes, the movement of other parts of the body, and the tone of voice which expresses our state of mind in seeking, having, rejecting, or avoiding something. Thus, as I heard words repeatedly used in their proper places in various sentences, I gradually learnt to understand what objects they signified; and after I had trained my mouth to form these signs, I used them to express my own desires.

(cited by Wittgenstein, 1968, para. 1)

18. Wittgenstein says:

We remain unconscious of the prodigious diversity of all the every-day language-games because the clothing of our language makes everything look alike.

(Wittgenstein, 1968, p. 224)

19. In a footnote to this passage, Cavell says:

What 'learning' and 'teaching' are, here is, or ought to be, seriously problematic. We say a word and the child repeats it. What is 'repeating' here? All we know is that the child makes a sound which we accept. (How does the child recognise acceptance? Has he learned what that is?)

Compare this with the views of Augustine (see above footnote 17).

20. And the regress does not just concern an endless supply of rulers. As Wittgenstein says:

... There is one thing of which one can say neither that it is one metre long, nor that it is not one metre long, and that is the standard metre in Paris ...

(Wittgenstein, 1968, para. 50)

21. After making this point, he adds in parentheses:

We do not usually carry out the order 'Bring me a red flower' by looking up the colour red in a table of colours and then bringing a flower of the colour that we find in the table; but when it is a question of choosing or mixing a particular shade of red, we do sometimes make use of a sample or a table.

(Wittgenstein, 1968, para. 53)

22. The concept of grammar in Wittgenstein's later philosophy is discussed by Specht (1969, Chapter VI) and Hacker (1972, Chapter VI).
23. See S. Korner (1970) who puts forward this view.

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