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Face-to-face Interaction in Research Interviews

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Abstract

This thesis is an ethnography of the research interview. It presents an analysis of interviewer-interviewee interaction unencumbered by the methodological and practical concerns of research interviewers, for collecting reliable or valid data. The thesis argues that positivist and interactionist descriptions of the research interview, that are tied to interactional procedures for saving the referential quality of interview talk - by maximising or minimising respondent interviewer interaction - under-theorise the interaction they describe. Thus this thesis suspends any concern with the referential quality of interview data and draws upon a particular reading of the work of Goffman to analyse how participants accomplish a research interview as an intelligible interactional reality organised from within and how participants honour and accommodate each other as ritual selves in the primary roles of interviewee and interviewer. The thesis reviews positivist and interactionist descriptions of the research interview; makes the case for a Goffman style ritual analysis and presents an empirical analysis of qualitative interview talk.
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Chapter 1
Introduction

This thesis is an ethnography of the research interview. It offers an analysis of face-to-face interaction in research interviews, unencumbered by the practical concerns of the research interviewer for collecting reliable and valid data.

As both a tool of research and an interaction, discussions of research interviews take the form of rules, rules of how to and rules of how not to interview. These rules, formulated to address either positivist concerns with validity or interactionist concerns with reliability (Hester and Francis 1994), by default describe interviewer-interviewee interaction. However to describe, proscriptively or retrospectively, interview interaction in terms of rule following (or rule deviation) pre-formulates descriptions and renders invisible the in situ practices by which participants make their actions recognisable and reportable as instances of following-the-rules-of-interviewing. These practices are what Garfinkel (1967) refers to as normal appearances i.e. stable and ordered interaction. No rule or set of rules is ever sufficient to produce the stable and ordered interaction; rules require interpretation and no set of rules can anticipate every eventuality. There is consequently more to the appearance of rule following than merely following the rules. This 'more', the in situ practices of interviewer and respondent interaction, is the research topic for my thesis.

My aim is not, per se, to document the inadequacy of rule based descriptions of the research interview because the adequacy of such descriptions lies in their practical use - providing novice interviewers with descriptions of interviews such that they know for what they are aiming. The inadequacy of rule based descriptions,
usually denigrated as text book approaches (see Silverman 1993, Oakley 1981), is their failure to describe convincingly to the initiated what 'goes on' in a research interview (rules require interpretation and do not cover every eventuality). It is this descriptive failure, at the level of interaction, that I take as the warrant for my thesis.

The thesis will examine interview data collected from two ESRC funded research projects: (i) Labour Market Decision-Making in low-income households\(^1\) and (ii) Labour Market Decision-Making in high-income households\(^2\). In both projects heterosexual couples with dependent children were interviewed about: their choice of jobs; their use of public and private welfare; the division of domestic and paid labour and their methods of budgeting. Each adult member of the household was interviewed separately and then with their partner. The interviews were not structured round a formal questionnaire, rather the respondents were asked to respond expansively to questions while the interviewer attempted to adopt a conversational style. The interviews were tape recorded and lasted approximately 30 minutes. Of the extracts used in this thesis I am, in the main, the interviewer\(^3\). To ensure the anonymity of the respondents they have been given either the names of rivers (the lower income couples) or trees (the higher income couples), (for an analysis of the interview data, in terms of its original raison d' être see Jordan et al 1992 and 1994; for a comparative analysis of the data see Jordan and Redley 1994).

In this thesis the data will be used exclusively for insight into interview interaction.

Many of the issues discussed in the thesis will be relevant to the study of interviews in other situations, such as professional-client interviews. It is not my intention to generalise my analysis to these other areas. My ritual analysis of research interviews seeks rather

\(^1\) Grant no. G00232446
\(^2\) Grant no. RG00232124
\(^3\) Bill Jordan or Helen Key being the other interviewers.
to draw the reader into the mutual fatefulness that was a feature of these interactions between interviewer and respondent.


A few words more may be said about the positioning of my work in relation to what are, in both cases, robust and independent traditions. Peräkylä and Silverman (1991) draw upon the work of Garfinkel and Goffman to analyse counselling interactions. This is however a reading of Garfinkel that finds its apotheosis in conversational analysis, whereas my Garfinkel is the ethnographic Garfinkel of the breaching experiments and the study of Agnes, a transsexual. A further difference between my thesis and Peräkylä and Silverman's co-reading of Garfinkel and Goffman is that their Goffman is read to elaborate an understanding of turn-taking (via the idea of footings) whereas it is a Goffmanian notion of ritual selves that is central to my analysis of interview interaction.4

Goffman's work has been variously classified as structural-functionalism, existential and symbolic interactionist (Burns 1992:6). My focus is upon extracting a theory of self from Goffman's texts. I interpret Goffman as describing non-essential selves that experience a sense of being a self and manifest its observable form - its face (Goffman 1969a) - as a consequence of interactional involvement. A self is a self to others to the extent and in the

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manner that its face is ritually honoured. Interviewers and interviewees establish their respective faces and experience themselves and each other as selves, by paying ritual regard to their own and the other's public face. A ritual regard that is accomplished by presentational displays of deference and demeanour (Goffman 1969b) that produces normal interview appearances as a set of normative expectations or rules (Goffman 1972). From this perspective a rule is an external constraint. Such a position is in sharp contrast to Garfinkel's normal appearances which are not recoverable from rules. For Garfinkel, following a rule is a practical accomplishment: interactants make their actions recognisable and reportable as instances of following the norms and rules (as stated above, no rule or set of rules is ever sufficient). Garfinkel's normal appearances are not framed by a set of appropriate rules but are an accomplishment as interactants interpret normative expectations as a branching texture of relevance (Garfinkel 1967:26). Goffman's interactants are framed rule followers, whereas Garfinkel's interactants artfully interpret rules within emergent but never (except retrospectively) realised frames.

It is Watson's (1992) argument that theoretical concepts derived from one theory are not transferable to another. He writes specifically addressing the possibility of a Goffman Garfinkel synthesis:

the concepts "Goffmanians" and ethnomethodologists/conversation analysts, respectively, use have a "logical geography", which forms their relations with other concepts of similar and dissimilar logical types. I have argued that conflating the two conceptual configurations breaks this logical geography and involves logically illegitimate operations. It involves the transplantation of concepts to logical types to which they do not belong, that is, within which they lose their specificity of sense and application.

(Watson 1992:12)

This argument is based upon the observation that Goffman's and Garfinkel's interactants as respectively selves and members are incompatible. Goffman's analysis is 'ironic' (to Watson) since it goes beyond empirically observable data to produce the interactant's motivation (to make and save face) as the core phenomenon (see also
Schegloff 1988). In contrast ethnomethodology (to which Watson is closely allied) is non-ironic in that its focus is upon what is empirically recoverable from audio and video recordings of interactions, particularly their sequential organisation (no reference is made to the participant's understanding of a situation beyond what is displayed in their talk). These two positions, Watson argues, can no more be combined than can tennis and football to produce a supergame. Watson is making the case for a disciplined discipline - for which there is a place. I however am making the case for an alternative conceptual viewpoint on the phenomena of interaction and suggest that Goffman's ritual selves and Garfinkel's members as artful practitioners can be usefully combined for the purpose of understanding research interview interaction. Potentially the most troublesome feature of drawing upon both Goffman and Garfinkel together is placing Goffman's notion of an interactional Self, motivated to make and save face, within a version of ethnomethodology, which emphasises that the 'stable, constraining, recognisable, rational and orderly properties of 'social facts' are local accomplishments' (Lynch 1993:265). Thus the interactional-selves of Goffman's analyses are a reality that members artfully document, via their methodic procedures, and not an underlying explanatory reality.

The idea of an essential self has been convincingly deconstructed (Edwards and Potter 1992). However reducing a person's moral obligations to what is displayed in verbal accounts (as do ethnomethodology, discourse analysis and conversation analysis) defies common-sense thinking. We routinely think and experience our selves as selves and to this extent my analysis prefaces an intuitive and introspective experience. My contention throughout this thesis is that the moral accountability of persons as selves structures interaction - without experiencing ourselves and others as selves we would not be able to co-ordinate our actions. Analytically what is required is a non-essentialist theory of self and just such a theory of self, an interactional self, is recoverable from Goffman's work and operationalised in his discussions of face work (1969a), deference and demeanour (1967) and alarm (1972).
In an interactional frame a participant takes a stance towards its normative expectations by either straightforward or ironic conformity (Travers 1994), accomplishing what Goffman (1969b) calls role distance - a degree of distance between what is publicly expected and what is actually presented. As a consequence of taking a stance the self as a behind-the-scenes but visible director of events is read from presentational displays, experienced as context free and assumed to have been 'there' all along. This self is an interactional self, it is not located in a particular body or person but diffusely in an interactional context. The body is just a convenient peg upon which this interactional self is hung. (Goffman 1971:245).

This interactional self is not for an analyst directly recoverable from participants' talk (or interaction). An interactant may be doing 'self work' without making any direct verbal reference to him or herself and this is in sharp contrast to the speaker of discourse and conversational analysis who only does 'self work' when making direct reference to himself or herself. For participants selfhood is experienced and seen either as a self that is being its self or as a self that is seen attempting to be other than its self (as when a person is 'seen' as masking his or her 'true' intentions). However 'self' as an explanatory hypothesis (as I wish to use it) has to be imposed on the data after the event (much as it is read by participants). The analytical warrant for such a reading of self when it is not directly recoverable from a transcript (as if anything ever was) can only be sustained by trading upon one's own experience of being an embodied self. Such an approach I believe, however, avoids the charge of solipsism and claims the right to be sociological (as opposed to psychological) by bracketing the life-world (Schutz and Luckmann 1973:3) experience of selfhood in order to rediscover it as non-essential, context dependent and interactionally produced.

Thus the notion of ritual self drawn from Goffman and deployed in this thesis is a hypothetical abstraction - based in a life-world experience. It functions as an explanatory device but is never validated by the interactions it explains.
A second point of contention relating to my proposed reading of Goffman and Garfinkel relates to the term 'normal appearances' which both authors use to describe ordered and stable interactional realities. What they mean by the term is significantly different. Goffman construes normal appearances as frames or time-slices of ordered and stable interaction in which normal appearances (as norms of presentational conduct) are visible to and seldom departed from by participants. Normal appearances are contrasted to alarming appearances (1972) as those moments when ordered and stable interaction, due to presentational failures, is on the verge of collapse. At such moments interactants normalise alarming appearances by giving accounts (excuses, apologies, explanation etc.) that reframe the interaction. Accounts restore normal appearances in the face of alarm because Goffman's interactants know, within a particular frame, the presentational rules. For Garfinkel however accounts are not just a restorative of normal appearances. Rather accounts are the sum total of all interactional conduct. Garfinkel's accounts are the seen but unnoticed artful practices (1967:9) by which reality is produced as a branching texture of relevance. Garfinkel's normal appearances are not reality frames but a branching texture of relevance that is constantly on the move and whereas Goffman's frames are directly visible to participants an interactional frame for Garfinkel's interactants is only visible retrospectively from within another frame. Garfinkel deconstructs normal appearances as a member's seen but unnoticed achievement. Goffman's normal appearances are seen (unaccounted for in Garfinkel's sense) and structurally frame participants presentations as a set of normative expectations.

Travers (1994) however argues that Garfinkel's accounts (as the means by which member's accomplish an observable and reportable world) are perceived because no matter how invisible (seen but unnoticed) the artful practices are, by which members construct and furnish themselves with an accountably real world, these practices are dependent upon visible and audible conduct. This conduct is seen and heard - not in terms of accounts - but it is never the less seen and heard and this visible and audible world is Goffman's world of presentations. These presentations are not in themselves what
Garfinkel's interactants achieve with their accounts (an objectively real and reportable world) because, as Garfinkel implies, presentations are not accounts (Garfinkel 1967:174). However Goffman's presentations do have meaning within particular frames because without these presentations there would be no interactional frame. Travers writes:

Garfinkel's analysis needs Goffman's presentations as a basis for accounting, and because incompatible self presentations would destroy his ritual order of interaction, Goffman needs Garfinkel's accounting in order to sustain his interactional order through a succession of slice-of-time presentations.

(Travers 1994:306)

Travers develops his argument by stating that Goffman's and Garfinkel's interactants as either selves or members are only experienced as such when there is a moral failure to live up to the normal appearances (Goffman) or a breach in the routine grounds of normal appearances (Garfinkel). Thus the more orderly an interaction is, the less it is peopled by interactants who are experientially real, morally accountable and active participants in their own moral world. Selfhood or membership is not so much a consequence of normal appearances but of abnormal appearances (Travers 1991:307). Breaches and moral failures potentially include a diverse array of actions, including the novel and the innovative, that 'fail' to live up to the idealised expectations of Goffman's ritual normal appearance and require of Garfinkel's members artful accounts that sustain normal appearances.

I have described these interactions as research interviews, a definition that I have adopted and traded upon in order to analyse the utterances of the speakers. Similarly I have described the speakers as either interviewees or interviewers and in doing so I have again traded upon my lay knowledge of these interactions. Such assumptions run counter to Schegloff's (1991) injunctions for conversational analysis that:

Even if we can show by analysis of the details of the interaction that some characterisation of the context or the setting in which
the talk is going on (such as 'in the hospital') is relevant for the parties, that they are oriented to the setting so characterised, there remains another problem, and that is to show how the context or the setting (the local social structure), in that aspect, is procedurally consequential to the talk. How does the fact that the talk is being conducted in some setting (say 'the hospital') issue in any consequences for the shape, form, trajectory, content, or character of the interaction that the parties conduct? And what is the mechanism by which the context-so-understood has determinate consequences for the talk?

(Schegloff 1991:52-53 emphasis in original)

Thus for Schegloff the context of an interaction is to be read - in so far as there is evidence for it - from 'the shape, form, trajectory, content, or character' of the talk - its sequential features - and not inferred from a lay or traditional sociological position (not conversational analysis), that assumes context a priori.

Schegloff's project for conversational analysis, a legitimate line of enquiry, is not however the line that this thesis will pursue. Amongst conversational analysts there is disagreement as to the extent to which it is both possible and desirable to read context only from the sequential features of talk (see Drew and Heritage (1992) editors introduction to 'Talk at Work'). And further, I believe it is sufficient to note that for the ethnographic purposes of this thesis the interaction and hence its context is studied as interview interaction and the participants are studied as interviewers and interviewees. It thus is not part of my research project to establish the institutional context of these interactions by reference to the mechanisms (Schegloff 1991:53) by which the talk is organised; my research project is rather to document the ritual organisation of the talk as it honours and accommodates ritual selves.

In the three essays collected under the title Interaction Ritual (1967) Goffman examines the problem of social order with reference to what he calls 'ritual equilibrium' (1967:45). Participants in a social scene are self-regulating (1967:44) to the extent that they are:
taught to be perceptive, to have feeling attached to self and a self expressed through face, to have pride, honour, and dignity, to have considerateness, to have tact and a certain amount of poise.

(Goffman 1967:44)

A person according to Goffman is a kind of 'construct' (Goffman 1967:45) built up from these moral requirements which determine the value he or she puts upon him or herself; he argues that the 'general capacity to be bound by moral rules may well belong to the individual, but the particular set of rules which transforms him into a human being [possessive of a viable social self] derives from requirements established in the ritual organisation of social encounters' (1967:45). The individual within this ritual context - a self - is for Goffman a 'deity' (1967:95) worthy of ritual care 'because he can actually understand the ceremonial significance of the way he is treated, and quite on his own respond dramatically to what is proffered him' (Goffman 1967:95). Selfhood is thus both the outcome of this ritual organisation and the object to which ritual care is directed. The ritual order is according to Goffman (1967:42) organised along 'accommodative lines'.

In The Presentation of Self (1969) Goffman elaborates this conception of ritual, the study of face-work and the means by which ritual deference is paid to selves, as a functional process in which order is created (Collins 1980:181).

To project a certain definition of a situation - as say an interview - is to claim a moral identity for oneself. A self that one has the moral right to expect others to treat and value appropriately. A social reality constructed out of these moral obligations is dependent upon its participants to uphold a consistent definition of the situation - a ritual equilibrium. To the extent that this is achieved, the ritual order is organised on accommodative lines, it accommodates ritual selves and their projected definitions. A process which Goffman in The Presentation of Self (1969:243) claims is founded upon a 'basic dialectic'.

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In their capacity as performers individuals will be concerned with maintaining the impression that they are living up to the many standards by which they and their products are judged. Because these standards are so numerous and so pervasive, the individuals who are performers dwell more than we might think in a moral world. But, qua performers, individuals are concerned not with the moral issues of realising these standards, but with the amoral issue of engineering a convincing impression that these standards are being realised. Our activity, then, is largely concerned with moral matters, but as performers we do not have a moral concern with them. As performers we are merchants of morality. Our day is given over to intimate contact with the goods we display and our minds are filled with intimate understandings of them; but it may well be that the more attention we give to these goods, then the more distant we feel from them and from those who are believing enough to buy them. To use a different imagery, the very obligation and profitability of appearing always in a steady moral light, of being a socialised character, forces one to be the sort of person who is practised in the ways of the stage.

(Goffman 1971: 243-244)

It is this stage-craft practised as pride, honour, dignity, considerateness, tact and poise towards ritual selves that provides for the stability and order of an interaction: its ritual equilibrium. And this becomes the topic for my empirical analysis in chapters three through to seven. My reading of Goffman is used to analyse how participants in research interviews render their actions reportable and accountable as instances of doing a research interview while also ritually honouring their own and each other’s self. Such a perspective is equally applicable to my own work as: how-a-student-writes-a-thesis-that-makes-observable-and-reportable-participants-practices-in-research-interviews-while-attending-to-his-face-and-the-faces-of-significant-others. Thus this thesis is an example of the same phenomenon it seeks to describe, producing an ordered and stable reality that is potentially in danger of collapsing.
A summary of chapters

Each chapter of the thesis has been written to stand as an individual analysis of the phenomenon of research interview interaction. This approach has enabled me to study the topic such that Goffman's theoretical insights are weighted differently, in each chapter, in what I hope is a revealing and sensitive account of the data.

Chapter 2: A Methodological Review reviews positivist and interactionist approaches to interview research and their respective solutions to the problem of interviewee-interviewer interaction. Problems and solutions which I suggest are strikingly similar because they have their origins in a similar view of the referential quality of language. This is followed by a discussion of how positivist and interactionist conceptions of the research interview are rhetorically organised by the use of two descriptive repertoires: the interactional and the instrumental. The research interview is then discussed as an interaction, highlighting the impossibility of removing interactional contamination as 'perceived' by positivist and interactionist approaches. I suggest an alternative focus upon meaning and self production. Finally I discuss Goffman's study of asylums (1968) as a starting point for the application of his ideas to the study of interview interaction.

Chapter 3: Being Expansive: How Respondents Say 'More' is the first of the empirical chapters. Reviewing Garfinkel's study of Agnes (1967) I introduce the notion of 'passing', where passing in a research interview is defined as telling an account that is hearable as consistent which is, in this instance, isomorphic with being honest. In an interaction, a context of accountability, participants are morally accountable to both a sense of context and to the self defining implications of their utterances. For an interview account to be heard as honest (a requirement of interview talk) it must be consistent; however, consistency cannot be specified in advance, it is a practical achievement. Consequentially an interviewee ends up saying 'more' to 'pass' i.e. cover him or herself against the potential charge of inconsistency.
Chapter 4: Interview Moments: How It Is That Some Respondents Appear to Have More 'Personality' than Others. This chapter focuses upon the interactional order of 'self-work'. It puts the case that an analysis of interview accounts must be supplemented with an understanding of the interview interactants as selves. Social Constructivist methodologies (Silverman 1973, Potter and Mulkay 1985) analyse interview accounts as artful displays of moral reasoning that are neither false or biased - just real (Silverman 1985:176). However, any understanding of respondents' artful practices is deficient unless it is coupled to an understanding of the presentational requirements of 'self-work'. Accounts are not just verbal displays of moral forms but the means by which ritual selves are honoured and normal interview appearances are produced.

Chapter 5: When Mothers Are Mothers And Children Are Children: The Moral Regulation Of Female Identity In Households. This chapter is about women's accounts of their child-care arrangements. These accounts construct normative expectations associated with the identities of mother, child and child-minder. And since the respondents in these accounts hold themselves accountable as a mother the moral worth of the identity - mother - is at stake. Thus this chapter examines the different ways child-care is described and the moral problems this poses for the female respondents.

Chapter 6: Reporting A Decision: The Local Accomplishment Of The Rational And The Irrational In Interviews. The focus here is upon interview accounts of decision-making and their rhetorical organisation. This organisation has the form of a preference, displayed by both interviewer and respondents, for accounts that describe an economic calculation and considerations of 'quality of life' as non contradictory. I suggest that these research interviews routinely produced a local version of the 'rational' as a requirement of intelligible and ordered interaction. When respondents 'fail' to achieve the preferred mode of describing a decision, the description is either reformulated under the influence of further questioning by the interviewer or the respondent gives an autobiographical account.
that explains their apparent irrationality in terms of their personality.

Chapter 7: The Ritual Interview Code is an analysis of how participants from within co-ordinate a research interview as an ordered and stable interaction. Interview participants via their talk make direct and indirect references to the norms and rules of interviewing as a means to know both what is going on and how to carry on. These allusions to rules, not only provide a means to co-ordinate the interview but are required if the participants are to honour and accommodate each other as selves.

Chapter 8: Conclusion. This final chapter asks if (i) conceptualising interview participants as ritual selves adds anything to the already existent social constructivist analysis of interview talk? And (ii) if the understanding of interview interaction developed in the thesis can be used to 'save' the referential quality of interview talk? Finally, in the light of my analysis, I discuss 'intimacy' and 'power' - terms often used by interactionists and positivists to describe interviewer-interviewee interaction.
Chapter 2
A Methodological Review

Introduction

This chapter reviews how interviewer and interviewee interaction in research interviews\(^1\) is described and theorised in the social scientific literature. The interview, a ubiquitous tool of social research, is not only an instrument to gather data, it is a face-to-face interaction\(^2\). The raison d'être of research interviewing is the assumption that data collected in one situation - interview talk - can be used to tell us something about objects, events, and states of mind that are separated by time and geography. The assumed referential quality of interview talk is however problematic; as a matter of routine, particularly in positivist approaches, it is assumed that the face-to-face interaction that is the prerequisite of a research interview leads to bias and inaccuracy. Respondents, it is assumed, may inadvertently give misinformation, because of memory loss (Grove 1982) or because of a lack of knowledge. A respondent may be evasive, put up a front (Douglas 1976:55-82) or even lie.

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\(^1\) I shall use the terms 'interview' and 'interview interaction' to refer to both unstructured qualitative interviews and structured and unstructured interviews that are analysed quantitatively, differentiating them as and when appropriate to my argument.

\(^2\) Telephone interviews are beyond the remit of this thesis though much that is said will be relevant to the topic.
The dynamics of interviewer-interviewee interaction provide for the possibility of misunderstanding, and prejudicial likes and dislikes which may affect how objects, events, and states of mind are reported.

In response to the interactional problem of bias, which affects the referential quality of interview talk, and the need to collect good data (data relevant to the aims of the research project), social scientists have developed and continue to develop their interview techniques, techniques which, it is assumed, will overcome the potential for interview data to be contaminated by the effects of interviewer-interviewee interaction. Implicit and explicit in discussions of interview technique are assumptions and theories about interviewer-interviewee interaction. It is my contention that this problem/solution approach to interview interaction overlooks developments in both the sociology of interaction and the sociology of language use. Consequently there is in these descriptions an under-theorisation of interviewer-interviewee interaction that enables researchers who use interviews, to 'save' the referential quality of interview talk by means of interactional techniques.

Ethnomethodologists, conversational analysts and some discourse analysts have abandoned the use of research interviews in favour of studying 'naturally occurring' situations. The reason for this is the assumption that interview talk cannot be separated from its interactional roots in interview interaction. Consequently, interview data can do nothing but report upon the site of its production. Thus, rather than conduct research interviews, these researchers have studied interviews in other settings, e.g., between doctors and patients (Heath 1988), police and suspects (Watson 1983), and employers and potential employees (Silverman 1973). The referential quality of the talk is a practical problem for the participants but not a concern for analysts. Here the analyst is interested in how the participants find practical solutions to the problem of bias and inaccuracy as and when it arises. It is in this vein, treating the research interview as a naturally occurring phenomenon, that my thesis will analyse how participants interact to 'pull off' the
research interview as an instrument of social scientific research (Hester and Francis 1994). Thus while I am broadly sympathetic to the idea that interview data can only tell us how interviews are done I do not feel that this is sufficient reason to abandon interest in the research interview. The research interview is a commonplace feature of our society and as such merits study in its own right; nor is it inconceivable that interactional events occurring in research interviews will occur in other forms of interaction. Thus this thesis is also a contribution to social science methodology.

This chapter is in 6 parts. In Part 1, I outline the positivist and interactionist approaches to interview research, how the interview is conceptualised as an instrument of research and the respective solutions of positivists and interactionists to the problem of interviewee-interviewer interaction. Positivist and interactionist solutions and problems are I suggest strikingly similar and have their origins in a shared view of the referential quality of descriptive language. Part 2 discusses how positivist and interactionist descriptions of the research interview are organised using two descriptive repertoires, the interactional and the instrumental. These repertoires are used rhetorically to justify different interview techniques. Part 3 discusses the research interview as interaction, focusing on Cicourel (1964) and Silverman (1985) highlighting the impossibility of removing interactional 'contamination'. Part 4 outlines a theory of interaction that focuses upon meaning and self production as constitutive of institutional frames, particularly the interview. In part 5, I discuss Goffman's (1968) study of asylums and its application to a study of interview interaction. Part 6 summarises the previous sections and introduces the subsequent empirical chapters.
Part 1: the interview

The first issue to be addressed is how do researchers theorise interview interaction, so that by means of interview technique, the referential quality of interview talk can be saved. Broadly speaking there are two styles of research interviewing. One is drawn largely from a natural scientific paradigm, this being the positivist position using a structured interview schedule (fixed wording and order of questions). The objects, events, and states of mind to be researched are categorised in advance of the actual interview. The aim is (i) to achieve objective descriptions and (ii) to reduce respondent-researcher interaction - the assumed source of error. This is in contrast to the interactionist or humanist approach in which the interview is likened to a social phenomenon, such as a conversation (Burgess 1984). Using an unstructured interview, the format of questions is not defined in advance and the interviewer aims to gather data that will enable him or her to understand (verstehen) how the respondent perceives the world. The two positions each have their own interview techniques as solutions to the problem of error. The solutions adopted seek to legitimate the interview as a viable means of social scientific research.

Positivism: from within the scientific paradigm there is an explicit attempt, via interactional means - interview technique - to minimise the interaction between interviewer and interviewee.

In order to do their job, both kinds of interviewer (i.e. structured and in-depth interviewers) must 'switch off' their own personality and attitudes.

(Oppenheim 1979:45)

This is achieved in structured interviews via the standardisation of the research interview. The interviewer follows an interview schedule

3 On occasion positivist researchers make use of qualitative interviewing methods but such an approach is usually characterized as 'discovery' of what is happening rather than the more usual quantification of a phenomenon (Brenner 1985a:140) or as a pilot study prior to a quantitative piece of research (Henwood and Pidgeon 1992).
and a strict protocol detailing the wording, order and manner in which questions are to be asked. This protocol is further elaborated into rules governing procedures to adopt when respondents fail to understand a question or request further information. The aim is to present the same stimulus or question to each respondent such that a direct relationship exists between a question and the responses it generates. Brenner makes this point thus:

In practical terms, the magnitudes of respondent attributes are determined by the interviewer presenting each respondent with a set of stimuli - questions and questioning procedures - common to all respondents. The response - the answer by the respondent - to each stimulus is taken to represent a particular magnitude of an attribute.

(Brenner 1985:9-10).

The stimulus response model of interviewing is further developed by considering variables not controllable by question standardisation - the so-called interviewer effect. The interviewer's age, sex, class, religion and education with respect to the interviewee's are assumed to affect responses. Where possible the interviewer should mirror the social situation of the respondent. Interviewers try to ensure a respondent's motivated compliance with the goals of the research project by developing 'rapport', a nebulous concept used to describe the optimal relationship between interviewer and respondent. Rapport is particularly important if questions are considered to be on sensitive topics (Lee 1993). If there is sufficient but not excessive rapport then respondents' answers are considered to be free of error emanating from interviewee-interviewer interaction. While many survey researchers claim to find this optimal relationship, communicating it to their readers in the objective terms of positivism is problematic.

Experienced interviewers agree that listening is hard work. It requires self-restraint and self-discipline. Also patience and humility. The listener's role, at the moment, is neither that of therapist nor moral judge. Ability to listen with understanding, respect, and curiosity is the gateway to communication.

(Young 1966:229)
Goudy and Potter (1975) suggest that since rapport can neither be satisfactorily defined nor measured it can be effectively ignored. The issue at stake between the standardisation of questions and the motivation of individual respondents is that subsequent statistical analysis relies upon the quality of the data collected. The extent to which interview techniques effectively minimise the particularities of interviewer-interviewee interaction indexes the reliability of the data as a whole. And the extent to which individual respondents are motivated and able to answer the questions truthfully indexes the validity of each interview. Brenner (1985) writes of the interviewer's 'socially effective interaction', as the expression of sympathetic understanding, attention and interest in what is being said. By such means he claims it is possible to overcome any reservations that the respondent might have about participating in the research. But as to what 'sympathetic understanding', 'attention' and 'interest' might look like he gives no clues.

An interviewer, as well as being skilled in the techniques that standardise interviews i.e. the minimisation of interactional idiosyncrasy to ensure reliability, must also be attentive to the motivational peculiarities of individual respondents i.e. maximise interactional involvement to ensure validity. These two requirements stand in sharp contradiction. Thus it is not surprising to note that studies of structured interviews report that interviewers rarely fulfil the technical requirements of standardisation (Mishler 1986). With regard to the unpredictability of 'socially effective interaction', Brenner (1985:35) notes the effect that the psychology of the participants might have:

It is likely, for all we know, that total measurement adequacy is never attainable, as interviewing, as well documented since many years [...] involves a psychological complexity that cannot possibly be regulated by interviewing technique alone.

The structured interview draws its theoretical impetus from the natural sciences and the belief in objective description. Methodologically the aim is the standardisation of questions and the awareness of possible variables that might affect interviewee
responses. Practically this awareness leads to the ultimate solution of a large sampling frame, based on the belief that what is idiosyncratic can be cancelled out statistically. Those critical of the scientific paradigm often give an ethical critique (Finch 1984, Oakley 1981). The point is made succinctly by Newby (1977:118).

Surveys are research instruments and consequently involve using people in an instrumental way.

The interactionist or humanist position aims at the establishment of an explicit inter-subjective relationship between the respondent and the interviewer, such that the interviewer is able to understand and gain access to the respondent's subjective perspective on the topic being researched. This is verstehen sociology and for Weber it took the form of a science of subjective meaning. Browne and Minichello (1994:233) explicitly state this in their introduction to research on condom use:

As the focus of the study was on the meaning, interpretation and experiential world of people, rather than measurement and statistical analysis, a qualitative approach was used in which in-depth interviews were the principal research instrument. This approach enabled the researchers to understand and collect data on the ways in which people constructed the meaning of pleasurable sex and condom use.

The interviewer attempts to establish a relationship with the respondent by maximising their interactional alignment to collect in-depth and private descriptions of objects, events, and states of mind. Consequently the interview is described not as an impersonal instrument or standardised tool but as a form of social life. And, reflecting the diversity of social life, the research interview takes on many different metaphorical guises: a contract (Brenner 1985), a conversation (Burgess 1984), a marriage (Oakley 1881:31), an affair or a flirtation (Douglas 1967). Given this emphasis it is not surprising that 'socially effective interaction' is given far greater consideration. As well as rapport and respondent motivation being discussed the relationship between respondent and interviewer is considered in terms of co-operation, negotiation, intimacy, reciprocity, identification, trust and involvement. These issues are
practical considerations in the establishment of an in-depth relationship that provides access to the respondent's subjective world. Thompson (1988:196) writes about this relationship as requiring:

an interest and respect for people as individuals, and a flexibility in response to them; an ability to show understanding and sympathy for their point of view; and above all, a willingness to sit quietly and listen.

The in-depth relationship between researcher and respondent can be achieved by having women interviewing women and other types of interviewer respondent mirroring (a strategy also employed by some positivist approaches). The researcher can also undergo a period of 'immersion' in the study population prior to conducting the actual interviews. That the interview is still a data gathering exercise is not lost. Both Burgess (1984:112-117) and Spradley (1979:61-66) run commentaries along transcribed extracts of interviews to show how questions are used to guide and encourage respondents to speak about topics relevant to the research. Reflecting this instrumental aspect of the interview Finch (1884:81) raises the concern that the interview as a means to achieve a 'genuine understanding' between interviewer and respondent can become one of mere technique:

These techniques [making the interview a social encounter] can be used to great effect to solicit a range of information (some of it very private), which is capable of being used ultimately against the interests of those women who gave it so freely to another woman with whom they found it easy to talk.

The assumed moral supremacy of the humanist or interactionist approach, that it does not treat the respondent in an instrumental way, and that the respondent is able to give his or her own perspective, is in danger of being eclipsed by another form of interview technique. The issue is one of power (Lee 1993:107-111), 'control over the setting, tone and agenda of the interview'. Mishler (1986) notes it is the interviewer who has responsibility for socialising the interviewee, but the respondent is capable of sabotaging the interview (Oakley 1981). To view the unstructured or qualitative interview as a forum for the respondent to express his or
her own opinions and feelings, however, overlooks the effect that the
interview as a particular social encounter has upon what is said;
'accounts are not simply representations of the world; they are part
of the world they describe' (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983:107). What
is said and how it is expressed in a research interview is for the
participants constitutive of the relationship they have (e.g. the
participants make assumptions about each other's moods and
motivations based on how and what they say). And the relationship
between respondent and researcher is constitutive of what is said
(e.g. what is said and how it is said is used by participants to
infer the quality of their relationship).

There are many different ways to describe objects, events, and states
of mind, dependent on the type of interview, the relationship between
the participants, and individual idiosyncrasy. Thus it is not
sufficient to privilege as potentially error free, accounts given in
an unstructured interview over those given in a structured interview
or vice versa. An account is tailored to, and constrained by, the
site of its production, it is not simply a representation of a
reality separated by time and geography. Interview accounts are part
of an unfolding social reality - the research interview.

Taken in its own terms the positivist position attempts to save the
referential quality of interview talk by minimising interviewer-
interviewee interaction. Paradoxically, minimising interviewer-
interviewee interaction is achieved by following a research protocol,
a particular form of interaction, not a minimisation of interaction.
As Goffman (1981) notes in his analysis of spill cries even strangers
in public places are interacting. In contrast, the interactionist
position attempts to save the referential quality of interview talk
by maximising respondent-interviewer interaction as a means to a deep
relationship. The assumption is that such a relationship will
encourage the respondent to talk openly and honestly. The difference
between these two positions is that one seeks objective descriptions
of objects, events, and states of mind, while the other, their
subjective interpretation. These two positions hold a common belief
in the possibility of accurate reporting and that interviewer-
interviewee interaction can either frustrate or enhance this possibility. The differences between these two positions taken on their own terms, that one seeks objective description while the other subjective experience, is un-resolvable and highlights different epistemological commitments. The similarity, however, highlights a taken-for-granted commitment to the referential function of language and an under-theorisation of respondent-researcher interaction. In Part 2 I will address the referential function of language via a discussion of how interviewee-respondent interaction is described in four research texts. In part 3 I will discuss interviewer-respondent interaction, and whether it make sense to assume that interactional alignment can be either minimised or maximised.

Part 2: the art of describing the research interview.

The referential function of language will be discussed in terms of how interviewer-interviewee interaction is described by research interviewers. My aim is to show just how closely allied the positivist and interactionist positions are. Below I have extracted four short passages from different authors' descriptions of the research interview. Brenner (1985) is writing as a committed survey researcher; Denzin (1970) as a symbolic interactionist; Oakley (1981) as a feminist who defines herself in opposition to 'male stream' sociology and textbook methods. And Suchman and Jordan (1990) offer a critique of, and suggested improvement to, survey research by drawing upon insights from the interactionist position. In spite of the apparent methodological and epistemological differences between these positions there are striking similarities. These similarities are 'suppressed' to establish their assumed epistemological differences and ultimately to save the referential quality of interview talk.

Figure 1, has three columns, (i) The instrumental nature of the research interview (ii) The interaction between respondent and interviewer and (iii) The formulation of a problem/solution in research interviews. Under each heading I have quoted extracts from
the four authors (see below) in which they describe either the instrumental nature of the research interview (column 1), respondent-interviewer interaction (column 2) or identify either a problem or solution associated with interview interaction (column 3).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1: The instrumental Nature of the research interview</th>
<th>2: Interaction between Respondent and Interviewer</th>
<th>3: Formulation of a Problem/solution</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Denzin</td>
<td>research tool and elicit intimate and private perspectives</td>
<td>an instance of ongoing interaction</td>
<td>beset with certain problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oakley</td>
<td>the methodology of 'hygienic' research with its accompanying mystification of the researcher and the researched as objective instruments of data production</td>
<td>personal involvement is more than dangerous bias - it is the condition under which people come to know each other and to admit others into their lives</td>
<td>rationale of research [to] be described and discussed</td>
</tr>
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<td>Brenner</td>
<td>data collection in survey research is typically conceptualised in stimulus-response terms and obtain[ing] from respondents valid answers in response to the questions put to them</td>
<td>in interviewer-respondent interaction</td>
<td>How can we attempt to accomplish this objective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suchman and Jordan</td>
<td>neutral measuring instrument in the interest of turning the interview into an instrument, many of the interactional resources of ordinary conversation are disallowed</td>
<td>the survey interview as an interactional event</td>
<td>an unresolved tension</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>fundamentally an interaction</td>
<td>On the one hand [...] On the other hand</td>
</tr>
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From Denzin (1970:113), *The Research Act: A theoretical Introduction to Sociological Methods*;

As the favourite research tool of the sociologist, the interview is beset with certain problems. At one level, these problems derive from the fact that the interview is itself an instance of ongoing interaction. It is a focused, usually face-to-face encounter which must rest on rules of etiquette while at the same time eliciting intimate and private perspectives.

Denzin describes the interview as a 'research tool', an item for column 1. This is followed by a description of the research interview as: 'beset with certain problems', column 3. The interview is then described as 'an instance of ongoing interaction', column 2. Denzin then describes the interview as a 'face-to-face encounter' and as 'rest[ing] on rules of etiquette', these descriptions go in column 2. Continuing his description Denzin describes the interview as 'eliciting intimate and private perspectives'; this is the interview as an instrument and goes under column 1.


A feminist methodology of social science requires that this rationale of research [suppressing the personal] be described and discussed not only in feminist but in social science research in general. It requires, further, that the methodology of 'hygienic' research with its accompanying mystification of the researcher and the researched as objective instruments of data production be replaced by the recognition that personal involvement is more than dangerous bias - it is the condition under which people come to know each other and to admit others into their lives.

Oakley calls for the 'rationale of research [to] be described and discussed', the identification of a problem, column 3. 'The methodology of 'hygienic' research with its accompanying mystification of the researcher and the researched as objective instruments of data production', is a description of the interview as an instrument, although the description is characterised as mythological, column 1. 'Personal involvement is more than dangerous bias - it is the condition under which people come to know each other and to admit others into their lives', here Oakley rejects the instrumental understanding of personal involvement as bias to
describe it as the condition under which people 'come to know each other' and 'admit others into their lives' a description of the research interview as an interaction - column 2.

Brenner (1985:12) Survey Interviewing writes:

data collection in survey research is typically conceptualised in stimulus-response terms. This is useful, if only as a goal, as there is only one objective of surveying, namely, to obtain from respondents valid answers in response to the questions put to them. [...] How can we attempt to accomplish this objective in interviewer-respondent interaction?

For Brenner, 'data collection in survey research is typically conceptualised in stimulus-response terms', this is the interview being described as a research tool - column 1. The goal of survey research is described as; 'obtain[ing] from respondents valid answers in response to the questions put to them', another instrumental description of the interview for column 1. 'How can we attempt to accomplish this objective', the formulation of a problem, column 3 and 'in interviewer-respondent interaction', a description of interview as interaction, column 2.

In Suchman and Jordan (1990:1), Validity And The Construction of Meaning in Face-To-Face Survey Interviews: An Interaction Analysis we find:

1. There is an unresolved tension between the survey interview as an interactional event and as a neutral measuring instrument. On the one hand, the interview is commonly acknowledged to be fundamentally an interaction. On the other hand, in the interest of turning the interview into an instrument, many of the interactional resources of ordinary conversation are disallowed.

Suchman and Jordan, 'an unresolved tension', is the description of a potential problem, column 3; 'the survey interview as an interactional event', column 2 and as a 'neutral measuring instrument', column 1. 'On the one hand [...] On the other hand' is a reiteration of the aforementioned problem - column 3. The research interview is then described as, 'fundamentally an interaction', this goes under column 2, and 'in the interest of turning the interview
into an instrument, many of the interactional resources of ordinary conversation are disallowed' is a description of the research interview as a research tool, albeit a problematic one, because it disallows 'interactional resources'; this can go under column 1.

From figure 1 it can be seen that the four authors describe the research interview as both an instrument of research (data collection) and as an interactional event. Described as a 'neutral' instrument of data collection the goal is 'valid responses', and 'eliciting intimate and private perspectives' via the use of a 'hygienic' methodology. As an interactional event between persons the research interview is contingent upon the vagaries of 'personal involvement', 'the rules of etiquette' and the 'resources of conversation'. The research interview is described using two different repertoires, in one the interview is an instrument of research, in the other the interview is an interaction, consequently the research interview is conceptualised as problematic: how can an interactional event also be a means of data collection? In part 1 it was suggested that this problem led to the different interviewing techniques associated with positivism and interactionism. But can the conceptualisation of the research interview as both instrument and interaction be taken at face value? What part does the art of description play in characterising the object described? At the end of part 1 I made the point that descriptions were tailored to and constrained by the site of their production; this is also the case for social scientific descriptions of the interview.

Description is not a straightforward - uni-directional - reporting; there can be no appeal to reality or the facts independent of the act of description. Descriptions, via a circular process, reflexively construct the objects represented. A description and the object described are each used to elaborate the other; to describe an object is to invoke a sense of what the object already is and to invoke a sense of what the object is, is to constitute the object by describing it. Description is what Garfinkel (1967) calls an artful practice and there is no escape from this accounting circle. Descriptions are indexical, for any object described there are as a
matter of routine, alternative and defensible descriptions available. Similarly, a precise and exhaustive description is in principle never achievable as further elaboration can always be called for. Yet adequate descriptions, adequate to all practical purposes, are achieved, to the extent that descriptions occur in settings where there are shared assumptions about the world and its objects. Social scientific descriptions of the research interview are possible because there are shared common-sense understandings or taken-for-granted knowledge about research interviews. Namely, that there is a tension between the research interview as an interaction and as an instrument of research. And, subject to the use of certain techniques it is assumed to be possible to gain accurate verbal reports of a reality outside of the research interview. There still persist, however, differences of opinion over interview technique and whether one is gathering objective descriptions or descriptions of subjective experience.

To follow up this point it is necessary to see that descriptions of research interviews occur within academic debates about the theory and methods of interviewing. Billig (1987:177) writing about attitudes - but equally appropriate to descriptions, because attitudes are descriptions of states of mind, writes:

> attitudes [but also read descriptions] are stances in matters of public debate. That being so, the possession of an attitude indicates a statement of disagreement as much as of agreement, and it signifies an implicit willingness to enter into controversy. In consequence, we can expect the possessors of attitudes to justify their stances, to criticise competing views, and generally to argue about the issues.

Social scientific descriptions of the research interview function (Edwards and Potter 1992:106) as rhetorical moves, doing justification, criticism and objective reporting in academic debates. Positivist descriptions of the research interview (by quantitative and survey researchers), interactionist descriptions of the interview (by qualitative researchers, feminists, symbolic interactionists and ethnographers) as well as descriptions by their ethnomethodological critics are not only constitutive of the object represented (research
interviews and interview interaction) but are also actions that attempt refutation and persuasion.

The common-sense view (from the reviewed material) is that the research interview, although controversial, is both a means to gather data and an interactional event. It is my contention that this descriptive common denominator is rhetorically organised by the use of two interpretative repertoires (Wetherall and Potter 1992:90):

broadly discernible clusters of terms, descriptions and figures of speech often assembled around metaphors or vivid images.

The two interpretative repertoires are the instrumental and interactional (columns 1 and 2 of figure 1). The function of these two interpretative repertoires, as rhetorical acts, is discernible in the use to which they are put in incidents of description. Thus although the repertoires are common to both positivists and interactionists, the use to which they are put, visible in the detail of description, is different. Different, because different technical and epistemological positions are being advanced and criticised. More specifically descriptions using these repertoires are placed within a hierarchy of modulation (Edwards and Potter 1992:105). Thus descriptions are warranted along a continuum from being objectively so, to being contingent upon human mental processes.

[...]

X is a fact
I know that X
I claim that X
I believe that X
I hypothesise that X
I think that X
I guess that X
X is possible

(Edwards and Potter 1992:106)

Generally speaking the statements of social scientists that are modulated towards the factual, objective, and empirical end of the continuum have a greater weighting in terms of their validity whereas statements that are warranted by reference to the agency of thought...
are seen as less valid. Returning to the quoted extracts, these will now be compared in terms of the relative epistemological weighting each author accords the instrumental and interactional repertoires.

In Denzin's formulation the instrumental repertoire is used to describe the research interview as 'the favourite research tool of the sociologist'. Such a description highlights the intentionality of those making it. In contrast the interactional repertoire is modulated as factual, 'the fact that the interview is itself an instance of ongoing interaction' (no reference is made to the intentions of any sociologists in this description). It is the contrast between the different epistemological weightings accorded the two repertoires, the instrumental as intentioned and the interactional as objective, that supports Denzin's claim that the research interview is beset with problems. Objectively the research interview is one thing, an interaction, but sociologists see it as another, their 'favourite research tool'. As an interaction the research interview is bedevilled with the problems associated with it, descriptive error; yet sociologists wish to use the interview to gather 'intimate and private perspectives'. Denzin's solution acknowledges that the interview is an interaction (he did after all describe the interview in these terms) and then suggests interview techniques and data triangulation (1970:291) to solve these interactional problems. The solution saves the favourite tool of the sociologists by ensuring the referential quality of interview talk.

Oakley (1981:58) states that a feminist methodology requires that the 'rationale of research [that suppresses the personal] be described and discussed' and that this is an issue for all social scientists not just feminists. Oakley continues: 'the methodology of 'hygienic' research with its accompanying mystification of the researcher and the researched as objective instruments of data production [needs to] be replaced'. The scientific status of the research interview is being described as contingent upon a methodology (a human artefact), that is a 'hygienic' 'mystification'. The instrumental repertoire is modulated to make the point that instrumental descriptions of the research interview are contingent upon human agency. A male agency
that is in this case responsible for a mystification, and thus Oakley implies, far removed from the ideals of (male) science. Oakley's description of the research interview using the interactional repertoire is modulated towards the factual end of the continuum; 'personal involvement is more than dangerous bias - it is the condition under which people come to know each other and admit others into their lives' (my emphasis). The reality of research is personal involvement. When this is contrasted to a description that is contingent upon the agency of thought - the 'mystification of hygienic research', Oakley's general recommendation that a personal relationship between researcher and researched be established, if valid and reliable data is to be collected, (1981:41-58) is legitimated.

Brenner (1985:12) uses the instrumental repertoire to state that the interview is 'typically conceptualised in stimulus-response terms'. Here the term 'typically' acknowledges possible alternative descriptions while simultaneously reducing their relevance to that of the un-typical. 'Conceptualised' modulates the description to that of an intentioned act, the description of the interview as 'stimulus response' is not an empirical fact. Brenner (1985:12) elaborates this typical conceptualisation as a means to a goal, 'valid answers in response to the questions'. Although not described objectively the description is warranted in terms of the desirability of its goal (objective data), it is almost inconceivable that a survey researcher would want to collect invalid responses. Brenner (1985:12) then asks the question: 'How can we attempt to accomplish this objective [getting valid responses] in interviewer-respondent interaction?'. The question states as objective the reality of interviewer-respondent interaction by almost not stating it. The goal of valid responses in the face of interviewer-interviewee interaction is achieved by the same intentionality that conceptualised the research interview instrumentally as stimulus response. Brenner thus lists interviewer skills and rules (1985:14-31) that should realise the interview - as conceptualised - in terms of being a stimulus response situation.
Suchman and Jordan (1990:1) describe an 'unresolved tension' between the survey interview 'as' an interactional event and 'as' a neutral measuring instrument. This appears to give each descriptive repertoire an equal weighting, however the term 'neutral' could be seen as a potential over-statement - making it susceptible to later criticism - given that interviews are generally assumed to be beset with interactional problems. The interactional repertoire is then used to describe the research interview as 'commonly acknowledged to be fundamentally an interaction' in contrast with 'in the interest of turning the interview into an instrument', using the instrumental repertoire. Although the interview is only 'commonly acknowledged to be fundamentally an interaction' this intentional act of description has a 'stronger' warranting than that of intentional 'interest' because the former is not motivated by interest and it expresses the notion that the position is commonly accepted. Suchman and Jordan's description of the interview balances the two interpretative repertoires tipping them slightly in favour of the interactional repertoire. It has a stronger epistemological weighting. This is in line with their 'Collaborative Approach' to survey interviewing in which it is assumed that meaning is produced as a result of a negotiation between researcher and respondent.

Thus the instrumental and interactional repertoires are used by both positivists and interactionally inclined descriptions of the research interview, and neither repertoire is exclusive to one position. This is in line with the taken-for-granted assumption that the research interview is both a research tool and an interaction. Descriptive diversity and hence the advocacy or criticism of different interview methods and techniques is achieved by warranting each repertoire with a different epistemological status. It is interesting to note that Oakley's description of the research interview as 'personal involvement' (contingent on human interaction) is warranted as factual, whereas the objectivism of 'hygienic' research (the interview as instrument) has the epistemological status 'mystification'. In contrast Brenner's instrumental description of the research interview is warranted contingently as a 'conceptualisation', while aspiring to produce objective responses that are not contingent upon interview interaction.
Descriptions of the research interview from survey researchers, quantitative sociologists and those in a positivist tradition use the interactional repertoire to account for social and psychological aspects of interviewing, while the instrumental repertoire is used to describe techniques that minimise possible bias and error due to social and psychological phenomena. Consequently the research interview's status as an instrument is refined and developed by the use of the interactional repertoire that initially problematises that claim.

I would say, the widespread ignorance of survey practitioners of the action character of measurement in the survey interview, among other psychological [...] factors is, unwarranted, as we are indeed able to study and to structure the majority of the social interactional conditions under which survey data should be gathered. This is a positive contribution to survey research practice: we can avoid sources of bias in interviewer-respondent interaction a priori;

(Brenner 1985:35 my emphasis).

Unstructured interviewers', qualitative sociologists', symbolic interactionists' and feminist sociologists' descriptions of the research interview are weighted in favour of its status as an interactional event. While an instrumental intention is acknowledged - gathering data - the epistemological emphasis is upon the interview as an interaction. The interactional nature of the interview is reflected in the theoretical and methodological concern placed upon the 'quality' of the interaction between interviewer and interviewee. Ideally a deep, intimate and trusting relationship is established in which the interviewee reports honestly and openly about his or her objective and subjective world. Thus an understanding of the research interview as an interaction is used by interactionally inclined sociologists to develop the interview as an instrument of data collection.

However, for some qualitative researchers, interviewer-interviewee interaction, no matter how closely it matches the ideal, still possesses the problem of descriptive error. Thus questioning techniques that make it possible to check the consistency of respondents' responses have been formulated:
If it becomes apparent that the subject's first answer is not correct or sufficient, one should ask for additional information, and rephrase the original question in a way that will make him prove his answer or expose the falsity of his reply.

(Kinsey et al 1948:55)

It is also suggested that data is collected from a variety of other sources, against which the interviewee's response can be compared;

Another strategy for analysing validity is a comparison [of interview data] with official records; when the subject provides 'factual data' that are likely to have been recorded somewhere [...] it is possible to check up on the accuracy of the story. [...] Nevertheless given the problematic nature of official records [...] this could be an unreliable checkpoint.

(Plummer 1983:104)

As Plummer suggests, which source of data, the official record or respondents account is to be credited as fact, is problematic. The same problem arises with Kinsey's suggestion. Does one credit as truthful what was said first or a subsequent reformulation? Is the repetition of an account sufficient to assume its status as truthful and thus valid and reliable? These questions remain unanswered. An alternative strategy is to view the respondent's talk as a 'subjective record'. Thompson (1988:199) posits the possibility of the 'free-flowing interview':

its main purpose is not to seek information or evidence of value in itself, but to make a 'subjective' record of how one man or woman looks back on their life as a whole, or part of it. Just how they speak about it, how they order it, what they emphasise, what they miss out, the words they choose, are important in understanding any interview; but for this purpose they become the essential text which needs to be examined. Thus the less their testimony is shaped by the interviewer's questions the better. However, the completely free interview cannot exist.

The free flowing interview cannot exist, as Thompson acknowledges, the giving of an account will be affected by the interaction between researcher and respondent. Thus the subjective record of a life can never be separated from the context of its telling.
Both interactionists and positivists assume a correspondence theory of truth in which 'more' accurate descriptions are a distinct possibility if interactional contaminants associated with the interview interaction can be minimised. It should be apparent from my discussion of Garfinkel and the art of describing interviews, that descriptions are not more or less accurate representations of reality but rhetorical moves that as well as constituting the objects, events, and states of mind described, are used to advance and criticise claims about the world. Thus what is left under-theorised in interactionist and positivist discussions of the research interview is how description is done, how descriptions achieve the status of being truthful, how descriptions are challenged as erroneous and how descriptions are refined; all within the social encounter called a research interview. Just as social scientific descriptions of the interview are tailored to and constrained by academic debate, so are respondents' interview accounts constrained and tailored by the requirement of 'doing' an interview.

Part 3: from research tool to interactional encounter

Descriptions and discussions of the research interview are framed and conducted in terms of instrumental and interactional repertoires that construct both potential problems and solutions. These repertoires feature in all accounts of research interviewing including Hyman et al.'s (1954) Interviewing In Social Research and Cicourel's (1964) review of this work Method and Measurement In Sociology (chapter 3). It is to Cicourel's work that I now turn, to develop an understanding of interviewer-interviewee interaction that is not burdened by a requirement to 'save' the referential function of interview talk. Indeed Cicourel explicitly critiques the possibility of interview data having (for analysts) a referential quality with regard to events, objects, and states of mind outside of the interview setting. Cicourel (1964:73) frames his review in terms of what he calls basic theory;
those properties of action scenes without which communication
could not take place and that are invariant to the substantive
features of the setting or the particular actors present.

Cicourel's project is to take arguments about the referential quality
of interview talk beyond concerns about interactional problems and
solutions to a discussion of interaction in general. In particular
those features of interaction that make referential talk about the
world both possible and problematic. Cicourel appeals to a version of
interaction that is more basic than Hyman et al's concern with
interview interaction as a source of bias.

Cicourel criticises Hyman et al, by positing a level of interactional
sense-making that is prior to concerns about bias and error, arguing
that the possibility of interview talk un-encumbered by its
production in an interview, as a requirement of its accuracy, is an
impossibility. The issue as Cicourel specifies it, is a contradiction
between the instrumental requirements of reliability and validity.

The tradition in survey research is to standardise the research
interview in the interests of reliability, as a means to eliminate
the interviewer effect as a source of bias that reduces data
comparability. The concern with validity is that the interviewer who
follows a standardised schedule and protocol will not be able to
interact 'successfully' with the respondent to ensure his or her
motivated compliance with the aims of the research. As Cicourel
(1964:77) notes:

The more the interviewer attempts to sustain a relationship with
the subject which he feels will reveal valid responses, the more
he feels the interview is 'successful'. (my emphasis)

This is the interview as an interaction, because even an interview
that appears to have reached the scientific ideal of standardisation
has its roots in common-sense knowledge of how moods, motives,
feelings, rapport, and impression management are necessary and
unavoidable features of interaction. The instrumental standardisation
of a research interview as a means to ensure reliability is not
possible because without recourse to common-sense knowledge - as a
means to render action intelligible, reportable and familiar - two persons could not begin to interact meaningfully let alone do an interview. A social scientific awareness of the significance of common-sense knowledge as an interpretative resource (for intelligible conduct) is displayed every time the interactional repertoire (as discussed above) is used to describe interaction as a source of error affecting the instrumental quality of the research interview. And it is the use by interviewers of such common-sense knowledge which is 'anchored in idiosyncratic, situational, and differential cultural attachments and definitions' (Cicourel 1964:97) that will: 'produce bias and error naturally because these [common-sense understandings] are basic to the structure of everyday conduct' (Cicourel 1964:80). As Cicourel puts it: 'In a statistical sense, the uniqueness of such events precludes our calling a set of data identical measures of the same property of different objects' (Cicourel 1964:81). The comparability of data across interviews, the imposition of measurement, is a reification (1964:81) of the interactional use of common-sense knowledge used to produce interview talk.

While Cicourel's focus is upon survey research and its concerns with error and bias due to interviewer-interviewee interaction, the basic tenor of the argument is equally applicable to the interactionist position because it also subscribes to a correspondence theory of language. Extending Cicourel's argument, the asking and answering of questions becomes the medium through which respondent and researcher interact and attend to moods, motives, feelings, rapport and impression management. Thus it is not surprising that interactionist guides to interviewing place such importance on the quality of the relationship between interviewer and interviewee. This relationship embodies taken-for-granted knowledge about what it is to interact with another person, so questions and answers while appearing to be about objects, events, and states of mind outside of the interview setting are functioning as interactional moves within the interview that establish (hopefully) what is recognisable to participants as an open and honest relationship.
Formal knowledge of interview technique (whether it is of structured or unstructured interviews), will never eliminate an interviewer's reliance upon common-sense thinking. The application of research strategies, techniques, and rules in an interview require common-sense thinking because a rule can never specify the terms of its own interpretation. To specify all possible interpretative contingencies would require programming the interviewer like a computer (Cicourel 1964:90) with all our knowledge about social process, and to anticipate all possible actions in every social situation. The impossibility of such a 'solution' to the problem of standardisation or developing an open and honest relationship means that interview data will unavoidably be 'contaminated' with the vagaries of its interactional production, as evidence of normal interpersonal relations. This is the case even when one party (the interviewer) or the other party (the respondent) is trained (or has trained himself) to manage his presence before others carefully so as to avoid the kinds of bias and damaging effects so strikingly demonstrated by Hyman et al [and of course other researchers]

(Cicourel 1964:97)

Yet Cicourel is not arguing that the interview should be abandoned as an instrument of research. He notes,

[I]n spite of the problem of interviewer error, 'somehow' different interviewers with different approaches produce[d] similar responses from different subjects. The question then becomes one of determining what was invariant or, more precisely, how were invariant meanings communicated despite such variations.

(Cicourel 1964:75)

Studying the interview for Cicourel becomes a means of studying the interactional basis of social order (Cicourel 1964:99). Thus in his study of Argentine Fertility (Cicourel 1974) offers an analysis of how the communicative skills and common-sense thinking of respondents, interviewers and analyst produce family fertility as a feature of everyday life. Thus fertility becomes for the respondents a conversational topic; for interviewers a subject on which
information is to be solicited and for Cicourel a phenomenon recoverable and representable by various analytical means.

Silverman's (1985, 1993) realist methodology abandons the referential concerns of positivist and interactionist positions and, using the critical insights of Cicourel and ethnomethodology, focuses upon the interactional production of meaning. Rather than seeing interview data as a problematic reference to objects, events, and states of mind outside of the interview situation, the data becomes a display of cultural particulars and artful practices (Silverman 1985:170). Cultural particulars are the norms and common-sense knowledge that structure everyday experience. Artful practices are the practical use which members make of such cultural knowledge to accomplish a particular interactional scene. The very action of interaction that casts doubt upon the veracity of interview talk (for positivists and interactionists) becomes a topic for investigation. From the analyst's perspective interview data is neither false nor biased, but real (Silverman 1985:176). Analysis becomes the identification, from transcribed talk, of the artful practices by which respondents do descriptions using cultural particulars while attending to the contingencies of interaction; the truth or otherwise of a description while a practical problem for participants is not an issue for analysts. The interactional contingency that Silverman emphasises is moral adequacy, that a speaker is morally implicated in his or her descriptions as a person who sees the world in 'such and such' a way (Cuff 1980). This is particularly so in unstructured interviews as an interviewee, because of the requirement to speak at length, is drawn into the moral implications of, and identified with, his or her account of objects, events, and states of mind. Cuff (1980:35) in an analysis of talk on a radio call-in show says in a passage that is quoted by Silverman (1987:241):

The teller, in producing an account of what is happening in the world, is also unavoidably producing materials which make

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1 The analyst is however crucially dependent upon his or her knowledge as a cultural insider. If it were not so, he or she would not know what terms such as family, wife, husband etc. mean.
available possible findings about his characterological and moral appearance as displayed in his talk. Alternatively put, in telling about the world he is also inescapably telling about himself: in seeing the world 'that way', he is inescapably open to possible findings that he is 'that kind of person who sees the world that way'.

A consequence of being morally implicated in their accounts is that speakers organise their descriptions so as to present themselves in a particular moral light. It is the organisation of an account that is, for participants constitutive of their sense of what is 'going on'. This is achieved by attention to how a description might be heard as 'appropriate' to assumptions about: the speaker's own identity; the hearer's identity; the social context; how the description compares with other descriptions (real or imagined) of the same phenomena and how the description might 'pass' as plausible or truthful. These considerations all require the teller's artful use of their cultural knowledge, a cultural knowledge that is taken-for-grantedly assumed to be shared by both speaker and hearer. As a result of this situational sensitivity a description is also constitutive of the context in which it is given (not just the object event or state of mind described). The sensitivity that descriptions display (in the means and manner of their telling) to social context reflexively constitutes social context (displayed in the means and manner of a descriptive account).

It is not the case that any account will 'do', sustain an interview, (or any other setting) and present the speaker in an 'appropriate' moral light. The possibility that an account will 'do' this - produce 'normal appearances' - depends upon the extent to which the participants share a similar grasp and subscription to the 'same' facts about the world and the extent to which an account conforms to and confirms these facts. Adherence to these considerations produces an institutional order, (Rawls 1987) 'the Real' as external and constraining. But within the constraint of this institutional order a speaker has a degree of 'licence', as to what will be heard as a morally adequate account - dependent upon the setting he or she is in.
If the referential function of language is seen as a members' problem the way is open for a study of interview interaction that is not dogged by the need to 'save' the referential quality of interview talk. Silverman's work, whilst being part of a significant advance in the empirical study of, the organisation and situated nature of accounts, does, however, by prioritising language render invisible, to analysis: our common-sense experience that the moral obligations of interaction are not solely reducible to verbal accounts. Ordered interactions require responsible selves and thus in my terms an adequate analysis requires an understanding of how interactants' selves are seen as existing prior to the accounts which construct their moral identity. An interaction order of ritual selves and meaning production is sui generis (Rawls 1987) to any consideration of how an account (i) is 'appropriate' to and constitutive of a local context or (ii) displays a speaker in a particular moral light. It is sui generis because an account can do neither of these things without first being heard as intelligible, and as emanating from a self. These issues will be discussed in Part 4.

Part 4: the interaction order

The common-sense view of the research interview is of a rule-bound encounter in which each participant has a specified role defined in advance of their participation. In this conceptualisation the meaning of an utterance is determined by reference to what is assumed to be a pre-existing context of facts, rules, and norms, an institutional order. This institutional order of objective facts and subjective opinions is, however, reflexively constituted from within by participants' accounts, accounts in which the teller is morally implicated. Thus Silverman suggests that accounts should be studied in terms of how speakers artfully use their cultural knowledge as a means to sustain a particular social scene (conforming to shared

This may not always be the case, for example children are often disruptive of ordered interaction but then children and dysfunctional adults are often given 'licence'.
expectations) while attending to their moral appearance within it. Descriptive accounts are not true or false, simply real. Interactants artfully draw upon their cultural knowledge of facts, rules and norms (background expectancies) displaying the extent to which their utterances and the utterances of others conform to these expectations as incidence of particular phenomena. Meaning and its validity is produced interactionally and has as its accomplishment the appearance of knowledge about an externally real and constraining world of facts, rules and norms: the institutional order.

Rawls (1987 1989b), drawing on the work of Garfinkel and Goffman, argues for a sociology of the middle ground in which she makes the case for a sui generis interaction order. Prior to the appearance of an external and constraining institutional order with its situation-specific facts rules and norms, interactants must be committed to the interactional production of self and meaning. This is the interaction order. The maintenance of an institutional order is an activity which requires of participants that they taken-for-grantedly make similar assumptions about the world, apply these assumptions in similar ways and trust appearances. Thus the institutional order is different from its interactional accomplishment which requires of participants a commitment to self and meaning.

From Rawls' position it is not possible to understand the research interview in terms of rule following because the actual practices of doing an interview have very little to do with the formal rules - except that actual practices have as their result or end product the appearance of rule following. Rules in the traditional sense (as a transparent context for the analytic interpretation of meaning), are present in the utterances of participants as the external and objective constraints to which their utterances are artfully designed to display conformity to. Thus participants are constrained by their commitment to the production of a particular institutional frame and consequently it is not the case that any account will do - produce normal interview appearances. The institutional order is moral and stable because of a prior commitment to the interactional order of (i) meaning and (ii) self production.
The commitment to meaning: talk has its own organisational structure, that Sacks (1964) identified as 'sequential relevance', where speakers and hearers are required to interpret each others utterances in terms of previous utterances. Thus the meaning of an utterance is displayed (its interpretation) in the next turn of talk. The response to a speaker's utterance - the next turn - enables him or her to assess how it has been interpreted and provides the opportunity for repair in a subsequent turn. The sequential organisation of turns enables interactants to monitor whether their fellow interactants are fulfilling their hearing and listening obligations. To be in breach of the sequential relevance that organises meaningful dialogue is at best an index of a failure to understand, at worst an index of a lack of commitment to the interaction. Sequential relevance guarantees and verifies a commitment to interaction. Although at an institutional level the research interview fixes turns and topics in advance the accomplishment of an interaction as an interview is an emergent property of a commitment to a particular variation of conversational sequencing i.e. the interviewer asks questions which the respondent answers. To the extent that the research interview as institutional order fixes turns and topics in advance, it must be responsive to the sequentially relevant organisation of conversational turns if there is to be intelligible talk i.e. talk that will reflexively constitute the interaction as a research interview.

Commitment to self: Self as an interactional accomplishment demands a commitment to an interaction order of ritual constraints for the expression of appreciation and respect for emergent selves. Like meaning, self is not a precondition for interaction but its end product. A person's commitment to the interaction order of self production and to the ritual nature of interaction is ensured by a set of related 'principles or background assumptions' to face-to-face interaction (Manning 1992:78). Manning (ibid:78) formulates these principles, on Goffman's behalf, in the SIAC schema, namely that:

1 interactants must display situational propriety;
2 interactants must gauge the appropriate level of involvement for an encounter
3 interactants must be accessible to all ratified participants;
4 interactants must display civil inattention in the presence of strangers.

The importance of SIAC is that it generates the trust in normal appearances without which social order would break down. SIAC itself is underwritten by Felicity's Condition (Goffman 1983), a presupposition about presuppositions, that whenever we come into contact with another through the mail, over the telephone, in face-to-face talk, or even merely through immediate co-presence, we find ourselves with one central obligation: to render our behaviour understandably relevant to what the other can come to perceive is going on. Whatever else, our activity must be addressed to the other's mind, that is to the other's capacity to read our words and actions for evidence of our feelings, thoughts and intent. This confines what we say and do, but it allows us to bring to bear all the world to which the other can catch allusions.

(Goffman 1983:51)

Interactants must demonstrate their sanity i.e. that actions are framed and styled so as to be acceptable and understandably relevant to what is perceived to be going on (Travers and Smith forthcoming 1996). It is a consequence of observing these principles or background assumptions (Manning 1992) of co-presence that interactional selves emerge as ritual objects. These ritual objects must be honoured and accommodated verbally and non-verbally as occupying specific social roles and identities pertinent to the institutional frame. The interactional order of self-production is distinct from and prior to institutional roles because there must be a self to fulfil a role before it can come into existence. Institutional roles depend upon emergent selves for their existence; to this extent, institutional roles (if they are not to denigrate selves) must be sensitive to the ritual requirements of self production. The extent to which institutional rules and norms threaten commitment to the ritual nature of emergent selves is counter balanced by an interactional 'underlife' in which selves are informally (not in conformity with institutional rules) honoured and accommodated. Thus even in total institutions where relationships are highly regulated, participants still observe, albeit informally, the ritual requirements of situational propriety.
There is potential for confusion between the morality of the institutional order, and the morality of the interaction order of emergent selves and meaning. At the level of the interaction order morality is a commitment to the interactional production of meaning and selves, whereas morality at the institutional level is conformity with the institutional expectations that are made observably real - normal appearances - through participants' commitment to the interaction order. Given the requirement for interactional commitment to meaning and self-production it is not surprising that researchers note difficulties in implementing a rule-bound textbook approach to research interviewing. Nor is it surprising that researchers note the development of a relationship with respondents as a consequence of a commitment to doing the research interview as a recognisably orderly and inoffensive interaction.

Part 5: ritual selves in the interaction order

I now turn to Goffman's *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates* (1968) as providing the basis of a method for studying institutions, in this instance the research interview, as structured and organised from within to honour and accommodate emergent ritual selves. Three specific points will be discussed in this section, (i) that organisations are based upon an explicit and implicit contract between participants, (ii) that organisations provide for a discipline of being and (iii) that organisations are goal oriented. This will be followed by a resumé of Goffman's ideas on *Face work* (1955) in preparation for their use in the empirical chapters of the thesis.

1) An organisational contract: Goffman likens an individual's involvement in a social scene to a contract. As a feature of his or her participation an individual enters an arena of obligations and rules pertaining to 'appropriate' behaviour. This is the institutional order, where the rules and obligations of participation vary in kind, the extent to which they are made explicit and the
means by which they are enforced, as defining features of an institutional reality.

There are, however, also tacit or unstated assumptions that formulate the general validity of an organisational contract. Specifically, that participants display situational propriety, demonstrate their sanity (Goffman 1983) and act in good faith. This is the *sui generis* interaction order. Participating in a scene involves a *de facto* agreement to abide by both formal (institutional) and tacit (interactional) expectations and has self-defining implications for those involved. By virtue of their attention to situational propriety and the formal expectations of an interactional scene participants become, for each other, persons possessing particular characteristics and identities, their social being is defined. Thus as a consequence of agreeing to do an interview on Labour Market Decisions the participants hold certain expectations about their own and the other's behaviour, becoming for each other (for the duration on the interview) persons possessing particular identities. Their identities can be glossed as interviewer and interviewee.

Asking how do participants 'handle' the self defining implications of participation Goffman (1968:160) identifies three extreme positions: (i) an individual can default from his obligations and brazen out any redefining looks that others might give him; (ii) he can reject the contract's self-defining implications but prevent his alienation from becoming apparent in any of his actions; or (iii) he can totally embrace the self-defining implications of his involvement, being to himself what others who are involved feel he ought to be. In actual practice Goffman claims:

[an] individual often abjures all of these extremes. He holds himself off from fully embracing all the self-implications of his affiliation, allowing some of his disaffection to be seen, even while fulfilling his major obligations.

(Goffman 1968:161)
ii) A discipline of Being: a participant who acts in accordance with the self-defining expectations of his participation becomes an 'official self' of the interaction. However as noted above:

We always find the individual employing methods to keep some distance, some elbow room, between himself and that with which others assume he should be identified.

(Goffman 1968:279)

There are limits though to the amount of elbow room or role distance (Goffman 1969b) that a participant can achieve. If an individual distances himself or herself too far and for too long from the official self, the contractual terms and hence the self-defining implications of participation will be re-negotiated. The manner in which an individual responds to the self-defining implications of an interaction presents his self to those co-present as a defining and real feature of the interaction.

With regard to this study of the research interview the following initial observations can be made. The interviewer pays close attention to his role, only occasionally distancing himself from it. By such action the interviewer is able to co-ordinate actively the interview and socialise the respondent (Mishler 1986). It is, after all, the interviewer who initiated the interview and who hopes to collect relevant data. The interviewer’s attention to his role is indicative of his involvement in it and of the extent to which the co-ordination of the interview is dependent upon it. Respondents in contrast appear to take more licence in the performance of their roles. By being more licentious the respondent makes use of other social identities - social identities that they are assumed to possess as a consequence of answering questions about Labour Market Decisions i.e. that they are mothers, husbands, employees etc. Role performance for a respondent is composed of multiple selves as they are required to 'handle' their situated involvement as interviewee and as husband, wife, parent, employee or however their identity is being defined at any given moment.
An individual for Goffman is a 'stance taking entity', taking a position somewhere between identification with and opposition to, the self-defining implications of participation. He or she is also able at the slightest pressure to realign him or her self by shifts of involvement in and out of particular roles. Thus it can be said of a respondent that his or her motivated compliance to the interview does not preclude the possibility that what he or she says is intended to present a particular image, please the interviewer or even warn the interviewer off a particular topic - interactional realities that have been documented by researchers using the interview.

iii) The instrumental nature of organisations: Goffman (1968:161) uses the term 'instrumental formal organisation' to describe 'purposely co-ordinated activities designed to produce some overall explicit ends'. Goffman is describing total organisations which are geographically bound or walled in; however the defining feature (in my reading) is visibility. It is as a consequence of his or her visibility that an individual's engrossment or otherwise in the activity of the organisation can be seen as a symbol of his or her commitment to the goals of the organisation.

Built right into the social arrangements of an organisation, then, is a thoroughly embracing conception of the member - and not merely a conception of him qua member [interviewer or interviewee], but behind this a conception of qua human being.

(Goffman 1968:164)

An instrumental formal organisation is only able to survive by virtue of its members' contributions of usable activity. There are however limits to the demands that an organisation can make of participants. An organisation must (i) be attentive to the welfare of its participants, (ii) establish shared values and (iii) offer 'appropriate' rewards and incentives.

(i) Participant welfare relates to health and safety; the amount of effort expected and the acknowledgement that other organisations have a claim upon an individual's time. While Goffman's conception of welfare has its origins in total institutions, it is an issue for
interviewers and interviewees. Interviewers attend to the welfare of respondents by giving assurance of confidentiality and by arranging interviews at the respondent's convenience - thereby acknowledging the claims of family and work upon their time. When an interview is disturbed (by a door bell or ringing telephone), it is the interviewer who suspends the interview (by switching off the tape recorder) so that the interviewee can respond to this call upon his or her time. Attention to these details defines the interviewer's and the respondent's participation status, only the interviewer can arrange a research interview and only the interviewer can make assurances of confidentiality. Conversely it is only a respondent who can accept these offers. Respondents attend to an interviewer's welfare, by offering both before and after the interview drinks and snacks. It is my contention that these courtesies serve a ritual function beyond mere refreshment. Via acts of hospitality a respondent is able to define his or her participation status as 'host' and the interviewer by accepting these offers assumes the role and obligations of being a 'guest'.

The different but mutual attentiveness that respondent and interviewer show to each other's welfare frames their respective identities. While these identity frames of interviewer/respondent and host/guest do not appear to conflict, they provide rules and expectations as to what is appropriate behaviour. Expectations that can be glossed respectively as 'this is a research interview' and 'you are a guest in my house'. Acts of hospitality by the respondent, which are often seen as an index of rapport (Finch 1984 Oakley 1981), can also be seen as interactional moves in which a respondent bids for and assumes a degree of control over an interaction which might otherwise be framed purely as a research interview. Thus it is interesting to note that the offers of drinks were not refused by me without the accompaniment of a 'good reason'. As Goffman notes, to forgo a prescribed activity - having a cup of tea - is a withdrawal from the official self - guest - and thereby a means to dodge the obligations of the interaction - behaving like a guest.
One example of a withdrawal from an 'official self' occurred at the end of some interviews. The interviewer (myself) reminded the respondent that the interview was confidential, only to have this reminder rejected, the respondent saying something to the effect\(^3\) 'I have not said anything that I would not normally say'. By such a remark the respondent dodges his\(^4\) expected identity as someone-requiring-confidentiality because he had said confidential things - this is a withdrawal from the official self of the interview because a commitment confidentiality was an expectation of participation. Consequently I (as an interviewer sitting in the respondent's house) had doubts about the quality of the data and the respondent's motivation in participating. Had he been going through the motions (of being interviewed) because his wife put him up to it?

(ii) Joint Values: by which Goffman means the extent to which a participant identifies with the interests of the organisation and the extent to which organisational values are fateful (i.e. consequential) to the participant. With regard to the research interview the customary description given to the respondent about the aims and method of the research project are important. These preliminaries to the actual interview can be seen as a means to motivate the respondent to identify with and participate appropriately in the research. The materials gathered and analysed in this thesis were collected by describing a wish to hear about the respondents' experience.

Q: Yeah, a lot of the theories are sort of based on ... ideas rather than people's real experience of looking for work

Mr Exe: Ah.

Q: and so we're sort of trying to fill in, find out, what it's like for people, how they make decisions about jobs ... ah. Obviously everything you say is kept in confidence; it's not passed on to anybody else

(Mr Exe p. 1)

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\(^3\) By this stage the tape recorder had been switched off so there were no transcripts of these incidences.

\(^4\) It was only male respondents who made this remark.
The need to establish shared values would explain the reluctance of this researcher (myself) to divulge that the project's explanatory paradigm was indifferent to the truth or falsity of the data collected. I felt that such an admission would be offensive to the respondents given the normative expectation of telling the truth in research interviews (see chapter 7), and jeopardise the respondent's willingness to identify with the aims of the project. Thus, as in the extract, the aims of the project are described as a desire to hear about the respondents' experiences. The only exception to this occurred when discussing the project with Mr Cedar, an educational researcher. Assuming that Mr Cedar had a more 'sophisticated' knowledge of research I felt it was appropriate to mention the rhetorical nature of the project to ensure his motivated participation. That respondents perceived their participation as fateful was apparent in questions about the use to which the research would be put by me as a sociologist or by any potential readers of the published report. This was a difficult question for me to answer because I felt the research would have little impact (in terms of government policy) yet I felt to have said so would de-value the project in the eyes of the respondents and hence de-motivate them. Consequently, I suggested that while a study of decision making was of great interest in its own right, it would be a number of years before the published research was noticed by policy makers.

(iii) Rewards and incentives: the use of which appeals to a participant's interests rather than those of the organisation. Participation in the research interview (for the respondents) was voluntary, the only inducement was an offer of a summary of the research findings. This provided Mr and Mrs Blith and a visiting friend with the opportunity to make 'sport' of the interviewer.

Mr Blith: What do you prove [indistinct]
Q: We don't prove things: we want to know the sort of things that make people change their jobs [children talking] ... want them to tell their story in their own words, 'cause everybody's

5 Mr Cedar did not appear to be concerned by this aspect of the research.
story's different and that's why we don't have a questionnaire or ... a form or . . .

Ms Blith: So we don't get no freebies on this then [laughs]
Q: No.
Mr Blith: [indistinct]
[children very noisy - adults indistinct]
Q: there are some surveys that you get ...
Ms A: Yeah, when I does them up the town [indistinct] they gives you a box of soap powder don't em?

(Mr and Mrs Blith p.9)

The fact that participation in the research interviews is voluntary and that there is little reward for participation is indicative of an expectation on behalf of the researchers and respondents that an interview can be freely given. Participation in the social scientific process, for whatever reason (including amusement), perhaps being its own reward.

As a direct consequence of the above observations I wish to suggest that a significant element of interview interaction is directed to establishing a commitment to interact via attention to the ritual nature of selves - selves must be honoured and accommodated. This consideration adds an extra analytic dimension to accounts based sociology. This extra dimension can be further caught and developed by Goffman's (1969a) notion of face work.

An individual possesses a face by virtue of the 'expressive events' (posture, utterances and gestures) emanating from him/her, displaying his/her evaluation of himself and of others present. A face is thus a composite of various witnessable attributes that are constitutive of an interactional scene. To be 'in face' is to manage impressions such that they are (i) in accord with institutional expectations and (ii) witnessable as consistent with previous expressive events. A participant experiences an immediate emotional response to his face as a source of positive and negative feelings. As all faces are derived from the same source, the social encounter, participants will have feelings towards each other's faces - there is a mutual fatefulness.
Face work is the expressive moves by which interactants respond to incidents that threaten to disrupt either their line (the expressive events that constitute their face) or the expressive order of the interaction. A participant's face is not a personal possession but is 'diffusely located in the flow of events' (Goffman 1969a:4) - it is a virtual self, a kind of 'player in a ritual game'. A 'player', because a participant is judging both the symbolic implications of his and others actions as a feature of a scene. It is 'ritual' because it is organised from within to honour and accommodate selves as sacred objects - via his actions an 'actor shows how worthy he is of respect or how worthy he feels others are of it' (Goffman 1969a:14). Once a participant presents a particular line or face - his co-participants tend to build their responses upon it - face saving - and in a sense he becomes stuck with it. Thus the ritual nature of interaction has a 'conservative' or stabilising effect upon interaction.

In general then a person determines how he ought to conduct himself during an occasion of talk by testing the potential symbolic meaning of his acts against the self-images that are being sustained. In doing this however he incidentally subjects his behaviour to the expressive order that prevails and contributes to the orderly flow of messages. His aim is to save face; his effect is to save the situation.

(Goffman 1969a:31)

Part 6: a summary

This chapter has made the case that interaction between interviewers and interviewees in positivist and interactionist methodologies is under-theorised. I claim this because interview interaction is conceptualised using two interpretative repertoires, the interactional and the instrumental, that function to save the referential quality of interview data. Thus these descriptions of interview interaction can be seen as attending to practical concerns relating to bias and error in data, rather than attending to the interaction as a topic in its own right. An alternative, suggested by Cicourel is to see interview data as a display of common-sense
thinking, used by participants, to accomplish research-interview-interaction. Developing this internalist position, Silverman (1985) analyses interview talk as artfully constructed by participants in attending to their moral identity as a feature of an external institutional order. This position, while an advance in the study of interview interaction, reduces the moral responsibility of participants to verbal accounts, neglecting the morality of the interaction order in which meaning and selves are produced and experienced. I then reviewed Goffman's study of asylums as a methodological entrée for the study of the research interview as an organisation structured and organised from within to honour and accommodate ritual selves. In Goffman's terms the interview, as an organisation, is based upon an explicit and implicit contract between participants; provides a discipline of being and is goal oriented. It is within the research interview as an organisational frame that respondent and interviewer become ritually involved with each other - making and saving face - an involvement that is displayed and attended to as interview talk. And it is the issue of interview talk, specifically how respondents say 'more' as a branching texture of relevance that I will address in chapter 3.
Introduction

Garfinkel (1967) claims members engaged in everyday affairs produce and manage their affairs as accountable, observable, reportable and real. Accounts routinely construct objects, events, and states of mind, furnishing members with 'resources, troubles, projects and all the rest' (Garfinkel 1967:2). The reflexive construction of everyday affairs (by members' accounts) is seen but unnoticed; it is of no practical interest to members whose affairs have an 'accomplished sense, an accomplished facticity, an accomplished objectivity, an accomplished familiarity, an accomplished accountability' (Garfinkel 1967:10). This chapter develops an understanding of why interview accounts expand, how respondents say 'more' to produce this accomplished sense, facticity, objectivity, familiarity and accountability. It starts from the assumption that for an account to be heard as truthful and honest it must be consistent, but that consistency cannot be specified in advance, it must be achieved and one way of achieving it is to say 'more'. However, by saying 'more', a respondent risks being inconsistent since he or she could well contradict him or herself.

As a common-sense ideal interview accounts (of objects, events, and states of mind) should be truthful and honest. Being truthful and honest is however an interactional accomplishment. For an account to be heard as such certain conditions must be fulfilled; the account must be: internally consistent (Billig 1987); consistent with the perceived motives of the teller and consistent with the artefacts
that surround the teller and the telling. Thus attention is paid to potential alternative accounts in which the events, objects or states of mind reported could be described differently (Cuff 1980), by a recipient. In this sense an account must be consistent with what is already known or knowable about the world in general. Saying 'more' is one way that the threat posed by inconsistency (as a potential index of dishonesty) is managed by interview respondents and it is this tendency of interview respondents to say 'more' as a means to give accounts that are hearable as truthful or honest that this chapter takes as its topic. In saying 'more' it is postulated that interview respondents cover themselves against the charge of inconsistency either actual (from a perceived fault in the account) or potential (from what is unstated but routinely known about the world). Being consistent as an interactional accomplishment requires a respondent to manage two domains of consistency; one which is based upon routine interpretation of what is perceptually present in the setting and another which is latent in the culture at large. With regard to this second domain, a respondent is potentially up against the whole of human knowledge (as it could be deployed by the interviewer) when he or she is required to give a description of Labour Market Decision-Making in a research interview.

Part 1 of the chapter describes how an interaction can be seen as a context of accountability in which participants are morally accountable to both a sense of context and the meaning of their utterances. Participants' descriptions of objects, events, and states of mind, are artful interpretations of common-sense knowledge. Common-sense knowledge cannot provide definitive once-and-for-all descriptions since, as a matter of routine, alternative descriptions are available. Alternatives that must be 'suppressed' if an account is to be heard as truthful. The perceived status of an account as truthful or otherwise is consequential to the ritual relationship between tellers and hearers and thus accounts are managed with due regard to face. Finally, to introduce the notion of 'passing' part 1 reviews Garfinkel's (1967) study of Agnes, Passing and the managed achievement of sex status in an intersexed person, where passing in a research interview on Labour Market Decision-Making is defined as telling an account that is hearable as consistent which in this
instance is isomorphic with being truthful and honest. In part 2 I discuss empirical examples of consistency work - passing - from the interview data in which the respondents say 'more'.

Part 1: interaction as a context of accountability

The meaning of an action (or utterance) is interpreted with reference to the context of its occurrence; context is established by reference to how actions are interpreted, thus both actions and context stand in a reflexive relationship. Each is used to elaborate a sense of the other. The act of interpretation is itself an action which will require subsequent interpretation. Meaning is both a constituent feature and an emergent property of interaction. The relevance of an action to an interaction, its meaning, depends on how it is interpreted, a relevance that can be revised in the light of subsequent events, changing the sense or normal appearances of what has been 'going on'. Normal appearances, as a sense of what is 'going on', furnish participants with a texture of relevant matters - expectations that may be confirmed, confounded or revised. Everything (actions, utterances and artefacts) is interpretable. How it is interpreted as meaningful is constitutive of an intelligible interactional scene. However, an interpretation is itself subject to interpretation, thus the intelligibility of an interactional scene, as a sense of what is and what has been 'going on', is emergent and constantly updated.

Acts that cannot be interpreted as 'appropriate' to the normal appearances of a scene are treated by participants as initiating a change in normal appearance (for example from casual conversation to making a sexual pass), or as requiring a specific request for confirmation of meaning (What do you think you are doing?). However since the meaning (of an action or utterance) is displayed in subsequent actions and utterances it is rare for meaning to become an explicit conversational topic (Heritage 1984).
An interaction is a context of moral accountability in which participants are accountable for their actions as contributions to a co-operatively produced and sustained sense of what is 'going on'. Actions and their meaningful interpretation, document (Garfinkel 1967:76-104) the world as factual, objective and familiar until a breach (Garfinkel 1967:47) occurs. Breaches are actions which a recipient is unable to interpret as textually relevant - appropriate - to the emergent sense of what is 'going on'. Such actions cause 'trouble' for interactants; what does the action mean, how is it to be interpreted in the light of what is already known? Participants in Garfinkel's breaching experiments, designed to produce just such trouble, interpreted anomalous actions as documenting an individual's until-then-hidden psychological motivation; 'are you mad?'; 'what has got into you?'; 'are you after something?'. Psychological motivation is an interpretative resource for participants and it follows from its use that anomalous actions become intelligible such that (i) interactional sense never breaks down and (ii) persons appear as morally accountable selves. Further, participants are routinely aware that should they fail to conform to the normative expectations of an interaction, their moral character, for good or ill, will be documented as a 'real' and relevant feature of the interaction.

In discussing the case of Agnes, a transsexual engaged in the activity of 'passing' as a natural female, Garfinkel notes that Agnes was involved in 'ongoing courses of action directed to the mastery of her practical circumstances by the manipulation of these circumstances as a texture of relevance' (Garfinkel 1967:166). Agnes, a 'practical methodologist' (Garfinkel 1967:180) made her status as a normally sexed female observable and reportable as real. Agnes' 'passing' made observable what her fellow interactants took on trust as the characteristics of a normally sexed female. On each occasion of Agnes' 'passing', the situation provided for her and determined for her what relevant matters had to be managed so that she would be

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1It is my contention that 'breach' is too strong a word. There is no time out from meaning production and in this sense there is no actual breach but a confounding of context specific expectations. However, breach in Garfinkel's sense of the word is used because of its familiarity.
seen as a woman. The achievement of the status, normally sexed female, was therefore based upon her compliance with taken-for-granted expectancies of everyday life as an accountable moral order.

I wish to suggest that the participants in these research interviews are doing their own form of 'passing', where passing is isomorphic with reporting Labour Market Decisions in a manner that is hearable as consistent and thus as truthful and honest\(^2\). However the expectations that enabled Agnes' 'passing' were in many instances not knowable in advance (they could not be planned for), thus Agnes allowed the situation to teach her what was expected of her as a normally sexed female (Garfinkel 1967:147). Similarly what will pass as consistent\(^3\) in a research interview is not knowable in advance, potentially a respondent's account must cover all possible alternative descriptions - it is up against the whole of human knowledge. Consistency is indexical, the terms of its accomplishment can not be specified in advance. It is only in actual instances of interview talk that consistency as a practical problem is dealt with and achieved - to all practical purposes. 'To all practical purposes' means, in this instance, giving an account that is hearable as consistent such that the respondent 'passes' as being honest and truthful.

By the use of the term 'passing' I do not mean that the interviewees were necessarily involved in conscious deceptions, but that they can be said to have 'passed' if their account did not appear to a fellow interactant as inconsistent; if their moral identity was not impugned and if normal interview appearances were not disrupted.

The common-sense knowledge that interactants draw upon to construct their accounts is dilemmatic (Billig 1987), in that for every

\(^2\) From this perspective consistency is not about telling 'the truth' or 'lying' but about managing what is said so that a recipient can hear it as truthful i.e. as without actual or potential contradiction.

\(^3\) Silverman (1987) in a study of professional-client interviews approaches the issue of consistency in terms of versions of events (that can always be undercut) and the means by which clients rebut actual and potential charges against their version of events.
description there is potentially an alternative description. Giving a description of a particular decision and the reasons why it was made sows the seeds of alternative reasons for making the same decision. Common-sense knowledge provides resources for describing reasons (for making a particular decision) but common-sense knowledge has to be interpreted (and interpretations are open to alternative interpretations) thus common-sense knowledge is never sufficient. Billig (1987:213) describes the art of description as:

feeling for the required balance of contraries in the subtly different dilemmas which must be faced at every stage of every game, both inside and outside the boundary of play.

An account of a particular decision and the reasons for making it, engages the respondent in a debate with possible alternatives. By specifying the possible alternatives a respondent acknowledges their relevance, as routinely available alternatives and as potential threats to consistency to be countered. This is done by saying 'more'. It is important to note, however, that it is not so much the facts of the account that are at issue, as there is little opportunity for participants to explicitly check them, but the account's status as factual. There is, however, more at stake here than just the status of the account because the moral responsibility of persons is not necessarily reducible to verbal accounts. Interview participants become involved in their accounts as ritual selves and there is an intimate and isomorphic relationship (Smith 1978) between the interviewee as a figure in their account and as the teller of their account. As Goffman (1969b:53) notes:

[a] performer will attempt to make the expressions that occur consistent with the identity imputed to him; he will feel compelled to control and police the expressions that occur.

Consequently, the quality of this isomorphic relationship - its public face - depends upon the mastery of practical circumstances. A mastery that is displayed in making and saving face as (i) a co-operative interview respondent and (ii) a morally adequate mother, father, husband, or whatever identity is being specified at that moment. In attempting to control and police expressions as
consistent, a respondent says 'more' as a branching texture of relevance (Garfinkel 1967:26). Saying 'more' is the means by which respondents; make face, ensure the consistency of their accounts (and thus the status of their accounts as factual and honest); 'pass' and 'deal' with potential alternative accounts that stand in opposition to what they have just said. However, saying 'more' potentially increases the possibility of being inconsistent as a wider range of materials become perceptually present.

Respondents' accounts invoke relevant matters so as to achieve consistency as a feature of telling an account that is hearable as the truth. This display of relevance is constitutive of normal interview appearances and is particularly pertinent to qualitative research in which the respondent is expected to speak at length. Inconsistency (as a breach or moral failure), whether wilful or unintended, is a distinct possibility when answering a question. Furthermore, interviewers routinely assume respondents may engage in deception and respondents assume that they are required to tell the truth or at least appear to be telling the truth (this requirement for telling the truth in interviews is discussed fully in chapter 7). The textually relevant criteria of an account's passing as truthful can not be specified in advance, as Goffman (1969a:4) notes:

on the basis of a few known attributes, he [a person] is given the responsibility of possessing a vast number of others. His co participants are not likely to be conscious of the character of many of these attributes until he acts perceptibly in such a way as to discredit his possession of them; then everyone becomes conscious of these attributes and assumes that he wilfully gave a false impression of possessing them.

What Goffman is referring to here is impression management, with its 'naughty' view of interactants as being actively engaged in a deception. The point I wish to make is that, for a participant to be seen to be engaged in a deception, he or she has to make observable and accountably real an inconsistency between his identity as a teller and his identity as figure in that telling. And there is always the possibility that such an inconsistency will be allowed to pass, for fear of causing offence. Participants in a research
interview have a vested interest in saving each other's face (as interviewer or interviewee) if normal interview appearances are not to be breached with possible unpleasant results.

A further point is that I am not arguing that Goffman's face work and Garfinkel's passing are equivalent. For Goffman an interactant lives between a virtual self identity of presentations and an actual self identity of how those presentations are seen. Managing these two identities as congruent is what Goffman calls face work. Wherever there are identity norms there is potential moral failure - stigmatisation and shame (Goffman 1968b). Stigmatisation is, for Goffman, a constant possibility for anybody in any situation (Travers 1994:11). Thus to pass as normal - have a congruent virtual and actual self identity - for Goffman is the cynical (Manning 1992:99) use of face work. This is quite different from Garfinkel's position on Agnes' passing. Agnes is not 'cynically' passing by masking a stigmatised biography and biology except when she is failing to pass. When Agnes is passing, managing a texture of relevant matters, she is for herself and for others who she appears to be, a normal sexed female or a woman born with a penis (when interviewed by Garfinkel). There is for Agnes (as she appears in Garfinkel's analysis) no difference between the normative expectations of womanhood and the practical realisation of those norms - her passing. Thus Goffman's ideas about face work and Garfinkel's theory of Agnes' passing are analytically different. But as Travers (1994:11) argues, the actual self identity acted out by a person looks exactly the same (to participants and analysts) regardless of whether it is a cynical face work performance or a grasp of interactional expectations that are managed as a texture of relevance - passing. The difference between these two positions is created by Goffman and Garfinkel in their search for a plausible description of participants' achievements of normal appearances. And any attempt to arbitrate between normal appearances as cynical face work or the management of textual relevance, would necessarily involve invoking a respondent's state of mind, which is contrary to the spirit of both Goffman and Garfinkel's analysis.
Saying 'more' is a difficult and delicate concept to define as a respondent says what he or she says, but I hope to demonstrate via analysis that he or she can become caught up in a branching texture of relevance, saying 'more'. And that by saying 'more' a respondent passes - makes face by telling an account that is hearable as consistent. Interviewer and interviewees have a vested interest in each other's face and in the Labour Market Decisions research none of the interviews broke down, and potentially all the data collected can be seen as instances of passing. However there do seem to be those interview moments where consistency work is tangible and it is these moments that I have selected to demonstrate my argument.

Part 2: saying more: an analysis of how accounts expand

In the two extracts below Mrs Nene and Mrs Torridge are asked if they would consider moving house. This question furnishes the respondents with a context of accountability; Mrs Nene and Mrs Torridge give different answers but they both display themselves accountable to the reputation of the area in which they live, as a relevant feature when considering a change of address.

Mrs Nene:

Q: Do you ever see a time when you might move away from this area?

Mrs Nene: No, 'cause I like it here. I don't care what anybody's got to say about Ashtree Lane. I've never had any problems with it. I was born here - in Ashtree Lane - and I like it. I mean all this ruffian stuff what goes on, I mean, I don't see any of it so .. no, I wouldn't move away.

Q: Do you rent your house or ..?

(Mrs Nene page 11)

Mrs Nene responds, 'No', she 'like[s] it here', an assertion that she displays as accountable, 'I don't care what anybody's got to say about Ashtree Lane. I've never had any problems with it.' In an account of not wanting to move a reference is made to what other people have to say about the area. Mrs Nene describes herself as
having been born in the area, a claim that plausibly provides her with warrant for knowing the area well. The 'problems' in the area are then specified: 'all this ruffian stuff what goes on', but Mrs Nene accounts for herself as 'never seeing any of it'. This is an account that does not deny the existence of 'problems' but runs counter to what other people say 'goes on', without explicitly denying it. Mrs Nene then repeats her initial claim of not wanting to move.

Mrs Nene says 'more', her account expands as a consequence of her attention to the estate's reputation as an accountable reason for wanting to move. An accountability that Mrs Nene addresses in a possible pre-emptive strike (Cuff 1980) in order to dismiss: she was born in Ashtree Lane and has never seen any trouble. Mrs Nene's claim to be born in the area is crucial because it establishes her knowledge of Ashtree Lane as greater than the interviewer's. Were the interviewer to dispute Mrs Nene's account of her reasons for wanting to stay or the problems on the estate the interviewer would risk slighting Mrs Nene's face as that of someone who not only likes the area but has lived there since birth. Mrs Nene's account expands, she says 'more' to make her account of not wanting to move consistent with an imputed general knowledge of the area as a rough place, by denying the validity of this description.

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4 Helen, the interviewer, spoke with a marked Scottish accent.
Mrs Torridge:

Q: Would you like to stay in this area or would you like to move?

Mrs Torridge: Um... I would love to move... but I felt obligated to my dad [laughs] and... so I won't [pause]

Q: So you rent this house?

Mrs Torridge: Yeah, from the Council. But I really would love to move. It's not the area. The area's nice area even though people's got... keep saying 'oh I wouldn't live out there, it's awful'. But you've gotta live here to actually know; it's not as bad as some of the other housing estates that's around... because it's very quiet out here. I mean you might get the odd occasion when something really drastic happens but it's not very often.

(Mrs Torridge p.24)

Mrs Torridge accounts for herself as wanting to move and also as 'obligated' to her father, sufficient reason for staying, 'so I won't [move]'. The laugh that proceeds this utterance could be seen as a change of footing, that distances the self that would love to move, from the self obligated to the father thus saving the consistency of Mrs Torridge's face. There is a pause, Mrs Torridge offers no explanation of her obligation to her father, as might be expected. The interviewer then asks 'So you rent this house?' Mrs Torridge responds, 'Yeah, from the Council', but returns to the previous topic; 'I really would love to move'. Mrs Torridge discounts the possibility that her desire to move has anything to do with the area, 'It's not the area', displaying (like Mrs Nene) that the area is an accountable reason for wanting to move. 'Not the area' is then expanded, 'the area's nice even through people's got... keep saying 'oh I wouldn't live out there, it's awful'. To justify the claim that the area is 'nice' in spite of what people say about it Mrs Torridge says more: 'you've gotta live here to actually know' and 'it's not as bad as some of the other housing estates'. The expansion is a justification of the assertion that the area is 'nice', which has its relevance as not being a sufficient reason for Mrs Torridge wanting to move. Mrs Torridge continues, 'I mean you might get the odd occasion when something really drastic happens', a possible concession by Mrs Torridge to any knowledge the interviewer is assumed to have of the area and a display that she, Mrs Torridge, has possibly over-stated her case. Mrs Torridge's final remark, 'it's not
very often' downgrades the significance of the 'odd occasion' to bringing her account in line with her previous remarks and avoiding a seesawing of the account from one position (there are no problems) to another (there are some problems).

The reputation of the area is a plausible reason for wanting to move, yet it is not the reason why Mrs Torridge would 'love to move'. Mrs Torridge's account expands to bring these contradictory formulations into line, making them consistent, by downgrading the significance of the area's reputation as a reason for wanting to move. It is interesting to note that the nature of Mrs Torridge's 'obligation' to her father is not expanded upon. This obligation may well be a common-place presumption, requiring no further expansion. Nor does Mrs Torridge provide an account of why she wants to move but the interviewer's next question about schools may sow the seed of a relevant reason. Mrs Torridge, however, gives no further account of her desire to move and the interviewer does not raise the topic again.

Mrs Nene and Mrs Torridge both invoke the reputation of the area - saying 'more' - as a textually relevant reason when considering a move. In doing so Mrs Nene and Mrs Torridge attend to the status of their responses as hearably consistent with what is possibly routinely known about Ashtree Lane as a 'problem' estate. A possible unstated alternative account that Mrs Nene and Mrs Torridge are countering is that they would like to move from the area but are unable to do so due to poverty. And therefore residents might reasonably be expected to want to move.

In the extracts below three men are asked about their employment status. Two of the men, Mr Exe and Mr Parratt, account for themselves as unemployed, to which they invoke a branching texture of relevance as they attend to their moral identity. This is in sharp contrast to Mr Avon who is employed and whose account does not expand. In each case the interview has just started.
In response to the interviewer's question Mr Exe replies 'No', but continues to speak, he is looking for work but wants a job that will 'cover all the bills', the job must be 'worth it'. Mr Exe's account has expanded from a simple 'No' to include an account of looking for work and a requirement to earn enough money to cover the bills. This expansion of the account is not only relevant to the task of 'doing' the research interview but it displays that Mr Exe holds himself accountable for his unemployment. An accountability that Mr Exe addresses by claiming to be looking for worthwhile employment.

The expansion, looking for work and a consideration of what is worthwhile is a consequence of Mr Exe displaying an accountability associated with unemployment. The expansion functions not only as an explanation of his unemployment but acts as mitigation against its negative associations. Unemployment is in this context an accountable fact because as Mr Exe displays in his expansion, it is consequential to his moral identity. Explaining his unemployment in terms of a calculation Mr Exe displays himself to be economically active while unemployed, a possible face saving move, that minimises a potential inconsistency between looking for work and being unable to find work. Thus the account given by Mr Exe could be sensitive to the unstated but potential charge, that he is 'work-shy'.
In response to a question about how he chooses his jobs Mr Parratt replies: 'I don't choose my job'; prompted by the interviewer's 'Don't you?' he adds that he is 'pretty versatile'. Asked if he has a job at the moment Mr Parratt replies, 'Well sort of', its 'part-time', 'here and there', 'When they want my services' This response is somewhat cryptic, Mr Parratt might be concealing the fact that he is illegally claiming benefit, but whatever the reason, Mr Parratt adds 'unemployed is my .. status at the moment', displaying that he possibly perceived his initial account as 'insufficient', (in some sense), for the purpose of 'doing' a research interview.

The use of the term 'status' hints at an official category, but the category 'unemployed' is however qualified, 'But ah, I'm not a lot really', which is more in line with Mr Parratt's earlier account of 'jumping around'. The qualification, that he is not really unemployed, is then bolstered by Mr Parratt's list of previous jobs and the statement that he has worked since leaving school. That Mr Parratt says more displays attention to unemployment as an

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5 My analysis cannot arbitrate over these two alternatives and the interviewer who might have given some indication of how she interpreted Mr Parratt's cryptic utterance (in her next turn) is inscrutable.
accountable fact with implications for his moral identity. However his account of having had numerous jobs becomes accountable as Mr Parratt adds, by way of explanation, 'Haven't never found nothing that I really enjoyed doing - not as yet anyway'. The account implies that stability of employment is the norm and the 'as not yet anyway' that Mr Parratt is working towards that norm. Thus Mr Parratt's account of looking for a job that he 'enjoys doing', unlike Mr Eke's, lessens the perception of an inconsistency between looking for work and having not yet found employment.

It is my contention that the expansion of Mr Parratt's account, his saying 'more', is an explanation of an explanation. Each utterance in Mr Parratt's account functions to save the face displayed in the previous utterance. The interviewer's question about when Mr Parratt started to work in roofing closes Mr Parratt's self-imposed accountability. It is hard to imagine what more could be asked of Mr Parratt on the topic of unemployment without threatening the self that he has done so much to establish.

Mr Avon:

Q: Do you have a job at the moment?
Mr Avon: Yeah.
Q: Can I ask you what that is?
Mr Avon: Ah ... for a firm that ah makes animal feed. And ... drive a forklift, on shift work.
Q: What 3 shift, 4 shift?

(Mr Avon p.1)

Asked if he has a job Mr Avon replies 'yeah', and says no more; employment (as opposed to unemployment) is not in this instance an accountable fact. What sort of employment however is an accountable fact for the interviewer, she asks 'Can I ask you what that is?'. Mr Avon describes the firm he works for, what he does and the terms of his employment, all relevant information to the research interview. Mr Avon does this without a branching texture of relevance: he does not hold himself accountable for the type of work, the firm he works for or the hours he works - though the interviewer asks for clarification of the shift system. Since Mr Avon does not account for
himself as unemployed he does not have to 'deal' with the threat this poses to his moral identity (as Mr Exe and Mr Parratt did) with a branching texture of relevance - saying 'more'.

These three extracts reveal that accounts contain facts that tellers hold themselves accountable for (Mr Exe and Mr Parratt's unemployment) and some facts that tellers do not hold themselves accountable for (Mr Avon's employment). Accountable facts are those facts that are further accounted for (saying 'more') if an account is to be heard as consistent with what is routinely known about the world - in this instance, that some unemployed men are potentially work-shy. In attending to his or her self-imposed accountability a teller invariably says 'more', which can lead to further accountable facts (Mr Parratt's numerous jobs and having not found anything he enjoys).

In the next extract Mrs Cherwell rejects the context of accountability as formulated by the interviewer's question, by reformulating it - displaying the terms in which she holds herself accountable.

Q. Mrs Cherwell: What attracted you most about the Granada job? 
[pause] Nothing. No. I just .. felt that I needed to .. to get out and do something. So it was nothing really. I just ah .. needed a job. Nothing attracts me to it now; I just needs a job [laughs], you know .. ah .. it's all right. Yeah. It's okay. I mean like everything it's all right one day and not the next innit? I mean all jobs are like that aren't they .. you know. Did it turn out as you expected [indistinct]  

Q. Mrs Cherwell: Um .... Well I don't really know what I expected .. I mean not, not .. having worked for anybody for a long time I ... it took a while to .... settle down but .. yeah, it's okay. You know .. ah .. I mean it's good in, in the respect that I can do the hours that I wanna do and ... work it in with my ... home life and whatever .. you know

(Mrs Cherwell p.22)
Mrs Cherwell is asked what 'attracted' her to her job and explicitly rejects the notion of attraction\(^6\), 'Nothing. No.[...] So it was nothing really.' However in her denial of being attracted Mrs Cherwell accounts for choosing her job in terms of 'get[ting] out an do[ing] something' and 'I just ah .. needed a job' thus although she explicitly rejects any accountability in terms of attraction she does give an account of why she is working. Mrs Cherwell has her face partly determined (Goffman 1967) by the interviewer's question and out of deference to the interviewer she gives an account, albeit an account in which 'attraction' as a relevant feature for choosing a job is rejected. To make face, for not having the expected 'attraction' (that the interviewer displays as relevant), Mrs Cherwell both appeals to and invokes a common-sense understanding 'I mean like everything it's all right one day and not the next innit? I mean all jobs are like that aren't they .. you know'. A difficult statement for the interviewer to question since Mrs Cherwell appeals directly to what she presumes to be shared ('you know') between her and the interviewer.

The interviewer's next question about expectations, provokes a similar response from Mrs Cherwell. Mrs Cherwell rejects the notion that she held any expectations about the job, 'Well I don't really know what I expected'. This becomes an accountable-fact as Mrs Cherwell explains, that her job is 'okay' in terms of the hours which can be fitted in with her home life. The terms which Mrs Cherwell holds her self accountable for - her job and her hours - are displayed as different from the 'expectations' implied in the interviewer's question. Mrs Cherwell rejects the accountability implied by the interviewer's questions but in accord with the expectations of doing the research interview she expands her initial rejections of the interviewer's questions - saying more - by formulating the terms in which she does hold herself accountable; fitting work in with her home life. It is interesting to note that Mrs Cherwell does not account for the income that her job generates -

\(^6\)The pause prior to Mrs Cherwell's response could from the perspective of conversational analysis be seen as dispreferred action (Pomerantz 1975) disagreeing with the interviewer's expectation of an attraction to the job.
could this be taken as a self evident non accountable fact implicit in her utterance 'I just ah .. needed a job'? Mrs Cherwell's account expands, she says 'more' to reject the terms in which the interviewer holds her accountable and in doing so Mrs Cherwell contributes to sustaining the interview as orderly and stable.

Below, Mr Frome becomes accountable for a perceived contradiction in his account. In the course of the interview Mr Frome has given as the reasons why he joined a government training scheme in pottery restoration: 'they're [Social Security) going to be hassling me so much I might as well sort of do something to keep them off my backs'. However now the reasons for joining the scheme are part of a 'master plan' to emigrate to Australia.

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Mr Frome: [...] Cause we were going to go to Australia .. or emigrate a couple of years ago, but .. didn't seem to have much to offer Australia to be honest [laughs], so I thought I'd better get something - something to entice them with.

Q: So what, you'd like to have a straight job in Australia?

Mr Frome: Um, dee, um, no I don't think so. I don't think I could go that far, but um ... at, at least, I mean, if I .. see, again, restoring, if I can sort of, like I say, just affiliate myself to museums - not actually be .. working for any specific one - but basically have them know that I'm there when there's anything that, that really needs doing, you know that needs .. I was gonna say that needs doing well, but I suppose anything they do..would have to be done well .. But .. just maybe a bit here and a bit there and um .. I'd also quite like to have had my own s, really I mean the ideal thing in Australia would be .. to have my own antique shop in the house we live in, because, you see, they're a lot sort of freer as .. to where, I mean you, basically you just turn your front living room into a shop there if you want to. It isn't like here, cause I mean if we were to suddenly sort of here put up a sign outside and .. ah, it wouldn't be very acceptable but, for some reason in Australia it seems to be. So to have a little sort of shop .. of um antiques and then behind

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7 But possibly only at the cost of making explicit what does not (to her) need to be said - there are no 'good' jobs available to her and she is only after a wage.

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that, sort of just in the room behind, to have my workshop for restoring ... I mean, you know, yeah .. maybe like that. But again I'd still want to be at home and sort of around home; I, I'd never s, you know, there's no way that .. whatever I did they'd get me anywhere else doing it, so ... it just isn't worth it to me.

[pause]

Q: When you were talking about going to Australia, do you both agree that? Do you sit and talk about it? Is it a joint decision, or is one keener than the other, or .. how .. ?

[Mr Frome p.24-25]

In response to Mr Frome's account of affiliation to a museum the interviewer says: 'So what you'd like to have a straight job in Australia?' Mr Frome displays himself as caught on the 'hop': 'Um, dee, um, no I don't think so.' The interviewer has drawn attention to what she and Mr Frome perceive as a contradiction. Mr Frome attends to the contradiction, accepts it as real, 'if I can sort of like I say just affiliate myself to a museum not actually be working for any specific one'. Thus Mr Frome re-specifies his potential relationship with an Australian museum, adding as if to make the point stronger 'just maybe a bit here and a bit there'. Mr Frome's account goes on to say 'more' about an 'ideal situation', of having a workshop and an antiques shop at his house. Mr Frome reiterates his rejection of a straight job, the issue that prompted the account; 'I, I'd never s, you know, there's no way that .. whatever I did they'd get me anywhere else doing it, so ... it just isn't worth it to me.'

Mr Frome attends to the interviewer's utterance as identifying a contradiction in his account. In his turn Mr Frome says 'more' as a means to repair the contradiction. This work involves differentiating 'just affiliate not actually work for one [a museum]'; 'Doing a bit here and there', as opposed to having a 'straight job'. Further work on the contradiction is done by accounting for the 'ideal thing', and restating a motivational consistency 'I, I'd never s, you know, there's no way that .. whatever I did they'd get me anywhere else doing it, so ... it just isn't worth it to me'.

Faced with a contradiction - having a straight job, when this possibility had been rejected Mr Frome's account expands until he
perceives he has repaired the contradiction. By invoking the idea of an ideal situation, a shop in the house where he would live, Mr Frome's account attends to the contradiction as a feature of the real world. In an ideal world, however, there would be no contradictions, the ideal can be seen as a face-saving move that honours the requirement for consistency while also contributing to the task of doing the research interview. What is consistent is Mr Frome's attitude to work which underlines both versions of doing pottery restoration as avoiding hassle from the Social Security and moving to Australia.

In this next extract Mr Lime is asked if he intends sending his daughter to a private school.

Q: So your youngest daughter, Rachel, will you be sending her (to private school)?

Mr Lime: Well, we have already begun the debate ... Sue was privately educated right the way through, she went to boarding school ... I'm a grammar school boy which I've always felt was the best system but that's probably because it's the system I went through that I think that. I have very strong views on education, probably the only thing I have strong views on actually ... I'm very much a mixed up person when it comes to politics, I'm very much a 'grey' person. Humanitarian, I would probably call myself, rather than anything else, but I have very strong views on education and I believe that you should do the best for your family whether that is morally or implicitly right or wrong, I do tend to put the one side on that particular occasion. Seeing what it's done for my first batch who've turned out so far extremely good and quite well balanced and obviously there are benefits. I feel sorry for all the ones who haven't had the benefit of what they've had, particularly on the sporting side when I see excellent raw talent that's just being wasted because the facilities in the state system are not there to bring it on. And I'm convinced that's true of the academic side as well. Anyway ... I think Rachel will certainly go through private education. Having said that we've started the debate, it's because Betington primary school is about 50 yards from where we live, and it's an extremely good school. All three of my previous children went to Betington primary school and they went into the private sector at ten or twelve and I think that's what Sue sees as being a good thing.
because I think she wants Rachel to experience [indistinct] before going off and doing anything else. Although, I'm not so sure if that's what I want, but we have a little bit of time to discuss it between now and then.

Q: Yes, but are you already earmarking finances for school fees?

(Mr Lime p.7)

Without explicitly answering the question Mr Lime contrasts his wife's education, private boarding school, with his own, 'grammar school boy', which he feels was the 'best system'. A claim which Mr Lime then makes this claim relative to his own experience: 'it's the system I went through that I think that'. Mr Lime continues his account by contrasting his views on education, 'I have very strong views on education', with his views on politics, 'I'm very much a mixed up person when it comes to politics'. Mr Lime Labels himself as a 'Humanitarian' and 'grey person, a designation that side-steps the usual left/right or red (Labour) blue (Tory) frames. Restating his views on education Mr Lime elaborates them: 'I believe that you should do the best for your family whether that is morally or implicitly right or wrong.' The contrast between education and politics has been reformulated as doing the best for your family regardless of the moral consequences, at which point Mr Lime locates himself, 'I do tend to put the one side on that particular occasion' the political dimension of education, already downgraded by its unusual formulation: 'Humanitarian' and 'grey' is submerged. Unlike the contrast between his and his wife's education Mr Lime does not make his position relative, to his own experience, rather he goes on to describe the education of his children from a previous marriage.

It is interesting to note that Mr Lime does not state that his children (from the previous marriage) were privately educated, or at this point that he favours private education - though this point is implicit in the imperative of doing the best for one's family right or wrong. Rather he describes his children as having 'turned out so far extremely good and quite well balanced and obviously there are benefits'. This description of his children's education is contrasted with the education of children 'who haven't had the benefit of what they've had'. Mr Lime does not make it explicit that he is referring
to state education, but he does describe seeing sporting talent wasted and is 'convinced that's true for the academic side as well'.

'Anyway', says Mr Lime, 'I think Rachel will certainly go through private education' - a return to and direct answer to the interviewer's question. Mr Lime's utterances prior to the 'answer', are, I suggest setting a context of relevance in which his accounted for intention to have Rachel privately educated can be heard as 'acceptable' to an interviewer of unknown political opinion. In a branching texture of relevance Mr Lime's account attempts to cover all the 'bases': his and his wife's educational experience; the defunct grammar school system as the best; the politics of education; the morality of family life; the success of his older children in the private system and the waste of raw talent in the state system. It is only after covering this rhetorical territory, and feeling for the 'right' balance of contraries that Mr Lime directly answers the interviewer's question. 'The answer' is simply put, there is a debate between Mrs Lime who would like to see Rachel go to a local primary school prior to being privately educated while Mr Lime is not so sure what he wants. Reaching a conclusion to this debate can however be deferred: 'we have a little bit of time to discuss it between now and then' - Rachel is only 20 months old.

Up until now the respondent's accounts have been analysed as instances of saying 'more', in which a branching texture of relevance is managed to make face by ensuring consistent accounts that pass as factual and honest. Normal interview appearances are based upon the respondents' judgmental skill in terms of what and how much to say. Just as it is possible to say 'more', it is also possible to say 'as little as possible'. Again, saying 'as little as possible' is a difficult and delicate concept to define, because a respondent says what he or she says. But by saying 'as little as possible', a respondent displays a restricted - as opposed to branching - texture

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8 There are no grammar schools in the area in which Mr Lime lives.
of relevance and in doing so he or she minimises the possibility of inconsistency.

The extract below comes from the start of an interview with Mr Poplar. Like the other respondents Mr Poplar was asked to respond expansively to the interviewer's questions. Yet clearly Mr Poplar does not:

Q: Are you currently employed?
Mr Poplar: Yes.
Q: Doing what?
Mr Poplar: Local Authority.
Q: In which department?
Mr Poplar: Crowndale Technical Services.
Q: What is Technical Services?
Mr Poplar: I'm an engineer, a civil engineer.
Q: Right. And how long have you been in that job?
Mr Poplar: Fifteen years.
Q: Is it an office based job?
Mr Poplar: Partly office, partly on-site.
Q: If you're a civil engineer, presumably you're a graduate?
Mr Poplar: Yes.
Q: So is that the first job you've had since graduating?
Mr Poplar: I did a doctorate as well.
Q: So is that the first job you've had since leaving full-time education?
Mr Poplar: No.
Q: So, previous to that?
Mr Poplar: I was the consulting engineer.
Q: In Crowndale?
Mr Poplar: Yes.
Q: Are there any particular reasons why you stayed in Crowndale?
Mr Poplar: Family basically.
Q: In what sort of sense?
Mr Poplar: I came out in 1972 and there weren't all that many jobs around until the eighties by which time I was fairly settled.
Q: In Crowndale?
Mr Poplar: Yes.

(Mr Poplar p.1)

Mr Poplar is asked if he is currently employed, answering 'Yes', it is then left to the interviewer to define the textual relevance on this question by asking: 'doing what?'. Mr Poplar replies, 'local authority' - the interviewer displays the relevance of this answer by asking another question, 'In which department?', Mr Poplar replies
'Crowndale Technical Services'. The interviewer then asks, 'What is technical services' and Mr Poplar answers: 'I'm an engineer, a civil engineer.' At this point Mr Poplar says 'more', displaying that it is textually relevant, when describing himself as an engineer to specify what sort, 'civil'. Mr Poplar's accounts are relevant to the task of doing the interview however by saying 'as little as possible'. Mr Poplar's answers do not so much display a branching texture of relevance as a restricted sense of relevance that does not go beyond a 'formal' answer to the interviewer's questions. It is the interviewer who by asking yet another question, says 'more' and who assumes responsibility for a branching texture of relevance that sustains the interaction as an interview. If Mr Poplar's response were to have displayed a greater sense of textual relevance i.e. said 'more', the interviewer's initial question could have been answered thus:

Q: Are you currently employed?  
Mr Poplar: Yes. I work for Crowndale's local authority in the technical services department as a civil engineer.  

(Mr Poplar: hypothetical response)

The interviewer asks further questions in response to Mr Poplar's 'as little as possible' responses. After establishing that Mr Poplar is a graduate the interviewer asks if this is his first job since graduating, Mr Poplar replies that he, 'did a doctorate as well', but does not say 'more' - fitting an account of his post graduate studies in with an account of his career history (as might be expected). The relevance of this answer, as an account of Mr Poplar's career history, is left to be established by the interviewer in his next question: 'So is that the first job you've had since leaving full-time education?'. 'No', replies Mr Poplar - the interviewer asks another question displaying that it is expected, textually relevant, that Mr Poplar should account for what he was doing prior to working for Crowndale Technical Services. Mr Poplar says he was working as a consulting engineer. Receiving no further information the interviewer asks if this job was in Crowndale, Mr Poplar replies, 'Yes' in his next question the interviewer displays that Mr Poplars' reasons for staying in Crowndale are relevant: 'Are there any particular reasons why you stayed in Crowndale?'. Mr Poplar replies, 'Family basically',
by asking; 'In what sort of sense?' the interviewer displays that 'more' is required i.e. the texture of relevance. 'Family basically' is too narrow. Mr Poplar attends to this expectation in his subsequent response: 'I came out in 1972 and there weren't all that many jobs around until the eighties by which time I was fairly settled.' Although his account displays a branching texture of relevance - a coming out in 1972, the state of the job market and being 'settled' - it is difficult to discern what Mr Poplar means by 'I came out' or in what way he was 'fairly settled'. The interviewer's next question, 'In Crowndale?’, is possibly sensitive to the cryptic nature of Mr Poplar's account and his minimal responses, thus the question returns the floor to Mr Poplar but with a loss of direction with regard to the topic, Labour Market Decision-Making.

Whereas the other respondents said 'more' to pass as telling a consistent account, make face for themselves as co-operative interview participants and sustain normal interview appearances, Mr Poplar can be seen - and indeed was seen - as non-co-operative. This was particularly so given the expectation on the part of the interviewer that Mr Poplar was to respond expansively to the questions. Thus while Mr Poplar did not breach normal interview appearances - the interview kept going - it was the interviewer who sustained the interaction by asking 'more' questions, as a branching texture of relevance. By providing this branching texture of relevance a lot of interactional work with regard to sustaining the interview fell upon the interviewer. It was as a consequence of doing this interactional work that I found conducting this interview particularly stressful. Keeping the interview going (by supplying a branching texture of relevance) was a matter of sustaining my identity as an interviewer and having sufficient reason to be sitting in Mr Poplar's front room. I was making/saving my face as interviewer with very little help from Mr Poplar's minimal responses.

9 Doing a research interview is a subtle balance, being expansive can be cause for concern if a respondent appears to be inconsistent and not being expansive is also grounds for concern.
The extent of a respondent's co-operation in these research interviews can possibly be judged by the extent to which they say 'more', provide textually relevant material i.e. hold themselves accountable for their utterances within a branching texture of relevance. Insofar as Mr Poplar failed to do this motivations were of crucial importance for me (as the interviewer): 'why was he taking part in the interview?'

While Mr Poplar's responses as instances of saying 'as little as possible' caused a lot of stress for the interviewer, Mr Poplar's accounts narrowed the amount of relevant material he had to manage as non contradictory, thereby reducing the risk of inconsistency. Saying 'as little as possible' as a means to do a research interview is one way to manage the scepticism of the interviewer, who sees respondents as potentially engaged in some form of deception and the respondent's expectation that he or she is required to tell the truth or appear to be telling what passes as the truth. Each question by the interviewer is an interactional 'test' of the respondent's ability to manage a texture of relevant material - as an instance of telling the truth. Saying 'as little as possible' is an alternative interactional tactic to saying 'more'. By saying 'as little as possible' a respondent is saying enough relevant material to sustain the interaction as an interview but not saying so much that he or she becomes caught up in breaching texture of relevance to which he or she is accountable.

It is my contention that Mr Poplar's style of managing textual relevance minimises the possibility of inconsistency thus reducing possible threats to his interactional and ritual face from contradictions. However this interactional strategy makes the interview interaction precarious as the interviewer's face is threatened by a lack of co-operation on the part of the respondent. Consequently the respondent's self is documented accordingly as being non-co-operative. This precariousness, experienced as stress by the interviewer, has its origins in a displayed disparity of relevance. By saying 'as little as possible' a respondent displays a narrow texture of relevance while the interviewer's questions display a branching texture of relevance. To the extent that interview participants do
not share a similar grasp and subscription to what is relevant they are interactionally out of alignment. It is as a consequence of interactional alignment that participants will appear to each other being unique selves, as having a particular personality. And it is the issue of perceived personality that I will discuss in chapter 4.
Chapter 4
Interview Moments:
How It Is That Some Respondents Appear To Have More 'Personality' Than Others?

Introduction

Chapter 4, in line with the overall aim of the thesis, puts the case that an accounts based interpretation of interview data may be usefully supplemented with a conception of the interview interactants as selves. As accounts, interview data display forms of moral reasoning that are neither false nor biased, just real. These forms of moral reasoning are artfully displayed by respondents who are, and hold themselves, accountable. However, any understanding of the respondents' artful practices is deficient unless coupled to an understanding of self presentation. Accounts do not just display moral forms but are produced in the interactional setting of the interview (with attendant ritual rights and roles) as a consequence of 'face work' (Goffman 1969a). The respondents' displays of moral forms are thus mediated by a sui generis interactional requirement to be in face. Such an understanding of interview talk questions the taken-for-grantedness of what an interview is and exposes the dynamic nature of the respondent's selfhood. This chapter will track the dynamics of giving an interview account as a display of moral forms in terms of self presentation and will relate these selves to how the interviewer experienced them as personalities.
Part 1: doing an interview

The interviews were an occasion for face work. Face work in interviews is required to be done on two fronts, (i) in terms of interactional competency, i.e. 'doing' the social interaction that is known as an interview and (ii) providing an account that is morally adequate (about which more later). This separation is analytical rather than experiential but, as I shall argue and demonstrate, it gives an insight into the tactics of self production during the interactions to which I was privy. If this separation is accepted, an interactant's face can be said to be in double jeopardy. However, it also becomes possible to make face or save face in response to possible threats by either interactional competency or by providing a morally adequate account.

The interviews were the reason for the face work and the means in terms of ritual conventions for accomplishing it. Thus the notion of 'doing an interview' becomes for those involved a taken-for-granted means for routinising the interaction. The answer to the potential question 'what are you doing?' is 'we are doing an interview,' the participants' ability to give this answer stabilises the intelligibility of the interaction as an interview.

Thus what was for the interactants a single interaction, albeit with a texture and a time span, I (as an analyst) have broken down into a number of moments. These moments will enable a demonstration of the dynamics of face work. The dynamic of face work is a constant shifting of emphasis between the interactional competence of doing an interview (the ritual nature of the interview) and morally adequate accounting (of sustaining a particular identity such as husband, wife, father).

Each interactant's face as a result of face work (shifting the emphasis between interactional rituality and moral adequacy) is a source of potential threat to his fellow interactant to which he or she must respond in order to stay in face. The mutual threatening and fatefulness of faces commits and predisposes them to seek refuge in
the interview as a set of normative expectations that enables two strangers to interact (this point is further developed in chapter 7). However, cultural expectations associated with 'doing' an interview do not extinguish all possible sources of alarm - as potential threats to face are called by Goffman (1972). Interactants have varying grasps of and subscriptions to what an interview is and should be and there is also always the possibility of causing alarm by accident or intention.

Interview interaction is driven not just by the sequencing of questions and answers. The interactant's grasp of and subscription to what an interview is and thus should be leads to a series of actions and responses with regard to being in face. This gives the interviews an evolution, changing the parameters of being in face. Thus when, during the course of this chapter, I make reference to remedial actions and interview expectations, these are my actions and expectations of what a social scientific interview should be. These expectations were not necessarily consciously held prior to the interviews but were formed in the light of experience (being there) and helped to constitute the interactions. Nor do they necessarily correspond to the respondents' expectations. 'Doing' an interview is precisely that, an ongoing though never finalised means to routinising a potentially alarming situation. However, the 'threat' need not just be one of 'offence' or loss of face as Goffman implies. There is also the threatening possibility of completely original conduct (Travers 1992).

The idea of moral adequacy denotes that in giving an account of their Labour Market Decisions the respondents are morally accountable for the accounts they give. Thus the respondents attend to their appearance (face) as moral persons, competent members and adequate performers (Brauch 1981). It is this attention to appearance that leads to the respondents displaying moral forms and hence an external and constraining social structure. From my reading of the interview data I assume that the respondents' attempt to achieve this adequacy by a display of self development (either in or outside of an incremental career structure) and, in the terms of a joint project,
being able to meet or having met the perceived needs of their child(ren). The accountability framework of these interviews can be captured in the two ideas of 'making something of oneself' (in or outside employment) and giving priority to the needs of partner and children. These dual criteria of moral adequacy give scope for artful practices in which different aspects of these requirements are given different emphases and interpretations. (For an in-depth consideration of these accountability frameworks see Jordan 1994 et al.)

I have extracted a number of incidents from the interview transcripts and I am calling these incidents 'Moments'. The moments have then been grouped initially into three sections; heretical moments, orthodox moments and fundamentalist moments. Each section illustrates accounting 'styles' that emphasise the relationship between interactional competency and moral adequacy differently. I then address specifically how these accounting styles lead me as the interviewer to experience the respondents as being different 'personalities'. Finally I identify three further types of interview moment - disagreement, strangeness and reflexivity - which again emphasise the difference between giving a morally adequate account and the face work done in sustaining these interactions as research interviews.

Part 2: heretical moments

Heretical interview moments can be divided in two types: (i), when the speaking rights and roles of interviewer and interviewee are subverted and (ii), when the respondents subvert the expectation to give a serious interview account.

(i) The subversions of rights and roles. This extract comes just after Mr Hazel, an academic with a young family, has explained the extreme circumstances under which he might consider leaving Crowndale. He then asks me a direct question: 'I mean would you go
and work in the middle of Sheffield or somewhere?' Mr Hazel has suddenly become the interviewer. I reply:

Q: I've actually got an application in for Sheffield!
Mr Hazel: Why are you going to Sheffield, because it's there I suppose?
Q: Because it's a job.
Mr Hazel: Because it's a job, absolutely...change your job...and if you're young it might be quite a nice and exciting thing but in terms of people settled with families...the South West is extremely attractive.

(Mr Hazel p.7)

The purpose of Mr Hazel's question appears to have been to establish the attractiveness of Crowndale. My reply comes as a surprise which he then evaluates to make his (same) point. Normal interview appearances return when I ask Mr Hazel to elaborate the South West's 'attractive' features. Mr Hazel does not resist my 'normalising' action. He facilitates it by responding to my question. At the end of Mr and Mrs Hazel's joint interview Mr Hazel (and not for the second time) again subverts the interview. I close the interview by saying 'Right, yes. I think we'll leave it there', Mr Hazel agrees and I switch off the tape recorder. Mr Hazel then asks me to switch it back on as he has something to ask me:

Mr Hazel: at one stage...I would genuinely like at the end of it to get your report when you finish writing it up, it could be fascinating.
Mrs Hazel: It might end in divorce (laughs).
Mr Hazel: Well, not if it's too confidential, I hope it doesn't come out as crap statistics.
Q: Oh, Good Lord, no!

(Mr Hazel and Mrs Hazel p.48)

I then switched off the tape recorder for the final time, as an assertion of my privilege, as interviewer, to control the opening and closing of the interview. In the moments cited above it is the respondent who subverts the interview. In the extract below where Mrs Beech describes the division of labour in her house, I subvert the interview format by evaluating and comparing Mrs Beech's domestic arrangements to my own. I become engrossed in the topic of conversation at the expense of my interview face.
Mrs Beech: It's brilliant 'cos I never buy the right food and unless Martin goes shopping there's no food in the house. So he does the shopping and I do the cooking.

Q: He does that all the time?

Mrs Beech: Yes he does.

Q: But it seems odd that the person who cooks doesn't buy the food.

Mrs Beech: Well it's nice. If you plan a meal and buy the damn stuff, bring it back, cook it, eat it, wash up, you'll never want to see or think about food again. If someone buys the food then I think what have I got and just make something out of it myself. Cos he's a meat eater and I'm not.

Q: I just wouldn't trust anyone to buy, I know what I want to cook, and buy what I want.

Mrs Beech: He very much buys what he likes and what he knows I like or there's plenty of room for me to have something on the side. We're fairly good friends really (laughs) just as well really isn't it. What else? I do the ironing [...] (Mrs Beech p.8)

After this period of 'non-interview interaction' Mrs Beech re-establishes normal interview appearances by continuing to describe the domestic division of labour, with no prompting by me. It could be said that Mrs Beech saves my face and saves the interview. These momentary subversions of the interview involved a shift to interaction that upset the expected roles and speaking rights of interviewer and interviewee. The upsets were short-lived and easy to remedy.

(ii) The subversion of seriousness: The second type of heretical interview moment relates less to the formal structure of an interview and more to the requirement to give an account that is serious. This expectancy of doing an interview was avoided or minimised as above by placing greater emphasis on interactional competency of doing an interview. These subversions were less open to remedial action and this is the key point in establishing their difference.

In this extract Mr Larch is describing the circumstances that led to him to be supporting Ms Plum's pottery business. Ms Plum is his fourth partner, after two marriages and a long co-habitation. In no sense can Mr Larch be said to be giving a response that attempts to achieve moral adequacy. It relies upon being jokey and off-hand.
Mr Larch: She [co-habitee] had two children and my children used to come at weekends or whenever they wanted to, and she had rather a rebellious daughter and I think in the end the wedge split us up because basically her daughter should have been put to sleep when she was born, I think. And that split us up, and I met M.C. in someone else's house down the road here, about six years ago - I met the dog first I think, she had a collie dog. She was a potter and I like pottery, I have always done pottery at evening classes and things - and I upped and went.

Q: Upped and went?
Mr Larch: I moved in with M.C. Plum [his co-habitee] like any sensible person would.

(Mr Larch p.20)

Mr Larch could be said to be morally adrift since an attempt to give a morally adequate account of marital break-up could be risky in terms of face work and possibly appear partisan (Cuff 1980). Mr Larch's account avoids these 'problems', but he does not give a serious interview account. In the next extract Mr Hazel passes very strongly opinionated comments about the National Curriculum:

Mr Hazel: it's just a complete cock-up, where they've actually spatched together a Frankenstein's monster which seems to have satisfied various interest groups, and you suddenly realise the wretched thing is literally Frankenstein, because this thing just ain't got no...nothing at all to recommend it...it just won't work, it's an idiots' charter, it's just non-viable.

(Mr Hazel p.20)

This sort of expressive account is possibly inappropriate to an interview about Labour Market Decisions, where considered reflective responses might be expected. Mr Hazel recognises this in his next utterance:

Mr Hazel: But that's within the context of the political debate. It's all very peculiar...I do sound...when you play this back it'll sound quite odd [edited] ...it's [the National Curriculum] just an ungodly mess. Never mind.

(Mr Hazel p.20)

Mr Hazel displays his previous comments as appropriate to a different interaction, a political debate. In displaying this recognition Mr
Hazel re-establishes normal interview appearances. Similar forms of subverting interview interaction occurred as when Mr Hazel exaggerates the attractive features of the South West. Mr Hazel makes his point by interactional means that subvert the seriousness of the interview, rather than by giving a morally adequate account.

Mr Hazel: That sense of, personally, the fishing, and fishing, and fishing and...the beach and the facilities...

(Mr Hazel p.8)

Flamboyant metaphors have the same effect. Here is Mr Larch describing the success of Ms Plum's pottery during their joint interview.

Mr Larch: Six exhibitions last year [the number of exhibitions where Ms Plum's pottery was shown]. You're not living in that grotty little flat now, you're living in a house - that a lot of people would give their left ear for ... or right toe ... So, you must be successful.

(Mr Larch and Ms Plum p.34)

Mr Larch and Mr Lime both subverted the interview by appealing to a presumed to be shared (with the interviewer) chauvinistic experience of Women. Mr Larch's comment (quoted above) was that Ms Plum was the sort of woman 'any sensible person would move in with'. In Mr Lime's case this occurred when discussing the role his wife played in his decision to become self-employed:

Mr Lime: Well I think I involved her by telling her what I felt I ought to be doing and I think had she had any adverse responses to that I would have taken a lot of notice of them. But I think when you meet her you will realise that she's a super lady and is a very great help to me with what I do without necessarily having to sit down and discuss it all at length.

(Mr Lime p.7-8)

I encountered a markedly non-shared experience when interviewing Mrs Dogwood the wife of, and herself, a full time teacher with a four year old child. When she was describing how she fitted parenting and paid labour together I felt she was looking at me out of the corner
of her eye and thinking 'what does this puppy know about bringing up a child?'

These interview moments which subverted the interview expectation to account in a particular manner were less open to remedial action, because they were possibly closer to what might be called the respondents' 'Everyday Face' - a presentation of self that was not assumed just for the duration of the interview. The respondents have a life and a face that existed prior to and will exist after the interview. To have asked Mr Hazel to 'be serious', or Mr Larch to give a 'better' account of his marital break-ups could well have endangered the completion of the interview because I could possibly have offended their Everyday Faces as opposed to a face assumed for the purpose of doing the interview as a stable and ordered interaction.

Finally, some heretical moments were not recorded on the transcripts. One such was Mr Silverbirch leaving the television set on, albeit with the sound turned down, during his interview. Interactionally this was an offensive move which undermined the interview and displayed to me an unwillingness to take part in the research. Another respondent, Mr Poplar, prior to the interview made it clear that he wanted to work late rather than be interviewed. And Mr Larch's interview was conducted in his pottery shop where Ms Plum's work is for sale and this interview was interrupted twice, once by a pair of customers and once by a local shop keeper. Mr Hawthorn, Mr Lime (during his joint interview only) and Mr Hazel adopted body postures verging on the horizontal during the interviews, interactionally displaying a lack of commitment to the interview as a serious task.

Part 3: orthodox moments

Orthodox moments are those moments in which the respondents give morally adequate accounts. These moments are the interactants'
routine grounds or normal interview appearances. The respondents are abiding by interview expectancies and giving an account that is oriented towards achieving moral adequacy. It is these moments that provide the 'good data' of qualitative methodologies because the respondents display through their accounts serious attention to the questions.

Below Mrs Elm is responding to a question about her feelings towards the possibility of using a childminder so she can return to paid employment. Mrs Elm is a qualified teacher who has an interest in social work and, except for running a pre-school group two mornings a week, is currently not in paid employment.

**Mrs Elm:** I don't really like the childminding set-up very much. I don't think that it's the best that we can do for the children really. Partly for the childminder — it's a very hard job to have — it's quite soul destroying when you don't get paid very much at all. It's not like you have training and you are recognised as a professional and your pay matches that. And partly for the children — I think it's better, if possible, if they can be with their mums I think that's the best if you can manage it.

(Mrs Elm p.5)

Mrs Lime below is responding to a similar question about her feelings towards the use of childminders. Mrs Lime however works part-time as a personnel manager in a job she held full-time prior to the birth of her daughter, now six months old.

**Mrs Lime:** I think it's good for her actually. The childminder is registered but I met her through a friend, or heard of her through a friend, and so she came highly recommended. And in fact Anna has a whale of a time because there's other children there, there's new toys, and she's absolutely exhausted when she comes back — which is great for me because she just goes to sleep. She has a great time.

(Mrs Lime p.21)

From these two extracts it is possible to see that different life styles and conceptions of a child's needs can be artfully given a
morally adequate legitimation within the interactional constraints of giving an orthodox interview account. (These extracts will be discussed further in chapter 5).

In the next extract Mr and Mrs Pine gave an account of what they like about living in Crowndale. In comparison to Mr Hazel's (see p.88) account of his reasons for staying in Crowndale, the Pines' account is both orthodox in terms of interview expectancies and properly oriented towards a display of moral adequacy.

Mrs Pine: Crowndale is a nice town to live in with a family because it's just so accessible for everybody and although there are facilities that are missing compared to Oxford and London, where we've lived before, there are a range of really quite good facilities and I think the most important thing as family is that everything is so accessible to the children from a relatively early age...[edited]...

Mr Pine: And also, I think, you're near the country: wherever you are in Crowndale you can see green fields (easy) down to the sea. And to be in a city, which has got access to such beautiful countryside I think is fairly rare.

(Mr and Mrs Pine p.26)

Mrs Spruce like Mr Larch has been previously married but her account is orthodox. Early on in her interview Mrs Spruce mentions that she planned to go to university but was unable to because her 'marriage split up'. During the course of her account of her employment/unemployment history some details of her marital break-up were given. In the extract below Mrs Spruce explains when she started to question giving up full-time employment (as an army officer whose ex-husband was at that time also an army officer) to become a full-time mother:

Mrs Spruce: Very early on, I suppose, after I'd had the children and realised life doesn't work like that, I think that first of all I had a husband who was away a lot, and things very early on weren't going very well, and also that I needed more. But at that stage a) they [the children] were very very young, and b) the thought of actually working at that stage didn't particularly enter into it.

(Mrs Spruce p.28/29)
Mrs Spruce's ex-husband then resigned his commission to join the police force where a high degree of occupational mobility was expected about which Mrs Spruce said:

Mrs Spruce: Yes, and it was something I was very unhappy with. It meant there was no stability for me, I could never put myself in a position where I could think about what I wanted to do. And that just got worse and worse. Basically, I think, the feeling in retrospect is that for a very long time I had to put everything on hold and I didn't particularly want to. But I didn't feel that I was in a position to do otherwise.

(Mrs Spruce p.30)

Although this account of marital break-up is by no means detailed it does illustrate that it is possible to broach a topic where giving a morally adequate account is 'difficult', without recourse to an heretical accounting strategy as seen in Mr Larch's account of marital break-up.

Mr Redwood, when asked what factors influenced his decision to have his two sons privately educated, gave an uninterrupted account that lasted four minutes. The account was 'more than morally adequate' in that it ignored the time constraints of the interview and the attention span of the interviewer. Mr Redwood had a number of 'more than morally adequate' moments like this in his interview account and I hope this extract will give an idea of what they were like.

Mr Redwood: And, I suppose that I've always been perfectly happy with local education authorities provision at first school and middle school levels. I've never been that, or as happy, with the idea of the secondary stage and it's partly I suppose the worry that if the children are that way inclined, and one never knows whether they're going to be or not, but I would hate either of the boys to have fallen into a situation where they got in with a group of friends where working at school became in some way uncool. I mean I've seen it happen to children of friends of ours and because all of us, I mean myself - and I suspect most of us, unless we are incredibly self-motivated and especially at that age, will take the line of least resistance and the easy way out and if children get themselves into a situation where they just think
it's ridiculous to work - and why on earth should they bother - then I come out with trite phrases like 'you only have your time at school once'...[etc.]

(Mr Redwood p.18)

Orthodox moments are occasions when the respondents talked in a manner that displayed 'serious-thought'. During their joint interview Mr Pear resorted to psychology to explain both why he never sat his university finals nor got a lucrative job in the 'oil business';

Mr Pear: No ... there's a psychology thing isn't there - the 'murdered' self - have you come across that?
Q: I haven't no.
Mr Pear: A friend of ours is an educational psychologist, and it's when you make a decision in your life, a major decision, and you make the decision because of persuasion, or pressure, or conformity, rather than making the decision because it's an intrinsic part of yourself. And to do that you 'murder' part of yourself. And I think that although it might have been very lucrative, had I progressed through those channels.

(Mr and Mrs Pear p.31)

The respondents also give orthodox accounts of themselves by reference to changing social roles, professional ethics, the state of the economy and by speaking in the third person. The serious talk of orthodox interview moments requires a 'serious' vocabulary of psychology, social history, economics together with an absent 'I'.

Ms Plum displays her serious attention to the interview by her concluding remark:

Ms Plum: It's terribly difficult to answer honestly, it really is.

(Ms Plum p.16)

As a display of interest many respondents in off-tape remarks asked questions about the research and expressed an interest in the finished work, which they looked forward to reading. Mrs Spruce during her actual interview and Mrs Cedar off tape, were particularly interested in the research's policy implications with regard to the employment of mothers. Mrs Spruce said:
Mrs Spruce: I believe very firmly in a voucher system, so that every individual has the choice. But I think that without a doubt there should be more state provision. Very very few children in this country, a very small proportion, get nursery education. It should be available to all. And then you choose if you want a private nursery, or a state nursery, or childminders. And then there's no provision after school and during school holidays. Even [Name of Company] has a crèche and there's a year's waiting list - you have to have been with the company for at least six months before you can even put your name on it. So there's no point in saying: Right, I want to return to work, I have a small child, I'll go there. So actually when you look into it, yes they have nursery provision, but with such a long waiting list.

(Mrs Spruce p.12)

Mrs Spruce says she has developed these ideas through her own experience of being a working mother, some of it as a single parent. Orthodox interviews were for the most part conducted at tables away from distraction and the respondents sat in a manner to display attentiveness - upright. The orthodox interviewee - in my perspective is on his or her 'best behaviour'.

Part 4: fundamentalist moments

In these moments the respondents give an account that is of itself morally adequate, but abbreviated. Fundamentalist moments close down the interaction, such that a new line of questioning has to be initiated in order to re-activate the interview (see chapter 3 in which the point is developed in greater detail). The extract below is from Mr Poplar's interview. He is a local authority civil engineer.

Q: Are there any particular reasons why you stayed in Crowndale?
Mr Poplar: Family basically.
Q: In what sort of sense?
Mr Poplar: I came out in 1972 and there weren't all that many jobs around until the eighties by which time I was fairly settled.

(Mr Poplar p.1)
Mr Poplar gives what appears to be a morally adequate account, 'family reasons'. But the account is 'hyper orthodox', in the sense that while it conforms to the requirements of making something of oneself and putting family first, the account makes little concession to the ritual requirements of 'doing' an interview. It must be remembered, however, that Mr Poplar's face is in double jeopardy. His interactionally minimalist response, 'saying as little as possible' undermines his display of face (as a moral person/competent member). This is particularly so in Mr Poplar's case because this passage is typical of the entire interview. This was more a mode of accounting than a moment. The interview was only able to continue through my endeavours to raise new topics, it had no interactional momentum of its own. By giving minimal accounts Mr Poplar's face was experienced, by me, as non-co-operative. Because fundamentalist moments close down the interaction they are a threat to my face as an interviewer since they deny the interview interaction that is necessary to produce my face. As such I attempt to subvert the fundamentalist responses by further questioning i.e. 'doing' an interview.

In the following extract I attempt to undermine Mrs Elder's fundamentalist moment because of its interest to research on Labour Market Decisions, but she will not be drawn, on the domestic arrangements or the events that precipitated her living with her mother, niece and nephew.

Q: Your husband mentioned that you have your mum living here and you've got two children from your brother?

Mrs Elder: My brother, yes.

Q: So that's quite a responsibility really for the two children, plus your mother ...

Mrs Elder: No, because I've left mum totally on her own to bring up the children, because I think if I interfered it would not be fair on them to have two people telling them. So I've really left the responsibility to mum.

Q: For your brother's children?

Mrs Elder: This is for my nephew and niece. I think it's helped my mum anyway, in the circumstances, to carry on. And as I say I don't think it's fair on the children, because my views are probably different from mum's, and I would probably go against mum, which would probably upset our relationship.
Q: And how long has your mother been here with you?
Mrs Elder: Well we came here together, we've all been down here ten years. We did this as a joint thing.
Q: So in terms of supporting your niece and nephew, your mother provides the income?
Mrs Elder: Yes. Well she's a widow on a pension [indistinct]

(Mrs Elder p.2)

At this point I abandoned this particular topic for fear of prejudicing the rest of the interview. The recognition of fundamentalist moments is difficult except in the most extreme cases like those quoted above because (i) I attempt to subvert them as they are a threat to my face not only as the interviewer, but as a member of a team with the responsibility of collecting data and (ii) all responses can potentially demand further clarification and thus potentially appear morally adequate but brief.

In this next moment of fundamentalism, Mrs Elm adheres rigidly to the interview ritual of answering the question;

Q: And what does Mark think of your [name of preschool group]?
Mrs Elm: I don't know. I think you have to be more specific.
Q: Is he keen, encouraging, or not too sure about what you're doing?
Mrs Elm: On that parity, he's keen and encouraging, yes.

(Mrs Elm p.13)

Fundamentalist moments can also possess a strong interactional quality to them by which the respondent communicates the message 'back off'. Below the otherwise communicative Mrs Quince explains why she does not have private medical insurance:

Mrs Quince: Medical insurance, no, I don't have that because I had a series of major operations and in fact have got what they call an ileostomy which is a stoma, and they won't actually insure me because I'm too high a risk for them I think. So we did ask if that was possible, you know, we made enquiries but no, they wouldn't let me have insurance.

(Mrs Quince p.19)

The transcript is unable to record how interactionally Mrs Quince was able to communicate that this was a 'no go' subject but that was how
I experienced her response. The medical terms were however spoken quietly and quickly without being directly addressed to me. I would have liked to have asked about the consequences of her illness for her and her family's lifestyle, a topic Mr Quince spoke about at some length both off and on tape but I felt unable. As a culturally competent member I was aware of the taboos that surround illness, so would have been particularly sensitive to any interactional cues Mrs Quince gave.

Fundamentalist moments attempt to minimise interview interaction by providing a brief morally adequate account. In the case of Mrs Quince this was accompanied by other interactional cues that aid the closing down of a particular line of questioning. Fundamentalist moments draw attention to what is not said, inviting speculation, but not necessarily further interview questions, about whether something was being hidden, and if so what?

Part 5: moments and the experience of 'personality'

In part 2 to 4 the interviews were seen in terms of moments (heretical, orthodox and fundamentalist) as a means to describe face work in terms of shifting the emphasis between the interview as a ritual interaction and moral accountability. I want now to reconstruct the interviews as single interactions so as to describe my experience of particular interviewees' personalities. This description will be aided however by the previous argument. By the term 'personality' I am not making reference to psychological theory but to my experience of who the respondents were during the interviews. Hence I have used everyday expressions. This will be done under three headings: (i) Face and Personality; (ii) Pre and Post Interview Talk and (iii) Grasp and Subscription To.

(i) Face and Personality: During the course of the research and particularly in discussion with colleagues I became aware that some of the respondents could be identified as 'characters', others as
'miserable cusses' and the vast majority of whom I said (to colleagues) 'I have no idea who they are, they are just bland'. Mr Larch, Mr Hazel and to a lesser extent Mr Lime, were experienced as 'characters'. It was in these interviews that heretical moments were most commonly found. Mr Poplar and Mr Silverbirch were experienced as 'miserable cusses'; their interviews were not so much composed of fundamentalist moments, but had fundamentalism as a dominant mode of accounting. The vast majority of the other respondents were experienced as 'bland'. In these interviews orthodox moments predominated. This would seem to confirm Travers' (1992) thesis that selves only appear as selves under conditions of abnormal appearances (see chapter 1) i.e. when they 'fail' to confirm the expectations associated with their role as respondent. I wish to suggest that my experience of the respondents' personalities can be understood as having been produced by the relative quantities of heretical, orthodox and fundamentalist moments in their respective interview accounts.

Interviewees and interviewers occupy different social locations because of the different ritual roles and rights expected of them in order to 'do' an interview. My face, the interview face, was dependent upon sustaining the interview ritual, though I also had to give a morally adequate account of the research project - my self - in order to initiate the interviews. The interviewee's face is weighted towards moral accountability. Interviewees produce themselves through what they say about themselves. The interview face is an accounted-for face though the account, and thus face can be, as in the case of Mr Poplar and Mr Silverbirch, undermined by interactional minimalism, or as with Mr Redwood's 'more than adequate' moments of accounting, experienced as that of a 'bore'. In the case of the 'characters', where non interview interaction is maximised, an account can be questionable because it is not serious. Thus I wish to say that in order to 'do' an interview and be 'in face', interviewers and interviewees generally place a different emphasis on interactional ritual and moral accountability.
In those interviews where orthodox moments predominated - the interviews with the 'bland' - my face was 'in face' as a researcher and I believed that I performed well. The interviews with the 'characters' had interactional momentum but this caused problems in sustaining the interaction as an interview and thus posed a threat to my research face. In the fundamentalist interviews of Mr. Poplar and Mr. Silverbirch my face was most threatened because I had not only to sustain the interview (my research face), but the interaction in general, my everyday face.

(ii) Pre and Post Interview Talk: Prior to the tape recorder being switched on and signalling the start of the interview there was a period of pre-interview interaction. In this pre-interview period I would inform the respondents of the aims of the research, why the data was being collected by interview and that their contributions would be edited to disguise their identity. By doing this I was establishing my moral integrity as a researcher. Many of the couples made jokey remarks about potentially contradicting each other, the possibility of falling out in front of me and the need to get their story straight. In the light of the previous analysis these comments can be understood as the respondents' expressing concern over being held accountable in an unfamiliar interaction. The respondents were not sure how to give a face-making account in an interview interaction where they were expected to give accounts both separately and together. What they were sure of was 'how to do' hospitality. Hence, with few exceptions I was offered a drink when I arrived to do the interview. A cup of tea or coffee was a hindrance to doing an interview and in many cases they were only part drunk and allowed to go cold. The pre-interview interaction was an opportunity for me to establish my research face and for the respondents to express concern at the faces they are about to assume and to establish the more familiar identities of host and guest. After the interviews, there was post-interview talk, I felt the respondents needed this opportunity to shake off their assumed interview face and re-establish their everyday face. Post interview talk enabled the respondents to ask me questions such as my labour market decisions, living in the south west, cycling (I arrived for the interviews on my bicycle) and the publication of the research.
(iii) Grasp and Subscription To: As faces are produced interactionally in conjunction with other faces and as my face was one of those produced I feel qualified to speculate upon the three 'personality' types (produced during the interview interaction) with regard to their 'grasp of and subscription to' the research interview. The 'bland' respondents, those with predominantly orthodox moments, can be said to subscribe to the notion of doing research by interview: they take the research seriously by giving expansive accounts and by being co-operative i.e. not having fundamentalist or heretical moments. The 'miserable cusses' minimise their interactional involvement in the interview by being non-co-operative respondents; the interview possess a possible threat to their face, which they take seriously by keeping their accounts brief - morally adequate but 'hyper orthodox'. The 'characters' displayed a lack of seriousness during their research interviews and I suspect this is because they are aware of the situated and interactional nature of giving an account. An awareness they displayed because their accounts rely in part upon 'doing' the interview as a ritual interaction rather than solely in terms of giving a morally adequate account; a possible alternative explanation is that these respondents are bored because the questions are not involving but then, why do these respondents give heretical responses which are interactional involving? Fundamentalist responses would 'do', to sustain face and the interaction. I believe 'character' respondents were not bored because unlike the 'miserable cusses' for whom fundamentalism was a mode of accounting, the 'characters' did not have heresy as a mode of accounting.

Part 5: more moments

Having discussed the interviewees' responses in terms of three different interview moments namely the heretic, the orthodox and fundamentalist, I reviewed these moments in terms of how I experienced the respondents' 'personalities'. In Part 5 I will describe three more interview moments so as to give a richer sense of the contingent nature of selves within interview interaction. These
moments are those of (i) disagreement, between the couples in joint interviews; (ii) strangeness, (Travers 1992) when the respondents transform themselves in quite radical ways under potential interactional threat to their routine selves' and (iii) moments of reflexivity in which the respondents display an explicit awareness of their accountability as respondents in a research interview.

(i) Moments of Disagreement: During the joint interview both partners are present and this makes for possible disagreement between them. As well as having an individual face a couple, because of their partnership, have a joint face. This joint face, like an individual face, is displayed both interactionally and by accounts - double jeopardy. The criterion of morally adequate accounting which the respondents are orienting towards is potentially contradictory since it involves both a display of individual self development and a joint project partnership (see p.86). The respondents' joint face, as a couple, is potentially in double double jeopardy. Thus moments of disagreement are particularly interesting as they 'hover' around this potential contradiction of being both an individual and a partner. As well as partners being a threat to each other's face it is possible for them to make face and save face in response to this double double jeopardy and thus display their individuality and a stable presentation of partnership. Below I will discuss four disagreements and their resolution.

In this extract Mr and Mrs Hazel report a disagreement they had in the past over a decision to move house - a disagreement that involves different individual perspectives:

Q: You recently moved house, I wonder what were the reasons for you wanting to move?
Mr Hazel: Well I didn't want to move [indistinct]
Mrs Hazel: To create a better environment for bringing up children, in all honesty, it was extremely difficult, the house, to keep an eye on them, and a very exhausting house, and this is just a much more family oriented house.
Q: Why didn't you want to move?
Mr Hazel: Well, I liked the four-storey Georgian terrace mansion. It suited me down to the ground, but it's no good, but it was no good for the wife and
it was no good for the kids, no good for the dogs, but it was all right for me though.

(Mr and Mrs Hazel p.6)

Mr and Mrs Hazel each display their individuality in terms of their personal wants but Mr Hazel in a morally adequate display of partnership also acknowledges the needs of other family members. When I asked them how they resolved this disagreement, they resolve it both interactionally and in terms of accountability.

Q: So how did you actually resolve this difference?
Mrs Hazel: Go on, you give your version (laughs).
Mr Hazel: I am always very bad at making these... I don't want to be... I mean let me just say she gives an impression... I do [indistinct] It can be very forceful but there is the issue that she doesn't tend to articulate the decision in a way in which it becomes a great burden, a declaration of intent, in the sense of a policy which is carried through. So I always say, 'well if you want [indistinct] so I've said that for years, so this time she did and we have.

Q: Right. Is that how you see it?
Mrs Hazel: (laughs) It was fairly traumatic yes. Because I knew that he didn't want to move, but I couldn't have continued there in the situation. We had the choice financially so I saw no reason, because of one member of the family, why... for 11 years we'd lived like that and it had never suited me, so I thought it was about time. All through our marriage, we've actually taken it in turns really to decide on job priorities and moving house, and it's worked quite well.

(Mr and Mrs Hazel p.39)

Mrs Hazel takes advantage of the ritual convention that only one person can speak at a time, by inviting her husband to speak first. Mr Hazel is uncharacteristically very inarticulate, he manages to speak without giving an account, this allows Mrs Hazel to speak without the risk of contradicting her husband. Mr Hazel in his next utterance, a heretical moment, closes the topic by saying 'Back to an earlier question' [p.39] thus minimising any further risk to face through continuing the discussion.
Other moments of disagreement can be more of a threat to a display of partnership. In this extract Mr Larch asserts the financial success of Ms Plum's pottery business, a claim that she refutes.

Mr Larch: Well, it is a financial success. It is working.
Ms Plum: It's not working ...
Mr Larch: Yes it has because for the simple reason we have come from living in a grotty little flat in town, in what? - four years, five years? - to you owning a shop, or us owning a shop, running a pottery - You put on how many exhibitions last year? Five ... Six?
Ms Plum: Mm.
Mr Larch: Six exhibitions last year. You're not living in that grotty little flat now, you're living in a house - that a lot of people would give their left ear for ... or right toe ... So, you must be successful.
Ms Plum: You see I partially feel ...
Mr Larch: You feel as though you're not successful because you're ...
Ms Plum: My overdraft is 'enormous' - and the only reason I'm allowed a large overdraft is because of the collateral that Mark provides. The bank wouldn't look at me without [him].
Mr Larch: Well that's a very basic business overdraft, and you're still within the limits of it.
Ms Plum: Yes, but it's only because you bank with the same bank and you own properties that they will let me have that overdraft.

(Mr Larch and Ms Plum p.34/35)

In this exchange Mr Larch and Ms Plum have successfully established their individuality, but their competing reality claims are at the expense of each other's face. As the degree of disagreement escalates they are failing to display partnership. The emotional intensity of this moment of interaction was particularly disturbing to me because, as well as undermining the ritual constraints of doing an interview, I did not feel it was part of my role as interviewer to act as a catalyst for marital strife. The interaction was becoming an argument. My question in the next extract asserts the ritual frame of the interview and makes reference to 'teamwork', an attribute the couple had earlier claimed for their partnership, in order to describe the division of domestic labour. This comment is seized upon by Mr Larch and Ms Plum to re-establish their display of partnership both in terms of morally adequate accounting and interaction. They
produce accounts that agree with and supplement each other's, and
interactionally Mr Larch stops interrupting Ms Plum.

Q: Yes, how much of this move as you put it from the
flat to this house is based around the success of
the pottery or a teamwork success around the
pottery and property?

Ms Plum: It's a teamwork success isn't it?

Mr Larch: It's a teamwork success, the whole thing.

Ms Plum: Because you said to me you wouldn't have done any
of this if it hadn't been for the children and for
me ... 

Mr Larch: I wouldn't have bothered with it if it weren't for
Laurel and the children.

Ms Plum: And my pottery wouldn't survive if it wasn’t for
you.

(Mr Larch and Ms Plum p.35)

This disagreement is resolved by my question which establishes the
interview ritual and my reference to 'teamwork' gives Mr Larch and Ms
Plum the opportunity to interactionally bring that teamwork into
operation in giving a morally adequate display of partnership.

The extract below is from the Birch's joint interview. Mr Birch is
the managing director of a small drinks producing company (employing
himself and one other). Mrs Birch is a full-time teacher. The moment
of disagreement is 'resolved' by my re-establishing the interview
ritual.

Mrs Birch: We're not managers or business people at all.
Mr Birch: That's not true I'm a manager.
Mrs Birch: David's getting there more quickly than I am.
Mr Birch: I've been a manager for six years or so, I have
the production experience. What I lacked was
probably the financial and sales side. The
financial side of a small business is not all that
daunting. The sales is an area which does require
learning about. I've employed as I told you
earlier a part-time salesman and also been on
courses and club meetings with the Enterprise
Agency workers, very helpful. [pause 15 seconds]
Q: My turn to speak now isn't it

Mr Birch: Please.

(Mr and Mrs Birch p.20)

The closure of this moment of disagreement was by ritual means alone.
This could well have contributed to the tense atmosphere which I
experienced at this point. Almost immediately after the tape recorder was switched off Mrs Birch said that things were not really as 'difficult' as she had made them appear. This was an attempt to save face, but with the emphasis on giving a moral account rather than attending to the ritual of doing an interview - particularly as the interview was over when she made these comments.

There is a fine line between those disagreements that display moral adequacy, and those disagreements that endanger it. Disagreement is 'risky' and the lack of it, despite the concerns expressed in the respondents in their pre-interview talk suggest that respondents attempt to avoid it. The extract below from the Beech's joint interview is unusual because of its 'jokey' delivery:

Q: John mentioned a role swap?
Mr Beech: well yes.
Mrs Beech: Do you think we're in a role swap?
Mr Beech: I said if you wanted to go out and be me and....
Mrs Beech: No, never never.
Mr Beech: And go and get a partnership, you know I could live with the idea that I was you and I was you and would have either a part-time job or if I did really well none at all but I would look after the children and sort that side of it out. You know, I could cope with that. You don't think so?
Mrs Beech: His idea of a father living at home is that seven Dads get together and on one day each one Father has all the children, on the other day the men to out playing golf. And he seems to forget there's a bit more to do than just looking after children. There's house cleaning, cooking, that sort of thing. Oh John I'm sorry.
Mr Beech: I mean I just said you girls go out yicky yackering together and have endless sort of lunch and then stay all afternoon yicky yackering then we'll have tea.
Mrs Beech: You'd be a Father yicky yackerer.
Mr Beech: Well so what?
Mrs Beech: On the basis that men can do one thing at a time extremely well, women can do six things at a time extremely indifferently. They get more done (indistinct).
Mr Beech: The home would be spotless one week, the next week, the beds made brilliantly.
Mrs Beech: Well I couldn't cope with you at home, there you go. No way would I go out to work and leave John at home looking after the children, no way.
Mr Beech: Well I reckon I would have a serious go at it.
Mrs Beech: No chance.
Mr Beech: Yes I know that's what the boys told me Jill.
Q: Why wouldn't you give him a chance?
Mrs Beech: What to sit at home while I went out to work?
Well, because I'm probably on to a winner you know. Basically because society accepts the fact that women stay at home, the man goes out to to work and as long as that traditional role is established I would like to sit around.
(Mr and Mrs Beech p.59)

(ii) Strangeness: The interview interactions as already stated are occasions for face work, face work being a dynamic and evolutionary process that transforms the interactants' selves. These selves can range from routine selves where the interactants are secure within normal interview appearances to moments where the interaction is 'alarmed'. The interaction is no longer routine but has an uncertain quality to it. These are transformative moments and lead to the production of new or stranger selves (Travers 1992). I will now discuss some of the more extreme moments of transformation with regard to the two fronts of face work: interactional competency and moral accountability.

In an extract quoted earlier (p.105) Mr Hazel and Mrs Hazel described how a disagreement to move house was resolved. Here is Mr Hazel's account of how the disagreement was resolved:

Mr Hazel: I am always very bad at making these...I don't want to be...I mean let me just say she gives an impression...I do [indistinct] It can be very forceful but there is the issue that she doesn't tend to articulate the decision in a way in which it becomes a great burden, a declaration of intent, in the sense of a policy which is carried through. So I always say, 'well if you want [indistinct]' so I've said that for years, so this time she did and we have.
(Mr and Mrs Hazel p.39)

Mr Hazel is unable to account and unable to display a viable self in terms of either a morally adequate account or by interactional competency. This is not his normal mode of self presentation (see pages 105 105 90 90 for other examples of his speech). Mr Hazel has been transformed from an articulate academic by the threat of being publicly contradicted by Mrs Hazel. He has become an inarticulate
man. He regains himself, however, with his next utterance which is spoken with emphasis immediately after Mrs Hazel finishes her utterance 'it's worked quite well'(see p.105).

Mr Hazel: Back to an earlier question on the argument of 'how are your family going to approach your career choice', yea, I think the argument is, I'm a member of the Groucho-Marx Club, you know, but I wouldn't want to belong to a club that would have have me as a member, but I might have been forced actually to try and become a professor running something, and God help the poor sods in my department, on financial grounds, and the next thing, that could be a very very serious issue.

(Mr and Mrs Hazel p.39)

After losing himself Mr Hazel returns to a heretical style of self presentation to re-activate a previous topic of discussion and makes use of metaphor. This is an attempted return to Mr Hazel's normal appearances. It is however a self that I have difficulty addressing a question to, as it harks back to a previous moment in the interview interaction;

Q: This is because the [indistinct] has brought the family...forces you to work up the housing market?

(Mr and Mrs Hazel p.39)

In the extract below Mr and Mrs Rowan transform themselves from an accountant specialising in taxation and part-time school assistant respectively into gypsies. This occurs in response to a question addressed to Mr Rowan about any worries he has relating to the current economic climate. Mr Rowan starts off giving an orthodox response, acknowledging that worrying about potential redundancy could affect his work and bring about his redundancy. Then he starts to recall that two months ago they did contemplate the possibility of him losing his job. At this point Mr Rowan's orthodox account becomes heretical as he exclaims 'what the hell would we do?' and his previously accounted-for world starts to fall apart as he contemplates selling the family home. Mrs Rowan then becomes interactionally animated as she exclaims 'lovely' to the idea of living in a caravan.
Q: How do you both feel in terms of your economic situation in the current economic climate - does that worry you as you hear more about the recession?

Mr Rowan: Economic-wise, the only worries I had were regarding redundancies because it was happening in the accountancy practices throughout the UK. There were more and more redundancies. It was even happening in the firm I work for, but not in Crowndale, it was other offices throughout the UK. That has gone quiet - I mean you still don't know - in three months' time they could do a little review and yes there could be more staff to go. I suppose I did worry about it but now I'm not worrying about it - if I start worrying about it then my job will suffer, and I could be the number one candidate to go if I start worrying about it. I suppose we did start thinking, two months back, if I lose my job what the hell will we do, how will we cope, what will we sell first. I think it came down to keeping the caravan and selling the house.

Mrs Rowan: Yes, we'd live in the caravan ... lovely.

Mr Rowan: Because if it's based on that, yes we could still keep Claire at school. [fee paying private school]

Mrs Rowan: We'd really want to do that, that would be our one main concern.

Mr Rowan: It's daft, because regardless of what we think of money, the main priority as far as we're concerned is the children's education. We wouldn't care where we lived as long as we could give the kids the right education. I think that's fair enough to say.

Mrs Rowan: Yes. Because without a good backing in education nowadays I'm afraid I don't think they'll get very far. They need the pieces of paper to prove that they can do something.

(Mr and Mrs Rowan p.27-28)

The reason for moving into the caravan becomes for Mr Rowan a means to pay his daughter's school fees 'because regardless of what we think of money,' and this is an accountant speaking who previously spoke 'Economic-wise'. From being a couple giving an orthodox account at the prospect of Mr Rowan's redundancy, they lose themselves interactionally and become gypsies in an account that will provide a private education for their daughter. Mr Rowan then reverts to his usual orthodox respondent self, as he details economies that a sober home owner, and not a gypsy, might make;

Mr Rowan: I suppose we have cut back a bit on the expense, we haven't had the central heating on as much,
we've not had the lights on as early in the night as possible. It's the usual things you just try and cut down a bit, so that your money going out isn't as much as it was in the last quarter.

(Mr and Mrs Rowan p.28)

These are moments when the respondents became strange, but I too became a stranger to myself. I started the interview with Mr Hawthorn and Mrs Hornbeam (a couple who are married but using different surnames) by asking why they had different surnames. This question went straight to the crux of the contradictory nature of partnership and became a threat not only to their faces, but to mine as well. Mrs Hornbeam responded by replying that they were attempting to avoid traditional gender roles:

Mrs Hornbeam: Because I'd reached the point of really feeling that I wanted...that my name was my name, and that the traditional reasons for taking a husband's name were...no longer felt valid for me.

Q: And what are these traditional reasons?

Mrs Hornbeam: For taking your husband's name?

Q: Yes.

Mrs Hornbeam: Well, it feels very much to me like being part of a husband's possessions in some sort of way.

Q: So, was that just symbolic or did it involve other sorts of things as well?

Mrs Hornbeam: Well, that is only one thing, many of my...perhaps looking at women's position and trying to get more of an equal balance, which has been quite difficult as far as work goes, and child-care, all of those issues, quite tricky.

(Mr Hawthorn and Mrs Hornbeam p.27)

Seeking further clarification I asked Mr Hawthorn if his wife's attempt to avoid traditional roles was in response to a possible recalcitrance on his part towards child-care. Mr Hawthorn responded heretically, denying that he had not done any child-care at all. This hangs as a non-serious comment inviting contradiction if Mr Hawthorn and Mrs Hornbeam are to present a morally adequate display of their partnership. Mr Hawthorn gives an orthodox account once his wife establishes his moral competency.

Mr Hawthorn: Oh I don't know, I don't have anything to do with the children [laughs]. No not at all.

Mrs Hornbeam: No, it isn't because he hasn't actually been OK.
Mr Hawthorn: It's because it's the traditional woman's role. Because unless something exceptional happens and the woman is either very career oriented or has a much better chance of getting a job, a well-paid job, than a man, then the tendency is for people to fall into the traditional roles.

(My Hawthorn and Mrs Hornbeam p.27-28)

My initial question has led the interview down a particular line of questions and answers that produced a tense atmosphere as I inadvertently frustrate their attempt to display a morally adequate partnership (albeit a somewhat unorthodox partnership). I sat opposite Mr Hawthorn and Mrs Hornbeam as they sat as far apart as possible on the sofa. My next question which further heightened the tension was to ask 'if I was to sort of be a fly on the wall, what sort of indicators would I see of you both avoiding these traditional roles?'

(p.28)

Mr Hawthorn: We don't do things as the royal we. We don't have to do everything together, we're not inseparable, like Jan recently went off on a holiday to Spain for a couple of weeks.

Mrs Hornbeam: With a friend of mine, so I take holidays separately from the family.

Mr Hawthorn: Not always.

Mrs Hornbeam: No.

(My Hawthorn and Mrs Hornbeam p.28)

As Mrs Hornbeam recalled her separate holiday from the rest of the family I remembered Mr Hawthorn in his separate interview, commuting to Plymouth for work and stopping over for two nights, and living for a number of months without his wife while employed in the Far East. I felt uncomfortable, as I may have opened a can of worms. Mr Hawthorn and Mrs Hornbeam were failing to provide a morally adequate account of their partnership. I had no idea what might be said next. So as in the case of Mr Lime and Ms Plum I helped them revert to a morally adequate account as I found the uncertainty of what might be said a threat to my face. Were they about to disclose an open marriage and how would I cope with such a disclosure?

Q: Because this is quite interesting, because most of the...all the couples that I've been interviewing do operate with this royal we type thing, and speak on each other's behalf as they were, so...
Mr Hawthorn: I find that quite bizarre. I think they're abnormal and we're normal.

(Mr Hawthorn and Mrs Hornbeam p.28)

After Mr Hawthorn's statement I am able to routinize the interview by asking;

Q: Right, insofar as we operate in a particular culture with these fairly traditional roles, how is it that you've...I mean do you think that you've successfully been able to override them?

(Mr Hawthorn and Mrs Hornbeam p.28)

The moment of my strangeness is over and the interview has become routine though with a tense atmosphere. There is no longer any serious threat of Mr Hawthorn and Mrs Hornbeam displaying a compromised partnership. My face and the research expectations have been saved.

(iii) Reflexivity: During the course of the interviews the respondents displayed an awareness of their accountability, their perception of the research and ritual requirements of doing an interview. No explicit reference was made by them to moral accountability except in the sense that they expressed concern on occasion about who might read the transcript of the interview.

Below Mr Redwood has just been explaining the family's method of budgeting, which he described as having a 'laissez-faire approach', but he then goes on to qualify this:

Mr Redwood: I'm probably giving you the wrong idea. It's not actually a case that whenever I see a Porsche I write out a cheque just because I fancy it. What I'm really saying is that I know pretty well that most of the time the income matches expenditure. What I'm really saying is that I've never been desperately worried if for a few months the expenditure exceeded the income, because at the end of the day it's all going to roughly come out in the wash.

(Mr and Mrs Redwood p.49)
Mr Redwood makes explicit that accounts can be misleading and that further clarification may be needed 'What I'm really saying is [...]'. But this too can be inadequate as he again says 'What I'm really saying is [...]'. Mr Redwood glosses his description of the family budgeting and the problem of the infinite extendability of accounts to all practical purposes with the phrase 'it's all going to come out in the wash.'

Mrs Cedar draws attention to the research requirements of the interview in a moment of heresy when she asks:

**Mrs Cedar:** I don't know whether I should say this, but they [the children] are actually both adopted. I don't know whether that's of any interest to your survey?

**Q:** I don't know actually.

**Mrs Cedar:** There you are, one up.

**Q:** It might be, I mean, there's the joint interview to come, I shall dwell on that.

**Mrs Cedar:** Just a different aspect to people's visions of what they want and what you might mould them to be, hopefully.

**Q:** So, what about things like private medical insurance, do you...?

(Mrs Cedar p.24)

This question illustrates that Mrs Cedar has a conception of relevance with regard to what is of potential interest to the research although it needs clarification. Her question also forces me to reflect upon the aims of the research. In a moment of mild strangeness I am transformed from fellow interactant to detached researcher. I quickly re-establish the interview in order to be in face as an interacting interviewer. In the next extract Mrs Redwood is reluctant to mention that her husband was Mayor for fear of possible identification. By making such a comment she is showing an awareness that she may be held accountable to a wider audience than just the research team. I then assure her of the limits of her accountability.

**Mrs Redwood:** Before that I worked for Barnardos as, sort of fund-raising, but that was not me at all. I'm not a particularly outgoing person, and it was a friend of mine who offered me the job. [Pause]
Mrs Redwood: It was y e s . . . O K. . . . W e l l , t h e y a c k n o w l e d g e t h a t m e, t h e y a c k n o w l e d g e t h a t m e, t h e y a c k n o w l e d g e t h a t m e. . . . W e l l , t h e y a c k n o w l e d g e t h a t m e. . . . W e l l , t h e y a c k n o w l e d g e t h a t m e.
outlet. If you were in a more satisfying job, I'm sure that you wouldn't feel so frustrated.

Mr Pear: As long as it wasn't the same thing all the time.
Mrs Pear: No, of course not.
Mr Pear: If there was variety
Mrs Pear: Of course. [turning to me] I'm sorry.

(Mr and Mrs Pear p.33)

Mr and Mrs Pear's have become over-engrossed in this topic, ignoring the ritual requirements of doing an interview. Mrs Pear's apology is an apology for disregarding the ritual requirements of doing an interview and an invitation for me to re-establish the interview momentarily lost during their over-engrossment.

During their joint interview Mrs Maple takes advantage of my presence and the constraints of doing an interview with a stranger to give a particular account of the family's finances. Mrs Maple has been supporting her husband and daughter through her income for a number of years. Mr Maple has now however got a job as a school teacher in London, starting in the new academic year, and 'things' are about to change.

Mrs Maple: Because he [Mr Maple] is very laid back and easygoing about money and I'm not. I'm a total neurotic. But then I'd have taken all the stress of that and what's happening at the moment is I'm gradually leaving the bills on the table and being really laid back about it and I can see what I must have been like. I think personally, now that you're sitting here I can say this, he's still very laid back about it and when the pressure gets on he will change his attitude because he's learning - he said to me the other day he spends his money three times over. I'm the cautious one about spending because I've always been in control of the money and I think it will turn and when he starts earning he'll be very cautious.

(Mr and Mrs Maple p.34)

Mrs Maple in this extract makes explicit reference to my presence 'now that you're sitting here' and thereby to her expectations of doing an interview. Mrs Maple trades upon these expectations firstly to warn her husband of what is about to come, so precluding the possibility that he will react in such a way as to jeopardise her face
and the partnership by disagreeing with her. And secondly she signposts her remarks as peculiar to this interview interaction.

Conclusion

Interviews are not stable, but 'done' by those involved in response to the requirements of face. Doing an interview can have consequences for being in face and thus face like the interview is not a stable phenomenon. The limits of instability are dependent upon the degree of alarm the interactants can sustain without (i) re-invoking normal interview appearances or (ii) transforming the interview into an interaction other than an interview for example, an argument, a conversation or an embarrassing silence. It is the limits of instability - non-normal appearances - that the interview interactants can sustain that are the conditions of for all but the orthodox interview moments. Orthodox moments are the idealised routine grounds of interview research, the interview as it appears within rule-bound methodologies. I hope I have demonstrated that this view of the research interview can be fruitfully supplemented with an understanding of face work so as to draw into an analysis those moments of instability (heresy, fundamentalism, disagreement, strangeness, and reflexivity) where normal moral forms are disregarded to maintain interactional face. In chapter 5 I will pursue this notion of interactional face to discuss how the female respondents accounted for their child-care arrangements, accounts in which, by default, they are morally implicated as mothers. Thus in describing their child-care arrangements the female respondents were describing the expectations of motherhood as a contemporary social phenomenon, the uniqueness of their own family situation and managing the moral accountability of their own identity within a research interview.
Chapter 5
When Mothers Are Mothers And Children Are
Children: The Moral Regulation Of Household
Identity.

Introduction

Chapter 5 analyses how the higher income women managed accounts of
child-care arrangements, when these accounts as a matter of course
construct expectations about what it is to be a 'good' mother and
consequently display the speaker's moral identity as a mother.

Accounts construct the world that they claim to report. Yet the
social world we inhabit is remarkably stable - it is not the case
that any account will 'do'. This chapter analyses the relationship
between in situ descriptions (practical reasoning) and the moral
authority of Motherhood (as an institutional frame (Rawls 1989b)) in
terms of interactional selves. During the research interviews the
women respondents gave accounts of Motherhood (in general) and of
their mothering practices. These formulations of the identities and
activities were consequential for the interactional selves 'doing' a
research interview. Co-operative interview participants are situated
selves 'appropriate' to the maintenance of a locally produced social
order. And are responsible for paying due ritual regard to each
other, so as to sustain the stability of the interaction. In part 1
of this chapter I describe how participants accounts are constructed
using common-sense knowledge of household members and then in part 2
I analyse actual examples of such accounts.
Part 1: accounts of households

The common-sense knowledge used by the respondents to describe household organisation and decision-making can be glossed as: formal rationality; economic reason; family morality; personal identity and household identities. These conceptualisations of the household are insufficient as rules or norms, they do not guide action but have to be artfully invoked and interpreted 'for another first time' (Garfinkel 1967), to simultaneously report upon and construct a world that is external and real. This is accounting after 'the Event', where the process of accounting is an event in its own right, constructing 'the Event'.

To understand descriptions of household decision-making, it is necessary to understand how the terms used to formulate such descriptions work. The membership categorisation device (MCD, Sacks 1974) 'household' can routinely be assumed to contain the following sorts of identities: husband, wife, children, breadwinner, father, mother. Each of these identities are associated in standard relational pairs (SRP); husband and wife, mother and child etc. and each of these identities has expectations with regard to category-bound activity. Identities can be inferred from activities and vice versa. Although my analysis will not make explicit use of MCDs and SRPs, participants in an interview invoke morally specified and artfully interpreted versions of MCDs, SRPs and category-bound activities to describe and construct what is 'going on' (i.e. how the different identities interact) in their households. The moral specification of particular activities from particular identities produces intelligible accounts and consequently an external and stable real world.

It is a feature of household accounts that individual members may hold more than one identity and that these identities may be perceived as contradictory, thus potentially jeopardising the status of an account as a reliable description of an external and real world. Further, such a perceived contradiction also jeopardises the face of the teller as a reliable and co-operative interview
respondent. The particular identities and allied activities I will be focusing on are those of Mother and Paid Employee particularly where the woman identifies herself as having either a career or a higher education. The shifting topics of the interviews thus give rise to occasions for the respondents to artfully manage potentially alarming moments of actual or potential contradiction. As such the interview can be understood as a series of shifting frames of potential 'alarm' (Goffman 1972) for the participants as the women respondents account for their identities and activities with regard to child-care, and as the rhetorical ability to manage the morality of Motherhood is put to interactional 'test'.

Part 2: an analysis of the accounts

The analysis is organised around three different ways that child-care arrangements are accounted for. These are: (i) The activities and identities associated with the relationship between mother and child are accounted for as complementary; (ii) The women respondents account for the quality of a childminder's identity as a means to assume the identity of both mother and paid employee; (iii) The women respondents construct an identity other than mother or employee and from this 'new' identity manage the activities associated with motherhood and paid employment. These different ways of accounting for child-care potentially pose 'problems' for interview selves and for the maintenance of an external and stable reality if the accounts are perceived as contradictory.

(i) The activities and identities associated with the relationship between mother and child are accounted for as complementary: I will exemplify this by the case of Mrs Quince. Mrs Quince has no formal qualifications and works part-time for a charity three mornings a week. She has two school-aged sons and her husband is a partner in a local firm of estate agents. In the extract below she explains why she gave up her previous full-time employment as a secretary.

Q: And at what point did you decide? [to stop work]
Mrs Quince: Unless you have to work, I think it's better not to leave them [the children] when they're small. I'd rather be at home with them, but once they're out at school and involved in other things, then I see no reason why I shouldn't go out and spend a bit of time doing something else.

(Mrs Quince p.15)

With little justificatory talk, Mrs Quince morally specifies her relationship with her children, she was at home with them, rather than out at work. She constructs the children's identity in terms of 'when they're small'. The word 'small' in this context invokes the idea of the children's identity as 'needing care'. Given that the children have this identity, Mrs Quince's accounted-for decision not to work displays herself as a mother who stayed at home to look after her young children. The children's identities, however, have changed. They are 'out at school' and 'involved in other things'. Legitimately in her own terms, 'I see no reason why I shouldn't go out and spend a bit of time doing something else.', Mrs Quince changes her identity from full-time mother to part-time worker and mother. The interview continues:

Q: So what about the possibility of working full-time?
Mrs Quince: I wouldn't consider full-time work until the children are older than they are now. I don't want to work to their detriment.
Q: And you think that will be the case?
Mrs Quince: Yes. If the situation changed dramatically, for example if David's work finished, if anything happened whereby he wasn't earning then I'd have to go out to work full-time. But, I have to say, we're fortunate that I don't have to go out full-time, I realise that. But I feel quite strongly that it's not the right thing to do, when you're trying to run a household with children involved, to be out of the house full-time all week.

(Mrs Quince p.15)

In response to a question about the possibility of full-time work Mrs Quince asserts that working full-time would be to the 'detriment' of the children. Thus this account coupled with the needs of the children when younger establishes the value of Mrs Quince's accounted-for identity as a mother who only works part-time. Were her husband's identity as 'adequate earner' to change, Mrs Quince would...
consider changing her own identity to that of full-time working mother. However this does not however change her initial account of the relationship between mother and child. Mrs Quince accounts for herself as 'fortunate', her account of her husband, as adequate earner, supports (financially and rhetorically) the account of herself as a mother who is at home for the children. Prior to this interview I interviewed Mr Quince who in a lengthy off-tape account gave details of a serious illness affecting his wife. In 'deference' (Goffman 1967) to Mrs Quince's accounted-for self I made no reference to my 'knowledge' of her illness. Such 'knowledge' could however be used to undermine Mrs Quince's accounted-for self. Mrs Quince's self would become motivated, rather than 'immediate and spontaneous' (Goffman 1969a p.3) Had Mrs Quince made reference to her illness she would, subject to interactional deference, become accountable for it (explaining possibly how long she had been ill; the symptoms and how her illness affected her family life) - a possibly alarming experience. In this interview moment both respondent and interviewer contrive to maintain the stability of the interaction.

Mrs Cedar has no formal qualifications and has been working three mornings a week since her youngest child went to school. Her husband is a highly paid company manager. Below she gives her reasons for giving up her previous employment and not using a childminder when her children were pre-school.

Q: What, not fair on the childminders or...?
Mrs Cedar: No, on the child.
Q: Why do you say that, in what sort of sense?
Mrs Cedar: Well, I suppose in a way you've got the problems of when they're ill and whatever and it wasn't really necessary to work I suppose and I thought well this is the time when you're really...if you can...you should be at home giving a 'secure foundation to your family' [laughs]. But when they do eventually go to school then hopefully we should be able to work round it.

(Mrs Cedar p.15)

Mrs Cedar's account of her child-care arrangements is similar to Mrs Quince's in that the change in the children's identity to school pupil is used to account for a change in Mrs Cedar's identity, to
part-time worker. Like Mrs Quince, she mentions economic necessity 'it wasn't really necessary to work' as a feature of an account: of being a mother at home with the children.

Where Mrs Cedar's account is different is the tone of voice she used to say 'a secure foundation to your family'. It was a tone I would associate with parodying a quotation. Mrs Cedar (unlike Mrs Quince) appears to be mocking the moral values that she claims to live by, thus mocking her self. To this problem of self I offer a tentative solution. Later in the interview Mrs Cedar revealed that her two children are adopted. During the joint interview Mr and Mrs Cedar recounted collaboratively with great enthusiasm the story of the adoptions and their various encounters with social workers. I suggest that Mrs Cedar, due to her experience as an adoptive parent, is a skilled teller of morally adequate accounts of family life. Therefore she is reflexively aware of what she is 'doing', presentational work. In a less consequential interview in terms of outcome, Mrs Cedar finds the opportunity to amuse herself by parodying institutional expectancies. Such a 'parody' makes Mrs Cedar's self more visible, increasing the degree of involvement in the interactional order of self production. Whereas Mrs Quince's accounted-for self when compared to the potentially accounted for ill-self has the effect of minimising interactional involvement in the ritual production of selves.

Mrs Elm has a degree in Social Administration and a Post-Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE). She has not however done her probationary year. Mrs Elm has three children, one of whom is pre-school and she currently runs a pre-school group from home one morning a week. Mr Elm has recently set himself up in business as self-employed accountant. Mrs Elm is held accountable for her decision not to take professional employment.

Q: So why aren't you pursuing a career track?
Mrs Elm: [laughs] A career track [pause] By which you mean?

1She may of course be distancing herself from the charge of being pompous.
Q: Well I would say: Why aren't you in professional employment?
Mrs Elm: Professional employment [laughs] By which you mean being called a teacher or being called a social worker and going and doing a nine to five job?
Q: Yes.

(Mrs Elm p.5)

Mrs Elm's displayed 'difficulty' in understanding my question resists my (as the interviewer) expectations vis-à-vis qualifications and professional employment. Mrs Elm's 'difficulty' makes apparent on her part, a reluctance to be held accountable in these terms. However Mrs Elm then proceeds to respond in these terms, thus contributing to the interviewer's definition of the interview.

Mrs Elm: Um, [pause] Well, [pause] I suppose I'd always been equally divided between social work and teaching anyway [... indistinct] ... I knew I wanted to work with people at the end of the day. Then in terms of why I didn't actually end up teaching - because at the time I qualified there weren't jobs available because people were being redeployed and (there were only one or two jobs advertised?) in the year that I qualified. And eventually, by going in as a voluntary teacher I did get some supply work which built up. But by the time they actually got round to a point where I would have been offered a contract, I was actually pregnant because I remember thinking: there just aren't any jobs available - this is a waste of time - I might as well have my family first and I can always go back later if I want to. So that's what I decided to do.

(Mrs Elm p.5)

Mrs Elm's response displays a lot of accounting work as she responds in the terms set by my question. Each of her qualifications 'social work and teaching' are mentioned, along with the economic market for teachers. Only finally, are her pregnancy and family reasons invoked 'I might as well have my family first'. In spite of Mrs Elm's initially light-hearted response to my question, - the display of misunderstanding - I suggest my question, due to the detail and length of the account of non-professional employment, was a threat to her face.

Q: So how would you feel about going back to work while the children are still pre-school?
Mrs Elm: I would rather be at home with them. In fact I wouldn't really want to work full-time until they were quite a lot older. Anyway I wouldn't want to work full-time with them the ages they are. It's too much to do to try and do both.

(Mrs Elm p.5-6)

This response is sparse in detail: the children's ages, 'a lot older', her wants, 'I wouldn't really want to work full-time', and what is involved, 'It's too much to do' minimise the possibility of a branching texture of relevance. Mrs Elm's account closes down the possibility of a threat to her face by reducing the amount of relevant material she might be held accountable for. The hearer of Mrs Elm's account is forced to do a lot of interpretative 'work' to understand the precise details of what she is saying.

Q: Even with employing a childminder?
Mrs Elm: I don't really like the childminding set-up very much. I don't think that it's the best that we can do for the children really. Partly for the childminder - it's a very hard job to have - it's quite soul destroying when you don't get paid very much at all. It's not like you have training and you are recognised as a professional and your pay matches that. And partly for the children - I think it's better, if possible, if they can be with their mums I think that's the best if you can manage it.

(Mrs Elm p.6)

Mrs Elm's statement on the conditions of child-care by displaying a lot of 'inferential work' and 'knowing-what-we-all-know-about-childminders' achieves a high degree of adequacy. It is only at the end of her response that Mrs Elm implicates her personal identity, herself, in an account of the mother child relationship. My line of questioning is making Mrs Elm 'squirm' as I hold her in an accountability framework of professional employment and qualifications that was initially resisted. This resistance continues as the account is given predominantly in terms of institutional expectancies. Mrs Elm's self becomes less visible (involved) as institutional expectancies become more visible. What was once a light-hearted atmosphere became one of 'tolerated intrusion'. Remembering that Mrs Elm runs a pre-school group I asked:
Q: So you don't see your pre-school group as taking children away from their mums?

Mrs Elm: No, because it's only two hours in the whole week, and also they don't come until they're four. Up north they'd be at school at four.

(Mrs Elm p.6)

Mrs Elm's response is plausible within its own terms. Mrs Elm in these interview moments experiences a degree of interactional discomfort due to my questions. I hold Mrs Elm's self accountable to an accountability framework that she appears to simultaneously reject and work within.

Mrs Pear is a graduate currently working part-time as a sessional education worker with the local authority and she works irregular hours. Her youngest child April is child minded by family friends or her father, or she accompanies Mrs Pear to work. April is about to start school.

Q: So, do you see yourself going full-time with your current work when your children get older?

Mrs Pear: It's a real dilemma at the moment, where to go and what to do. Because my youngest daughter starts school in three weeks, after Easter, and in some ways I feel a real pressure to go for a full-time job then, and in other ways I don't want to because I want to be able to be at home for them - when they're ill or when they come home from school and things like that. And also because I feel I've worked hard for the last seven or eight years, when I've been at home with the children and working part-time as well - and I ought to give myself a bit of a break and really work out what I want to do - which is the other thing. I'm not really sure where I want to go. Part of me really wants to continue and develop this work and another part of me has been thinking very strongly about going into primary school education.

(Mrs Pear p.3)

Mrs Pear's accounted-for dilemma is one of identity. As in Mrs Elm's interview moment the issue revolves around accountability to both motherhood and professional employment. Mrs Pear constructs a self accountable to a 'pressure' to take full-time employment; to change her identity, in response to her daughter's change of identity. Yet Mrs Pear also holds herself accountable as a mother. A mother who is
'at home for them [the children] - when they're ill or when they come home from school and things like that'. Mrs Pear further compounds her accounted-for 'dilemma' by accounting for herself as someone considering the possibility of changing her professional identity. Her self is in two parts: 'Part of me really wants to continue and develop this work and another part of me has been thinking very strongly about going into primary school education.' In this interview moment Mrs Pear has well and truly become a dilemma-self. In the absence of an accounted for external and stable world the only stability is to be found in an account of the self. This precipitates a greater involvement in the interaction order as I ask Mrs Pear to clarify the 'pressure' she claims to be under.

Q: So what sort of pressures are you feeling under in terms of whether to go full-time?

Mrs Pear: There isn't a pressure from Peter, my husband, not personally, but I feel myself - I suppose it's a pressure I put upon myself - because we always said that when the children were older then I would go to work full-time so that he could have some time to himself and time to work, do things that he's always wanted to do. So I feel an obligation, which was based on a promise really, a long time ago, in that sense. But also I just feel that socially quite a pressure on women when you've had your children, to actually do something which is full-time, and fulfilling, and all the rest of it, because I still feel that society doesn't really value mothering and you do come out of a number of years as a mother feeling that you haven't really done anything - which is crazy.

(Mrs Pear p.3)

My question about 'pressure' is itself a pressure upon Mrs Pear's self since it sets the terms of her accountability with regard to the maintenance of the interview interaction. The 'pressure' that my question makes reference to is accounted for as having two sources, (i) a promise made to her husband and (ii) as an external social pressure, 'I just feel socially quite a pressure on women when you've had your children, to actually do something which is full-time, and fulfilling, and all the rest of it, because I still feel that society doesn't really value mothering.' It is interesting to note that the pressure to 'mother' is given no account possibly because it is so taken-for-granted and thus needs no account.
Q: So you don't think that's a legitimate understanding?

Mrs Pear: No, absolutely not. And I feel very angry that it affects me as it does. Because it shouldn't.

Q: So why do you think it does? You're fighting against it and yet ...?

Mrs Pear: I don't know, it's probably just the sort of person that I am. I can't actually come to terms with that. And a lot of it's to do with my background I think, especially my father who's a bricklayer/builder, and there was also this kind of thing in the house that unless you were actually working physically and a full day, then you weren't actually doing anything. And also because my mother brought up four children, and worked full-time as well, and I found it very difficult not to work, not to do anything; not to give myself space, which I think is a great shame.

(Mrs Pear p.3-4)

The account of Mrs Pear's dilemma has shifted from discussing competing social expectations to an historical account of her self - her self is highly visible and thus interactionally involving to the interviewer. This moment of the interview was not conducted under 'normal' interview conditions. Although we were seated at the dining table, Mrs Pear sat low in her chair leaning across the table with her head in one hand. At intervals she ran her other hand through her hair. It would be fair to say that Mrs Pear did not speak to me as a mother/potential worker being interviewed by a researcher but more as if in an 'intimate'/therapeutic encounter. The working consensus of the interaction order changed and so did the nature of the interaction and the selves produced. I became a privileged listener rather than an interviewer.

In these interview moments Mrs Quince and Mrs Cedar have no interactional difficulty in accounting for and holding themselves accountable for their child-care arrangements. They account for themselves as mothers who are present to satisfy the needs of the children. These accounts are brief, displaying little accounting 'work'. This leads me to claim that Mrs Quince and Mrs Cedar's accounts of their child-care arrangements are 'orthodox' in terms of our culture's taken-for-granted understanding of the mother child relationship. Mrs Elm is confronted, via my line of questioning, by an accountability framework which she rejects. Rejection is
accomplished by minimising self involvement in this particular interview moment. Although in terms of institutional expectations Mrs Elm, by answering my questions, displays conformity to the accountability framework invoked by my questions - thus maintaining the stability of the interaction as an interview. As a consequence of this institutional compliance but interactional rejection of the accountability framework the nature of the interaction changed.

Mrs Pear is a self with a dilemma and my questions hold her accountable for her dilemma self. This congruency between the interactional order of self production and the institutional accountability framework invoked by my questions heightens the involvement between the interacting selves. The interview thus became less like an interview.

(ii) The women respondents account for the quality of a childminder's identity as a means to assume the identity of both mother and paid employee.

Mrs Lime is a personnel manager. Six months after her daughter was born she returned to work part-time for her previous employer. Mrs Lime takes her daughter to a childminder on the way to work. Mr Lime is a self-employed director of an engineering firm. The extract below is from Mr and Mrs Lime's joint interview.

Q: What about your own views about the childminding? I mean, is your working career almost like a luxury, in terms of the income it generates? How do you reconcile the two - that you are away for two and a half days working?

Mrs Lime: Well I don't know, I think it works out all right. I don't feel that I neglect Penny because of the fact she has to go to somebody else for two days and I enjoy my work and obviously I enjoy the money that I get from it. I don't see a problem in that at all. And I think I said to you before, [in her separate interview] I think it's actually good for Penny to mix with other children and to be with somebody else.

(Mr and Mrs Lime p.22)
In response to my question Mrs Lime seeks to establish that her twin identities, part-time career-woman and mother, are not a 'problem' i.e. contradictory. Aware that a subversion of what she does not see as 'a problem' is possible, i.e. that she is a neglectful mother, Mrs Lime repeats what she has already told me in her separate interview, that using a childminder is 'actually good for Penny'. Mrs Lime attempts to account for her dual identity by establishing the quality of the childminder's identity. Mr Lime 'picks up' on this possible subversion and attempts to defend the account and thus Mrs Lime's moral self.

Mr Lime: Well, I think if we saw any definite signs - you know, bruises, or if she was particularly bad tempered - and I think she's at the age now where if she didn't like this particular childminder, she would probably complain when you tried to drop her off in the mornings.

Mrs Lime: Yes I think if I felt unhappy about the particular childminder, and I didn't think Penny was happy there, and maybe I couldn't find anyone else to look after Penny, then I'd seriously consider leaving my job. I'd put Penny before my job, definitely, rather than the other way round.

(Mr and Mrs Lime p.22)

Mr Lime's account establishes the quality of the childminder in physical and observable terms, the absence of 'bad temper' and 'bruises'. Mrs Lime accounts for the quality of the childminder in terms of feelings. By accounting for her feelings as a mother and her daughter's feelings as important in the use/selection of a childminder Mrs Lime's self becomes more visible and interactionally involving. Mrs Lime's account attempts to establish her moral identity as a part-time career woman and mother via an account of the childminder's identity. Mrs Lime's involvement in her account was one of anxiety, she sat hunched forward on her chair and appeared flushed. I attempted to defuse this interactional intensity, by giving Mrs Lime the opportunity to respond with a 'yes' to my next question. A 'yes' would be institutionally appropriate in terms of maintaining the stability of the interview, but interactionally less involving. Like Mr Lime I was trying to save Mrs Lime's face. Mrs Lime at first takes this 'gambit' but then accounts some more.
Q: But you feel you have a good childminder at the moment?
Mrs Lime: Yes, excellent.
Mr Lime: Yes, she's got two other children and she seems very pleasant. And there do not seem to be any adverse effects on Penny.
Mrs Lime: Well Penny's obviously happy there, because I went to a child's party and the childminder was there with other children and her own, and Penny and I turned up and all Penny wanted to do was go and sit on this woman's knee and she got all embarrassed because she said: That's your mother over there. And Penny preferred this woman to me at the time, and I thought that can't be a bad thing because she obviously gets on well with her. [pause]

(Mr and Mrs Lime p.37)

This story is very powerful in establishing the quality of the childminder's identity, 'Penny preferred this woman to me at the time.' It does however 'open up' the possibility of Mrs Lime being seen as a mother who is indifferent to whom the affections of her daughter are directed, and hence a 'neglectful' mother. I suspect that Mrs Lime was aware of this possibility since she continued to appear uncomfortable.

Mr and Mrs Dogwood both work full-time, Mrs Dogwood is a teacher and her husband is a part-time teacher and union official. Their son is four years old and goes to a childminder. The extract below is from Mr and Mrs Dogwood's joint interview, and follows her description of her job as a 'life style' to account for the out-of-hours pastoral work she did.

Mrs Dogwood: But there are some evenings when we're both pretty wound up or tired or whatever from work where we almost start talking about Jack as a chore. Like getting involved in putting him in bed and having a debate as to who is going to do it because neither of us have really got the energy. And then I feel guilty... and this seems to hit working women more. Certainly I see it at school and I feel it at home. And it's because of Jack's relationship with us both, and I think it's quite common with children when they're poorly to want mummy. Living with guilt on those days... if I go to work I feel guilty because I've given the childminder a sick child, and all the things that go with that, and I've left him [her son]. If I
stay at home and haven't gone into school - and with everybody at school, the women understand completely because at some point they've all done it - that there's no way you can reconcile that guilt. It's like a split personality. And so that's difficult, it really is, because those children at school - for one reason or another you're letting them down by not being there.

(Mr and Mrs Dogwood p.42-43)

Mrs Dogwood describes an 'irreconcilable guilt' regarding her identities as a teacher and a mother and the associated activities as she morally specifies them: being at home for her son when he is sick, and being in school to teach her pupils. The guilt, Mrs Dogwood claims, is 'quite common' and 'women understand completely'. Mrs Dogwood's accounted-for guilt, like Mrs Pear's dilemma, is a display of her inability to provide an account that reconciles her identity as both mother and full-time employee. In the absence of such an account, Mrs Dogwood becomes involved in an account of self. The appearance of a self which is 'guilty' and has a 'split personality' changes the involvement obligations of the interaction.

Q: Are you getting better at handling the guilt or has it got worse?
Mrs Dogwood: No, because it doesn't happen all the time ... it's not every day is it?
Mr Dogwood: You are better. You manage it much better. But then I think that's a lot to do with the comfortable circumstances in which we find he's placed with our childminder. We seem to be very fortunate with that ... he has another family.
Mrs Dogwood: I've got complete confidence in her ... and also to ring me if he was really bad so that I could leave school.
Mr Dogwood: think things could be very different if you didn't feel completely confident with your childminder?
Mrs Dogwood: Oh, I really don't know how I'd (cope) [Mr Dogwood interrupts at this point to change the subject].

(Mr and Mrs Dogwood p.43)

Mr Dogwood comes to the defence of Mrs Dogwood's moral self by establishing the quality of the childminder. Their son has 'another family'. However Mrs Dogwood does not confirm her husband's moral specification of their childminding arrangements. To do so could further undermine Mrs Dogwood's already problematised self, as did Mrs Lime's account of her daughter preferring the childminder's knee.
But Mrs Dogwood does assert her 'complete confidence' in the childminder. Mrs Dogwood says she does not know how she would cope without her i.e. live these two identities, mother and teacher, if not actually reconcile them. In this interview moment Mrs Dogwood accounts for a problem self, the disclosure of which was interactionally intense, requiring my full attention. The experience that I had was of being a privileged listener, not an interviewer.

Mrs Beech works three days a week as a solicitor. Her husband is also a solicitor, a partner in a different firm. The Beech's have three children, two of whom are pre-school, and a childminder who comes to the house on the days Mrs Beech works.

Q: So when you're at work you have a childminder?
Mrs Beech: Yes, supergran, not a real granny but we call her 'supergran' and she's sixty and she's widowed and she answered an advert for a help from home. So she comes to the house when ever I am working.

Q: Does she have the touch 'supergran' obviously has, is she somebody you have a lot of faith in?
Mrs Beech: Yes, respect and a lot of affection, it goes both ways and we've both helped each other enormously.

Q: And the children presumably get on well?
Mrs Beech: Mmm, she's part of the family.

(Mrs Beech p.2)

Mrs Beech gives the childminder the honorific title 'supergran' and in a very powerful statement claims that the childminder is part of their family. What could be better for a child than being brought up by a 'family member', a granny? In this brief interview moment Mrs Beech accounts for the childminder's identity and legitimates her use by accounting for the childminder's identity such that it is synonymous with a well-looked-after child.

Mrs Lime, Mrs Dogwood and Mrs Beech attempt to reconcile their identities as employees and mothers by specifying the quality of the childminder. Mrs Beech, I suggest, gives the most artful account

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2 Supergran is also described as a widow - she has no immediate family demands and is thus free to be part of someone else's family.
since she is not troubled by anxiety (like Mrs Lime) nor does she 'problematis' herself (like Mrs Dogwood). Had Mrs Dogwood's childminder come to her house then maybe she would have become a 'family member'. Mrs Lime, having initially denied there is a problem with her employment and her identity as a mother, has difficulty sustaining this position since she was unable to morally specify the quality of the childminder without undermining her moral integrity as a mother.

(iii) The women respondents construct an identity other than mother or employee and from this 'new' identity manage the activities associated with motherhood and paid employment.

Ms Plum is an artist. She has two pre-school children who are childminded during the week at a crèche, and by her family at weekends. Ms Plum has a master's degree and has spent a number of years developing her artistic skills. Ms Plum's work is sold commercially at exhibitions and at a local gallery/shop. She lives with a successful property owner and developer.

Q: You mentioned one of the other things you were juggling with, [in pursuing a career as an artist] that was keeping you from doing the publicity and getting your name bandied around, was bringing up the two children - so how do the two (things) potentially conflict?

Ms Plum: It would be easy to blame the children for my lack of progression, which I'm not doing because I prefer them to working. So I don't blame them for my lack of progression, I prefer my life with them to my professional life at the moment. So I would say the conflict is not on the level of any resentment of progression I haven't made, but it exists in just loss of basic energy. They take all the energy and creativity I've got, which leaves very little for the part-time that I'm in the workshop. Which isn't a sort of resentment, because I like them better, but it means that it's a struggle keeping this going for later. But I know I'll need to, otherwise all the years up until now will have been wasted.

(Ms Plum p.3)
Ms Plum says it would be easy to blame the children for her failure to have established her identity as an artist, i.e. to produce an account to that effect. To do so would risk displaying herself as an immoral mother by breaching normal 'motherhood' appearances. Such an account is avoided as Ms Plum accounts for herself as liking her children 'better' than her work. However her activities as a mother, as she accounts for them, do frustrate her artistic activity and hence identity as an artist. Ms Plum holds herself accountable for not 'wasting' the years spent as an artist. Below I ask Ms Plum about her part-time activity as an artist.

Q: You said this is part-time, so how many days a week do you do?

Ms Plum: It works out at about half the week. The children are cared for, roughly, for half days. There's a bit of give and take, it changes about slightly from week to week, but I have roughly half the day in the workshop and with extra care on a Saturday - either John will take the children on a Saturday afternoon, or my aunt will look after them on a Saturday morning - I have a half day on a Saturday as well. At times of pressure, then I'll work in the evenings - I'll come back and work in the evenings as well. So it's snatched bits of work around looking after the children, which is very difficult in terms of concentration. You don't get a long spell of time to settle into what you're doing and really think about it. That's the sort of conflict.

(Ms Plum p.3-4)

In this interview moment Ms Plum's description of her child-care arrangements and the time spent in the workshop is very 'matter of fact'. The account establishes a complex network of arrangements that enable Ms Plum to 'snatch' bits of work around looking after the children. In terms of the production of selves this was not a particularly involving interview moment. Ms Plum's displayed self as either mother or artist was minimal and she becomes interactionally almost a non-self in order to be both mother and artist.

Mrs Hazel has two daughters, the eldest is eleven years old and youngest is pre-school. Mrs Hazel works part time as a university researcher and is professionally qualified as a special needs teacher. Mrs Hazel's husband is a university lecturer.
Q: If you're doing that part-time, so who...what happens about looking after your two youngest children?

Mrs Hazel: Well, it's a terrific juggling act, between play schools, childminders and sometimes friends, but for peace of mind I've stuck to childminders and play schools because friends are not reliable.

Q: Not reliable in the sense that...?

Mrs Hazel: Oh, if their children are ill they can't take yours and this, that and the other, or they forget and you have to have them back and time hasn't allowed that because we've had a major house move in the middle of it.

(Mrs Hazel p.20)

Mrs Hazel accounts for her child-care arrangements as a 'terrific juggling act', a juggling act in which childminders rather than friends are more 'reliable'. The topic of the interview shifts to discuss moving house, but I then return to the issue of childminding by asking if the childminders come to the house.

Mrs Hazel: No, I've tried...over the 11 years of child rearing I've tried lots of different arrangements and if you have someone coming to the house and you're working at home it doesn't work because the child always wants to go to you. It creates a tension, and it also...throughout the winter periods you feel you have to have, if you want to go and work in the library, you have to have the heating on, and that puts up the cost dramatically.

Q: Right.

Mrs Hazel: And also the house just gets very very untidy, because a stranger doesn't know where to put things. We're very lucky in [name of town], there's a very professional group of childminders, a lot of them are professional women, and they are registered and vetted quite heavily, and they've got an association, they've got a toy library, they meet at a centre, if they want to they've got a social worker attached and there's a lot of support network for the childminders who have any problems, personality differences, and I've had four different childminders and they've all been terrific, absolutely fantastic people. Maybe I've just been lucky, or not dramatically fussy, but I've chosen them for their interests and compatibility...they're all people with their own children, compatibility of personality and ages, and convenience of where they live, and health. Because the little one's so extraordinarily active, they have to be active people, and when I interview them I make sure that I ask about what
they do with their own children, like swim or take them out for walks every day, or go to the park a lot, and when I saw one had a bike with a bike seat for children, that was good, she took mine on that and her own child rode his own bike for a good hour and half a day.

(Mrs Hazel p.22-23)

Although I put the question about the use of childminders twice to Mrs Hazel she does not respond to them as posing an identity problem in terms of her relationship between being a mother and an employee. Although Mrs Hazel claims not to have been 'dramatically fussy' in her choice of childminders she details at length her ability to choose a 'good' childminder. Such an account establishes the quality of her 'juggling act'. Mrs Hazel, who does not assume the identity of either mother or employee in this interview moment, devotes herself to becoming a 'juggler of child minding services'. Such an identity establishes the legitimacy of Mrs Hazel's self as both research worker and mother.

Ms Plum and Mrs Hazel do not assume an identity as either mother or worker, but become 'alternative' identities that enable them to account for their activities as both mothers and workers. Ms Plum accomplishes this by a 'matter of fact' account of her child-care arrangements that minimises the involvement of herself in her account. Mrs Hazel, in an involving interaction, becomes a 'juggler of child-care services'. In these interview moments Ms Plum and Mrs Hazel become selves that are not 'disturbing' (like Mrs Lime) or problematic (like Mrs Pear or Mrs Dogwood) or located in the identity mother (like Mrs Quince, Mrs Cedar and Mrs Elm).

Conclusion

A feature of the ritual selves in interviews describing 'households' is their inter-dependence upon each other, be they selves actually present in the interaction as spouse or interviewer or as selves artfully invoked, accounted-for, as having a particular identity and associated activities (or needs).
Mrs Quince and Mrs Cedar held themselves accountable as mothers but
set a limit to this accountability such that they were able to take
part-time employment when their children's identity changed. Mrs
Beech held herself accountable as a mother for her childminder's
identity. Mrs Elm's discomfort/resistance to my imposed
accountability framework - but ultimate conformity to it - was
accomplished by interactionally withdrawing herself as an accountable
mother. Thus I claim that these respondents have in these interview
moments conformed to/reproduced motherhood as a normal institutional
appearance and demonstrated their conformity to it - albeit with
variations in what motherhood is.

Ms Plum when accounting for her child-care arrangements became less
involved in the interactional production of self. But this reduced
involvement enabled her to account for herself as both mother and
artist. Mrs Lime was 'disturbed' by her account of her child-care
arrangements possibly indexing a perceived 'weakness' in her
accountable-self. Mrs Pear and Mrs Dogwood with their respective
'dilemma' and 'guilty' selves index an inability to reconcile their
accountability to the expectations of motherhood and economic
activity. It is my contention that these respondents were 'troubled'
by their dual accountability and that this 'trouble' was an
opportunity for a potential reconstruction of the expectations
associated with Motherhood, an opportunity that these respondents did
not take. Where as Mrs Hazel in her account of herself as 'juggler'
has gone some way to construct a 'new' meaning of child-care in
opposition to traditional meanings. The fact that Mrs Hazel accounts
for herself as a 'juggler' is perhaps an index of the precarious
nature of this 'new' meaning.
Chapter 6
Reporting A Decision: The Local Accomplishment Of The Intelligible

Part 1: the organisation of talk

Organisational features of ordinary conversation and other talk in interaction provide for the routine display of participants' understandings of one another's conduct and of the field of action [context] thereby building in a routine grounding for intersubjectivity. (Schegloff 1992:1295).

The organisational features germane to this analysis are those of adjacency pairs and repair. The adjacency pair: the turn by turn organisation of talk enables a conversationalist, via his talk, to display his interpretation of a previous utterance and to have the status of his last utterance (how his last utterance has been interpreted by the next speaker) displayed in the next speaker's turn. Repair: due to the turn by turn organisation of talk a conversationalist is routinely able to identify any misunderstanding of her previous utterance and is provided with the opportunity (via her talk) to repair the misunderstanding in her next turn. As a consequence a 'context of publicly displayed and continually updated intersubjective understanding is systematically sustained' (Heritage 1984:256). As meaning is accomplished in the sequential organisation of talk the meaning of an utterance rarely becomes the explicit topic of talk between interactants. These organisational features are the 'building blocks' of intersubjectivity, but each actual instances of talk is:
designed by conversationalists for what the other does or does not know, such design can be expected to avoid in advance much of the potential ambiguity [of utterances] for co-participants.

(Schegloff 1984:50 my emphasis).

This 'seen but unnoticed' organisational feature of talk is a matrix in which cultural knowledge is locally 'reconfirmed, modified and expanded' (Schegloff 1992:1298) - in the light of what conversationalists display through talk or assume is reciprocally known. By this act of design conversationalists conspire in the maintenance of intersubjectivity as an 'operation' (Schegloff 1992:1298) or artful practice (Garfinkel 1967). Assuming that conversation has these organisational features for the maintenance of intersubjectivity I now wish to examine the by design features of actual instances of talk, which 'can be expected to avoid in advance much of the potential ambiguity for co-participants'. This will be done by asking what are the design features of respondents' accounts of 'making a decision'?

Weber argued in Economy And Society that an action is intersubjectively meaningful - by which he means rational - insofar as it associates means to a particular end in a manner that is publicly recognisable in terms of 'typical norms and expectation' (Weber 1987:11). Weber assumed that these 'typical norms and expectations' were unproblematically available to analysts and lay-members alike. Rawls (1987) however identifies 'typical norms and expectations' with an institutional order that is constituted 'in and through' interaction. Once interactionally constituted these 'typical norms and expectations' frame the interaction constituting the definition (meaning) of the interaction i.e. what is 'going on'. Thus 'doing' an interview is both framing an interaction and constituting that frame. Once established the interview frame will include assumptions of 'typical norms and expectations', an expressive order (Goffman 1972) encompassing both (i) expectations of politeness and decorum and (ii) what is to 'pass' as an account of a decision. Participants become involved in the interviews to the extent that they become ritual selves (interviewee and interviewer) appropriate to the orderly maintenance of the interview frame. Accounting-for a decision both constructs the decision as an event and frames the
decision in terms of typical norms and expectations, an institutional order. This institutional order of accounted-for 'typical norms and expectations' becomes the means by which a decision is to be understood, and to which the 'decision maker' - the respondent - is accountable as a more or less rational decision maker.

In no sense do I wish to reify the notion of accountability framework since it is an intersubjective understanding that is 'sustained' and continually updated and frequently subjected to interruptions, lapses in attention and being side-tracked. But at any given moment the interaction is always potentially recoverable as 'doing an interview'. The design feature of an accounted-for decision, in an interview, is then the artful articulation of an institutional order via the practice of accounting, in a manner to sustain the expressive order of 'doing' an interview to which all the participants hold themselves accountable (though with varying grasps and subscriptions). This analysis focuses upon the expressive order as sustained via talk as in the process of doing the interviews it was respondents who gave monosyllabic responses rather than those that adopted near horizontal postures that were more 'troubling' to the interview interaction. I do not wish to play down the significance of non-verbal action, but in this analysis they will effectively be ignored.

Part 2: the design of Mr Redwood's account of domestic finances

In the extract below Mr Redwood is describing his domestic finances. Mr Redwood has just listed his investments in his business (a firm of solicitors), pensions, insurance policies and stated that he would not 'write out a cheque for a Porsche just because I fancy it'. He continues:

Mr Redwood: What I'm really saying is that I know pretty well that most of the time the income matches expenditure. What I'm really saying is that I've never been desperately worried if for a few months the expenditure exceeded the income, because at the end of the day it's all going to roughly come out in the wash. I just never see very much fun
in actually having a strict budget for housekeeping and a strict budget for clothes and all the rest of it, because there's no point in having money if it's just sort of money sitting there in the bank. I'm not one that figuratively gets up with gold coins and counts them at night. The only purpose of having money is so you can use it and enjoy it...enjoy it when you've got it if you like. So there's no point in you being a slave to it, as long as you're in a position that you know that overall that you're covered and that it'll all come right in the end - hopefully.

Q: And that's your view?
Mrs Redwood: Yes, I mean I think it

(Mr and Mrs Redwood p.49-50)

That Mr Redwood's account achieves an intersubjective meaning is displayed in my next turn, a question in which I ask Mrs Redwood: 'And that's your view?' to which she responds 'Yes' prior to addressing herself to my question and her husband's account. By changing topic or the person addressed the interviewer is in effect signalling that a response has achieved a meaning 'appropriate' to sustaining the interaction.

As a design feature Mr Redwood's account constructs two accountability frameworks recoverable from his last sentence: (i) 'knowing that overall you are [financially] covered'; and (ii) not being a 'slave' to money. Mr Redwood's account can be seen as 'managing' these two accountability frameworks so that they do not contradict each other. A task that is displayed as 'troubling' when Mr Redwood twice uses the phrase 'what I'm really saying is...' The design feature of accounting-for 'making a decision' that I want to draw your attention to is the construction and management of two non-contradictory accountability frameworks through which a 'decision' is to be understood by the interviewer, and which is constitutive of the interaction as an interview (and the speaker's partner when present during the joint interview). Further I want to classify these two accountability frameworks as quantity and quality reasoning. A quantity accountability framework - Mr Redwood's 'know[ing] that overall you are covered' - relates a decision to economic calculation. A quality accountability framework relates a decision to considerations of 'quality of life' - Mr Redwood's 'not being a slave'.
In summary the design feature of an accounted-for-decision, recoverable from the excerpt above ensures that the expressive order of 'doing' an interview involves the construction and management of two non-contradictory accountability frameworks. Further the decision can also be understood as either rational or irrational in terms of the quantity and quality accountability frameworks that frame it. Thus Mr Redwood's spending habits are rational in terms of the quantity and quality frameworks that constitute the account of his spending habits. The precise terms of this dual accountability framework will of course always be defined in-talk but I suggest that quantity and quality accountability frameworks require artful management because once a decision is accounted for in terms of an accountability framework, that framework becomes an external and coercive social fact (Durkheim 1966) against which the rationality (or otherwise) of the accounted-for decision could be measured by fellow interactants. Where a 'decision' was perceived as irrational by one of the participants, in terms of one of the accountability frameworks (there being no cases where a decision was irrational in terms of both accountability frameworks), a number of consequences followed to ensure: (i) a intersubjective understanding of the otherwise irrational action was achieved and (ii) that the interview expressive order (as the interactional frame which gives meaning to the talk but is itself dependent upon that very talk) is not disrupted. These consequences will be discussed in Parts 5 and 6.

The quality and quantity accountability framework which will frame this analysis is, despite apparent rhetorical claims to the contrary, not an empirical feature of the respondent's accounts. Rather it is a feature of the author's own devising for the purpose of developing an intelligible and interesting account of the respondents' accounts - the 'validity' of which is dependent upon this argument.

Part 3: illustrations of quality and quantity reasoned accounts

Below are some extracts that illustrate respondents' construction and management of quantity and quality accountability frameworks. A
significant feature of these accounts is the variation with which the respondents are able to display conformity to the quality and quantity accountability framework, yet still account for their decisions as both rational and intersubjectively meaningful. The achievement of an intersubjectively meaningful accounted-for decision (for all practical purposes) is indexed by the next conversational turn in which the topic of conversation is changed. Below Mr Pear, a senior technician, is responding to a question about the possibility of promotion, having previously stated he does not see his job as a career.

Q: If you're not seeing what you're doing as a career, is there a promotion element?

Mr Pear: There is a promotion type element. Within the technical structure there's a promotion, and promotion for me would be to proceed to principal technician, and then possibly break into the admin area. I did apply, reluctantly, for the post of senior technician - in fact the post came up for the principal technician or it will when this fellow, the chief technician, retires soon - but I doubt whether I will apply for it: a) because the financial incentive isn't very great and b) which is more important to me, I don't want the additional responsibility which would then make me more of an integral part of the college mechanism. Senior technician gives me the responsibility to work on my own initiative and yet a flexibility to mould the college round my social life. The more responsibility you have, then I think that pulls you away - you know, there's a greater commitment to the work place than there is to the home base.

(Mr Pear p.17)

Mr Pear's accounted-for decision to not apply for the post of principal technician (when the chief technician retires) is 'done' in terms of a lack of 'financial incentive', a quantity accountability framework. And as Mr Pear accounts for it, promotion would entail him becoming part of the 'college mechanism' with the resultant loss of 'initiative' and 'flexibility' - quality reasoning. The two accountability frameworks are non-contradictory because Mr Pear has prioritised his 'home base' over the 'work place' - 'mould[ing] the college round my social life'. In the next extract Mrs Dogwood is
accounting for her decision to return to work, rather than stay at home with her son Peter.

Mrs Dogwood: I don't think I could have stayed at home, I think realistically I have to work. After all that time, knowing that I've got the skills and the experience to be working and earning - because if I'd stayed at home it wouldn't have been an enriching experience because we'd have had no money - I would have been with Peter but not able to do anything. So I think psychologically I couldn't be out of work.

(Mrs Dogwood p.3-4)

Mrs Dogwood accounts for her return to work, 'I think realistically I have to work'. This realism encompasses, 'knowing that I've got the skills and experience to be working' - quality reasoning and 'earning' - quantity reasoning. She indicates that the being 'at home' would not be an 'enriching experience' because of economic factors - quantity reasons - 'I would have been with Peter but not able to do anything.' Unlike Mr Pear, Mrs Dogwood has in her account, conformed to the design features of accounting for a decision by prioritised work and earnings. Below Mr Alder a fairly successful self-employed builder is asked whether he considered private education for his children.

Mr Alder: No, they're being educated under the state system. I mean previously we didn't have enough income even to consider that. And I don't think ... I suppose the state school system - we were both educated in state schools so whilst I have met and rubbed shoulders with private school pupils and I think they do have an advantage, I'm actually not an academic person. I'm a practical person and therefore it wouldn't do me any good whatsoever. And my son is not an academic so it wouldn't do him any good. Whether it would have done the girls any good I don't know but I think children have still got to be streetwise. Come the end of the day you've still got to earn a living.

(Mr Alder p.25-26)

Mr Alder's children have been educated in the state sector; 'previously we didn't have enough income to even consider it[private education]' - an economic calculation of a quantity accountability framework. Mr Alder acknowledges, however, that the privately
educated have an 'advantage'. Is this 'advantage' worth paying for? In the case of himself, 'it wouldn't do me any good', nor in the case of his son, 'it wouldn't do him any good', because they are not 'academic'. Mr Alder is not so sure if private education would have done his daughters 'any good'. The expressions 'advantage' and 'any good' are cryptic as to what they might be referring to. Is it economic 'advantage' and 'good' or quality of life 'advantage' and 'good'? I would suggest the latter, because as Mr Alder says 'children have still to be streetwise'. Mr Alder's account seems to suggest 'being streetwise' is not an 'advantage' of being privately educated; if this is the case, 'advantage' and being 'streetwise' are quality considerations. And Mr Alder's account downplays the significance of 'advantage' through private education, by stating 'Come the end of the day you've still got to earn a living.'

The use of cryptic expressions like 'advantage' and 'any good' - are they referring to economic calculations or quality of life considerations? - trades upon the interviewer's (and analyst's) ability to make a sense of what is being said. Thus the extracts below will illustrate the interviewer's preference for accounts designed by reference to non-contradictory quality and quantity accountability frameworks and thus his ability to make sense of what is being said. A further point on Mr Alder's account, the strength of the accountability framework preference is such that, even though Mr Alder accounts for not having the income to consider private education - economic reasoning would have been sufficient - his account still provides an account of quality of life considerations.

Below the interviewer asks Mr Mahogany, who owns and works a large farm, if he would consider a business in computer software, if it could be proved to be more profitable.

Mr Mahogany: No I wouldn't be interested in that.
Q: Because?
Mr Mahogany: I just think that some things that look as if they're more profitable in the short term don't always turn out to be that way.
Q: Say I could convince you that it would be, suppose I could produce a hard and fast case, to take you
right out of the farming way of life, and give you a completely different way of life, then what?

Mr Mahogany: It would obviously depend very much on the circumstances. I don't think I'd be very keen to do that to be honest. My goal has always been to have lots of acres I can look out over and I'm here on the job every day, and sometimes it can get over-burdening but I think I'd still put up with a lower income in farming than...

Q: But it's a life-style thing as well?

Mr Mahogany: It is a bit as well, yes. You certainly wouldn't do it just for the money (laughs).

(Mr Mahogany p.15-16)

Mr Mahogany argues against the idea of moving into computer software in terms of the short term nature of any potential profit, a decision reasoned in terms of a quantity accountability framework. The interviewer then puts the question again, this time assuring increased profits. Mr Mahogany responds by mentioning his goal, his proximity to the job and the burden of farming, concluded by 'I think I'd still put up with a lower income in farming than...'. At which point the interviewer interrupts: 'But it's a life-style thing as well' and in doing so constructs a quality accountability framework that Mr Mahogany agrees with. The interviewer could well be charged with putting words into Mr Mahogany's mouth but what this excerpt reveals is an expectation on the part of the interviewer that a solely quantity reasoned account is 'inadequate' and a non-contradictory quality reasoned account is also expected. Once a 'quality of life' accountability framework had been constructed, albeit with the help of the interviewer, and acknowledged by Mr Mahogany the account can be said in this instance to have achieved an intersubjective meaning since the interviewer changes topic.

The extract below is from Mr and Mrs Silverbirch's joint interview. Mr Silverbirch has just described his reason for taking a job as a civil servant as well as sole partner in a small business as 'a matter of maximising income'. Mrs Silverbirch has followed this by describing her decision to return to teaching as 'Well financial first and that's what I wanted to do.'

Q: I am wondering, there are two of you and yet you are holding down three jobs collectively so I was wondering
Mrs Silverbirch: Four if you don't mind, I'm a housewife as well.
Q: Right, OK, four jobs, so how do you manage to work all that out?
Mr Silverbirch: One just works long hours.
Q: Right. What about negotiating it together? How do you make the best of it in terms of working together at it?
Mr Silverbirch: That's not a matter of negotiating about it, we just get on and do it.
Q: Right.
Mrs Silverbirch: They're two separate things. We don't really...well apart from the fact I occasionally type up survey reports for him, I don't really get involved in his side of it at all. And he doesn't in mine.

[edited account by Mrs Silverbirch describing her work routine]
Q: People I've interviewed have used this notion of quality time which is the time they spend doing family things away from the pressures of work and those responsibilities, so I'm wondering that's the notion that you have and where you fit it in?
Mr Silverbirch: No, we don't really have time for that.
Q: What, at all?
Mrs Silverbirch: Well, occasionally on a Sunday.

(Mr and Mrs Silverbirch p.18-19)

My question about 'quality time' invokes 'quality time' and the Silverbirch's accountability to it, a feature that has been absent (except for Mrs Silverbirch's brief 'that's what I wanted to do') from their economic quantity reasoned account of their employment decisions. Mr Silverbirch's response to my question acknowledges a 'quality of life' accountability framework but only to dismiss it 'we don't really have time for that'. Mrs Silverbirch's response also acknowledges a 'quality of life' accountability which she is accountable to 'on Sundays'. It is again the interviewer who makes reference to a quality of life accountability framework which the Silverbirches in their responses acknowledge only to dismiss or marginalise. A consequence of this is that their quantity reasoned decision to hold down four jobs is not contradicted by, or made to appear irrational in terms of, a quality of life accountability framework.
Part 4: the intersubjective interview self

A notable feature of these 'reasoned accounts' is just how little exposition is given of the accounted-for reasoning process, be it quantity or quality reasoning, Mr Redwood being a notable exception (due to his 'trouble' in 'doing' non-contradictory quality and quantity reasoning). It is as if expressions like 'streetwise', 'advantage' (Mr Alder), 'financial incentive', flexibility' (Mr Pear), 'money', 'enriching experience' (Mrs Dogwood), 'profitable' (Mr Mahogany), 'life style' (Mr Mahogany's interviewer), 'maximising income' (Mr Silverbirch), and 'quality time' (myself interviewing the Silverbirches) signal accountability frameworks that do not require further exposition. The interview interactants are trading upon cultural knowledge in a manner that maximises the indexicality of their talk. The maximisation of indexicality ensures the commitment of conversationalists to the sequence relevant organisation of talk, and enhances the intersubjective relationship between co-participants who are constantly interpreting and displaying their interpretations of talk in talk. I wish to suggest that a consequence of this means to enhance intersubjectivity is that hearers are recruited, by default, into the acceptance - as real - of the world as constructed by speakers. Thus accounts 'pass' as creditable (without challenge) since to challenge an account of 'making a decision' would be to challenge the speakers' knowledge of the world, their ability to make rational decisions and ultimately the interview (as the frame that gives meaning to the talk yet is dependent upon that very talk). Similarly to ask for clarification of terms like 'advantage' (Mr Alder) or 'enriching experience' (Mrs Dogwood) would potentially expose the interviewer as socially incompetent i.e. lacking in the taken-for-granted cultural knowledge appropriate to 'do' an interview.

Quantity and quality reasoning as a design feature of accounted-for 'making a decision' would appear to be routinely available to both interviewee and interviewer. As such an account that fails to be constructed in terms of two non-contradictory accountability frameworks - or modes of reasoning - i.e. a decision which is
accounted-for in terms of only one mode of reasoning is open to the accusation of being irrational from the perspective of a determinate alternative (Cuff 1980) account constructed in terms of the absent mode of reasoning. If a quality of life account were absent from a respondent's response it would 'loom large' as a potential critique of a wholly economically reasoned account; hence the consistency when quantity and quality reasoning appear together. The interviewers can therefore be seen to have 'helped' Mr Mahogany and the Silverbirches to account for their employment decisions as both intersubjectively meaningful, and rational, in terms of 'doing' the interview.

Part 5: the design of reasoned accounts and ritual selves

So far the analysis has indicated that when respondents account for 'making a decision': (i) the interviewer by changing topic or addressing another participant will signal that an account has to all practical purposes achieved an intersubjective meaning; (ii) that interviewees as a by design consequence of sustaining the interview expressive order, construct their accounts of decisions using two non-contradictory accountability frameworks relating to economic calculation and quality of life considerations; (iii) this design feature displays the decision as rational and 'protects' it from charges of irrationality from a determinate alternative account; (iv) interviewers also have a preference for accounts designed this way and 'help' respondents via their questions to construct accounts of decision making that conform to this design; and (v) all this accounting is 'done' to interactionally establish the interaction as an interview and is 'done' precisely because the interaction is intersubjectively understood as an interview.

1 It would be reasonable to expect the quality and quality accountability frameworks to be found in other interactional contexts.
The interviews are however more than the intersubjective construction of 'a context of sustained and continually updated intersubjective meaning' (Heritage 1984:256) since through their utterances interactants display themselves as 'the kind of person who sees the world in such a way' (Cuff 1980:35) and through their accountability for their utterances become selves involved in the interaction. Thus the selves, displayed and constructed 'through and in' the interaction are morally accountable for their utterances and attend to their appearance as moral persons, competent members and adequate social performers (Baruch 1981). These selves can be usefully thought of as Goffmanesque ritual selves. Thus the design of the respondents' accounted-for decisions can be understood as the accomplishment of selves involved in being 'rational household decision makers' under interview conditions. These selves are the selves appropriate to the expressive order of these interviews. The design preference for similarly constructed accounts by the interviewers can be seen as the interviewer saving the respondents' face and potentially the interview, and making his own face (to his colleagues back at the university) by attempting to gather data about such selves - the aim of the research.

If the previously discussed excerpt were the routine display of rational selves the excerpts that follow are of irrational selves that potentially threaten the expressive order of the interview. 'Irrational' decisions can be identified by the respondents' use of such phrases as, 'a bit of a mental really' and 'we do have these flashes'. The design features and thus the means by which these accounts maintain intersubjectivity (in terms of 'doing' interview accounting) is different from rational accounts. The irrational is in a sense beyond being accounted-for thus decisions accounted-for as irrational 'problematis' intersubjective meaning and are quickly followed by repair work. Two different means of accomplishing repair are recoverable from the data. One, reasoning the irrational, of which there are two versions: (i) the irrational account is followed by an account with routine design features and (ii) a brief psychological biography is offered in which the accounted-for irrational decision is made meaningful (rational) by reference to some event in the respondent's past. After either variation the topic
of conversation is changed by the interviewer, ratifying the repair. Two, the need for repair is glossed over by a swift change in conversational topic.

Repair accomplished by reasoning the irrational with a routinely designed account. Mr Maple is about to start a full-time teaching job in another city and will be living away from home. In the extract below I ask Mr Maple about the holiday he has just bought.

Q: Gill [Mr Maple's common law wife] said you've been out and bought a holiday today?
Mr Maple: Yes, it was a bit mental really. I've put the deposits down. I had to scrape the deposit together really, seeing as I'm on Income Support at the moment - I didn't mention that did I? - did you want to know that?
Q: Yes, well I know now.
[Edited section in which Mr Maple then explains that his wife's business is not doing particularly well at the moment and that he is currently claiming Income Support.] Mr Maple continues;
Mr Maple: So the income support, rather than just tiding us over, is really essential at the moment. However, yes I went and booked a holiday despite that - I'm also about £2,000 in debt, half of which I ran up on my year's PGCE because the grant was so dismal - I was quite happy to go into debt because I figured I'd walk straight out of college into a job. So this year has made that more difficult. However, I figured that if I was going to go through all this trouble and strife going up to London, I just figured it would be a reward for the end of the first term, to get away for Christmas. And I've simply gone into more debt. I've just topped up on my credit card and my loan account - I've just gone back to the limits of both of those in order to put this money down as a deposit. Assuming I won't have to pay the full whack until November, by then I will have had a few months' salary.

(Mr Maple p.28-29)

The initial decision to buy the holiday was accounted for as an irrational act: 'it was a bit mental really'. However in the course of recounting the accounted for decision - the repair - he says: 'I figured that if I was going to go through all this trouble and strife going up to London, I just figured it would be a reward for the end of the first term' - quality reasoning. And 'Assuming I won't have to
pay the full whack until November, by then I will have had a few months' salary' - quantity reasoning. Mr Maple has reasoned the irrational, by recounting for the decision to buy the holiday by constructing two non-contradictory accountability frameworks. That this account achieves intersubjectivity for all practical purposes is indexed by my next question in which I ask Mr Maple where they are going on holiday.

Below Mr and Mrs Rowan are accounting for their decision to buy a caravan. They have just collaboratively given a quality reasoned account by comparing a tent to a caravan. 'And in the middle of putting the thing up, we'd see a couple of people come along in a caravan and within ten minutes they were in it' - Mr Rowan. 'And everything got wet [in the tent]' - Mrs Rowan. A caravan is desirable to the Rowans in terms of their quality of life when on holiday.

Mr Rowan: That was the reason for looking at caravans. We'd seen a caravan the year before which we thought about. And we then went out with the intention of trying to get a caravan.

Mrs Rowan: They changed it didn't they?

Mr Rowan: Well they changed it. We'd done our budgeting, we'd taken everything into account based on the prices last year and allowing for an increase in prices hadn't we?

Mrs Rowan: Mm.

Mr Rowan: We'd gone through the whole budget that we had and worked out that yes we could afford to buy a caravan as long as we didn't go over a certain sum. When we actually went to the place, they'd changed the style of the ones we'd seen the year before and we didn't like it as much. And then we saw this one. We were up there for a whole afternoon umming and ahhing as to whether we could afford it.

Mrs Rowan: Because this one was dearer. A lot better.

Mr Rowan: It's a lot better but it was dearer.

Mrs Rowan: But it was dearer.

Mr Rowan: It was outside of what we'd call our budget for buying a caravan.

Mrs Rowan: It meant stretching it a bit.

Mr Rowan: And we decided in the end that with stretching it we could afford it, and it was worthwhile getting it because it had everything we wanted. And besides that, it was the sort of thing that if we'd bought the cheaper one, give it two years and we would have changed.

Mrs Rowan: Whereas we intend holding onto this one.
Mr Rowan: For at least five or six years, then we'll see where it goes from there.

(Mr and Mrs Rowan p.19-21)

In the Rowans' quantity reasoned account Mr Rowan, at length, describes their economic reasoning and the fact that the caravan they eventually bought after 'umming and ahhing' was 'outside of what we'd call[ed] our budget for buying a caravan'. In Mrs Rowan's utterance it meant 'stretching it a bit', and for Mr Rowan 'we decided in the end that with stretching it we could afford it'. 'Stretching' a budget is almost to act irrationally in the terms of a budget, a decision which Mr Rowan immediately reasons - in the same conversational turn - in terms of a new economic accountability framework: 'we could afford it'. Mr Rowan with the aid of his wife then gives a routinely designed account of the decision to buy the caravan by constructing two non-contradictory accountability frameworks: 'it was worthwhile getting it because it had everything we wanted', quality of life considerations and 'if we'd bought the cheaper one, give it two years and we would have changed' quantity reasoning. The Rowans', having earlier in their interview accounted for themselves as careful budgeters have become accountable for the irrationality of 'stretching' their budget that the Rowans only accomplish this repair 'to a degree' is indexed in my next question when I asked about the financial consequences of 'stretching' the budget.

Repair accomplished by reasoning the irrational: by giving a biographical or autobiographical account. Mr Cedar has a well paid job, but is on a six month renewable contract, a fact that features in both the interviewer's questions and the Cedars' accounts of making decisions. Below I ask the Cedars about their decision to buy a caravan. Mrs Cedar's initial response is framed in terms of quality of life considerations: 'it's really nice for us as a family to come together', confirmed by Mr Cedar. My next question invokes the Cedars' economic accountability.

Q: Was there a conflict between, shall we buy a caravan or shall we put this money behind us [save it]? Did you sort of...
Mrs Cedar: No, because we do have these flashes of things, don't we?

Mr Cedar: Yes, we have a brainstorm. There wasn't really, because we went to [name of sea-side resort] and we were talking about it then and watching the children playing, and we were talking about the lack of quality time with them, and that took priority really, and we sort of said, 'Yes, let's do it' because we do want to spend more time with them. We did actually go and look at second-hand [caravans] and it's her fault we bought this big one you see. Jane was normally the one that wouldn't spend...I'd spend the money, but Jane wouldn't. Originally we went to look at second-hand ones, didn't we, but that's not the same. We then said, 'Well let's look at a new one', and we looked at this new one, and once you've walked into a new one you don't go back to a second-hand one, which is fatal. Then Jane spotted this other one, which is [indistinct] got there.

Mrs Cedar: Well in the place we kept on moving up a bit and saying, 'Well we'll just look at this next one here', and we eventually got to this one and we thought 'Well that will do' (laughs).

Mr Cedar: And within a week I'd 'phoned a number of places and went to another couple of places to see what they had literally within a week we'd picked it up.

Mrs Cedar: It was just really a brainstorm thing really, wasn't it? We didn't think about it in depth, we just thought well we think this is a good thing to do.

(Mr and Mrs Cedar p.32-33)

In response to a possible conflict between economic calculations and quality of life considerations Mrs Cedar invokes the irrational 'we have these flashes' - the decision is not economically intelligible (rational). Mr Cedar concurs 'we do have brainstorms'. Then (like Mr Rowan) Mr Cedar proceeds to reason the irrational by constructing a routinely designed account: quality of life considerations are accounted for as 'lack of quality time with them [the children]'; 'we went to look at second-hand ones' and 'I'd phoned a number of places and went to another couple of places' - activities associated with making an economic calculation. Mr Cedar's recounted account is however constantly checking the almost 'run away' irrationality of the change from looking at second-hand caravans to buying a new one and the fact that the purchase was made within a week. It is Mrs Cedar, as constructed by Mr Cedar, who is responsible for the decision to buy 'this big [new] one' and Mrs Cedar, for her part,
restates the decision as a 'brainstorm'. My next question which asked 'do you have many of these brainstorms?' displays the extent to which the topic is not closed and the Cedars are still accountable to the interview design preference for accounts that construct quality of life considerations and economic calculations as non-contradictory. The Cedars response to my question was two routinely designed accounts of decisions to buy a three piece suite and to double glaze the front of the house. Responses which go some way to effect a repair as displayed in my next question (quoted below) which also 'helps' Mr Cedar in the construction of an account that uses quality and quantity reasoning in a non-contradictory manner.

Q: But this idea of putting money behind you, is that...that's like the bottom line and these are aberrations from it rather than the other way round.

Mr Cedar: Yes. The business about putting money aside, I mean we really should take more than we do, but we are very conscious of the fact, as we said, that the job could go, so therefore we need a fallback position, and the low mortgage is one and to get some more money behind us is another, but on the other hand what we are not going to do is live a miserable life, where, I've got friends who have done that, [indistinct] high mortgages, they're fretting over whether they might lose their job or not which would really put them into a problem and they find it difficult to live as a result. Well, we said we want a bit of quality of life as well and for the children's sake as well, so it is a mixture of putting some money by but not...

Mrs Cedar: Well, I suppose if we think back to how your parents were a bit and your background, I think don't you?

Mr Cedar: In part, yes. More so for you, because your parents were very frugal.

Mrs Cedar: Very frugal.

Q: Right.

Mr Cedar: He loved chasing round [name of city] years ago to save him 10p. and it would probably cost me 50p. to save him 10p., and that was the way he was, but...probably more of an effect on you too.

Mrs Cedar: I think I don't want to live like that, but it's difficult because you're fighting both ways really because I've been brought up in that way and I don't want to live like it at all.

(Mr and Mrs Cedar p.33-36)
Mr Cedar's account constructs economic accountability in terms of 'a fall back position', a low mortgage and 'get[ting] some money behind us'. This 'fall back position' is tempered by quality of life considerations, not wanting to live a 'miserable life', and 'we want a bit of quality of life as well'. Mrs Cedar interrupts as Mr Cedar is about to state the terms of the 'mixture' and what follows becomes a part biographical and part autobiographical account of Mrs Cedar's upbringing. The consequence of this account is that Mrs Cedar's decisions previously constructed as 'flashes' and 'brainstorms' are now potentially intelligible, intersubjectivity has been repaired and my next question, a change of topic, signals this.

Below, Mrs Pear is accounting for a possible decision to return to full-time employment. The accounting 'done' in this extract is slightly different from that in the previous extracts since it involves the construction of two non-contradictory accountability frameworks but one of which is critiqued as being irrational from the perspective of a third and determinate alternative accountability framework.

Mrs Pear: I suppose it's a pressure I put upon myself - because we always said that when the children were older then I would go to work full-time so that he could have some time to himself and time to work, do things that he's always wanted to do. So I feel an obligation, which was based on a promise really, a long time ago, in that sense. But also I just feel socially quite a pressure on women when you've had your children, to actually do something which is full-time, and fulfilling, and all the rest of it, because I still feel that society doesn't really value mothering and you do come out of a number of years as a mother feeling that you haven't really done anything - which is crazy.

Q: So you don't think that's a legitimate understanding?

Mrs Pear: No, absolutely not. And I feel very angry that it affects me as it does. Because it shouldn't.

Q: So why do you think it does? You're fighting against it and yet ... ?

Mrs Pear: I don't know, it's probably just the sort of person that I am. I can't actually come to terms with that. And a lot of it's to do with my background I think, especially my father who's a bricklayer/builder, and there was also this kind of thing in the house that unless you were
actually working physically and a full day, then you weren't actually doing anything. And also because my mother brought up four children, and worked full-time as well, and I found it very difficult not to work, not to do anything; not to give myself space, which I think is a great shame.

(Mrs Pear 3-4)

Mrs Pear initially accounts for a 'promise' she made to her husband, that she would return to full-time work so he could reduce his hours of employment to 'do things that he's always wanted to do', a quality of life reasoned account (though particularly focused upon the needs of Mr Pear). Mrs Pear then accounts for a 'social pressure' to return to work and this can be seen as an extension of quantity reasoning from the strictly economic to the 'society at large'. These two accountability frameworks are non-contradictory with regard to the decision to return to work. Latent however in Mrs Pear's account of the 'social pressure to work' is 'motherhood' as a determinate alternative accountability framework. Mrs Pear's account of the decision to return to work is now based upon two contradictory accountability frameworks, that of a 'social pressure' and 'motherhood'. This is a situation that Mrs Pear describes as 'crazy' - irrational. Unlike the respondents in the previous extracts who accept their accountability, as they construct it, Mrs Pear morally and negatively evaluates her 'social pressure' accountability and rejects its reasonableness. My next question holds Mrs Pear accountable for this contradictory and hence irrational state of affairs - so beginning a process of repair. A repair which is accomplished by Mrs Pear giving an autobiographical account of herself: 'a lot of it's to do with my background'. That this account achieves a repair, makes the contradictory situation understandable, to all practical purposes is indexed by my next question when I changed the topic.

Glossing the need for repair by a swift change of topic. Below Mr Alder is accounting for his decision not to employ his son in his one-man and apprentice firm of builders.

Mr Alder: Well I think, when I actually analyse my attitude towards him I'm very hard on him, I'm very analytical of his every move, and you probably have
the correct word for it, but I think I'm going through a stage with him where I actually resent him becoming a man. It's strange, I hate myself for it. I can feel myself bubbling and yet because he's actually developing and getting bigger, I tend to shout at him but I don't really want to. It's something I'm really struggling with at the moment. I find him really annoying and yet with my apprentice, who's the same age, I'm far more tolerant of the kid and it baffles me really. When I actually step outside myself and look at it, and yet I can see it in my wife and the eldest daughter, I mean they fight like flipping cats. It's just this sort of womanhood bit, sort of protecting your own space as it were. And I can see it happening with her and it's funny and yet now I can actually see it happening to myself. And it's weird, it's really weird. I suppose this is one of the things that children say, that they don't get on (with parents) and yet you see I'm developing a very good relationship with my elder daughter. We can actually communicate at quite a high level which has been developing over the past two years/eighteen months. It is a weird thing. I mean nobody trains you, to grow up like this, but I can see it happening. So that is why, coming back, I want training (for him) because I feel I should be too hard on him and he wouldn't survive. [pause] I mean looking at this list, this second job. I assume you mean by that have you actually taken a drastic direction turn in your career?

(Mr Alder p30-31)

Mr Alder's accounted-for decision not to employ his son is framed in terms of the irrationality of the father/son relationship - a quality of life consideration, 'I'm very analytical of his every move', 'I think I'm going through a stage with him where I actually resent him becoming a man'. Mr Alder can be seen as having 'trouble' establishing this accountability framework as intersubjectively meaningful: he gives examples of behaviour consistent with his accounted-for decision of not employing his son - being hard on him; 'I tend to shout at him' and 'I find him really annoying', actions which are in sharp contrast with his (accounted-for) 'tolerant' attitude towards his apprentice. Mr Alder also compares his relationship with his son to that of his wife's relationship with their eldest daughter and compares his relationship with his son to his relationship with the eldest daughter. Mr Alder's decision not to employ his son because he will be too hard upon him is accounted for in an accountability framework of the perverse - irrational - nature.
of family relationships 'it's funny' and 'it's weird it's really weird'. This quality reasoned account can only be said to be intersubjectivity meaningful to the extent that family relationships are understood as 'It's a weird thing' - irrational. To account for the irrational is to make it rational (in terms of an accountability frame) and this is the 'trouble' Mr Alder faced in his account of the irrationality of family relationships. Mr Alder 'concludes' not by reasoning the irrational but by restating his initial proposition: 'I want training for him because I feel I'd be too hard on him.' To establish this as a 'conclusion' Mr Alder changes topic by addressing himself to a question on his copy of the interview schedule 'I assume you mean by that...' To further ratify his 'conclusion' I respond to Mr Alder's question and the topic of conversation is changed. The 'failure' to reason family relationships and the employment of his son as intersubjectively meaningful in terms of quality and quantity reasoning leaves room for speculation as to what is 'really going on'. The absence of an account of economic considerations suggests an alternative account, for example; the apprentice is cheaper to employ than Mr Alder's son.

Mr Hawthorn, a free-lance engineer, has a mill house in France which when it is in a 'fit state' he intends renting out. I have just introduced the mill as a topic.

**Q:** But it's not at that state yet[ready to rent out]?

**Mr Hawthorn:** No, but it's getting there, it should be there next year for at least some of it to be let out. Basically that was an investment, one of the reasons for going in was that I was having trouble getting work here, so I thought 'if I can't get work in this country I might as well go and do something else ??? get out of this country'. And the other thing is, you could say it's a kind of private pension fund, that I figure that if it's going all right by the time I'm 60, and I don't have anything else to do, then I shall go down there and look after the tourists in the summer, clear the place up and whatever and get a bit of money from it.

**Q:** How much actual business planning has gone into buying this property?

**Mr Hawthorn:** Not a great deal, no. It was more a gut feeling, 'Well this is a chance', well it's like when you're 46/47 if you don't do it now you never
will. No, it's like if I had sat down and really accurately calculated what it was going to cost I would have died of fright, but I've never done it (laughs). So it was a leap in the dark. It'll probably work out in the end.

Q: And how long have you had it for?
Mr Hawthorn: About 3 years.
Q: Right.
Mr Hawthorn: And spent a lot of time...I've spent a total of about 7 months over there working on it, doing it up. That's something I've been enabled to do by being freelance. Some of the breaks from employment I've used to do...I've also used some of the breaks from the employment to do this City Aid [name of local charity] thing to set up a group to link places in [name of county] to places in Africa.

Q: City Aid being?

(Mr Hawthorn p20-21)

Mr Hawthorn displays an interpretation of my question about the state of the mill as requiring an account of the reasons for buying it. These reasons are initially framed in an economic accountability framework, 'an investment' and 'a kind of private pension fund'. In my next question I ask for further details of this economically framed decision. However, Mr Hawthorn describes the extent of the economic planning involved as 'not a great deal' and proceeds to account for the decision as a 'gut feeling' and 'a leap in the dark'. The decision as it is recounted is irrational in terms of the previously constructed economic accountability framework. My next question about the length of time Mr Hawthorn has owned the mill can be seen as 'fishing' for further information in which a routinely designed account, intersubjectively meaningful in terms of interview interaction, of the decision to buy the mill, will be given. Mr Hawthorn answers my question, providing some additional information prior to mentioning his work for City Aid. 'City Aid', a previously un-mentioned topic, can be seen as a conversational gambit. A gambit which I 'buy', since in my next utterance I ask 'City Aid being?' and the topic of conversation is changed. Mr Hawthorn's account of the decision to buy the mill is left as irrational, it was not reasoned therefore Mr Hawthorn is open to the charge of making a 'bad' economic decision. No quality of life account of the purchase was given, leaving space to speculate as to the 'value' of the mill to the rest of the family. No questions about the purchase of the mill.
were framed in these terms since they could well have been threatening to Mr Hawthorn's interview self, as maker of rational decisions, and thus could potentially threaten the interview as the site for the interactional production of myself as well.

If accounts that have routine design features produce the selves of 'rational household managers', selves that are produced in the reasoning of the irrational decisions can be seen as 'struggling' to achieve rationality in these interview moments. Mr Maple, the Rowans and Mr Cedar's selves as 'rational household managers' were, in the extracts quoted above, under threat. The subsequent reasoning of the irrational is thus not only a repair of interview intersubjectivity but an attempt to re-become the self of a 'rational household manager'. It is worthy of note that such repairs as, an interactional accomplishment, require more accounting work than routine accounting. Mr Maple and Mr Rowan emphasise the economic calculation involved in their 'rationalised' decisions and Mr Cedar makes explicit the relationship between economic calculation and quality of life considerations.

Mrs Cedar's biographical account and Mrs Pear's autobiographical account, to reason the irrational, produce selves that are 'more' than the selves appropriate to the interview's accountability framework. In Goffman's (1971) terms there is a glimpse backstage; Mrs Cedar and Mrs Pear are seen as possessing selves that exist outside of the interview. The expressive order of the interview was changed to produce these selves, which were experienced as more interactionally involving, possibly because these selves were more interesting to the participants. Mr Alder's and Mr Hawthorn's repair by changing topic, avoids reasoning the irrational. These interview moments subvert the interview accountability framework, Mr Alder's and Mr Hawthorn's interview selves momentarily disappear only to instantly reappear as selves with 'something to hide'.
Conclusion

This analysis has taken as its topic the intersubjective relationship between selves established 'in and through' the 'doing' of interview accounts of 'making a decision'. From this analysis I wish to draw the following conclusion. In our data corpus rational accounts were 'preferred' by the interview interactants. Thus these interviews can be sociologically understood as interactions that routinely produce accounts of rational decisions - the irrational being subject to repair or glossing. I suggest this phenomenon is possibly due to the common-sense understanding that interviews require intelligible answers (intelligibility being a prerequisite of intersubjectivity) where what is intelligible is isomorphic with the rational. The rationality of an answer being a criterion that is constituted 'in and through' the 'doing' of an interview but having a particular design; the construction of economic calculation and quality of life considerations in two non-contradictory accountability frameworks. Once constructed in interaction this mode of rationality frames the interaction as a 'real' phenomena and deviations from it are modulations in the expressive order of the interview, producing selves that 'struggle' to become rational; the interactionally involving selves of biographical and autobiographical accounts and the selves with 'something to hide'. If it were not for these deviations from the expressive order of the interaction the interviews and the need to sustain the interview in order to maintain face, there would be a lack of interactional texture and momentum. In other words the interview would be dull and non-involving to the participating selves - a precondition of interaction. These interviews have produced as a dominant feature rational accounts by rational selves but the achievement of this rationality was a precondition of accomplishing the interviews.
Chapter 7
The Ritual Interview Code

Introduction

if language is to be traced back to some primal scene, better it is traced back to the occasional need for a grunted signal to help co-ordinate action in what is already the shared world of a joint task than to a conversation in and through which a common subjective universe is generated. (Goffman 1981:141)

Talk possesses meaning by reference to a shared task that it helps co-ordinate. It is from this observation that this chapter will analyse the talk collected and transcribed during a series of research interviews. 'Interview talk' is not any 'form of talk', it is talk designed to co-ordinate a particular task, in terms of 'some sort of overall plan' (Goffman 1981:143). A research interview is a verbal activity, so this is an analysis of the talk that co-ordinates a particular form of talk, namely interview talk. Interview talk as the means to co-ordinate an interview will display the participants' 'schema' of what an interview is. Thus I will, following Wieder (1974), develop the idea of an 'Interview Code'. This chapter will also analyse the ritual aspects of interview talk using the work of Erving Goffman, whereby the participating selves are honoured and accommodated (Manning 1989:365). It is my contention that, as an ideal, the talk which co-ordinates a research interview is isomorphic with the talk that fulfils the ritual function of honouring selves.

The aim of this approach to interview data is to caution against methodological positions that assume interview talk reports, more or less accurately, upon a reality - objective or subjective - that is
taken to be wholly or partly independent of interview interaction. It is also done to warn those researchers who reject interviews in favour of 'naturally occurring situations' that they risk overlooking an interesting and complex interaction.

Part 1: the ritual interview code

The interview code, as a participant’s understanding of what an interview is and should be, is recoverable from the transcribed talk. Interview talk, as the talk that co-ordinates the shared task of doing a research interview, is a constantly displayed and updated corpus of indexical cultural elements (Wieder 1974: 161) that provides the participants with an understanding of what is 'going on' and how to 'carry on'.

I am using the term 'code' to refer to (i) explicit tellings of instructions by the interviewer that took place during the unrecorded pre-interview talk. The respondents were told that the interview would be recorded, last approximately half an hour and that expansive responses to the interviewer's questions were required. These initial and explicit tellings of the interview code displayed the interviewer's understanding of how the interview should progress as well as acting as a preliminary co-ordination of the research interview - prior to switching on the tape recorder. (ii) The interview code is also recoverable from the actual interview talk in references and allusions to a presupposed understanding of what a research interview should be, as a means to co-ordinate its accomplishment.

To the extent that my analysis is of explicit tellings and allusions to an interview code it differs from the analyses of interviews (in a variety of institutional settings) conducted by conversation analysts. These studies demonstrate the methodic practices of interview participants with regard to the organisation of questions and answers as a two part pairs. Thus Button (1992) in an analysis of
A job selection interview describes how members of the interview panel, after the candidate has given an answer, change topic or give speaking rights to another panel member. It follows as a consequence, that the candidate has no opportunity to monitor or repair the panel’s understanding of his answers. This methodic procedure, which is different from normal conversation in which a speaker can return to a topic of talk, is, Button claims, constitutive of the job interview as a social occasion. These procedures organise the setting by distancing the interviewer from the candidate and by isolating the candidate’s answers as his answers (Button 1992:227) which is in accord with the orthodox view of job interviews: that questions should reveal qualities about the candidates.

The analysis I offer here is not of these sequential and methodic practices since such an analysis would be distinct from the substantive topic of the talk: its content. It is the topic of the talk that is of explicit concern to participants as witnessed in guides to conducting research interviews which focus upon the relationship between interviewer and interviewee, the appropriate rapport, as established by the questions asked.

The sequential and methodic practices that conversation analysis documents are unnoticed by interactants, even though, as Button (1992) demonstrates, they can affect the interpretation of instances of actual interview talk. Thus the possibility that an interview panel can claim that a candidate failed to answer the questions put to him is a consequence of the sequential and methodic practices of the interview panel: changing topic or giving speaking rights to another panel member. This is an issue that guides on how to conduct research interviews fail to address.

However, within the methodic and sequential structure of a research interview there are, this thesis argues, selves, in a face-to-face encounter, that must be ritually honoured if normal interview appearances are to be sustained. Thus while fully acknowledging the significance of the sequential and methodic practices to the accomplishment of a research interview this chapter’s focus is upon...
the ritual interview code as displayed in instances of talk that make reference to and allusions to a presupposed understanding of what a research interview is and should be. What my analysis and that of conversational analysis share is a focus upon the talk as 'interview talk' - constructive of an interactional encounter - and not as a report upon an external or subjective world that is independent of the interview setting.

Tape recording the interview: This extract comes at the start of an interview with Mr Trent. The interviewer has just finished an interview with Mr Trent's partner, when the interviewer turns to Mr Trent and says

Q: Can I ask you...
Mr Trent: Yeah. Do you want to move the microphone up?
Q: Yeah, that would be sensible wouldn't it?

(Mrs Waveney p.7)

Mr Trent's 'interruption' to ask about the position of the microphone displays an understanding about 'doing' a recorded research interview. An understanding that the interviewer endorses, 'that would be sensible wouldn't it?'. These turns of talk, as telling the interview code, co-ordinates the interview by invoking a feature of doing a research interview: interview talk is talk that is recorded.

Considerations of time: This extract comes from the joint interview with Mr and Mrs Teak, who live in the same house as another couple, pooling their respective incomes. Mr Teak has just given an account of the events that led up to this arrangement.

Mr Teak: [...] in the end we said: Well, why don't we actually live together. One could expand about why we wanted to do that I suppose, but it would take a long time.

Q: Well, sort of edited highlights?
Mrs Teak: Well I think if you are altogether you can pool your resources, and on a practical level you can share lots of things [...]
Mr Teak references the possibility that his account could be expanded upon but points out that any further expansion, 'would take a long time'. Mr Teak’s utterances, as interview talk and thus incidence of telling the interview code, display an understanding that interviewees are expected to answer questions and consideration must be given to the duration of an interview. The interviewer attends to these accounted-for features of an interview by requesting ‘edited highlights’. Mr Teak and the interviewer have co-ordinated their understandings of what an interview is, as a means to carry on. This co-ordination reveals another feature of the interview code: that the precise terms of the interview are negotiable. By co-ordinating their talk as interview talk - displaying presuppositions about what doing an interview involves - the participants are able to ‘do’ the interview.

There are questions to be asked: In the extract below the interviewer asks Mr Fieldmaple:

Q: Can we just have a quick scan through the questions [on an interview schedule] and see if there is anything which, well if you have a look too, is there anything which strikes you as glaringly missed out?

Mr Fieldmaple: No, um ... I'm happy with [indistinct]

Q: Happy to offer your wife sort of encouragement and support in her taking this OT course?

Mr Fieldmaple: Yes, I think so, yes. Yes I think in starting it and in [...] (Mr Fieldmaple p.30)

In this extract another feature of the interview code is displayed: the interviewer has a number of scheduled questions to ask. By asking Mr Fieldmaple to look at the interview schedule, the interviewer invokes an expectation that the co-ordination of this feature of the interview code is shared. Mr Fieldmaple co-ordinates his actions and talk with the interviewer's expectations by answering a question on the interview schedule: 'How do you feel about your husband's/wife's job?' and the interview continues.

Not all sentient beings are ratified participants: In the next extract Mr and Mrs Frome are curbing their son, Eric and their dog.
Mr Frome: Eric, will you get the dog out. It keeps hitting the tape recorder.

Mrs Frome: It's on - recording.

Eric: Tramp.

Mr Frome: Go on.

Mrs Frome: Out.

Eric: Can you hear it now?

Mrs Frome: Out.

Mr Frome: Go away.

Mrs Frome: [indistinct] .. you on it.

Mr Frome: Which you know very well, because I told you just before you came in. Go away.

Eric: [indistinct]

Mrs Frome: [indistinct] - bye.

Mr Frome: Go and play on the road.

Mrs Frome: With a lorry.

Mr Frome: Yeah.

Mrs Frome: Big one.

(Mr Frome p.29-30)

The Fromes attend to the task of 'doing' the interview by interrupting it, to exclude their dog and child. The dog and child are unratified participants, in terms of recording talk that is pertinent to an interview about Labour Market Decisions. Thus this talk as an incidence of the interview code helps to co-ordinate the research interview - even though it interrupts it, by displaying the expectation that the interview is not open to all.

Respondents assume they are to tell the truth: this extract comes at the end of Ms Plum's interview, in which she reveals an expectation on her part that interview accounts are honest.

Q: So let's leave it there?

Ms Plum: That's covered everything?

Q: I think so.

Ms Plum: It's terribly difficult to answer honestly, it really is [TAPE OFF]

(Ms Plum p.16)

The participants, as a means to 'doing' an interview, display in their talk and co-ordinate via their talk what it is to 'carry on' a research interview - telling the interview code. This is not an exhaustive telling of the code and there can be no exhaustive telling, since the interview code is not a set of stable itemised elements (Wieder 1974:161) but an occasioned corpus of cultural
elements for the practical purpose of 'carrying on' where what it is
to 'carry on' will vary according to contingencies of a particular
interview. It is the attempt by text books to tell the interview
'code' that is their failing - since they can never cover all
potential contingencies. Nevertheless in situ tellings of the
interview code do provide participants, to all practical purposes,
with a recognisably ordered and stable environment of 'real' objects.

Telling the interview code as a means to co-ordinate a research
interview is not rule-following but invoking and interpreting rules,
what Garfinkel (1967) calls an artful practice. A practice that
occasionally poses a 'problem' for participants; how exactly to
'carry on', how to interpret a rule? There is no 'time out';
interactants are by default making sense of their interactional
predicament, they are doomed to 'carry on' even if 'carrying on' is
not actually doing an interview but asking how an interview should be
done.

In this extract Mr Lime is asked if he has private medical insurance
for his family and replies:

Mr Lime: Yes...I don't know if you want to ask the reason
why [pause] it's always a comfort to know - I
mean I realise that if there's an emergency [...] 
(Mr Lime p.6)

Mr Lime answers 'Yes' and then says 'I don't know if you want to ask
the reason why'. Mr Lime interrupts the interview to ask the
interviewer how to 'carry on'. Receiving what was presumably a non-
verbal 'yes' from the interviewer, Mr Lime continues the interview by
accounting for the reasons why he has medical insurance for his
family. The participants co-ordinated the task of doing the interview
by displaying and attending to an expectation for expansive answers,
as a feature of the interview code. This expectation was displayed as
initially 'problematic' by Mr Lime, how exactly to carry on and
remedied by the interviewer's non-verbal signal. The interview was
briefly interrupted for a momentary and negotiated purpose of co-
ordinating it.

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Below Mrs Cedar is explaining why her children are at a state school, when she says:

Mrs Cedar: [...] I don't know whether I should say this, but they [the children] are actually both adopted. I don't know whether that's of any interest to your survey?

Q: I don't know actually.

Mrs Cedar: There you are, one up.

Q: It might be, I mean, there's the joint interview to come, I shall dwell on that.

Mrs Cedar: Just a different aspect to people's visions of what they want and what you might mould them to be, hopefully.

Q: So, what about things like private medical insurance, do you...?

(Mrs Cedar p.23)

Mrs Cedar interrupts her interview account to reveal a possible 'problem' - as she sees - 'I don't know whether I should say this'. Mrs Cedar's two children are adopted, 'is that of interest to your survey' she asks; Mrs Cedar displays that she is unsure of how to proceed given this piece of information. Mrs Cedar's displayed expectation is that to co-ordinate the task of doing the interview, the terms of the interview code as a means to carry on, need to be clarified. A clarification that the interviewer is unable to provide, 'I don't know actually'. When Mrs Cedar responds by saying that she is 'one up' she displays an expectation that the interviewer should know what is of interest to his research, another feature of the interview code. The interviewer acknowledges this aspect of the interview code - that he should know what is of interest to the research - by saying 'It might be', (of interest that Mrs Cedar's children are adopted), but he is unable to articulate precisely how this fact is of interest to the research. The interviewer says he will 'dwell' on this point and will have a solution by the time of the joint interview. Mrs Cedar then offers a candidate specification of this feature of the interview code such that the adoption of her children is of interest to the research: because it gives 'a different aspect to people's visions of what they want...' This point clarified, to all practical purposes, the interviewer co-ordinates the task of doing the actual interview by asking another question.
Thus both participants 'work' together to establish the interview as an interactional reality.

The talk in these extracts has been interpreted as incidences of telling the interview code as a means to co-ordinate the activity of doing a research interview. These utterances are part of a self-elaborating schema (Wieder 1974:161). The talk is interpreted as incidences of telling an interview code simultaneously providing evidence for the research interview as a task co-ordinated by following an interview code. Garfinkel called this interpretative procedure, which is common to both lay and sociological sense making, the Documentary Method of Interpretation (1967:76). The interview code for the participants was occasioned by the practical need to make sense of and co-ordinate a research interview. The interview code as recovered in the analysis is an articulation of the participants sense making procedures as a means to co-ordinate a research interview. Thus the analyst's and the participants' telling of the interview code are constitutive of the same phenomena, a research interview. Interpreting a rule is synonymous with following a rule; none of the participants in the above extracts displayed an interpretation of the interview code only to 'break' it in their next turn. The activity of doing a research interview requires co-operative participants who follow the code as interpreted, the limit to which the interview code is artfully interpreted being set by the practical requirements of accomplishing a research interview.

Part 2: the research interview as an interactional footing and the figures embedded within it

A research interview (like any social situation) as a recognisably normal and ordered face-to-face interaction is produced and sustained by the participants in it. It is as a consequence of producing a social scene that the participants acquire an interactional self (Goffman 1969a). A self, whose 'social value' or face must be protected, ritually honoured and accommodated (Manning 1989), if an interactional scene is to be sustained. Thus the participants'
interview talk must both co-ordinate the task and display the 'appropiate' ritual regard to self, their own and those of fellow participants.

At any given moment an interaction has what Goffman calls a footing (1981) a particular alignment between selves - i.e. interviewer and interviewee - that is displayed and managed in the 'appropriate' ritual production and reception of utterances (Goffman 1981:128). To change footing, is to change the task and thus the alignment between the interacting selves. Changes in footing were apparent in the moves from pre-interview talk (introductions, offers of cups of tea, 'small talk' and discussions of the research projects' aims and methods) to actual interview talk (switching on the tape recorder and attending to the interview as task) to post-interview talk (switching off the tape recorder, discussing the researcher's biography, the research project and more 'small talk'). Each of these different footings required the participants to display the 'appropriate' alignment between selves and was functional to the co-ordination of the interview.

This extract comes from the start of Mrs Rother's interview.

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TAPE ON.

Q: the reason for that is that if I have to write it down. I have to stop all the time and write it down, and I might not get exactly what you say, in your words; and it's important to us to know how people phrase things, in their own words.

Mrs Rother Oh .. umm.

Q: If you find it too much then I'll switch it off .. shall I leave it on?

Mrs Rother Yeah, righto .. try.

Q: Can I ask you if you have a job at the moment?

Mrs Rother Two.

Q: Two jobs?

Mrs Rother Yeah. One mornings, one night-times.

(Mrs Rother p.1)

The interviewer explains the purpose of using the tape recorder and offers to switch it off, if Mrs Rother, 'finds it too much', as a means to honour Mrs Rother's self as a self with possible doubts, 'Oh .. umm', about assuming the role of tape recorded interviewee. Mrs
Rother honours the interviewer's self by assenting to the use of the tape recorder and by responding 'appropriately' to the interviewer's first question. This change of footing, accomplished by ritually honouring the participating selves as they realign also co-ordinates the start of the research interview.

The next extract comes from the end of Mr Rother's interview, when he has just finished talking about household expenses and the cost of a pint of beer.

Q: Right...I think I've asked most of the questions I want to ask. Is there anything about your job or how you decide about your jobs that I haven't asked about that is important to you?

Mr Rother: Umm, no, not really. Not really. I don't think so. I think you've got more out of me than anybody have for I don't know how many years. I think you, you've come on the right night. You must have done.

Q: Good.

Mr Rother: Cause my mouth haven't stopped moving.

Q: It's really, you were really eloquent.

Mr Rother's interview ends with the interviewer's reflection on the interviewee's eloquence, highlighting the ritual nature of the exchange. The interviewer's talk rather than displaying an apparent intention to close the interview, literally invites the interviewee to continue the interview. Yet Mr Rother by closing the interview...
interview displays an unproblematic interpretation of the interviewer's talk as providing him with the opportunity to close the interview. An interpretation that the interviewer does not contradict when she says 'Good'. The interviewer's talk as an invitation to continue the interview is a ritualised closing, in which Mr Rother's interview self is formally honoured as having the 'right' to continue the interview. Mr Rother and the interviewer then informally honour each other's interview-selves by complimenting each other on their respective interview performances.

There are in the data corpus numerous variations on the changes in footing, from pre-interview talk to interview talk and from interview talk to post-interview talk. These changes in footing done with due ritual regard to the changing alignment of participating selves also co-ordinate the 'doing' of a research interview.

An interaction has a footing in which participating selves are ritually aligned so as to sustain the footing as a frame of events (Goffman 1981:128), that is, as an interview. Within that frame, the participating selves are embedded as figures (Goffman 1981:147) who are able to speak as: assumed fictional or real characters; as the occupants of a particular social role or even as quoting oneself. The ability for a speaker to adopt and change the figure which he or she animates (Goffman 1981:147) gives interactants considerable scope in changing the alignment between selves while staying within a particular interactional frame. Thus in Mr Rother's extract when the interviewer says 'I think I've asked most of the questions I want to ask', the first and second 'I' of 'I think I've' is thinking carried out by a flesh and blood person thinking reflexively and out loud about the social role she is occupying. The third 'I' of 'I want to ask' is the speaker animating the figure of her self as occupant of the social role interviewer. The ability of speakers to animate different figures as a means to honour participating selves while co-ordinating the shared task of 'doing' an interview is put to effective use.
Below, Mr Alder, a self-employed builder, was asked about the financial calculations involved in his decision to become self-employed.

Mr Alder: Well, first of all, I don't want to be condescending but you're a sociologist and I'm a businessman, one of the things you have to establish in business is how many hours can you physically work in a year. There's only so many hours in the day and most people reckon to take off bank holidays for instance and have a holiday. 

(Mr Alder p.2)

Mr Alder's utterances animate a figure who does not want to be 'condescending', as a means to achieve this, embedded in Mr Alder's account is the figure of himself as a businessman aligned with the figure of the interviewer as sociologist. By framing his account, of the financial calculations, as an interactional alignment between a businessman-self and a sociological-self Mr Alder can be heard as displaying attention to the possibility (though not necessarily avoiding it) that his account could be perceived as condescending. Mr Alder as part of the activity of accounting for a decision, attends to the interviewer's face.

In this next extract the interviewer figures as a 'bore' as a means to dissuade Mrs Hazel from interrupting what he considers to be an interview with Mr Hazel her husband.

Q: I don't want to be sort of boring, but I'm supposed to be interviewing your husband
Mrs Hazel: I'm sorry, yes.
Q: I mean, it's all right?
Mr Hazel: That's OK, he'll interview you later. Let's carry on.
Q: I'll address my questions to your husband but if you wish to say something...
Mrs Hazel: I thought it was a joint interview.
Q: It will be later on.
Mrs Hazel: That's fine, I've got lots of things to do. [Mrs Hazel leaves the room]
Q: Right. Just let me ask you about medical insurance, do you have medical insurance?
Mr Hazel: I don't think so. No's the answer to that. We have something [edited]
In response to Mrs Hazel's perceived interruptions the interviewer interrupts his interviewer-self and the interview footing to animate the figure of himself as a reluctant bore with a job to do. The speaker has distanced himself from the role of interviewer as a means to claim the terms under which he is assuming that role: interviewing only Mr Hazel. Mrs Hazel, in a face saving gesture (to the interviewer), apologises. In a reciprocal face saving move (to Mrs Hazel), the interviewer offers to renegotiate the terms of the interview, so as to include Mrs Hazel. Mrs Hazel then displays herself as acting under a misunderstanding, 'I thought it was a joint interview' the interviewer clarifies the point, 'It will be later on'. Mrs Hazel, in a face making move prior to leaving the room, claims she has other 'things to do'. In this exchange of talk, the interviewer has attended to the co-ordination of the interview; as an interview with Mr Hazel by dishonouring himself and by honouring Mrs Hazel's self. Mrs Hazel conforms to the interviewer's conception of the interview, honouring the interviewer's self and saves her own face. Thus the potential for offending either the interviewer's self or Mrs Hazel's self has been minimised. A return to the interview footing is accomplished by the interviewer's next question and by Mr Hazel's response.

Changes in footing enable the participants with due ritual regard to selves to co-ordinate their talk within a recognisable frame of events: starting, re-starting and stopping an interview. Variations in the figures animated enable the participants to ritually co-ordinate their talk within a footing.

Part 3: participating as either interviewee or interviewer

Doing a research interview necessitates a series of changes in footing, from speaking to hearing (and back again) requiring the participants to display 'appropriate' involvement (Goffman 1963:43)
in their participant status (Goffman 1981:137) as either an interviewer or an interviewee. If participants adhere to their participant status as either interviewee or interviewer then changes in footing from speaker to hearer will not 'trouble' these roles. It is a displayed understanding of this interview expectation that provides Mr Alder with the opportunity to 'joke' at the close of the joint interview with his wife:

Q: Well, that's all of my questions.
Mr Alder: It's our questions now is it? [laughs]
Q: Thank you very much. [Tape off]

(Mr and Mrs Alder p.9)

This expectation is breached in the extract below when the interviewer responds to an utterance by Mr Hazel as if it were a question. Mr Hazel is recounting his reasons for not wishing to live in another city.

Mr Hazel: Well, if one was given an offer one couldn't refuse, I mean something like Gazza and [indistinct] I suppose, but not quite the same...transfer thing. There are certain elements of ambition stir here or there but when you get to my age it is to find a better whole syndrome of family and clients. I mean, there's no...it might sound an odd thing to say, well not an odd thing to say, but it's being honest with you about it. I mean would you go and work in the middle of Sheffield or somewhere.
Q: I've actually got an application in for Sheffield
Mr Hazel: Why are you going to Sheffield, because it's there I suppose.
Q: Because it's a job.
Mr Hazel: Because it's a job, absolutely...change your job...and if you're young it might be quite a nice and exciting thing but in terms of people settled with families, let's put it this way, the South West is extremely attractive.
Q: I mean, what are the attractive features?

(Mr Hazel p.7)

The interviewer displays an interpretation of Mr Hazel's utterance 'I mean would you go and work in the middle of Sheffield or somewhere', as a question, when he replies that he has an 'application in for Sheffield'. Mr Hazel's next turn of talk is also interpreted as a question by the interviewer, the expected interview participant.
statuses have been reversed: the interviewer is no longer interviewing Mr Hazel. In his third turn Mr Hazel uses the interviewer's responses to his 'questions' to answer the question initially put to him, his reasons for not wishing to live in another city, thereby re-co-ordinating the interview in terms of 'normal' interview expectations. The infringement of the interview code, the interviewer interpreting and responding to Mr Hazel's utterance as questions is repaired. A repair that the interviewer consolidates by asking his next question. In this extract, Mr Hazel's utterances project what the interviewer interprets as questions - Mr Hazel has a question asking self. The interviewer in response to this perceived self has his self partly determined by it (Goffman 1981:151), becoming a question answering self; the roles of interviewee and interviewer are reversed. The interviewer by assuming his role in this role reversal honours Mr Hazel's perceived question asking self. Mr Hazel by initiating the repair that re-establishes the interview as a co-ordinated task honours the interviewer's self as interviewer.

The interviewer's question being the first move in an interview, it follows that the participants' change in footing from speaker to hearer is accomplished by the interviewer speaking in order to listen and by the interviewer listening in order to speak. These footings are assumed sequentially but both are required to constitute a participant's social role as either interviewer or interviewee. It is apparent from the analysis that the participation status of 'speaker' is different for interviewer and interviewee and this indexes a difference in the participant status 'hearer' as it relates to interviewer and interviewee. The interviewer does a lot of talk over and above displaying sequential relevance that displays hearing 'appropriate' to co-ordinating an interview. It is interviewers not interviewees who make use of back channel comments (Goffman 1981:128) and it is interviewers not interviewees who summate their co-participants talk, as a ritual means to honour self and co-ordinate the interview.

Mrs Conifer has just described a 'good spell', when she was 'working half-time and [had] a small baby who slept a lot'. This 'good spell'
was prior to Mrs Conifer giving up her job and following her husband's career to a different city.

Q: So that was a good time, so then there was an element of something to lose at the time when the move to [name of city] and were you conscious of that, because as it turned out there was a big price to pay, but were you conscious of that at the stage when that was being debated, and was there a kind of swings and roundabouts, was there a kind of balancing thing that you were trying to do with [husband's name] career on the one hand and your...and this nice equilibrium that you had in your life?

Mrs Conifer: Yes, I mean I certainly had no desire to move. I had no desire to move from where we were, I was quite happy and so on, but I did understand that if he was stuck in the department and not able to move up and not happy there, that that would make a great difference to life anyway [...]

(Mr Conifer p.45)

The interviewer's utterances which summate Mrs Conifer's account display the extent to which he has been listening. This act of summation provides Mrs Conifer with the opportunity to repair what she might perceive as a misunderstanding by the interviewer. In the absence of such a repair the interviewer can 'know' to all practical purposes that he can make face (Goffman 1969a) by asking a sequentially relevant question that co-ordinates the interview. 'Appropriate' listening is listening, displayed via talk, that is both sequentially relevant and co-ordinates the interview. Inappropriate listening by the interviewer is therefore a distinct possibility.

In the next extract Mrs Dogwood is talking about her emotional relationship with her son after she returned to full-time work after maternity leave.

Mrs Dogwood: No reservations from Jack's point of view though I think I've missed out. But he is very happy and very secure, he has another family. He isn't with a childminder who has lots of children - he's the only one in her family and so he has friends, family, outings, life somewhere else as well.

Q: So you feel that he's doing well but you're not.
Mrs Dogwood: I just said it's best for all of us ... I don't think I could have stayed at home, I think realistically I have to work. After all that time, knowing that I've got the skills and the experience to be working and earning [...] 

(Mrs Dogwood p.3)

The interviewer, by summation, displays the extent to which he has been listening. It is an act of summation that is perceived by Mrs Dogwood as displaying inappropriate listening, because she corrects the interviewer's summation 'I just said it's best for all of us...'. The interviewer is rebuked and corrected for hearing Mrs Dogwood as saying, her son is 'doing well' but she is not.

Interviewees display 'appropriate' involvement in an interview by responding to the interviewer's questions but there is more to this display of involvement than giving a sequentially 'appropriate' response. The extract below is from the start of Mr Poplar's interview, but is representative of the interview as a whole.

Q: Are you currently employed?  
Mr Poplar: Yes.  
Q: Doing what?  
Mr Poplar: Local Authority.  
Q: In which department.  
Mr Poplar: Exeter Technical Services.  
Q: What is Technical Services?  
Mr Poplar: I'm an engineer, a civil engineer.  
Q: Right. And how long have you been in that job?  
Mr Poplar: Fifteen years.  
Q: Is it an office based job?  
Mr Poplar: Partly office, partly on-site.  
Q: If you're a civil engineer, presumably you're a graduate?  
Mr Poplar: Yes.  
Q: So is that the first job you've had since graduating?  
Mr Poplar: I did a doctorate as well.  
Q: So is that the first job you've had since leaving full-time education?  
Mr Poplar: No.  
Q: So, previous to that?  
Mr Poplar: I was the consulting engineer.  
Q: In Exeter?  
Mr Poplar: Yes.  
Q: Are there any particular reasons why you stayed in Exeter?  
Mr Poplar: Family basically.  

(Mr Poplar p.1)
Mr Poplar's responses, while sequentially relevant, displayed what the interviewer perceived to be a lack of involvement in the interview. Mr Poplar's responses infringed the expectation for expansive answers, as a feature of the interview code. This perceived lack of involvement caused a degree of interactional discomfort for the interviewer, since his self as interviewer, and the interview as a co-ordinated task, is dependent upon an 'appropriate' display of involvement by Mr Poplar. Other respondents who spoke at length, limiting the interviewer's opportunity to ask further questions, also jeopardised the co-ordination of the research interview.

The research interview as a co-ordinated task, requires the participants to attend to their involvement as either interviewee or interviewer as a means of 'doing' an interview as a recognisably ordered and normal interaction. It is by a display of 'appropriate' involvement - attending to the interview code - that the participants honour their own and the other participant's selves. This is also the case when the participants are involved in 'troubles' and repairs to the interview code.

Part 4: the interview code - troubles and repairs

The next extract is from Mr and Mrs Rother's joint interview; Mr Rother refuses to divulge how much he earns and becomes involved in a repair of normal interview appearances.

Q: I know you're not very keen on telling me but if I could compare with younger families .. can you tell me .. some sort of idea roughly what your earnings are?
Mr Rother: No.
Q: Is it over two hundred pound a week?
Mr Rother: I'm not telling you.
Q: You're not telling me, alright. Okay.
Mr Rother: I, I, I'm not, I'm not telling you. No, I won't do that.
Mrs Rother: [indistinct]
Q: No.
Mr Rother: You can ask me any other questions you like and I .. you know [Mrs Rother talking to child] .. but
Mr Rother refuses to disclose his earnings, neither will he say whether his earnings are over £200. Mr Rother has breached the expectation of the interview code, that questions should be answered. A breach that Mr Rother orientates to: 'You can ask me any other question you like and... I know.' Mr Rother is interrupted, but a plausible candidate completion would be 'and I'll answer it'. To explain and thus repair this breach of interview expectations Mr Rother invokes (constructs) the normative expectation that one's earnings are private and that he cannot tell the interviewer what his wife does not know. In spite of the interviewer's display of agreement, Mr Rother and Mrs Rother become involved in legitimating the accounted for fact-repair-that Mrs Rother does not know how much her husband earns. This account in its turn provides the interviewer with the opportunity to ask 'How do you know when you can afford something new?' This extract highlights the potential for an interactional scene, constructed via talk, to have a branching texture of relevance (Garfinkel 1967). What was a refusal to answer an interview question, leads to an acknowledgement of the expectation that interview questions should be answered, leads to an explanation of that refusal (repair), leads to a legitimation of the explanation.
which provides material for another question by the interviewer. In this extract the normative interpretation of an interview expectation - interview questions should be answered - and its repair is constitutive of the evolving character of an interaction. It is an evolution that is further developed by the legitimation of the account that repaired the breach.

The extract below is also from Mr and Mrs Rother's joint interview. Mr Rother attends to the possibility that his account of harmonious domestic arrangements, in which he cooks for his wife, may not be heard as truthful.

Q: [indistinct]
Mr Rother: Yeah, but you gotta .. it might sound .. as though us is trying to pull the wool over your eyes and that ..
Q: No.
Mr Rother: but it gotta work like that; it's .. that, our family gotta work like that to do what we wanna do, to achieve what we want to achieve. Follow?
Q: You set certain goals What, you're saying you decide what you're going to do and once it's decided ..
Mr Rother: Yeah, we stick to it.
Mrs Rother: to it.
Mr Rother: And we help each other.
Mrs Rother: Yeah.
Mr Rother: Cause it's the only way to do and to get what we want to get, and we've always been like it, all the way through.

(Mr and Mrs Rother p.40)

The interviewer denies that she is hearing Mr Rother as trying to 'pull the wool over her eyes', thus saving Mr Rother's face as a cooperative interview respondent. It has already been noted that telling the truth is a feature of the interview code. As if 'unsatisfied' with the interviewer's response (does Mr Rother possibly disbelieve the interviewer) Mr Rother further accounts for why his family life is as he reports it, 'our family gotta work like that to do what we wanna do [...] Follow?' The interviewer responds, displaying the extent to which she 'follows' and the Rathers agree with her assessment. The threat to Mr Rother's face, occasioned by the possibility that he perceived the interviewer as hearing him as 'pulling the wool over her eyes' is repaired. However Mr and Mrs
Rothers' utterances that form part of this repair provide a resource for the interviewer's next question - thus extending the Rother's accountability.

Q: What happens when you disagree about what you want?

Mr Rother: Oh .. well things may start flying and ..
Mrs Rother: [laughs]
Mr Rother: you know, I mean ..
Mrs Rother: He's [indistinct] for days ..
Mr Rother: don't, don't get me wrong tis'n ah, tis'n so smooth as what we're making out like, you know, ah .. I mean tis'n hunky dory all the time, you know. I mean, couple of the, you know; you get the odd couple of days where not a word is spoken between us like, you know, and.. you know .. She either sulks or I sulk and .. you know ..

Mrs Rother: Don't speak ..
Mr Rother: You know .. don't speak
Mrs Rother: and the kids do the talking ..
Mr Rother: Tell your father, or tell your mother .. um .. you know, it goes on in every family, doesn't it. You gets your ups and downs and that's it; you'd be a crag if you said it was hunky dory all the way through, cause it never is, is it? And that's it. But you gotta work these things out and .. you know. We, we set ourselves standards and goals I spose, and we're both fortunate to be in work; that is the biggest thing. We are in work. So for as long as the work lasts, we can set ourself goals and try and achieve things and do things .. together.

Q: Talking about these 2 job changes you had: when you took the charge-hand job - that was 3 years ago?

(Mr and Mrs Rother p.40-41)

In response to a question about disagreement Mr Rother reports that 'things may start flying' and again becomes involved in attending to the truth of his account, 'don't get me wrong tis'n ah tis'n so smooth as what we're making out like'. Mr Rother having now reported disharmony in the family (the absence of which earlier caused 'trouble' in his account) appeals to, (constructs) common-sense knowledge to claim, 'it goes on in every family doesn't it [...] you'd be a crag if you said it was hunky dory all the way through'. From the context, it is apparent that a 'crag' is a negative appraisal of a person who lies about the nature of family life. Mr Rother, in attending to the perceived truthfulness of his account,
appeals to common knowledge about family life and negatively evaluates as 'crags' those who deny this knowledge. Thus Mr Rother, in order to be heard as a reliable respondent, now reports disharmony in his family which he normalises by invoking knowledge about families in general, castigating those who deny the truth of this knowledge. Thus Mr Rother makes face as a reliable interviewee, and save the face of his family as being basically harmonious, 'you gotta work these things out [...] we set ourself goals and try achieve things and do things together'. That Mr Rother's account has apparently achieved this is indexed by the interviewer changing topic in her next turn.

Below Mrs Whitebeam is explaining the purchase of an old mill house by her husband. Previous to this extract the interviewer had stopped the interview in order to examine the tape recorder - its little red light was not glowing. After 'checking' various connections the interview continued but with the interviewer occasionally glancing in the direction of the tape recorder.

Mrs Whitebeam: Well, I mean I don't know whether you're going to get onto the finances but we have a joint account but we also have our own separate accounts, and Richard did have some money from when his father died, so the money to buy this place in France. Is it going? [the tape recorder]

Q: Yes it is

Mrs Whitebeam: Ahh, partly came out of what he earned and partly from [...]  

(Mrs Whitebeam p.11)

Mrs Whitebeam question 'Is it going?' displays an understanding of the significance of the tape recorder to the interaction. The interviewer's definite 'Yes it is' displays a similar awareness. In response to this utterance Mrs Whitebeam continues her account. A few moments later the functioning of the tape recorder is again in doubt.

Q: So the money that you make. This is really quite distracting this isn't it, my confidence has been slightly shattered with this machine [the tape recorder] So the money that you make.

Mrs Whitebeam: It goes into our joint account and we just draw from that for everything, [...]

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The interviewer changes footing and becomes a self with 'slightly shattered confidence'. However he hangs tenaciously on to his social role as interviewer through the utterance 'So the money that you make' - more interview talk. Mrs Whitebeam saves the interviewer's face, by attending to the interviewer's question, rather than to the projected figure with 'slightly shattered self confidence'. Interview meaning and order were in this interview moment on the edge of collapse: the tape recorder was not recording and the interviewer was 'flooded out' (Goffman 1961:50-51) in response to this threat to his interview-self. However by exerting 'poise' the participants were able to sustain the interaction as a research interview.

Part 5: interview participants as ritual strangers

The research interview as a 'form of talk', can be thought of as a device for the 'legitimate' invasion of one person's privacy by another. It provides the ritual means by which a stranger can unilaterally ask and expect to receive answers to questions without offence being implied or taken. As a device for the invasion of privacy, the research interview is a negotiated interactional order (Rawls 1987). The face-to-face negotiation of this interactional order occasions (i) the tension experienced when doing an interview (ii) what is and what is not talked about, (iii) the elaboration of the interview code and (iv) the ritual honouring of selves. The participating selves are aligned as interview-selves; an alignment that is adopted and displayed-as-adopted in the production and reception of utterances. These utterances are designed so as not to jeopardise this alignment between selves even when that alignment is being repaired. The research interview, as an interactional order, is constituted by the utterances of the participating selves. Thus the participants' talk as the co-ordination of a task - a research interview - accomplishes this task by constituting it, telling the interview code. As a series of occasioned rules, the interview code as the means to co-ordinate an interview must be attended to (if not')
actually followed) for an interaction to be a recognisably 'normal' research interview.

There is more to following a rule than following it. Manning (1987) suggests that in the presence of strangers, those known only through proximity, talk that follows interactional rules honours strangers as strangers expecting only reciprocity in return (Manning 1987:370). In the presence of friends, talk that takes liberties with interactional rules provides the ritual means for honouring those present as friends. However, this ritual rule breaking is precarious; it involves the possibility of an inappropriate level of formality (insufficient rule breaking) and of 'going too far' (too much rule breaking). Research interviews present a potential 'problem' for the participants with regard to the appropriate display of intimacy. Ritual rule breaking would disrupt the co-ordination of an interview. A research interview with its dependence upon rules and rule following produces selves who by their adherence to ritual rules are ritually strangers. Thus if an amicable relationship during the research interview is to be achieved, it must be by means other than rule breaking. Goffman in Radio Talk (1981) identified just such a means in the 'fallible skills' of radio DJs. DJs project a friendly self, via their talk, by talking as individuals with a single self. The projection of a single self is accomplished by not changing the alignment or footing between themselves and their audience. I wish to suggest that interview participants adopt a similar procedure by following the interview code, as it is elaborated, aligning themselves with the interview footing. Being amicable is to be a cooperative interviewee or interviewer who follows ritual rules, minimising the risk of causing offence and getting the interview done. But as Goffman noted in his PhD:

if rules of tact are followed, often boredom sets in. If rules of tact are broken, often embarrassment sets in. Apparently a fundamental source of involvement consists of the slight infraction of tactful rules.

(Communication and Conduct in an Island Community. 1953:257 quoted by Manning 1989:366)
The interview participants did not for the most part infringe the interview code, which accounts for the apparent blandness of the interviews, the risk of causing offence outweighing considerations of boredom. When rule breaking did occur it was repaired, the participants honoured each other as strangers.

Part 5: the research interview as a self-elaborating schema

The interaction order - research interview - as a negotiated and self-elaborating schema is based upon a reciprocity of perspectives (Garfinkel 1967), the participants assume and assume it is assumed by their fellow participants that their interpretation of a scene is identical - to all practical purposes. Participants trust one another to use common interpretative procedures, constructing a normative order of expectations, displayed, repaired and updated in their talk. These constitutive expectancies provide, in this case, the interview participants with a knowledge of what is 'going on' and how to 'carry on'. It was the constitutive expectancies of an interaction that Garfinkel's 'breaching experiments' were designed to disrupt. Experiments that provoked the unwitting subjects to demand; 'What's the matter?', 'What's gotten into you?', 'Did you get fired?', 'Are you sick?', 'What are you being so superior about?' 'Are you mad?' (Garfinkel 1963:227). What these demands reveal about an interactional scene is that a person perceived-as-responsible for breaching its normative order is morally accountable as a motivated person. And, that knowledge of the motive behind the breaching action both repairs and is constitutive of a change in the environment of socially defined real objects - a 'new' set of normal appearances. In other words, the footing of the interaction and the alignment between selves would be changed, the very event that interview talk is designed to avoid.

Breaches in normal appearances are 'seen' as motivated and I would suggest that, conversely, interactants who appear-to-be motivated breach the situational proprieties (Goffman 1963:24) of normal
interview appearances. To appear to be motivated is to appear to be a self other than the self that one's actions project. For a research interview to 'pass off' as routine and recognisably normal, the participants design their talk so as not to appear motivated, such an act of design ensures the alignment of selves as interview-selves - here then is the constraint on the interview participants to project the aforementioned single self. A perceivably motivated self, by breaching normal interview appearances, could precipitate a change in the footing of the interaction; the participants would no longer be strangers interacting via the ritually predictable medium of the interview but in the interactional equivalent of 'unknown waters'.

This argument could be taken to imply that the interview participants were slavish conformists to the interview code, fearful of breaches in it. From the quoted examples this is not the case, though breaches of the interview code (when they occurred) were attended to and repaired. It does not follow that because an action breaches a constitutive expectancy of an interaction that the result will produce the confusion so dramatically demonstrated in Garfinkel's breaching experiments. An apparent breach of constitutive expectancy can be 'taken' in any number of possible ways. Participants in a scene are able to exercise 'poise', glossing over and overlooking infractions of the interview code. To appear-as-motivated may breach normal interview appearances, but the assumption of a motive behind the action also provides a resource to sustain normal interview appearances; slight infractions of the interview code can be accounted for and accommodated by reference to an individual's idiosyncrasy. This is precisely what this interviewer did when reporting his experiences to the rest of the research team. The notion of an 'individual' and the motives that individuals are assumed to possess is another self-elaborating schema, documented and constituted by infractions of the interview code. The assumption of 'individual idiosyncrasy' as an interactional resource would appear to be functional to orderly interview interaction and to the analysis of interview interaction.
Conclusion

As a 'form of talk' interview talk both constitutes a research interview as an interactional order and co-ordinates a research interview as a task. As a 'form of talk' interview talk aligns the participating selves, providing a normative order in which selves are honoured and potentially dishonoured. Interview talk is constitutive of its own reality such that the 'reality' that interview talk is supposed to report upon can be viewed as mythical, a by-product of achieving normal interview interaction.

Interview reality as an interactional accomplishment is sustained by the artful use of and trust in indexical expressions and is potentially in a constant state of repair. A state of repair that participating selves - as a ritual means to honour themselves and each other - are constantly repairing. 'Doing' a research interview as opposed to some other interaction might well be characterised as the involvement necessary to repair a mutually assumed but potentially disintegrating reality, a reality that the participating selves are dependent upon for their very selfhood. This repair work, displayed in and accomplished by the participants' talk, is what I have identified as the interview code.
Chapter 8
Conclusion

Summation of the thesis

I have argued in this thesis that interview interaction has been under-theorised. Descriptions of interview interaction, because they have been rhetorically located in discussions of method and technique, aim to 'save' the assumed referential quality of interview talk rather than, specifically, to analyse participant interaction. I have pursued my argument (i) by reviewing the methodological concerns of positivist and interactionist positions on the interview and (ii) by proposing an interactional analysis drawn from the work of both Goffman and Garfinkel. The empirical chapters of this thesis suspended any concern with the referential quality of interview data to analyse interview talk as (i) the means by which participants honour and accommodate each other as ritual selves in the primary roles of interviewee and interviewer and (ii) the means by which participants accomplish a research interview as an intelligible interactional reality organised from within. It is my contention that only by suspending the issue of referentiality is it possible to gain insight into how, via their talk, participants co-ordinate and sustain interactional selves whilst rendering their (inter)action reportable as 'doing' a research interview. To do otherwise is to view interview interaction as something to be minimised (positivism) or enhanced (interactionism) rather than as a topic in its own right.

From this perspective interview talk does not so much tell us about a world beyond the research interview (as is assumed by positivist and interactionist methodologies), but about how the research interview,
as an everyday feature of our world, is accomplished. Two apparently
different (but ultimately similar) questions seem pertinent to be
asked of my analysis: (i) does conceptualising interview participants
as ritual selves add anything to the already existent social
constructivist analysis of interview talk? I have in mind Potter and
Mulkay's (1985) paper Scientist's Interview Talk. And (ii) can the
understanding of interview interaction developed in the thesis be
used to 'save' the referential quality of interview talk?

(i) Does conceptualising interview participants as ritual selves add
anything to the already existent social constructivist analysis of
interview talk? Potter and Mulkay (1985) abandon the traditional -
externalist - assumption that interview talk reports upon a world
outside the research interview. The authors suggest instead (much
like Silverman's realist methodology), that interview talk can be
used to generalise about the interpretative repertoires (or moral
reasoning - Silverman) used by respondents to construct their world.
Interpretative repertoires used in a research interview, it is
claimed, 'resemble to some degree that which takes place outside of
the interview' (Potter and Mulkay 1985:269). Thus Potter and Mulkay
conclude (1985:269):

once the analyst abandons the traditional objective of using
interviews to get at "the truth"; she is freed from the customary
procedure of "minimal intervention." Once the analyst has come to
use the interview as a way of exploring participants' variable
interpretative practices, there is every reason for her to engage
actively in the interview so as to extend the range of
interpretative work carried out there.

My analysis would suggest that an interviewer as a matter of default
is 'engaged actively in the interview' whether she minimally
intervenes or not. But what I imagine Potter and Mulkay are referring
to is an interviewer who by means of her questioning technique
(probing, questioning, reformulating, seeking clarification etc.)
activates the interpretative resources of the respondent over and
above what might 'normally' be expected. This is fine as a general
statement but what it fails to acknowledge are the self
presentational constraints that interviewers put upon themselves to
honour and accommodate a respondent's self. To put this another way, interviewers attempting to extend the interpretative work done by respondents, risk offending the respondent and thus jeopardise the interaction as an interview. As noted in chapter 2 (page 55) the ritual nature of selves has a conservative effect upon interaction. Any attempt by the interviewer to 'extend the range of interpretative work' done by a respondent will necessarily be bound by the ritual requirements of sustaining the interaction as a research interview. Further, since the ritual boundaries of self work are invoked and policed by both interviewer and respondent, extending the range of interpretative work carried out in an interview is not solely under the control of the interviewer. An 'extension' of interpretative work might well be initiated by the respondent such as when a respondent 'says more' (chapter 3) or as in those interview moments I identified as 'heretical' (chapter 4). It was just such extensions of the interpretative work that in some instances jeopardised the interview frame and threatened the interviewer's face qua interviewer.

(ii) Can the referential quality of interview talk be 'saved' by a greater understanding of participant interaction? Briggs, an ethnographer of the Córdovan's of New Mexico, displays an awareness of the interactional nature of the respondent-interviewer relationship and how this relationship is manifested in talk.

Briggs identifies what he calls metacommunicative repertoires (Briggs 1984:1-2) as the common-sense norms that govern and structure speech events. Speech events can range from: 'the talk of the elders of bygone days', 'talking with children', 'making biblical allusions', 'making a few bucks', to research interviews. 'Successful' communication, according to Briggs, is based upon a participant's knowledge of these and other metacommunicative norms. Briggs argues that a field worker's collection and analysis of talk will be greatly assisted by a knowledge of the local metacommunicative repertoires; specifically the normative structures of speech within groups and sub-groups determines the settings in which questions can be asked; the relationship between questioner and answerer, and consequently the sort of responses given. Thus Briggs claims that an adequate
interview technique will require a basic knowledge of the metacommunicative norms (i) to establish a relationship between ethnographer and local that avoids faux pas and (ii) so that the ethnographer can interpret responses in the light of the appropriate metacommunicative norms.

Briggs describes interviewing as an attempt to establish a Western communicative hegemony (Briggs 1983:257) with an emphasis upon the referential function of language (1983:238) over a host population's metacommunicative repertoires that may emphasise the 'poetic, phatic, emotive and conative' features of language (Briggs 1983:252). This fact can only frustrate the ethnographer's attempt to collect intelligible talk from the locals - this is especially so if the ethnographer has little or no knowledge of the local population's metacommunicative repertoires. Briggs graphically illustrates this point. Wishing to learn about Córdovan wood carving Briggs initially tried interviewing an elderly couple who were the leading practitioners of the art. Initial failure to elicit exegesis on the local traditions was overcome when Briggs was handed a block of wood and a knife with the expectation that he should start carving. Briggs' problems and difficulties as an 'apprentice' wood carver provided the appropriate metacommunicative repertoire for the elderly couple to be questioned and to give advice - enabling Briggs to collect the information he wanted. Similarly Briggs notes that Córdovan culture places great value upon rhetorical skill. If the Elders had been lured into an interview they would have accepted a conversational role subordinate to that of Briggs, a 'rhetorical incompetent' with a limited grasp of the local dialect (Briggs 1983:251). Consequently Briggs was at first only able to ask questions upon topics that the elders had initiated in the course of pedagogy, the right to make original statements and then to initiate topics having to be earned by demonstrations of rhetorical competence (Briggs 1983:250).

Briggs' case for an understanding of respondent's metacommunicative norms is that it offers a means to 'save' the referential function of interview talk by reference to a communicative context. However the
force of Briggs' argument lies in the ethnographic nature of his studies and the common-sense belief that an understanding of how the locals speak can only assist in understanding their talk; when interviewing in our own Western culture (where the interview is an established and known metacommunicative event) the problem of interpreting responses still exists. The task that Briggs envisions, understanding metacommunicative repertoires, is the very task that Cicourel suggested was impossible - knowing the meaning of every interactional move independent of its common-sense use to accomplish an interaction (in this case a research interview). Further the analysis of how utterances function to accomplish a particular interaction is a very different research project from assessing the truth or otherwise of an utterance. In the former the focus is upon how participants might 'do' referential talk as an interactional accomplishment - telling convincing tales. In the latter the focus assumes the referential function of language and assesses the accuracy of specific utterances. The former is constructivist while the latter is essentialist.

Methodological positions like Briggs' which apparently reconcile an internalist concern for the situated construction of accounts with an externalist concern for generalisability of talk are, from my perspective, still open to the accusation of under-theorising interview interaction. The point at which one generalises from interview talk to other interactions is the point at which what is specific to the talk as interview talk starts to recede into the background. Thus there is a tension between the situational specificity of an account and attempts to generalise from it. I have weighted this tension towards an interest in the ritual aspects of interview interaction. This is not to say the other weightings of this internalist-external tension are not legitimate but that there is a potential under-theorisation of interview interaction when attempts to generalise from interview data also claim to analyse respondent-interviewer interaction.
Part 2: Intimacy and power in the relationship between researcher and respondent

Jorgenson, in her reflexive study of interviewer-interviewee interaction based on interviews done while researching kinship (1991), looked for evidence of how respondents saw the interviewer. Thus Jorgenson reversed the usual role of interviewer as observer and respondent as observed. Rather than focusing upon the 'usual' considerations of race, gender, age and class, the focus of Jorgenson's paper is upon the interviewer as 'conversational you' (Jorgenson 1991:223). By this she means the respondents' interpretations of the interviewer - the conversational you - as 'psychologist', 'family expert' 'moral judge' and 'novice parent' (Jorgenson was pregnant at the time of the interviews) as displayed in descriptions of family kinship. It is Jorgenson's contention that:

like other communicative events, they [research interviews] are characterised by a reciprocal perspective-taking on the part of interviewer and respondent as each guesses at the state of the other's knowledge and anticipates the other's response. How interviewees make sense of and respond to the interviewer's questions is embedded in the larger process of coming to know who the interviewer is.

(Jorgenson 1991:211)

Jorgenson's 'conversational you' is much like Goffman's notion of self, in that a respondent, via his or her talk, displays a conceptualisation of the interviewer that is contextually specific to the task of 'doing' the interview. Thus respondents are potentially able to give multiple accounts dependent upon how the interviewer is seen. Jorgenson concludes that the ultimate consequences of this idea are not fully clear to her (Jorgenson 1991:223). This inability to see the ultimate consequence of her analysis is, I contend, due to Jorgenson's commitment to the interview as a research tool and her desire to generalise from interview talk. As noted above, in generalising from interview talk, the talk loses its situational specificity. The 'problem' of referentiality and how it is affected by interviewer-interviewer interaction has its basis in what I see as an unwillingness to distinguish between the roles of interviewer and
analyst. The assumed isomorphism of these two roles is particularly apparent in the work of feminist sociologists (who identify closely with their respondents as interview participants and more generally as women whose experiences and concerns they address) and leads to a paradoxical understanding of interviewer-interviewee interaction (Ribbins 1989:587). This paradox coalesces around the issue of power and intimacy; thus it is that Ribbins (1989:580)

So how do we acknowledge our power [as researchers] and yet deal with feminist concerns with intimacy, reciprocity and collaboration?

Ribbins' concern is that in research relationships, even ones that are egalitarian, there will be expectations on the part of respondents, who trust and expose themselves to an interviewer, that are not compatible with the research process. This is another version of the research interview as both tool of social scientific research and as interaction. But on this occasion an ethical (not a methodological) solution is offered. The interviewer/researcher takes responsibility for the welfare of individual respondents; for the respondents as members of a wider social group (in this instance women); for the source of research funding; and for bringing private lives to a public domain (publishing the research) (Ribbins 1989:587).

There is not only an epistemological aspect to the interview but also an ethical dimension. As stated above this ethical aspect of the research interview is a solution to the nature of the research interview as both interaction and research tool. The interviewer has the power to set the style and agenda of the interview to the aims of the research yet to collect data he or she needs to develop an intimate, reciprocal and collaborative relationship that ideally does not exploit the respondent. Since the relationship between interviewer and interviewee is often described in terms of power (Lee 1993), intimacy (Oakley 1981), reciprocity and collaboration (Ribbins 1989) - (and not just by feminist researchers) - I want to examine the viability of these descriptive adjectives in the light of my analysis.
(i) Reciprocity and collaboration. For an intelligible interaction participants must share a common understanding of what they are doing, to co-ordinate their actions - a reciprocity of perspective - and interactants must collaborate with each other if they are to co-ordinate their actions. Reciprocity and collaboration are an interactional default for intelligible, ordered and stable interaction. From my analysis, even fundamentalist respondents (chapter 4) who said as 'little as possible' collaborated and displayed a reciprocity of perspective. Of course the extent and the terms of this reciprocity and collaboration might be said to be minimal (when compared to the other respondents) but an interview was still accomplished. It would seem reasonable to conclude that there are degrees or qualities to reciprocity and collaboration that might be understood in terms of 'intimacy'.

(ii) Intimacy. Although we all trade upon a common-sense notion of intimacy, providing an analytic definition is problematic. Intimacy from my previous argument seems to signify a quality of interactional collaboration and reciprocity such that instances of the 'same' interaction could be said to be more or less 'intimate'. In the rhetoric of research, intimacy, rapport and identification (between respondent and researcher) function as an index of the quality of the relationship between respondent and interviewer and ultimately as an index of the quality of the data collected. Data collected under intimate conditions is assumed to be private and thus a truthful description of the objects, events, and states of mind reported. Conversely, if there is a failure to develop an intimate relationship the respondent's descriptions are seen by researchers as public accounts and not particularly revealing of the respondent's true or actual experiences. As participants we can imagine that there are public and private versions of events. Analytically, however, there can only be public accounts in interviews since what is private by definition is not told. The 'experience' of being told a private account cannot however be ignored. Many of us will have had the experience of chatting to a stranger on a train and then feeling uncomfortable when he or she reveals information about themselves that confounds our expectations of what is 'appropriate' to talk-between-strangers-passing-the-time-on-a-train. In Goffman's terms,
the stranger has misjudged his or her involvement obligations. As participants we routinely experience and recognise intimacy — but what participants (interviewer included) experience as private and intimate cannot be assumed to be such by analysts. This participant experience must be made available to social scientific scrutiny. I shall now discuss this with reference to Finch (1984) and Oakley (1981), two feminist researchers who see the relationship between interviewee and interviewer as crucial to reliable and valid data.

Finch (1984) claims that 'identification' between her and her respondents as women was a crucial feature of interviews with clergy wives and mothers involved in playgroups. Finch writes:

Comments like 'fellas don't see it that way do they?' and 'you can't ask your mother because it's an admission of defeat' indicate an identification between interviewer and interviewee which is gender specific.

(Finch: 1984:78)

I certainly do not wish to deny the importance of gender relations as a significant feature in the interview interaction. But what is required, however, is an understanding of how interview participants make observably real their gendered identity (or age, class and race) as relevant to 'doing' a research interview. Finch appears to have traded upon a common-sense understanding of gender — that women trust each other and understand each other simply because they are women — and then documents this by quotes from her data. Gender can, following Garfinkel, be seen as a social accomplishment open to study. Finch quotes the extract below, from which the respondent's expression, 'you can't ask your mother because it's an admission of defeat' came, as an index of respondent interviewer identification. It is my contention that the extract is open to an alternative reading in which the expression is not so much a gendered identification as a request for identification.

One big problem in being a clergy wife is, at the odd time which happens in every marriage — and it happens in clergy marriages as much as it happens outside — is that when you get some sort of crisis, and I don't think a marriage ever gels until you've had a
crisis in a marriage, where do you go for advice? If you're like me, you can't ask your mother because it's an admission of defeat that you have a problem - big enough problem to seek advice on - in your marriage. You cannot ask the vicar or the vicar's wife because you are, by definition, criticizing his curate. You cannot ask the bishop or the archdeacon because, again, you are casting some sort of slight on one of his priests who cannot manage his own marriage. So who do you ask?

I was very fortunate in that I knew the widow of a clergyman who had no sort of direct tie with the church but had sort of been through a lot herself and could help me. I find this sort of person invaluable, but how many people manage to find her? Other than that, just who do you go to?

(Finch 1984:76-77 my emphasis)

The respondent identifies 'one big problem' with being a clergyman's wife, a problem that occurs in all marriages, having a 'big bang' or a 'crisis'. However the respondent also accounts for a crisis as part of what makes a marriage 'gel'. The respondent thus accounts for what is a crisis in a marriage as part of what makes a successful marriage. The respondent then asks the apparently rhetorical question: 'Where do you go for advice?'. The answer takes the form of a three part list: 'if you're like me you cannot ask mother because its an admission of defeat'. Where the expression 'if you're like me' invokes the respondent's psychology to legitimate the claim that asking mother would be an admission of defeat. Thus the clause 'protects' the respondent's utterance from the suggestion that asking one's mother for advice is a normal thing for a daughter to do and not an admission of defeat. The list continues, 'you cannot ask the vicar because you are by definition criticizing his curate' (the respondent's husband) and you cannot ask the Bishop or Archdeacon, 'because you are again casting some slight on one of his priests'. The respondent having listed and rejected possible persons to turn to for advice asks: 'So who do you ask?', making it apparent that there is no one to ask. The respondent then answers this question by moving from a problem associated with all clergyman's wives to describe her personal solution. 'I was very fortunate' the respondent claims in 'know[ing] the widow of a clergyman who had no sort of direct tie with the church and had sort of been through a lot herself and could help me'. The list and the rejection of those on it as appropriate persons to turn to serves to emphasize the respondent's fortune, a point that is reiterated when the respondent describes the widow as
'invaluable'. The respondent then returns to a general formulation of the 'one big problem', how many people manage to find her? - someone to turn to for advice. 'Other than that [clergyman's widow with no ties to the church] who do you go to?'

The utterance 'you can't ask your mother because it's an admission of defeat' does not so much 'indicate an identification between interviewee and interviewer that is gender specific', as claimed by Finch but functions as an element in a three part list which is itself part of an account of a general problem - having no one to turn to. It is worthy of note that Finch's editing out of the phrase 'if you're like me' overlooks a critical element of the statement as a request for identification rather than a display of identification. It is not necessarily so that a statement of identification is particularly intimate: intimacy cannot be inferred from a single statement but must be located in a wider understanding of the conversational context.

Oakley (1981) makes her claim for the identification of intimacy in the apparently 'private' nature of the topic discussed. As an index of her success in achieving intimacy, Oakley offers the following extract from her interview data on the Transition to Motherhood:

A.O. : Did you have any questions you wanted to ask but didn't when you last went to the hospital?  
M.C. : Er, I don't know how to put this really. After sexual intercourse I had some bleeding, three times, only a few drops and I didn't tell the hospital because I didn't know how to put it to them. It worried me first off, as soon as I saw it I cried. I don't know if I'd be able to tell them. You see, I've also got a sore down there and a discharge and you know I wash there lots of times a day. You think I should tell the hospital; I could never speak to my own doctor about it. You see I feel like this but I can talk to you about it and I can talk to my sister about it.'

(Oakley 1981:49-50)

The graphic nature of the bodily functions described are Oakley's warrant for assuming an intimate relationship between respondent and interviewer. In Oakley's extract it is worthy of note that the
question which prompts the respondent's account is vague: 'Did you
have any questions you wanted to ask but didn't when you last went to
the hospital?'. Oakley does not specifically ask for a report of vaginal/sexual health but for an account of questions not asked when
the respondent was at the hospital. The respondent introduces her
response: 'Er, I don't know how to put this really', where 'knowing
how to put this' can be taken to relate to her alignment to Oakley
and how the forthcoming utterances might be interpreted (by Oakley).
The interviewee I suggest is asking for and making space within the
interview setting such that what is to follow will not be disruptive
of the interviewer's understanding of the setting. After giving some
gynaecological details the respondent again accounts for 'problems'
with regard to how to tell about her gynaecological problems, this
time, to the hospital: 'I didn't know how to put it to them'. As if
to legitimate the not knowing how to put 'it', the respondent gives
further details: 'You see, I've also got a sore down there [...]. The
respondent then says; 'You think I should tell the hospital'. In this
utterance the respondent displays (and projects) a candidate
understanding of the sense that Oakley could be making of her
account: 'You should tell the hospital'. The respondent then offers
the observation 'I could never speak to my own doctor about it', also
an appropriate candidate hearer of the symptoms, who is dismissed: 'I
could never speak to my own doctor about it'. This dismissal is then
made incongruous, 'you see I feel like this but I can talk to you
about it and I can talk to my sister about it'.

Organisationally the details that appear for Oakley as an index of
depth and intimacy, have a place within an account of questions-not-
asked-when-visiting-the-hospital and these details serve in their
graphic quality to make communicatively understandable the
respondent's reported troubles in asking about them. In giving this
account, the respondent calls into doubt her alignment with Oakley,
the interviewer: 'Er, I don't know how to put it really' she also
questions her potential alignment with regard to reporting her
condition to hospital: 'I don't know how to put it to them' and to
her doctor: 'I could never speak to my own doctor'. The reported
absence - to Oakley - of a potential person to align with is, I would
contend, more suggestive of intimacy, not the graphic nature of the description.

The analytic study of intimacy is clearly problematic; it cannot be assumed by reference to expressions of alignment (Finch) nor topic (Oakley) alone^1. It appears to me that before intimacy can be used to describe the extent and terms of interviewer and interviewee collaboration and reciprocity it must become the topic of further interactional studies. Studies that, I suggest, can only be done by suspending any concern with the referential quality of interview talk.

(iii) Power in interviewer-interviewee interaction: Like intimacy, power has an ethical dimension and becomes confused when the roles of interviewer and analysts are not seen as separated. The interviewer is generally assumed to be in a powerful position relative to a subordinate interviewee by virtue of the fact that it is the interviewer who asks the questions and selects the conversational topics. Kress and Fowler (1979:63) make this point very forcefully:

The basic fact is that the interviewer has power qua interviewer. He is in control of the mechanics of the interview: he starts it; he has the right to ask questions, and he has the privilege of terminating it. Through his choice of questions he selects the topics which may be introduced [...]. The interviewee only has the right to ask questions in the very rare, and often token situation of being given explicit permission to do so. The interviewer may, even then, refuse to answer a question, may without penalty plead lack of expertise or irrelevance; yet failing to answer the question, or deviating from the drift of the question, is the most damning sin the interviewer can commit.

Kress and Fowler's description of the interviewer's apparent power could be seen as an extreme formulation that many interviewers would try to avoid. But even when the interviewer is credited only with the responsibility of socialising the interviewee (Mishler 1986) and aims

^1 It is interesting to note that while Finch and Oakley clearly intend their quoted extracts to be read as incidents of intimacy they do not say how such readings are to be accomplished. It is almost as if Finch and Oakley see their reading as self-evident.
at doing an egalitarian interview, the fact remains that it is still predominately the interviewer who asks questions and initiates changes in conversational topics.

The initial request to participate in a research interview places the 'power' to co-operate (or not) in the hands of the potential respondent. However once he or she accepts the invitation to take part, this acceptance is displayed by answering questions and deferring to the interviewer's choice of conversational topics, a deference to the interviewer by assuming the role of respondent. Recruiting a respondent is to assume the role of interviewer with a responsibility to ask questions and select particular topics. These roles with their particular rights and responsibilities, negotiated via talk, are fundamental to co-ordinating the interaction as a research interview.

By appeal to considerations of ethics (as well as the need to develop an intimate relationship) interviewers attempt to interactionally curtail this power. Thus ethical considerations are a way that interviewers formulate their responsibility for an assumed power (to ask questions and select topics) over the respondent. It is suggested that this 'power imbalance' can be reduced if the flow of information is not all one way (the interviewer answers the respondents questions). But these tactics for changing the 'balance of power' by 'devolving power' is in this instance a prerogative of the powerful but enlightened interviewer. The researcher, however, must operationalise the research project, maintaining a degree of control over the flow of information. Were this not the case the research interview would lack structure and the participant's co-ordination of the interaction by formulating specific roles would be difficult. Thus although an interviewer can be sensitive to a potential difference in power - power from this perspective enables and is an unavoidable consequence of doing a research interview. (This is the case even in interviewing members of elite groups who might in non-interview situations be expected to be more powerful than the interviewer.)
Where there is power however there is also resistance. Oakley clearly identifies this when she remarks upon a respondent's ability to 'sabotage' a research interview. Other forms of respondent resistance are implicit when interviewers document the moral failings of respondents i.e. lying; failing to understand a question; avoiding giving an answer; digressing from a topic and putting up a front. In terms of my analysis, respondents who break the interview frame and give heretical or fundamentalist responses are resisting the interviewer's 'power' to set the interview agenda. Such interactional moves might well be designated as 'weapons of the weak' (Scott 1985). Expressions of power and resistance must however be done with ritual regard to the face of the other - a minimum degree of interactional competence - if such actions are not going to cause offence and jeopardise the interaction as a research interview.

Ethical discussions can be seen as a means by which researchers formulate and hope to modify their actions to take account of the assumed disparity in power between them and their respondents. Ethical codes have however to be interpreted and thus Punch (1994:95), in his review of research ethics, concludes that ethical codes can be unworkable:

At the situational and interactional level then, it may be unavoidable that there is a degree of impression management, manipulation, concealment, economy with the truth and even deception. I would maintain that we have to accept much of this as being in good faith, providing the researchers come clean about their "muddy boots" and "grubby hands".

Thus to speak of powerful interviewers and powerless respondents potentially obscures the practices by which interview participants artfully establish themselves within a research interview either by asking questions (interviewers) or by answering them (respondents). Respondents opt to participate in research interviews, exposing themselves to interactional risk, however respondents possess numerous interactional strategies to resist the 'power' of the interviewer without risking embarrassment or confusion that might occur should the interview be prematurely terminated. Just as Jorgenson (1991) suggested that the relationship between observer
(interviewer) and observed (interviewee) is not unidirectional so it would seem that this is the case for power. Each participant comes to the interview with his or her own agenda, artful skills and assumes and co-ordinates their own variation of the roles 'interviewer' and 'interviewee'.

Two views of the respondent and consequently two views of the researcher appear within the social scientific literature of the interview. In one the respondent is the powerless person who is open to exploitation by the powerful social scientist unless the social scientist is restrained by a strong ethical commitment. In the other the respondent is a 'saboteur' of the social scientific project able, wittingly or by accident, to give misleading data. In this instance the researcher is technically skilled in the art of the interview and has recourse to other data sources with which to 'check out' the reliability and validity of the respondent's answers. Both these views are, however, deficient, for in neither are the subtleties of interviewer interaction documented in detail as I have done in this thesis.

**Part 3: the sociological project**

The decision to use the interview as a tool of sociological research and my doubts about such a decision have their roots in the presuppositions upon which sociology as both an academic and scientific discipline was founded. Durkheim defined an academic space for sociology in terms of 'treating social facts as things' (1966:14) an approach that he hoped would establish sociology as a positivist science and distance it from psychology:

Sociological method as we practice it rests wholly on the basic principle that social facts must be studied as things, that is as realities external to the individual. There is no principle for which we have received more criticism; but none is more fundamental. Indubitably for sociology to be possible, it must above all have an object all its own. It must take cognisance of a reality which is not in the domain of other sciences. But if no reality exists outside of individual consciousness, it wholly
lacks any material of its own. In that case, the only possible subject of observation is the mental states of the individual, since nothing else exists. That, however is the field of psychology.

(Durkheim 1952:37-38)

Durkheim's now much criticised study of suicide (1952) was in part a test case in which the apparently individual act - suicide - would be explained scientifically without reference to the motives and intentions of individuals. While this study is justifiably open to criticism for its reliance upon the statistical categorisation of deaths (Atkinson 1978) the overall project of establishing sociology as methodologically rigorous and distinct from other social sciences is, I believe, still as pertinent now as it was when Durkheim was alive.

A more recent attempt to define the sociological project is Garfinkel's Ethnomethodology (the source for Atkinson's critique of Durkheim's Suicide study). Garfinkel's claim for Ethnomethodology is that it stands in direct opposition to traditional sociology. Traditional sociology and lay understandings of society are from an ethnomethodological perspective open to analysis in terms of practical activities that render the world 'visible-rational-and-reportable-for-all-practical-purposes' (Garfinkel 1967:vii).

In doing sociology, lay and professional, every reference to the 'real world,' even where the reference is to physical or biological events, is a reference to the organised activities of everyday life. Thereby, in contrast to certain versions of Durkheim that teach that the objective reality of social facts is sociology's fundamental principle, the lesson is taken instead, and used as a study policy, that the objective reality of social facts as an ongoing accomplishment of the concerted activities of daily life, with the ordinary, artful ways of that accomplishment being by members known, used, and taken-for-granted, is, for members doing sociology, a fundamental phenomenon. Because, and in the ways it is practical sociology's fundamental phenomenon, it is the prevailing topic for ethnomethodological study. Ethnomethodology studies analyse everyday activities as members' methods for making those same activities visible-rational-and-reportable-for-all-practical-purposes, i.e., 'accountable,' as organisations of commonplace everyday activities.

(Garfinkel 1967:vii)
Traditional sociology shares with lay understandings a taken-for-granted lack of interest in the organisational activity of how objects, events, and states of mind (beyond issues of bias and error) are reported as real. The explanatory success of Garfinkel's ethnomethodological project can be judged by the impetus it has given to the study of natural scientific practices - the Sociology of Scientific Knowledge (Woolgar 1988). After all, sociologists have often considered themselves the poor relations of the natural scientists, with their objective methods and apparently accumulative bodies of knowledge. Ethnomethodology offers sociology its own unique method, the study of the practical activities by which members produce their world as reportable. Since the whole of human experience is 'caught' in the practical activities of members nothing is beyond the scope of ethnomethodological study.

It is this ethnomethodological project that I have brought to bear, in part, on my study of interview interaction; studying some of the means by which members accomplish the intelligible activity of 'doing' a research interview, ostensibly reporting more or less truthfully upon a world of objects, events, and states of mind that are assumed to exist beyond and independently of the research interview (though not adopting the sequential analysis advocated by conversational analysts as contemporary interpreters of Garfinkel). I have however done this using Goffman's ideas about ritual selves. The aim of bringing this ritual dimension to the study of members' practical actions is based upon the assumption that participant interaction needs also to be analysed in terms of how ritual selves are produced and how these selves are accommodated and honoured in the practical activities that sustain ordered and intelligible interview interaction.

My analysis of ritual interaction has traded upon a participant experience of selfhood. This is at odds with Garfinkel's ethnomethodological perspective in that it prefaces as real a participant experience rather than focusing upon how that experience is located within a member's practical sense-making procedures. I accept this point, but in my defence I would say that the notion of
self used in this thesis and recoverable from Goffman's work is of a non-essential contextual self that only experiences itself as a self through interaction thus avoiding the un-investigated essentialism of a psychological theory of self. It is my contention that without this conception of a ritual self the moral accountability of persons to render the world intelligible in 'appropriate' ways - producing normal appearances - would be reduced to verbal utterances when the self-defining implications of that talk may well be intensely felt. Thus a further justification for the foregrounding of ritual selves in this thesis is the belief that an analysis, organised around the notion of Self, is potentially more engaging to readers who experience themselves as selves.

Every analysis must consider the terms by which it is to judged reliable and valid. With regard to the reliability of the data and the features of interview interaction I have identified, the question arises as to what extent they are common to instances of interview interaction and whether they can be identified in other instances of face-to-face interaction? Because the thesis is a study of interview interaction I would expect the features identified to be recoverable in the transcripts of other research interviews and to this extent I have applied the analytic categories used in a standardised manner. As for the applicability of the analysis to other forms of interaction, this is the subject for further research.

Is my analysis a valid description of an interactional reality? This is a problematic question given that I have (i) suggested that positivist and interactionist descriptions of interviewer-interviewee interaction are deficient and could be understood in terms of repertoires. And (ii) that the method of studying interview interaction that I recommend, suspends the referential quality of interview talk. So what then of the reality that my analysis documents, a reality of ritual selves and artful accounting practices as found in interview interaction? Of the 'reality' that my analysis seeks to describe, I am of the opinion that in principle my analysis reflexively constructs the reality of selves and artful practices that it claims to document. However in practice, as a means to write
I have adopted a 'subtle realism' (Hammersley 1992) and this is how I would like my analysis of interview interaction to be judged.
References


