In the gulf between prejudice and culture: talking the experience of Western expatriates in the Middle East

This item was submitted to Loughborough University's Institutional Repository by the/an author.

Additional Information:

- A Doctoral Thesis. Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy of Loughborough University.

Metadata Record: https://dspace.lboro.ac.uk/2134/6775

Publisher: © Kevin McKenzie

Please cite the published version.
This item is held in Loughborough University's Institutional Repository (https://dspace.lboro.ac.uk/) and was harvested from the British Library's EThOS service (http://www.ethos.bl.uk/). It is made available under the following Creative Commons Licence conditions.

For the full text of this licence, please go to:
http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/2.5/
IN THE GULF BETWEEN PREJUDICE AND CULTURE

Talking the Experience of Western
Expatriates in the Middle East

by

Kevin McKenzie

A Doctoral Thesis
Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the award of
Doctor of Philosophy of Loughborough University

19 November 1997

© by Kevin McKenzie 1997
ABSTRACT

This thesis is an investigation into the accounting practices by which British and American expatriates make sense of Western involvement in the Middle East. Based on the analysis of an audio-taped archive of some sixty hours of face-to-face interview material recorded in Kuwait during a ten-month period in the year immediately following the Persian Gulf Conflict of 1990-91, this project explores the interactional work by which speakers situate their conversational contributions in dialogic anticipation of a range of competing but mutually co-implicative demands for accountability which they take their talk and their participation in the circumstances of that talk to entail. Specifically, speakers are seen to manage the productive tension between the competing demands for accountability to conflicting assumptions about the nature of prejudice on the one hand, and the awareness of and/or sensitivity to cultural difference on the other, in and while attending to the situated concerns for their warrant in making the claims that they do and the degree to which they are implicated in those claims in and through the activity of their production. In this way, conflicting assumptions are show to be constitutive of the social practices whereby speakers account for Western involvement abroad.
CONTENTS

Acknowledgements i

I: Others ii

II: Full Circle iii

Introduction iv

Overview of the Thesis v

1. Approaching the Other: A Theory of Methods 7

The Familiar Other: The Paradox of Altery 12

Managing the Crisis in Anthropology 14

Dialogue and the Rhetorico-Responsive Model of Interaction 21

Dialogism and Social Constructionism 21

Dialogue and the Negotiation of Meaning 23

Contributions to Social Constructionism 34

Points of Comparison: Differences in Contributions to Social Constructionism 37

Analytic Materials 44

Conclusion 50

2. Work on Work on (Work on) the Other: Literature Review — Writing an Argumentative Foil 62

Methodological versus Theoretical Appeals to Transcendence 65

Reflexive Implications in Social Constructionism 80

Conclusion 91

3. Incumbency and Entitlement: Category Membership and Identity as Participant Concerns 98

Speaker Incumbency and Identity as Participant Concerns 99

Accounting for Social Mobility 101

Anticipating Criticism: Reductionism and the Description of Culture 113

Conclusion 127

4. Reflexivity, Racism and the Voice of the Other 132

The Spectre of Racism 134

Attending to Arab Identity: Race, Nation and the Voice of the Other 151

Recruitment and Corroboration: Colluding with the Voice of the Other 161

Conclusion 169

5. 20/20 Hindsight: Narrative as a Device in the Management of Competing Demands for Accountability 174

The Analysis of Narrative 174

The Narrative Time Machine: Temporal Disjunction as a Resource 176

Narrative and the Rhetoric of Experiential Authority 186

Constructive Analysis: Theorising One’s Presence 192

Conclusion 198
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I: Others

If I had it to do all over again, I would make the same decisions and for all the same reasons. Along the way, though, I have had some very pleasant surprises. It is the business of these remarks to acknowledge these by directing my thanks to a number of different people.

To Toine van Teeffelen, who without fail always had a suggestion of something fascinating to read.

To all the members of Loughborough University’s Discourse and Rhetoric Group (DARG) who I’ve had the tremendously good fortune to encounter (either directly or in the legacy that they have left to those of us who joined the group after their having moved on) for providing a most stimulating environment for the exchange of ideas.

To my thesis supervisor, Jonathan Potter, whose work gave me the impetus to relocate to Loughborough and whose scholarship justifiably continues to be celebrated as exemplary. To Mikhail Billig, my Director of Research. To Derek Edwards, a rare teacher who can sustain my attention for phenomenal amounts of time with his eloquence both in print and in the lecture theatre. To Malcolm Ashmore, Katie MacMillan and Sumiko Mushakoji: ‘way out’ there on the bleeding, cutting edge of the social sciences. To Matt Kops, for quite a number of different reasons which are distinct from but not independent of his being a good drinking-buddy. To Stephanie Taylor, for demonstrating that it can be done. To Susan Speer, a waking giant. To Mary Horton-Salway who engaged me for all the right reasons, responding as I would have wished without ever neglecting to bid me on to something more.

To Jim White, Warden of William Morris Hall, who in providing me with a position as a subwarden there created a far more pleasant space of retreat from scholarship than I could have ever hoped for, and in so doing made it possible for me to accomplish my academic goals.

*I know what I mean. They know what I mean. I know what I mean because they know what I mean.*
I should also like to acknowledge the financial assistance of the Overseas Research Students (ORS) Award Scheme for partial funding of this project as well as to acknowledge a generous grant from the Timothy John Godfrey Memorial Fund.

II: Full Circle

I have read treatises whose first order of business was to acknowledge, with thanks and praise, indebtedness to none other than the Deity. I would like to think that since first having encountered such statements, my theology has matured to the point that I can regard acknowledging those around me as a not altogether different act.
INTRODUCTION

This thesis has as its topic an issue that has engaged the Western project of inquiry for at least the last three-hundred and fifty years: that of alterity — the question of the Other. In particular, this work is concerned with the way that alterity features as a topic in accounts by Western expatriates of their experience of living and working in the Arab Middle East. Based on an extensive body of face-to-face interview material collected from among the community of British and American residents of the Persian/Arabian Gulf area, the thesis explores how it is that when accounting for their presence in the region, speakers attend to matters of racism, cultural difference, racial and ethnic prejudice, and the legitimacy of non-indigenous contact with and interaction among those whom they regard as the Arab cultural Other.

The main concern here is not, however, one of working to identify these issues as aspects of the talk: to find instances of, say, prejudice or differences in cultural outlook in and among those expatriate participants who have taken part in this study. Instead, the concern is with precisely how just such matters feature as concerns for and among those participants themselves, and with the sort of significance this has in constituting the activity in which those participants are engaged when making sense of their own presence in the region where they reside. In other words, the concern is with how speakers bring off their activity of accounting for their involvement in the Middle East as something in relation to which just such considerations are essentially relevant. In particular, how do speakers make sense of their own identity in terms of contrast with some Other, and what is the relation of the assumptions to which they are mutually oriented in their talk when doing so? How do such assumptions constitute the activity of mutual orientation by which speakers make sense of their involvement in the region? Further, what are the reflexive implications of that involvement for the activities in which such accounting gets done? That is, in what sense is the activity by which speakers account for their experience of residing in the Middle East itself constitutive of that activity?

One principal claim in this thesis is that to the extent that speakers reflexively attend to the implications of their talk about residing in the Middle East, then accounting for that experience constitutes that experience. In other words, their talk is an instance of that about which it is an account (at least implicitly). This thesis,
among other things, explores that relationship. The investigative (i.e., interview related) activity produces that which is sets out to explore (viz., the experience of Western expatriates in the Middle East) and in so doing, it constitutes its own object of analysis. The question of why and/or how participants account for their presence in the Middle East is thus co-terminous with an account of their participation in the then current setting — the interview — where that very question is itself at issue. In reflexively accounting for their account — that is, in attending to the implications that the production of their own interview talk potentially raises for its reception — speakers also and thereby simultaneously attend to the matter of making sense of their presence in the region. It is in this regard that the subtitle of this thesis (‘Talking the Experience of Western Expatriates in the Middle East’) is relevant. While the claim here is not that the talk under consideration is constitutive of all of the participants’ experience in the region (even while that experience is the topic of their talk), that talk certainly constitutes that experience of which this thesis is an examination. Thus, this thesis takes sense-making as its topic, in the sense that it is a concern for both participants and a means by which participants pursue their concern.

In addition, the thesis also examines the way that speakers attend to a range of competing demands for accountability in their talk, exploring how it is that managing the conflict between such demands constitutes the activity in which the notions of Westerner and (Arab) non-Westerner are rendered meaningful. Such demands include one’s accountability to be neither prejudiced nor unaware of cultural difference. It is in this sense that speakers occupy a discursive space between two competing assumptions that inform their talk — as alluded to in the thesis title (‘In the Gulf the Between Prejudice and Culture’). Part of our concern in this thesis will be to explore how speaker efforts to manage the tension between these competing demands for accountability are themselves constitutive of the rhetorical work by which accounting for the Western presence abroad is accomplished. That is, without this tension, there is no talk about Western involvement to be had as such. The conflict is constitutive of the sense-making activity wherein accounts of Western involvement derive their significance.

As we shall see, the relation this has to the matter of alterity is at least two-fold. Firstly, alterity features in the talk we will consider as an assumption the
availability of which speakers provide for throughout their talk. The relevance of alterity is provided for in talk about cultural difference, and it informs the discussion of the Arab Other throughout. Second, and at the same time, the matter of alterity is also taken up as a theoretical concern in and through the very activity by which speakers discuss the Arab Other. In other words, the concern with alterity—the theoretical concern with the Other—features as both topic and resource for speakers in their activity of bringing the very assumption of alterity to bear in accounting for their own presence in the Middle East. It is this overall task of this thesis to explore this relationship between participants’ concern for alterity in these different but related ways.

Overview of the Thesis

This thesis is concerned, then, with how accountability for sensitivity to and awareness of cultural difference is related to accountability for prejudice; and with how the two are mutually co-implicative in the talk under consideration here. The analytic task will be to explore how speakers work to manage the two sets of conflicting demands in such a way as to sustain dialogue. In so doing, they display their orientation to the situation as one for which such concerns are constitutively relevant.

Chapter 1 (‘Approaching the Other: A Theory of Methods’) establishes the groundwork for a dialogic approach to interaction, basing this on the work of the Russian social philosopher and literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin. A dialogic approach is concerned with issues of alterity in making sense of interaction. This concern with alterity is related in the chapter with the issue of the Other, and the comparison is made with this issue as both a theoretical concern characteristic of the Enlightenment project of inquiry and a concern among participants in the talk. The interesting relation here is that of how what is taken up as a theoretical concern is also, in the talk we consider, reflexively deployed as a means in attending to the demands for accountability that those concerns are taken to imply.

Chapter 2 (‘Work On Work On [Work On] the Other: Literature Review — Writing an Argumentative Foil’) is concerned with previous work in which these issues are taken up. Conceived as an exploratory exercise in the reflexive implications
of observations regarding a discursive approach toward the production of textual representation and the objectification accomplished thereby, this chapter is something of a review of the literature which has such issues as its concern. Thus, what distinguishes the work of this chapter from an otherwise ordinary literature review is that it seeks to examine the reflexive implications of analysing analytic practices. Specifically, this chapter looks at instances where the analytic scholarship which takes the analytic/scholastic projects whereby culture and racial prejudice are objectified works to exempt itself from accountability for the self-same sort of deconstructive scrutiny which it objectifies in the work it examines; and further with how this is an inevitable feature of any analytic project. In this way, Chapter 2 works to display the very point it seeks to make about analytic work in its own take on the analytic work which takes analytic practices as its object. In objectifying such scholarship, it works to display how objectification works.

The analysis of corpus material begins in Chapter 3 with a consideration of issues surrounding identity (‘Incumbency and Entitlement: Category Membership and Identity as Participant Concerns’). This chapter addresses the rhetorical work that speakers pursue in offering critical remarks on the motivation of expatriate residents for their presence in the region. It is concerned with the way that speakers manage issues of identity, attending to the potential for their participation in the interview situation and the adequacy of their contribution to that interaction (as expatriate interviewees) to be construed as implying a range of negatively accountable inferences. As such, it is an explanation of how speakers manage the competing demands of their participation in the interview setting as between providing their contributions with experiential authority while managing the extent to which their own expatriate identity implicates them in the negative inferences which they work to make available in the very activity of making such identity relevant to the talk. As we shall see, it is in displaying an awareness of those very demands for accountability to assumptions concerning the awareness and tolerance of cultural difference whereby speakers are able to manage the extent by which they themselves are implicated in those demands.

Chapter 4 (‘Reflexivity, Racism and the Voice of the Other’) is concerned with the details of talk about the nature of prejudice and social discrimination and
with how these relate to implicitly available demands for awareness of cultural difference. Here, again, speakers work to manage a range of conflicting demands for accountability. Of particular interest is the situated nature of what is said to constitute racism — as between attending to physical phenotype, national origin or some other feature. It becomes clear that in orienting to matters of racial discrimination as relevant to the circumstances of the talk, that speakers must employ the very sorts of definitional criteria whose use they work to make accountable in pursuing the situated activity of attending to the management of that accountability’s extent. At the same time, however, speakers also display the reflexive awareness of this in and through their talk.

Chapter 5 (‘20/20 Hindsight: Narrative as a Device in the Management of Competing Demands for Accountability’) is specifically concerned with the role of narrative in managing conflicting demands for accountability. Specifically, we explore the details of how speakers create a distinction between themselves as the character of a narrative account and as the teller of that account in the then present context of that account’s telling. In creating this sort of a disjunction, speakers are able to manage the competing demands for accountability with which they are confronted in their talk. In addition, we also examine how theorising one’s own experience similarly has the effect of creating a disjunction between the speaker as the object of his or her own analytic scrutiny and as the individual who works to conduct that activity itself. This splitting of the speaker is productive as a device for managing the tension between competing demands for accountability.

Chapter 6 (‘Respecting the Wishes of Others: Providing for the Relevance of Cultural Sensitivity in Arguing for the Legitimacy of Western Involvement Abroad’) takes up the theme of cultural sensitivity as a participant concern by examining the argumentative uses for which the implicit demands for accountability are employed in legitimating Western involvement abroad — in particular with reference to the Persian Gulf Conflict of 1990-91 and Western-based corporate concerns. Here we shall see how speakers argue that Western actions in these matters is itself expressive of cultural sensitivity and also how they attend to the potential for their argumentative efforts to be construed as motivated — that is, how they deal with issues of stake and interest in the formulation of their argumentative accounts. In this way, implicit
criticism of Western involvement is itself accounted for as an instance of insensitivity to cultural difference.

In Chapter 7 (‘A-Conclusion’), we return to the issues of analysis and examine the theoretical implications of how the reflexive inferences of an issue are themselves deployed in taking up an argumentative stance.
Chapter 1

APPROACHING THE OTHER
A Theory of Methods

[Qualitative research . . . discovers what has always been known: We are our own subjects. How our subjectivity becomes entangled in the lives of others is and has always been our topic. (Denzin, 1997: 27)

This thesis project is conceived as a contribution to research in social constructionism, and this chapter is concerned with explicating some of the methodological considerations that are at issue in a project of this sort. In particular, its purpose is to describe the theoretical assumptions that inform the investigation which comprises the substantive analyses in Chapters 3-6 to follow. Providing such a description might at first appear as if it should be relatively straightforward, but one of the most difficult aspects of writing about analytic methods from a social constructionist approach is that it is the very distinction between theoretical and methodological concerns which is problematic for social constructionism in the first place (Gergen, 1992). The very question of what method itself involves is at issue in the sort of analytic undertaking that a thesis such as this one sets out to accomplish. Any treatment of methods, therefore, must begin with this observation from the very outset.

Any discussion of social constructionism, however, might also usefully begin by contextualising some of these problematics within the tradition of inquiry informed by the assumptions of a Cartesian dualism. Central here is the approach intrinsic to a representational model of mind (and, relatedly, of language) which regards reality as having an autonomous existence independent of the descriptive practices whereby it is portrayed — an approach which Rorty (1980) refers to as the mirror model of mind.1 Determining the degree of accuracy with which various representations of reality reflect that to which they refer has been one of the chief analytic goals within the Cartesian tradition of inquiry. Representations, because they are theoretically distinguished from their referent, thus become an object of scrutiny insofar as their accuracy (or lack thereof) is taken to result in distortion of some sort. Inherent in such efforts is the privileging of an implicitly available set of comparative criteria
which are themselves paradoxically regarded as transcendent of or unaffected by the
same sorts of contingencies to which they are applied as a corrective. In other words,
the contingency of perspective is an assumption that this sort of inquiry takes as both
its starting point and as its defining problematic. That is, situatedness of perspective
is of concern both as an assumption that informs the inquiry and as a problematic to
be resolved. Thus, one’s point-of-view — the position from which they see things and
from which that perspective is defined — has implied for Cartesian inquiry the
possibility that there might be a place from which the situated contingency of
perspective can be transcended (Lynch, 1994). Involved in such inquiry, then, is the
circuitous effort to transcend the limitations in perspective which the situated
contingency of a given description is taken to imply. It is this particular objective that
has characterised the Enlightenment project from its inception, and indeed is
constitutive of same (Berman, 1982; McGowan, 1991; Smart, 1992, 1993).

This sort of analytic approach is thus interesting for how the assumption
concerning a representation and its object(s) are situationally deployed to inform one
another. Specifically, it must be assumed that there is either an unchanging, given
nature to one’s perspective (making it possible to investigate alterations in reality),
or else that the reality of which one’s perspective is said to be a representation is
itself assumed to be unproblematically given and unchanging (in order that the
interrogate of alterations in perspective might be pursued). In this way, assumptions
about the nature of reality and representation co-implicate one another. Relating this
to some of the definitive problematics in psychological theory, Edwards (1997: 10,
emphasis in original) remarks:

Cognition and reality are like two sides of a coin. If we want to know about
cognition, we need to take account of the world, hold reality constant, or vary it
systematically, so that we can discern the workings of mind. If we want to know
about reality, it is cognition and other human foibles that have to be held constant or
under control. We have to assure ourselves that we are not deluded, mistaken, or
misinformed, seeing what we expect or want to see, and this may require systematic
methods for countering the vagaries of mind. (...) The interesting thing, of course,
is what happens when we consider any such purchase on non-psychological reality
to be itself a product of human perceptions, artefacts [sic], practices, and accounts.

It is this mind-versus-reality dualism that a social constructionist approach
works to interrogate. This is accomplished in investigations of how the distinction
between the description and the object is itself one that is employed in order to attend
to socially significant, interactional business in the contexts of its use. For example, in social constructionist work on the discursive practices through which the mental (that is, mental phenomena) is objectified in psychological theory, the distinction between mental representation and mind-independent reality is approached as one whose relevance is provided for in various discursive practices as a way of legitimating, among other things, a range of interventionary therapeutic practices (Danziger, 1990; Rose, 1990, 1996). Mental representations of reality are regarded (in the social constructionist work) as set against what representation-independent reality is taken to be (in the work which such social constructionist analyses take as their object — that is, the first-order level of work which is said to objectify the mental) in order to argue that that work (the first-order work) is itself employed to legitimate interventionary practices. The reading of how the dichotomy is produced is itself deployed to undermine the legitimacy of the claims entailed therein. Similarly, social constructionist approaches to the question of cultural difference regard the matter of culture itself as one whose relevance is made available in the context of discursive work to legitimate, say, Western projects of colonial and neo-colonial expansion (Barker, et al., 1994; Bloom, 1994; Childs and Williams, 1997; MacKenzie, 1995).

What these different examples of social constructionist work have in common is an approach that interrogates the dualistic assumptions of a representational model by exploring how those assumptions are made relevant in the specific contexts of their use. While there is continuing debate surrounding the scope of analytic purview that a social constructionist position should or ought to include, (related, specifically, to the question of whether the ironising, deconstructive reading of a given text reflexively encompasses itself within the theoretical scope of what is regarded as constitutive in its objectifying practice [Woolgar and Pawluch, 1985; Woolgar, 1988: 73-78; Potter, 1988; Edwards et al., 1995; Wetherell and Potter, 1992]), there is a shared concern with objectification as an interactionally achieved practice. As we will see, this concern is of direct relevance to the issues raised by participants in the conversations that comprise the analytic materials of this thesis, and features as germane to the work of this thesis in producing that concern in its analysis.
One particularly good example of analytic research where such claims are considered is that of the sociology of scientific knowledge (SSK). Nigel Gilbert and Michael Mulkay (1984), for example, have explored the way in which assumptions about the constancy either of viewpoint or of reality are selectively invoked in scientists’ accounts of their professional activities. Specifically, Gilbert and Mulkay describe how scientists work either to bolster or else to undermine their own or their professional rivals’ particular versions of reality by selectively referring either to the mind-independent ‘out-there-ness’ of a version’s referent (the empiricist repertoire), or else to the perspectival contingency of a version as the mere product of mind (the contingent repertoire) depending upon the implications that either of these imply for the legitimacy of theoretical models at issue in those accounts. As with Edwards’ observations on the nature of cognition and reality in the passage quoted above, so too in the accounts that Gilbert and Mulkay examine, the assumption of mind-constancy necessarily informs a theoretical interrogation into reality while the assumption of the static and unchanging nature of reality informs interrogation into theoretically formulated perspective itself. This means that the assumption concerning reality (as distinct from mind) is mutually co-constitutive or co-implicative of the assumption concerning mind from which it is taken to be distinct. That is, talk about perspective paradoxically entails making assumptions concerning mind-independent reality and vice-versa.3 Remarking upon this, Edwards (1997: 58-59, emphasis in original) notes:

What emerges [from Gilbert and Mulkay’s research of scientists’ accounts] is that the empiricist repertoire alone is inadequate for science in practice. Like cognition and reality, scientific truth and error are mutually implicative, and one of the things that has to be done in practice is resolving disagreements or contrary claims. Since proper adherence to the idealized formal canons of method should not, according to the empiricist repertoire itself, produce errors, then some other, contingent form of accounting is required, particularly for persistent errors and entire research programmes. Error accounts are essential to the credibility of factual accounts, and include various kinds of stubbornness, interests, rivalries, and misguided allegiances.

The interesting outcome of Gilbert and Mulkay’s research into the accounting practices that they consider is the ease with which participant scientists deploy the range of otherwise seemingly conflicting or mutually exclusive ways of talking about their professional activities and those of their colleagues. In terms of how this relates to the concerns of this thesis, the point is that the accounts of scientific activity that
Gilbert and Mulkay examine are expressive of concerns that characterise a project of deconstructive irony more generally. It is this paradoxical feature of how mutually conflicting assumptions inform talk about the practice of scientific inquiry that is addressed in discussions of the ‘foundational crises’ that are said to plague work throughout the social sciences. This issue has been a matter of concern since the earlier part of this century with work in the sociology of scientific knowledge (Mannheim, 1949; Dant, 1991; Ashmore, 1989); and more recently has been attended to in the disciplinary debates in the domains of social psychology (Elms, 1975; Parker, 1989), social and political philosophy (Bhaskar, 1989, 1993; Norris, 1997; see also related discussion in Parker, 1992: Ch. 2) and in the debate surrounding realism and anti-realism (Norris, 1990; Potter, 1992a; Potter et al., 1990).

The principal reason that the issue of contingency in scientific (or other) knowledge has proven problematic has to do with the way in which claims about situated contingency are themselves made available as a rationale in seeking to transcend the limitations of perspective which they are taken to imply in the first place. That is, the situated and (by implication) necessarily contingent nature of a given perspective on reality is seen as legitimating efforts to transcend or escape the limitations that it entails. The assumption involved is that reality might somehow be accessed in a straightforward or unmediated fashion if only the contingencies of given representations can be understood and thereby set aside. A paradoxical feature of such efforts is that they exempt themselves from the scope of this interrogation. That is, the very scrutinising activity whereby this setting-aside is itself accomplished is excluded from consideration as an instance of representational practice. The constitutive paradox of such a tradition is that it seeks to explore the limitations of perspective as a means of achieving a transcendence to which such limitations will not be effected — a sort of perspectiveless perspective, as it were or, as Derrida (1976) might put it, a view from nowhere.

It is for this reason that Greer (1997: 84) distinguishes two different strands of ironisation in work to examine representation: one which he glosses as an anti-realist, anti-foundationalist social constructionism (referring to the work of Gergen [1985], Shotter and Sampson [1983, 1987]); and a second that he calls social constructivism — an approach which, while concerning itself with a number of
different social factors in accounting for the development of particular kinds of knowledge, nevertheless allows for the sense of a discourse-independent reality to inform its readings (Greer refers here specifically to the work of Rom Harré, James Averill and Donald Polkinghorne). Whether defined as a feature of the individual (as with the case of mind) or of some collective (as with the case in working to delineate some set of socio-cultural norms and values); social constructionism, broadly speaking, examines the discursive means by which perspective is distinguished from that about which it is taken to be a representation. The distinction that Greer makes and its relevance to particular analyses raises some rather interesting issues concerning the reflexive implications for an analysis of claims to transcendence.

**The Familiar Other: The Paradox of Alterity**

The paradox involved in analytic efforts to legitimate knowledge claims is perhaps nowhere more evident than in the discipline of cultural anthropology. In particular, the disciplinary concern of anthropology with the matter of alterity — with the culturally organised perspective of some Other(s) — is one in which its own theoretical assumptions are brought to bear in the accounts of cultural systems (ethnographic descriptions) that are its product and are expressive of the effort to transcend the perspectival limitations of situated contingency. In other words, anthropology’s activity of revealing the limitations in culturally defined outlook is, by definition, *itself* constitutive of an effort to transcend just such situatedly contingent limitations. This is so even where this is acknowledged to be the case in the theoretical writings within the discipline concerning just how such descriptions are formulated. By cataloguing and exhaustively describing the various contingencies which are said to define the human outlook, the paradoxical goal implied in such efforts is that of transcending the situated concerns that comprise the human perspective. The paradox involved is that where all representations of reality are taken to be contingent on the (culturally defined) circumstances of their production, so too are the representations of such representational activity. Thus, anthropology shares in the constitutive paradox of the Cartesian enterprise generally in that the limitation in perspectives that it formulates is itself implicitly determined relative to a set of
comparative criteria made inferentially available in an ethnographic description which is itself suspended from reflexive scrutiny.

At the most fundamental level, the problematic is evident in the delineation of the analytic object — (the hu)man — as distinct from the activity of inquiry whereby that object is made available. In particular, this relates to how the production of ethnography as the discipline’s central practical accomplishment is organised around a range of different and competing demands for accountability (Sharrock and Anderson, 1981). In the first place, ethnographic description addresses itself to the elucidation of unfamiliar or exotic systems of cultural organisation. That is, it concerns itself with alternative ways of conducting social interaction and of exploring how modes of interactional relations among co-members of a given populace are definitive of its social organisation. Thus, the task of ethnography is essentially one of translation since it is the job of an ethnographic description to translate the otherwise unfamiliar patterns of social organisation into a form that is comprehensible from within an alternative set of patterns (norms, values, etc.) which is fundamentally different from it. The paradox this involves is that if the task of an ethnographic account is to make the unfamiliar accessible, it is also at the same time to preserve the exoticism of the Other as a way of obviating the task of translation between different culturally defined perspectives in the first place. Yet, to the extent that the unfamiliar is made accessible, it is thereby rendered non-exotic and no longer alter. It is the paradoxical tension between these two competing assumptions and the management of that tension which is constitutive of the practice of anthropology as a discursive undertaking.7

In terms of how this relates to this thesis, this project explores the way in which similar sorts of concerns with alterity inform the talk of British and American expatriate residents of the Middle East in conversations where they account for their presence abroad. Specifically, the concerns taken up in anthropological discourse are also at issue in the talk we shall consider where speakers attend to matters of cultural awareness and prejudice. Just as with ethnographic description, these two concerns are related in a particularly interesting way because attending to the issue of cultural difference raises a number of implications concerning bias and distortion on the part of the Other whose cultural expectations define them as Other. At the same time, this
raises similar implications with regard to the observer's description of that bias relative to his or her own view of the Other. In other words, assumptions about the contingency of perspective that are made available in talk about culture themselves raise reflexive implications for the speakers who provide for their relevance in their talk. This project explores how an assumption of reality-constancy is made available in talk where speakers attend to demands for an awareness of cultural difference (since invoking the values and outlook of a culture as such is accomplished relative to some criteria of comparison); while the assumption of mind-constancy is made available in talk where speakers work reflexively to foreclose a construal of such talk as itself prejudicially motivated. Exploring the details of what is this involves is the principal task of the analytic chapters which follow (Chapters 3-6, below).

Managing the Crisis in Anthropology

259. "But how can human understanding outstrip reality and itself think the unverifiable?"—Why should we not say the unverifiable? For we ourselves made it unverifiable.

A false appearance is produced? And how can it so much look like that? For don't you want to say that this like that is not a description at all? Well, then it isn't a false appearance either, but rather one that robs us of our orientation. So that we clutch our brows and ask: How can that be?

260. It is only apparently possible "to transcend any possible experience", even these words only seem to make sense, because they are arranged on the analogy of significant expressions.

261. The "philosophy of as if" itself rests wholly on this shifting between simile and reality.

(Wittgenstein, 1967: 48e, emphasis in original)

It is the paradoxical nature of transcendence and contingency which is the subject of continued debate within anthropological theory itself — specifically with regard to debate concerning the adequacy of ethnography. Discussion on this matter involves responses ranging anywhere from the mere acknowledgement of the paradoxical nature of the competing assumptions (transcendence or contingency) to attempts at privileging one or another of the two assumptions at the expense of its alternative. In either case, however, the issue of conflict between contingency and transcendence is approached as a problematic that requires resolution. That is, the concern seems to
be that of resolving the paradox in order to make anthropological inquiry itself accountable to the very assumptions regarding contingency which it works to make available. What makes all of this so significant is that anyone should approach the paradox as something that requires resolution in the first place. That is, the paradox is seen as problematic only where there is an implicit claim that one’s own knowledge claims themselves are not contingent on the circumstances of their production (even where those claims are that someone else’s knowledge is so contingent). Were this not the case, and were the contingent nature of one’s own claims (about the contingency of knowledge in general) itself employed as a display of the assertion which it itself entails, then there would be no need to attempt a resolution — that is, no problematic to attend to. The debate surrounding this issue, then, is one in which the contestants attempt to appropriate the rhetorical impact that an appeal to transcendent, value-neutrality provides even in making the claim that no such quality exists.

**Reworking Realism**

One particularly interesting example of how this appropriation occurs is that of Martyn Hammersley’s *What’s Wrong with Ethnography*? (1992). Hammersley takes up the sort of paradox entailed by a representational model of language in his discussion of what he glosses as realist and anti-realist readings of the ethnographic enterprise. For Hammersley, the resolution of the paradox between the necessity of contingency of perspective and the prospect of situational transcendence that an acknowledgement of that contingency suggests for him lies in what he refers to as a reworked realism. Though the details of his argument are rather involved, in the final analysis he argues that ethnographers should use a modified Popperian theory of falsification in order to manage the theoretical conflict between contingency and transcendence (Popper, 1959). Such a position — in which the relative degree of validity of a particular model is determined by its purported resistance to falsification — attends to the accountability of contingency by asserting the independence and autonomy of a representation’s object over and against that representation’s situated character. It is as if merely acknowledging *in principle* that
one's own viewpoint has limitations were tantamount in practice to transcending the confines which those limitations impose.

In addition, another way that Hammersley responds to what he sees as the problematics entailed by observations concerning the contingency of one’s viewpoint is to argue that they are self-refuting. The upshot of this is to acknowledge the reflexive implications of perspectival contingency as a means to reassert a theoretical distinction between representation and object. Thus, while Hammersley concedes that it is not possible to attain a viewpoint or representation which is not itself contingent on the conditions of its production, he nevertheless argues that the relative likelihood that a representation is falsifiable can be established (if not in actual practice, then at least in principle).

The very activity of interrogating the possibility of there existing some non-contingent, perspective-independent reality becomes, for Hammersley, the means whereby such a reality is asserted. This means that his interrogation of the assumptions at issue proceeds upon and is informed by those very assumptions themselves. Hammersley thus works to reassert a realist ontology rather than to respecify its terms. In this respect, Hammersley shares a great deal with much of the scholarship that he sets out to review because even while often noting that the competing demands for accountability implicate one another so that the assumptions entailed by one necessarily conflict with the assumptions entailed by its opposite (that is, contingency rules out transcendence and transcendence runs counter to contingency), such critiques take up the resolution of the conflict between these demands for accountability as their own business. An alternative, of course, would have been to approach the conflict and its management as a practical task whose accomplishment is (at least, in part) the business-at-hand of anthropology. From such an approach, transcendence and contingency could be regarded as co-implicating one another so that the attempt to achieve transcendence necessarily violates demand for the recognition of contingency. At the same time, the recognition of contingency implies the possibility of transcendence (as the site from which, paradoxically, contingency can be recognised as such). It is the management of this paradox that is an essentially constitutive feature of an anthropological undertaking itself.
Yet Hammersley’s review and much of the related scholarship to which it is a contribution do not do this. Instead, there is a drift whereby talk about the conflict between competing assumptions mixes with attending to the demands for accountability that they entail. Further, this involves some rather elegant rhetorical work in that the argument cycles-back and recognition of the conflict itself becomes a resource in the management of the paradox that it involves. For example, consider the way that in his critique of a realist position, Hammersley occasions the remarks whereby he works to reintroduce the very assumptions by which that position is itself informed (1992: 49-50, emphasis added):

In what direction does a solution to the ambivalence towards realism that is built into ethnography lie, then? The first step, I think, is to recognise that the realism often built into ethnographic methodology is of a relatively naïve or crude kind. Effectively, it assumes not only that the phenomena we study are independent of us, but that we can have direct contact with them, contact which provides knowledge whose validity is certain. [...] Such a view is clearly indefensible. It assumes that there is some foundation of direct knowledge to which we can get access. [...] The next step in the argument is to recognise that relativism is not the only alternative to naïve realism. There is a great danger of backing ourselves into a corner by deploying a dichotomy which obscures the wide range of epistemological positions available. We can maintain belief in the existence of phenomena independent of our claims about them, and in their knowability, without assuming that we can have unmediated contact with them and therefore that we can know with certainty that our knowledge of them is valid or invalid. The most promising strategy for resolving the problem, in my view, then, is to adopt a more subtle form of realism.

Here, the development of Hammersley’s argument is related to the issue of knowledge validity and the demand that an ethnography be held accountable to the assumption that the reality of which it is a purported description is independently verifiable. In arguing as he does here that there exists no reality which is description-independent, Hammersley implicitly introduces the very distinction which is at issue in the first place — viz., the distinction between knowledge and the reality about which that knowledge is said to be a representation, between epistemology and ontology. In other words, in recognising a conflict between the assumption that the object of one’s analytic gaze both results from and is independent of the activity whereby it is contemplated, Hammersley works to gain some purchase on that conflict and thereby to resolve the paradox it entails by means of the very activity of calling attention to it. Again, recognition of the conflict is itself employed as a resource in managing the paradox involved so that that which is denied is asserted in the very
denial itself. The maintaining of belief, for example, is here taken to be somehow distinct from the asserting of claims about the objects of that belief; the knowability of some phenomenon is taken to be different from contact (mediated or otherwise) with that phenomenon; and the issue of validity is regarded as somehow entailed by certainty (even where that claim is argued against).

Thus, relativism is deployed as a means of mediating in and where the potential for conflict arises as between the analytic meta-perspective and the perspectival limitations which it takes as its own object of scrutiny. Here Hammersley works to foreclose the potential for realism to be undermined through the implications of relativist arguments by attending to the implications of an anti-realist position without, however, dealing with the theoretical inferences that are entailed thereby. In short, the discussion of the debate surrounding the adequacy of ethnography takes the very sorts of concerns it addresses — that is, the management of conflict — as a means of engaging in the very sort of activity that it sets out to examine.

The Experience of Standing Outside Time

A similar response to the supposed problematics that are taken to undermine the credibility of ethnography (on the assumption of a realist ontology, that is) is that of Johannes Fabian. In particular, his discussion of ethnographic chronology resembles Hammersley’s critique in that it works to gain critical purchase from the acknowledgement of contingency as a means to resolve the paradox that it involves (Fabian, 1983). At issue here is something he refers to as co-evalness (or allochronism) involving, specifically the way that anthropological writing situates what it takes to be different cultural systems along a teleological scale such that any given socio-cultural system is construed as either more or less developed relative to some other culture on that same scale. For example, culture A (say, that of the Gahuku people of Papua New Guinea) is taken to be less ‘culturally advanced’ than culture B (say, a society from among the Western post-industrialised countries like those of Europe or North America). Crucial to Fabian’s discussion here is the relation between geo-physical space and temporality because what situating different cultures within such an evaluative scale entails is conceiving of them as located in different
times even when and where they are contemporaneous. Travel between different geo-
physical spaces thus denotes travel through time.

In developing this point, Fabian’s assertion is that to pursue the fieldwork
requisite for the production of an ethnographic account is itself to depend upon this
set of assumptions about time and space,13 and that this way of conceptualising the
spacio-temporal necessarily entails a fundamental contradiction in the practical
accomplishment of anthropology as an academic discipline which arises from the
conflict entailed between the tasks of the anthropologist-as-participant in a foreign
culture and the anthropologist-as-ethnographer of that culture (Fabian 1983: xi,
emphasis in original):

I will be searching . . . for an "error," an intellectual misconception, a defect of
reason which, even if it does not offer the explanation, may free our self-questioning
from the double bind of fate and evil. That error causes our societies to maintain
their anthropological knowledge in bad faith. We constantly need to cover up for a
fundamental contradiction: On the one hand we dogmatically insist that anthropology
rests on ethnographic research involving personal, prolonged interaction with the
Other. But then we pronounce upon the knowledge gained from such research a
discourse which construes the Other in terms of distance, spatial and temporal.

Specifically, epistemological warrant is accorded to the ethnography in proportion to
the success of its author-as-participant among those peoples to whose different geo-
physical and temporal space he or she has gained access and acquired firsthand
experience. At the same time, that warrant is undermined to the extent that it is held
accountable to the assumptions regarding contingency of perspective. Just as for
Hammersley, so too for Fabian the constitutive contradiction by which the
ethnographic enterprise is realised itself constitutes a problematic that requires
resolution rather than a phenomenon of interest in its own right.

On (Not) Being There

Perhaps the most celebrated response to the paradox involved in the anthropological
project which is similar to the sort of take that Fabian develops is that of Clifford
Geertz (1988). Geertz explores the constitutive paradox of anthropological writing as
a problematic by addressing how the production of ethnographic description as a
professional practice is one whose success is crucially dependent upon the use of
certain rhetorical devices whereby its authors imbue their accounts (and, by
implication, the theoretical constructs which they employ those descriptions to substantiate) with experiential authority in virtue of their own personal involvement among the peoples who are the object of those accounts.\textsuperscript{14} Again, as with the work of Hammersley and of Fabian, what is particularly interesting about this is how the conflict in demands for accountability that are constitutive of the ethnographic project is \textit{itself} taken up as a matter to be resolved. In Geertz's case, the objective appears to be one of making anthropology accountable to the assumptions of contingency by conceding the impossibility of transcendence. What is interesting about this is that such a concession is itself deployed as an implicit response to the demand for anthropological theory not to be circumscribed by the contingencies of its production. The concession is given for a response. This, however, is done \textit{from within} anthropology — as a way of attending to those very concerns which are its topic. That is, it is an attempt to legitimate anthropology, making it accountable to the assumptions concerning contingency that anthropology itself works to make available by simply acknowledging them.\textsuperscript{15}

In sum, we have briefly considered three different takes on the mutually co-implicative assumptions whose management and attending to is (at least partially) constitutive of anthropology as a disciplinary practice. What is significant here in terms of how these issues arise in the talk among Western expatriates we shall consider in the analytic chapters to follow is that the conversational participants attend to the same demands for accountability as a practical concern to be dealt with in their own talk. Both in professional contributions to the theoretical debate and the talk among expatriate speakers we shall have occasion to examine, the effort is to mediate the paradox rather than taking the activity of mediation as an interesting phenomenon to be considered in its own right.\textsuperscript{16} In this way, these participants work to \textit{do} anthropology, even while theorising what is involved in that activity. This thesis seeks to explore how that work of mediation is accomplished in accounts where cultural difference is attended to as a relevant concern as well as how the reflexive implications entailed in paradoxical nature of that conflict are handled in such talk. Thus, this thesis is concerned to respecify the issues that the debate surrounding the adequacy of ethnographic description throws up as its own analytic concern.
Dialogue and the Rhetorico-Responsive Model of Interaction

The purpose in addressing the sorts of concerns and debates within anthropology taken up in the previous section is least twofold: (1) to demonstrate the complexity with which a discussion of the reflexive implications of the debate have in and for its very own conduct; and, perhaps more importantly, (2) to situate this debate within the broader context of the Cartesian enterprise. These two concerns are, as the anthropological theorisation we have considered here demonstrates, ultimately related to one another. In terms of how they relate to the analytic concerns of this thesis, however, their relevance has to do in particular with the way that British and American expatriates, in working to account for their own presence in the Middle East, orient to the sorts of competing assumptions (and their associated demands for accountability) that are of concern in the theoretical debate surrounding the ethnographic enterprise. In this sense, their talk is very much an expression of Cartesian problematics — that is, as mentioned, a sort of mundane anthropology. More specifically, though, we shall also see that pursuing the issues that are at stake in the debate surrounding the adequacy of ethnographic description is accomplished when and where speakers attend to the potential for their own contributions to be construed either as prejudicial on the one hand, or else as unaware of and/or insensitive to differences in culturally determined outlook on the other. We shall return to consider these matters in considerably greater detail both in discussion below and in the chapters that comprise the substantive analysis of this thesis to follow; but before doing so, we need first to elaborate a bit more upon the matter of alterity and dualism with which we began this chapter. Only then will we be in a better position to consider the details of how these concerns are attended to in talk among expatriate speakers.

Dialogism and Social Constructionism

One of the major issues of concern with regard to the talk we examine in this thesis is alterity — the question of the Other. As we have touched upon, alterity is an issue for anthropology because it is the Other and the perspective of the Other which is that discipline’s object of analysis. Further, we have already suggested here that the
reflexive implications of situated contingency made relevant in discussions where the outlook of the Other is a topic itself holds significant ramifications for anthropology and for that discipline as a discursive undertaking which is itself accountable to particular assumptions constitutive of the Enlightenment project of inquiry. Now, an alternative approach to the question of alterity is to respecify the assumptions that inform one’s inquiry such that the Other is regarded as an accomplishment of situated discursive interaction. Specifically, this means regarding alterity as something that is intrinsic to the production of any discourse, as inherent in the production of any sort of utterance; since as an utterance, a discursive product is addressed to a set of assumptions which it thereby construes of an Other. It is to situate a perspective relative to some alternative which that perspective is directed to as contrastive. From such an approach, alterity is conceived of as inherent to the very activity of addressing the Other. The perspective of the Other is not regarded as autonomous, and independently inherent in some Other, but rather is regarded as arising in the activity whereby that Other is addressed and thereby construed as Other.

This position on what is involved in alterity is essentially the upshot of work in a dialogistic, rhetorico-responsive take on talk. A particular utterance is seen as oriented to the perspective of the Other, and it is in this orientation that alterity is constituted in and by the talk of participants to an episode of conversational interaction. It is the interactional response to that activity (a mutual orientation) by which this alterity-producing orientation is carried forward, extended in and through dialogic encounter itself. This is a different theoretical take on alterity than that developed within a Cartesian dualism because it does not begin with the assumption that there exist monadic, essentially individual points to and from which something is addressed; but rather that alterity is relationally constituted. In this way, the Self is regarded as constituted in some Other — that is, in the activity of orienting to a different perspective — and it is in that activity that difference in perspective as such is constituted.17

For our purposes here, of particular relevance to an approach of this sort is an emphasis upon and theoretical concern with the way that accounts of the world (or reality) are related to the interactional/social activity in which they come to be articulated. In particular, the emphasis here is on the interactional nature of those
accounts’ production such that they are reflexively oriented to the sorts of responses with which they might be met in dialogue. In other words, accounts of the world are produced, among other things, for how it (that account) might be received by some interactional Other(s) in dialogue. Thus, an account is situated within a rhetorical field of alternatives to which it might possibly be taken to contrast as a routine feature of talk’s production which Shotter (1993b) refers to as the rhetorico-responsive nature of interaction. More specifically in terms of the detailed manner whereby an account is actually related, this means that talk is shaped in anticipatory foreclosure of a range of possible receptions with which it might be met — that talk is reflexively oriented toward pre-empting a particular reading/reception by which its significance might be construed. It is in and through the work of such anticipatory foreclosure that contrastive rhetorical positions are themselves interpellated. It is this particular feature of a dialogic contribution that is referred to in the work of the Russian literary theorist and social philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin with the term addressivity. It is in such anticipatory work that the contrastive positions are inferentially made available in the talk. This work is, however, more complicated than this relatively simple description might imply because the very anticipatory work whereby a response is foreclosed itself becomes a factor in the shaping of the exchange between participants in the course of that encounter’s ongoing development. Furthermore, it is in and through this activity of anticipatory work that interlocutors come to negotiate the meaning of their contribution in the process of establishing a distinction between their relative positions (Edmondson, 1981: Ch. 3).

**Dialogue and the Negotiation of Meaning**

One way that we can illustrate what a dialogic approach involves is to consider some specific examples of conversational interaction. Here again, Bakhtin’s work is of particular relevance. In terms of what is involved in the interactional work of anticipating the sort of response with which one’s contribution might be met in dialogue, Bakhtin discusses this under the rubric of voice. What is important to see here is how a contribution’s (potential) reception is integral to its formulation. Consider, for example, the approach that Bakhtin develops in his analytic discussion
of the following excerpt from Dostoyevsky’s novel *Poor Folk* (1960; quoted in Bakhtin, 1984: 207):

A day or two ago, in private conversation, Yevstafy Ivanovich said that the most important virtue in a citizen was to earn money. He said in jest (I know it was in jest) that morality consists in not being a burden to anyone. Well, I’m not a burden to anyone. My crust of bread is my own; it is true it is a plain crust of bread, at times a dry one; but there it is, earned by my toil and put to lawful and irreproachable use. Why, what can one do? I know very well, of course, that I don’t do much by copying; but all the same I am proud of working and earning bread in the sweat of my brow. Why, what if I am a copying clerk, after all?

In examining this particular passage, Bakhtin works to show the way that the remarks of the character Makar Devushkin are oriented to the potentially responsive contributions of an (otherwise) absent interlocutor. His point is that Makar Devushkin’s remarks are shaped by those anticipated responses and that those very responses are accessible in the remarks by which they are oriented to as potentially available. In other words, these remarks have in them a sort of shadow or trace of the contrastive perspective to which they are directed, made available through what Bakhtin refers to as their accentual and syntactic structuring. In order to show this more clearly, Bakhtin (ibid.: 210) modifies this same passage, adding an explicit version of those alternative responses so that the text resembles a conversation between Makar Devushkin and an interlocutor giving voice to the statements to which his remarks are responsively oriented:

THE OTHER: One must know how to earn a lot of money. One shouldn’t be a burden to anyone. But you are a burden to others.

MAKAR DEVUSHKIN: I’m not a burden to anyone. I’ve got my own piece of bread.

THE OTHER: But what a piece of bread it is! Today it’s there, and tomorrow it’s gone. And it’s probably a dry one, at that?

MAKAR DEVUSHKIN: It is true it is a plain crust of bread, at times a dry one, but there it is, earned by my toil and put to lawful and irreproachable use.

THE OTHER: But what kind of toil! All you do is copy. You’re not capable of anything else.

MAKAR DEVUSHKIN: Well, what can one do! I know very well, of course, that I don’t do much by copying, but all the same I am proud of it.

THE OTHER: Oh, there’s something to be proud of, all right! Copying! It’s disgraceful!

MAKAR DEVUSHKIN: Well, in fact really, so what if I am just a copying clerk! . . . [etc.]
The point for Bakhtin in all of this is not to make the claim that an utterance determines its response; but that an utterance in nevertheless responsively oriented to the potential uptake with which it might be met in subsequent dialogue. In other words, Bakhtin is not claiming that these remarks here are the actual responses of an interlocutor; but rather that these are the sorts of potential rejoinders to which Makar Devushkin's remarks are oriented, and that the responsive orientation to just such rejoinders is made available in and with these very remarks themselves as an intrinsic feature of their design. In this sense, then, even though an utterance originates from an individual speaker, it nevertheless has the responsive reaction within it, so to speak, displayed in the concerns to which it gives expression. This is what Bakhtin means when he says that a single utterance is dialogic (ibid.: 209, emphasis in original):

Let us imagine two rejoinders of the most intense dialogue—a discourse and a counter-discourse—which, instead of following one another and being uttered by two different mouths, are superimposed one on the other and merge into a single utterance issuing from a single mouth. These two rejoinders move in opposite directions and clash with one another; therefore their overlapping and merging into a single utterance results in a most intense mutual interruption. This collision of two rejoinders—each integral in itself and single-accented—is now transformed, in the new utterance resulting from their fusion, into the most acute interruption of voices, contradictory in every detail, in every atom of the utterance. The dialogic collision has gone within, into the subllest structural elements of speech.

Again, the fact that a single utterance is the expression of what Bakhtin describes here as a sort of vocal fusion which contains an anticipated response within it is not to say that an utterance determines or indeed ever can determine the actual response with which it is met in conversational interaction. This is so because the anticipatory work of an utterance is itself something to which a response can always be made. Thus, whatever effort there may be to foreclose a particular construal of one's contribution is itself an effort which falls outside the scope of those projective attempts at anticipatory control or foreclosure.

Bakhtin thus distinguishes between different senses of the term dialogic: (1) the dialogue which is internal to an utterance (in the sense described in the immediately preceding quotation), and (2) the interactional exchange that actually takes place between conversational participants and which involves the response of an interlocutor that itself escapes such anticipatory attempts at foreclosure as carried
Dialogic Exchange and the Negotiation of Meaning

In order to understand exactly what is involved with this second kind of dialogue and in particular how it relates to the situated negotiation of meaning, consider the following extract of conversational material taken from an extended interview involving a junior-level member of the U.S. diplomatic corps assigned to the American Embassy in Kuwait (speaker DB). This particular exchange was recorded in February of 1992, shortly following the events of the then recent Persian Gulf War. In the conversation recorded here, the speakers are attending to the business of introducing a range of issues having to do with the conducting of the Gulf War and of the United States' involvement in the hostilities related thereto. 23

(1.0) Interview, 44 — junior-level U.S. diplomat

1  KM: Yeah. Well you must have been following the war pretty closely then, right? You [said] uh-
2  DB: [Mm.]
3  
4  DB: [Uh-] but uh- pretty much everybody was (Hx)@ @ back
5  KM: [Yeah.]
6  DB: home,
7  KM: Yeah, but I mean you- you would have uh- I mean but- but in the diplomatic corps, you’re [saying] everyone was following it. Is
8  DB: [Mm mm.]
9  KM: [[that it?]]
10 DB: [[Oh yeah.]] Yeah.
11  
12 KM: Yeah, so um- I mean, I have some questions here ((REFERS TO INTERVIEW SCHEDULE)) about the war I’m interest[ed in] as well
13  DB: [Okay.]
17  KM:  xx, uh- well the first question on my list is always "Why did- why
did the United States pursue the Gulf War". I mean as opposed to
pursuing sanctions or uh- [pursuing] it- another option, why did

20  DB:  [Right.]

21  KM:  they- why did the US government choose the course of action that it
DID. Um-

23  DB:  Just, you know, as my personal opinion? Or uh-

26  KM:  Whatever you want to- I- whatever you feel inclined to GIVE
[me] actually, but uh- because I don’t know how uh- how much at

28  DB:  [Yeah.]

29  KM:  liberty you are to- to tell me [[xxxx,]]

30  DB:  [[Yeah. I can’t talk-]] um-

Involved in an exchange even as brief as this one is a great deal of rather subtle interactional work. Of particular concern to us here, though, is the way that the speakers in this exchange work interactively to negotiate the significance of their contributions to the encounter by managing the potential reception of those contributions in virtue of the projective (or anticipatory foreclosure) work on the part of their respective interlocutor. In examining this exchange, one inclination is simply to consider the talk as incidental to the actual business of discussing the reasons for U.S. involvement in the Gulf War. All this preliminary work might thus be regarded as somehow incidental to the real business-at-hand of the talk — a sort of verbal meandering around, perhaps clumsily conducted in order to establish exactly what it is that the interviewer has in mind in pursuing the talk. As we shall see directly, though, it is precisely in these preliminary remarks where a great deal of the negotiation of meaning takes place. Specifically, it is in this activity that speakers work to establish the significance of their (forthcoming) remarks as adequate to the occasion to which those remarks are a contribution. That is, speakers work here to negotiate the adequacy of their forthcoming contributions as appropriate to the occasion of which they are constitutive. Essential to this work is the very dialogic aspect of the contributions that each of the speakers makes in his respective turn-at-talk. More specifically, it is the first kind of dialogue to which we referred above — the dialogue internal to a particular utterance — that provides a resource with which interlocutors work to negotiate the significance of their talk in the course of pursuing
the second kind of dialogue — the actual, turn-by-turn exchange between individual speakers.

The best way to begin discussing the details of what these different kinds of dialogue involves is first to consider the interactional work in terms of how the speakers make one another’s situated activities accountable within the context of an interview situation (Clayman, 1992; Hutchby, 1996). Interview situations are remarkable as occasions of talk because, among other things, they often involve features in which the participants orient to the interaction as the generating of talk-to-be-overheard. This is evidenced by the particular way in which questions are broached and answers are likewise offered up for consideration. For example, in an interview situation, a speaker might raise a question which, in other circumstances, might itself possibly be called into account as one for which he or she (the interviewer) might reasonably be expected already to know the answer. In the interview situation, however, the status of the question is different than it might be in other circumstances in that the question-and-answer format is the very means whereby the speakers ongoingly accomplish their talk as an interview throughout the course of its conduct.24

In other words, it is precisely because the interviewer is working projectively to anticipate what the answer to his or her question might entail that the asking-of-questions and the related giving-of-answers is taken by the concerned parties as contributing to the talk as the accomplishment of an interview. Thus, the status of the question is such that it contributes toward that end in a manner which is constitutive of the particular occasion of talk in which it occurs. For example, by letting a question pass, as it were, and not making accountable the interviewer’s broaching of that question; the interviewee thereby assents to the content of that question as constitutive of the talk’s topic while at the same time construing what it is that he or she takes that content to be (as displayed in his or her response thereto). In contrast, by failing to answer an interviewer’s question — that is, by interrogating the relevance of a question to the talk-at-hand or in some other way making that question accountable — the interviewee has at his or her disposal the means with which to reject the question’s content for the sake of its relevance in constituting the talk’s topic. The making accountable of an interviewer’s question, therefore, constitutes an
interviewee’s contribution to managing the talk’s content in the circumstances of its
generation. Now, in terms of what this has to do with the different kinds of
dialogue that we have considered and their relation to the negotiation of meaning,
these question-and-answer contributions might be considered for how they are both
dialogically related to one another, as well as for what sorts of internal dialogue
might be involved.

We can begin here by first considering the turn-at-talk wherein the interviewer
quotes from the written schedule of questions to which he refers (‘Yeah, so um- I
mean, I have some questions here about the war I’m interested in as well xx, uh-
well the first question on my list is always "Why did- why did the United States
pursue the Gulf War". I mean as opposed to pursuing sanctions or uh- pursuing it-
another option, why did they- why did the US government choose the course of action
that it DID. Um’, lines 14-22). In terms of the internal dialogue involved, the
shadows or traces of contrasting positions are made available where this turn is
shaped in anticipation of a range of possible responses which it works to foreclose.

For example, in referring to the interview schedule as such, the interviewer’s
remarks are oriented toward the potential that his contribution might itself be made
accountable as contentiously raising a range of implications concerning his
interlocutor’s intentions and motivation for contributing to U.S. foreign policy
objectives. That is, the question could be construed as implying that U.S. policy with
regard to the Gulf War is unjustifiable or illegitimate and that speaker DB, in his
capacity as a diplomatic staff member, is accountably complicit in contributing to
the pursuit of those objectives. The potential dialogic response to which his turn-at-
talk is directed might thus be something along the lines of an inquiry into the
appropriateness of the query as raising exactly such inferences. This could
conceivably take the form of a response on the part of speaker DB such as: ‘Do you
always ask such personally implicative questions of interviewees?’ or simply ‘How
dare you imply that I have contributed to a morally reprehensible activity’. The point
here is that the actual contribution of the interviewer (speaker KM) at this juncture
is reflexively oriented to the possibility of its being taken as raising a range of
potentially damaging inferences which have the effect of threatening continuation of
the interactional encounter given the range of assumptions regarding moral
responsibility for war and violent conflict (and the interviewee’s relation thereto) that they might be read as raising. It is in anticipation of just such a reading that these remarks are directed. The particular way that this is accomplished here is through the employing of the interview schedule as a resource to anticipate and foreclose such a response.

At the same time, it is in the actual response to the very inferences that are thus made available (in speaker KM’s work of anticipatory foreclosure) that speaker DB addresses his own reply (‘Just, you know, as my personal opinion? Or uh-’, line 24). Notice, though, that his doing this involves working to negotiate the significance of the inferences through the formulation of their relevance to the very interaction itself. Specifically, this involves speaker DB making available a distinction between what he refers to as personal opinion and some other (as yet, unnamed) category of knowledge. Now, what is important for our point here is not the question of whether the reply that speaker DB subsequently goes on to develop later in the interview is indeed an instance of personal opinion or not; but rather of how precisely, in making the distinction available as he does here, speaker DB’s reply is dialogically oriented to the potential responses on the part of his interlocutor (the interviewer, speaker KM). In this particular case, the distinction very nicely anticipates the potential for the interviewer to find his (speaker DB’s) account inadequate given the significance of the category entitlement (as a member of the diplomatic corps) whose relevance the interviewer works to make available in his prior turns-at-talk (lines 1-11). It is in exactly this way — through the broaching of contrastive categories and the subsequent construal of them as situationally relevant — that both speakers work to negotiate the very terms on which the conducting of their interactional engagement is to proceed. That is, in their mutual orientation to the classificatory distinction, they interactively co-constitute it as the basis upon which they can proceed with their talk.

Finally, notice further that in the interviewer’s uptake (lines 26-29) to speaker DB’s initial response (line 24) to his (the interviewer’s) question (lines 14-22), the interviewer also attends to the accountability of his own question and the relevancies for its appropriateness as attended to in speaker DB’s previous turn-at-talk (line 24). In replying as he does with a reference to the inclination of his interlocutor
(‘whatever you feel inclined to GIVE me, actually’, lines 26-27), the interviewer works here to foreclose his own accountability for the answer speaker DB is yet to provide to the query in the original question. At the same time, however, he (the interviewer) also attends to the possible suggestion implicit in speaker DB’s response that the initial query might have been a request for information that he (speaker DB) was unable to provide; and in so doing, displays his acceptance of the classificatory distinction it introduces along with the implicationally available constraints that it makes relevant.28 It is in responses to the anticipatory foreclosure work — the internal dialogue — which they take to be available in one another’s contributions that these speakers negotiate how their talk is significant for the setting of which it is constitutive. This is the result of jointly negotiation accomplished in the responsive orientation they display towards one another. Thus, it is in this sense that the internally dialogic aspect of a given utterance (of the first sort we considered) features in the interactive dialogue (of the second sort) by providing the contrastive vocal content in relation to which a response is formulated.

Dialogue and the Dualism of Representationalism

The implications that this sort of dialogic orientation hold for a social theory are quite far-reaching. The work of Bakhtin is closely related to the debate surrounding the adequacy of ethnographic description that we touched upon in the previous section because it addresses the dualism implicit in a representational model of language. Specifically, in conceiving of the utterance as dialogically oriented, the very independence of perspective which is implicitly deployed to bolster the credibility of an account is itself respecified. The question of whether a particular account is adequate is only meaningful in a context where one assumes a subject-object dichotomy. In that a dialogic approach works to suspend such an assumption (since it regards the nature of some object as intrinsic to the dialogic activity by which it is objectified), the problem concerning the adequacy of an ethnographic description simply fails to emerge. That is, the very problem with the adequacy of one’s perspective (or account) of the world is dissolved in and where that world is regarded as relationally defined in dialogic interaction with some interlocutor. This raises a number of interesting theoretical considerations. In particular, this means that the
position that one adopts, so to speak, is always open-ended since it is always relationally defined. 'The . . . assumption of a gap between mind and world is understood by Bakhtin as a necessary interdependence between the two, making all discussion of a transcendental ego superfluous or at least inadequate' (Clark and Holquist, 1984: 67). For an ethnomethodologically inspired discourse analysis, as for Bakhtin, the 'world' within which 'mind' interacts is that of a projected relationship with some Other — the dialogic potentiality in the discursive position of one's interlocutor (see also discussion of related strands of sociological theory in Knorr-Cetina, 1988: 22-27). Remarking upon this matter, Clark and Holquist (1984: 90, italics in original) note:

Alterity is the name Bakhtin assigns to the logic that determines mind, in the sense that it grants the capability of imagining whole entities to some aspects of the perception, namely to other selves that are not that mind, but it denies that capability to another aspect of perception, namely the self that is the mind.

As we have seen, Bakhtin's analytic work on voice is particularly important because, among other things, it attempts to reveal the way that utterances or contributions in dialogue are designed in relation to their reception — to the voice of an Other. Bakhtin worked out an analytic taxonomy of no fewer than seventeen distinct categories with different dispositionally relational orientations ranging from that of '[d]irect, unmediated discourse directed exclusively toward its referential object, as an expression of the speaker’s ultimate semantic authority' (Bakhtin, 1984: 199) to various subtle yet distinct discriminatory refinements in orientation to alternative perspectival positions referred to as 'double-voiced discourse' (ibid.), including here various sorts of parody, stylization, etc. One way of approaching talk might be to elaborate upon this taxonomic categorisation by looking for instances of these different sorts of voice throughout an analytic corpus of material. To do this, however, would in some sense be to do violence to the interaction by failing to examine the business-at-hand in that talk. It would be to leave aside the work of the participants in favour of the development of a taxonomy — a move to which Bakhtin himself would no doubt have been opposed." Thus, while the notion of voice is clearly relevant in exploring the talk at hand, it is secondary to exploring that talk's business — a heuristic or analytic prosthesis. Far more significant here is to explore the kinds of relevancies — the shared assumptions — that participants orient to as
relevant to the conducting of their situated interaction, and to examine how the social interaction is constituted in and through such activity.\textsuperscript{30}

\textit{Alterity and Accountability}

To summarise at this point, the significance of a dialogic approach for the present investigative work, one of the issues with which this thesis is concerned is that of the problem of the Other — the issue of alterity. This is so in at least two different ways. In the first place, the thesis is concerned with alterity as an accomplishment in and of talk. That is, it is concerned with how interactional participants orient to the perspective of an interactional Other (or Others) in formulating their own relationally contrastive position. We have considered how this first kind of alterity is explained employing the metaphor of dialogue. The second kind of alterity with which this thesis is concerned involves the way that perspectival difference itself features as a topic of talk, and with how such talk is itself employed as a resource or device with which to situate one’s position in contrast to an (often potential) interlocutor — that is, to a contrastive rhetorical position. The concern with alterity taken up in this thesis, then, will be with how the theoretically disputed issues concerning alterity are themselves deployed in argumentative and other contexts as a way of attending to the interactional business-at-hand in those contexts (Knorr-Cetina, 1988: 44-49). Otherness (perspectival difference, alterity) is thus a concern in this thesis as both an interactional accomplishment — the outcome or achievement of actual situated dialogue — and as a topic of concern to be pursued within such dialogue (and with which this first, interactionally achieved, alterity can be accomplished).\textsuperscript{31}

It is important to make this distinction clear because an analysis of alterity in talk (the topic of \textit{this} thesis) can easily get confused with issues of alterity as a participant concern. In other words, because the issue of alterity is essential to an examination of the work that speakers do in conversational interaction, the temptation in exploring alterity as a topic of talk in the materials we examine is to engage in the same sort of analytic level-mixing that Hammersley and some of the other anthropological theorists we have considered do in their discussion of the issues surrounding the realism/anti-realism debate. That is, because the concern of participants is with the self-same theoretical issues that our own analytic endeavour
takes as its concern, the tendency is to confuse the issues that we seek to explore in our own analysis of talk with the (very situationally distinct and contextually relevant) issues that participants pursue in their own talk. 32

**Contributions to Social Constructionism**

Throughout the preceding section, a number of references have been made to various sorts of analytic contributions from ethnomethodology. In this section, we will turn to consider more explicitly the relation of ethnomethodology to social constructionism. This will involve examining certain similarities between the two as already mentioned. Perhaps more importantly, we will also examine some contentious or problematic issues that distinguish ethnomethodology from other work in social constructionism. Again, we shall see that the work of Bakhtin provides a useful point of departure with which to highlight the methodological issues that are of relevance to informing the analysis in this thesis.

One way to go about this comparative task is to stress the sorts of concerns that are common to both a Bakhtinian analytic and ethnomethodology — concerns which characterise a social constructionist approach more generally. Possibly the most significant among these is an emphasis upon mundane, everyday social interaction. Bakhtin himself confined his exploration of analytic materials to works of literature; 33 however, as Morson and Emerson (1990) point out, the theoretical implications of Bakhtin’s analytic work is of far greater significance in terms of the implications it raises for a philosophy of the social than his choice of analytic data might otherwise suggest. Indeed, Bakhtin’s choice of analytic materials was to some extent decided by the limitations of the technologies as his disposal; and while access to audio- and video-recording equipment makes it possible to examine the most subtle and minute details of interaction with an attention to detail that was not possible for Bakhtin, it is still the same analytic interest with situated interaction that is of primary concern in the work of both Bakhtin and ethnomethodology. Both projects are concerned to explore how interlocutors accomplish mutual orientation in mundane interaction — an activity that Bakhtin referred to with the term *prosaics* and which ethnomethodology glosses in terms of the practical accomplishment of *intersubjectivity*. More specifically, the two share an emphasis on the anticipatory
responsiveness of interlocutors to one another's contributions — both actual and potential — in given episodes of situated interaction.

This common concern means that the two bodies of work share a great deal in terms of the detail of their analytic methods. For instance, both approaches are concerned to examine the utterance as the fundamental unit of analysis (as opposed to some other structurally defined entity such as the linguistically categorised sentence or the logical proposition of analytic philosophy). The reason for this, of course, has to do what the interactional nature of an utterance as oriented to the uptake with which it is met in conversational interaction. In contrast, structural analyses were among Bakhtin's most enduring targets of criticism precisely because they fail to take into account this relational aspect of interaction as dealt with in the sort of analysis that he worked to develop under the rubric of meta-linguistics. For both Bakhtin and ethnomethodology, the utterance is to be understood as retrospectively and prospectively oriented, relationally constituted by as well as constitutive of its context and as involving an in-principal, infinitely defeasible or unfinalizable project about and within which more can always be said (Garfinkel, 1967: Ch. 1).

Addressing the details of this particular context-related feature of talk, Heritage (1984: 242, italics in original; quoted in part in Edwards, 1997: 100) notes that within an ethnomethodological approach:

it is assumed that the significance of any speaker's communicative action is doubly contextual in being both context-shaped and context-renewing. A speaker's action is context-shaped in that its contribution to an on-going sequence of actions cannot adequately be understood except by reference to the context — including, especially, the immediately preceding configuration of actions — in which it participates. This contextualization of utterances is a major, and unavoidable, procedure which hearers use and rely on to interpret conversational contributions and it is also something which speakers pervasively attend to in the design of what they say. The context-renewing character of conversational actions is directly related to the fact that they are context-shaped. Since every 'current' action will itself form the immediate context of some 'next' action in a sequence, it will inevitably contribute to the framework in terms of which the next action will be understood. In this sense, the context of a next action is repeatedly renewed with every current action. Moreover, each action will, by the same token, function to renew (i.e. maintain, alter or adjust) any more generally prevailing sense of context which is the object of the participants' orientations and actions.

In terms of the sorts of analytic issues with which we are concerned in this thesis, these comments relate to the way that the talk of participants is dialogically oriented to the possible reception with which it can potentially be met (as we saw in the
analysis of Extract 1.0 above). In addition, however, this prospective/retrospective feature of interaction also means that a given set of assumptions potentially made available in talk itself provides the dialogic context relative to which speakers ongoingly formulate their remarks within a single turn-at-talk. That is, the context in relation to which a given utterance is situated is such that it involves making available various (often conflicting) assumptions that participants orient to as relevant in their talk and to which they display an orientation in their ongoing contributions to the interaction (Buttney, 1993). With reference to the conversational interaction we shall consider in the analytic chapters of this thesis, these assumptions are specifically related to a range of different issues having to do with both the awareness of cultural difference and prejudice. In particular, this means that speakers attend to the potential for their talk to be taken as an instance of prejudice while at the same time working to express an awareness of and/or sensitivity to cultural difference when accounting for their experience of living in the Middle East. In so doing, these speakers are reflexively oriented to a number of concerns regarding the accountable nature of the descriptive practices in which they themselves are engaged at the time. More interesting still is how talk about either cultural difference or prejudice are mutually co-implicative in the sense that by working to attend to one such demand, a speaker necessarily neglects its opposite, which in turn creates the context for subsequent talk with which to attend to the opposite concern. Talk about either prejudice or cultural difference are thus mutually co-occasioning. In working to display sensitivity to and tolerance of cultural difference, speakers then orient (in subsequent talk) to the potential for that very work itself to be construed as prejudicially motivated. Likewise, talk about prejudicial expectations itself occasions subsequent talk by which speakers work to display an awareness of and sensitivity to cultural difference. Prejudice and the awareness of cultural difference thus form a constitutive contradiction which functions as a sort of vehicle for the interaction by which speakers account for their presence in the Middle East since either one occasions its opposite.

These sorts of issues are important for how they relate to social constructionism in that they point up how the social (defined in terms of the sharing by participants of various norms and values which they thereby realise as relevant for
the conducting of their interaction) is an ongoing accomplishment of situated activities. The social is constituted in and by the jointly accomplished activity of mutual orientation.\textsuperscript{37}

Table 1 Points of Similarity in the Approaches of Bakhtin and Ethnomethodology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BAKHTIN</th>
<th>ETHNOMETHODOLOGY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>the ‘already-spoken-about’ and the ‘not-yet-spoken’ (Morson and Emerson, 1990: 136-138)</td>
<td>retrospective/prospective orientation, context-shaping and context-renewing relation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>metalinguistics (Bakhtin, 1984: 202)</td>
<td>emphasis on actual talk in use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>open-endedness/unfinishedness</td>
<td>ongoing accomplishment in uptake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prosaics (Morson and Emerson, 1990: 21-23)</td>
<td>emphasis on everyday, mundane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>utterance</td>
<td>emphasis on utterance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>joint creation of word</td>
<td>interactive accomplishment of sense (à la Wittgenstein)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Points of Comparison: Differences in Contributions to Social Constructionism

314. Here we come up against a remarkable and characteristic phenomenon in philosophical investigation: the difficulty—I might say—is not that of finding the solution but rather that of recognizing as the solution something that looks as if it were only a preliminary to it. "We have already said everything.—Not anything that follows from this, no, \textit{this} itself is the solution!"

This is connected, I believe, with our wrongly expecting an explanation, whereas the solution of the difficulty is a description, if we give it the right place in our considerations. If we dwell upon it, and do not try to get beyond it.

The difficulty here is: to stop.

(Wittgenstein, 1967: 58e, emphasis in original; quoted in part in Heritage, 1984: 101)

An investigation conducted under the auspices of the practical management of social order does not and cannot provide an answer to the question ‘what general principal provides for social order?’ If examined from the point of view of an interest in that question then such an investigation will appear to lack an answer to it. However, such a study does not fail to produce an answer, since it does not try to answer it.

It has withdrawn that question and substituted another one.

(Sharrock and Anderson, 1987: 294, emphasis in original)

In touching on points of similarity between the work of Mikhail Bakhtin and ethnomethodology as we have above, our concern was to highlight briefly some of the central features of a social constructionist take on talk in general. In this section,
we will consider some of the more problematic issues that this relates to in terms of social theory. Specifically, we will be concerned here with how the respective approaches developed both in the work of Bakhtin and in ethnomethodology differ with regard to two specific theoretical issues: that concerning the nature of (1) social structure, and (2) individual identity/subjectivity. These two issues, as we shall see, are very closely related in that the approach which one adopts to an analysis of social interaction necessarily entails making certain assumptions about individual identity and *vice-versa*. The principal difference that distinguishes the work of Bakhtin and that of ethnomethodology is that of the degree to which either of them takes these issues up as their own concern. In the case of Bakhtin’s work the issue of individual subjectivity and its relation to the social is a matter of some concern, and Bakhtin devotes considerable attention to exploring what he takes to be the theoretical implications of a dialogic approach that emphasises the responsive nature of talk. In contrast, for ethnomethodology, the matter of individual subjectivity is of interest only where it arises as an issue for participants in their talk. Where individual subjectivity is not a matter of participant concern, ethnomethodological analyses opt to focus on examining the business-at-hand to which interlocutors devote their activities in a given episode of interaction.

This issue is particularly relevant to this thesis because of the reflexive implications that a social constructionist exploration of talk about social structure holds for the analysis whereby that exploration is accomplished. More specifically, the issue of social structure is particularly relevant to this chapter because any methods chapter involves accounting for and justifying the analytic techniques employed in the thesis itself. This typically means working to establish the independence of the analytic referent from the objectifying discursive practices whereby that referent is made available. However, in that a social constructionist position is one where this assumption is itself called into question, then an account of the very methods whereby an exploration of this objectifying practice is accomplished by speakers in their conversational interaction is one which must necessarily also take itself into account. In other words, this chapter is concerned with methods (‘Approaching the Other: A Theory of Methods’), and the method adopted in this thesis is one of examining the details of talk as a way of deconstructing or
ironising (and thereby objectifying) the practices that social actors *themselves* pursue to engage in objectification. Now, in that the very ironising activity that forms social constructionism’s analytic object is itself the activity (on participants’ part) of objectification (specifying analytic objects), then the thesis’ own analytic work whereby such participants’ ironising activity is made available is itself implicated as an instance of that very activity it sets out to investigate — that is, as an instance of instance making. Thus, the implications for the thesis of an exploration of objectifying practices is reflexively multi-levelled. This is especially so in a thesis where the reflexive implications (*for* that thesis) of reflexivity-in-the-talk are the means whereby speakers hold structure accountable to dual and conflicting assumptions about the practice of accounting for activity with reference to some social structure (i.e., Arab culture). It is this sort of problematic that is definitive of any project of deconstructive irony. It also reflexively constitutes the thesis’ problematic — that is, the problematic of the methods section of the thesis. This further relates to the crisis in anthropology (surrounding the adequacy of ethnography) to which we referred at the beginning of the chapter.

*Not Somewhere Else: The Eminence of Social Structure*

One writer who takes up the issue of social structure and who argues for structure as an accomplishment of talk in interaction is Emmanuel Schegloff. For example, the issue of social structure is taken up in his article ‘On Talk and Its Institutional Occasions’ where he considers how the interview constitutes a social institution whose structure is accomplished in the mutual orientation and display between interlocutors to the question-and-answer pair-part format. Discussing the way that social structure is an accomplishment of situated activity, Schegloff addresses related matters in his discussion of *relevance* and *procedural consequentiality*, noting the ethnomethodological emphasis upon the relevance, for participants, of institutional structure and its consequentiality to the conducting of their interaction. Schegloff (1992: 109-110, emphasis in original) makes his point this way:

Now let us be clear about what *is* and what is *not* being said here. The point is not that persons are somehow *not* male or female, upper or lower class, with or without power, professors and/or students. They may be, on some occasion, demonstrably members of one or another of those categories. Nor is the issue that those aspects of
the society do not matter, or did not matter on that occasion. We may share a lively
sense that indeed they do matter, and that they mattered on that occasion, and
mattered for just that aspect of some interaction on which we are focusing. There is
still the problem [however] of showing from the details of the talk or other conduct
in the materials that we are analyzing that those aspects of the scene are what the
parties are oriented to. For that is to show how the parties are embodying for one
another the relevancies of the interaction and are thereby producing the social
structure.

Schegloff's point here is to say that at issue is not whether the interaction took place
in a given institutional setting, but that the relevance of that setting is oriented to by
participants. In other words, unless the setting is demonstrably consequential to the
conducting of the interaction in which it takes place (versus its being an otherwise
irrelevant feature of that occasion), and unless the speakers are so oriented to it as
such and display for one another their orientation thereto; then it cannot, for an
ethnomethodologically inspired project, be employed as an explanatory resource in
an analysis of the interaction in question. Schegloff's concern is, again, with the way
in which participants make their activities meaningful for one another, and he is
interested in institutional settings to the extent that their relevance is provided for by
participants (when it is provided for) in the course of their work to accomplish that
task. The relevance of setting to an analysis of interaction is thus, for Schegloff
(ibid.: 111, emphasis in original), not something to which an independent appeal
(independent of participant activity) is methodologically justified:

Even if we can show by analysis of the details of the interaction that some
categorization of 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 characterized, 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 (e.g. "the hospital") issue in
any consequence for the shape, form, trajectory, content, or character of the
interaction the parties conduct? And what is the mechanism by which the context-so-
understood has determinate consequences for the talk?

Of particular significance, once again, is that the social structure of setting is
constituted in and through interactional work whereby participants provide for the
relevance and consequentiality of a structure for the procedural conducting of their
activities. It is in and through such activity where structure is brought off —
accomplished. Structure is eminent in activity where its relevance is provided for.

Bakhtin's take on all this is somewhat different. Specifically, Bakhtin employs
the notion of social structure as an analytic resource. That is, he employs the notion
of such structure as an explanatory device with which to inform his analysis of
dialogue; and while not always consistent in this regard, he at times nonetheless
accounts for the activity of dialogic interlocutors as in some sense determined by pre-
existing structures of the social. In particular, this is apparent in Bakhtin’s treatment
of social language, national language and speech genre. For example, with regard to
the first of these, Wertsch notes: ‘In Bakhtin’s view, a speaker always invokes a
social language in producing an utterance, and this social language shapes what the
speaker’s individual voice can say’ (1991: 59). Another way of saying this is that in
expressing parody, straightforwardness or any of the other vocal qualities that Bakhtin
distinguishes in the taxonomy of voice types he outlines; a speaker is said to do so
in relation to some alternative type. The vocal disposition (point-of-view or
perspective) is defined in relation to some social language through which he or she
ventriloquiases and which, in this sense, is determinative of his or her talk.

In an ethnomethodological approach, one does not assume the pre-existence
of some language form that determines or shapes what the voice can say, rather one
would analyze an utterance by saying that the vocal disposition acquires its status as
such in the uptake with which it is met in the interactional encounter where it occurs.
In other words, for ethnomethodology, whether some conversational contribution is
or is not an instance of what Bakhtin refers to as ventriloquisation is itself a
participant concern as displayed by participants for one another in the uptake that a
given utterance occasions. Thus, if an utterance is responded to by an interlocutor in
a subsequent turn-at-talk as somehow non-serious, a joke, or in some way not a
straightforward expression of what its speaker intended; then the social language that
it is taken to be a parody of is simultaneously taken to exist (by virtue of the manner
in which the contribution is regarded as different). That is, the alluded to social
language of which the utterance is said to be a send-up is itself constituted in the very
taking — as displayed in uptake — of that utterance as parodic.

In Bakhtin’s work, it is not altogether clear whether these distinctions are
purely analytic or whether they are taken up exclusively as participant’s categories.
It is the ‘ready-made’ aspect of structures such as speech genre (see discussion in
Wertsch, 1991: 60-62) that is problematic for ethnomethodologists (Sharrock and
Watson, 1988). Bakhtin’s writings are notoriously unclear (Lodge, 1990), and it may
be the case that he is either not specific or else inconsistent on this point. What does seem clear, however, is that the matter of the eminence of structure is not made as explicit in Bakhtin’s writing as it is in the related theoretical work in ethnomethodology.\(^4\)

*The Question of Subjectivity/Identity: Personhood as Project or Accomplishment*

For Bakhtin, related to the issue of social structure is a range of rather interesting moral issues concerning the matter of one’s individual identity. In particular, the activity whereby interactional participants construe the dialogic position of their interlocutor(s) is itself regarded by Bakhtin as a sort of gift. That is, dialogue is the activity by which speakers give one another something to work with, as it were: some discursively formulated disposition relative to which they can formulate a response — be it one of agreement, disagreement, or (more interestingly) creative modification by which a speaker takes up a contrastive position while still attending to what he or she takes the concerns of the interlocutor to be. Now, where this contrasts with ethnomethodology is that Bakhtin employs this responsive model of interaction to inform a discussion of identity. In particular, Bakhtin is interested in the degree to which interlocutors formulate their identity from within the set of assumptions made available in and through the contribution of some dialogic Other(s), and he takes this matter up in a discussion of individual authenticity (which he glosses with the term *answerability*). Crucial to Bakhtin’s point here is the notion that no voice is autonomous — it is not our own, and it is on that point that our unique place of *answerability* is said to lie. Our uniqueness thus consists in our ability to alter the understanding of the Other in dialogue. Again, such alteration is not simply a matter of agreement or disagreement; but rather is a question of the extent to which one makes the assumptions of an Other’s contribution (their gift) his or her own, thereby taking responsibility for those assumptions (whether in an act of responsive alignment or disalignment). Thus, even where one aligns him- or herself with those assumptions, one’s authenticity/*answerability* is said to emerge to the degree that those assumptions are taken on as one’s own. For Bakhtin, then, this matter of individual authenticity is an ongoing project that one pursues, one in which an
individual works to situate him- or herself relative to an Other (or Others) where that situating work itself is the activity for which one assumes individual responsibility.

Within a Bakhtinian analysis, the issue of individual freedom is quite important, freedom being defined in terms of authenticity accruing from the extent to which one modifies the range of assumptions made available by his or her interlocutor(s) in a given dialogic encounter. In contrast, for an ethnomethodological analysis, the issue of authenticity is relevant only when and where it emerges as a participant concern. That is, ethnomethodology is concerned with authenticity as an issue that interactional participants themselves attend to in the course of their talk as a way of attending to that talk's business. Thus, where a Bakhtinian analysis might attempt to account for authenticity, an ethnomethodological approach would examine the situated activity whereby authenticity is taken up as a participant concern. For an ethnomethodological analysis, this would include examining how speakers work to align themselves with a particular position in such a way that they attend to the potential for their doing so itself to be undermined as an instance of some sort of social contagion — that is, of merely going along with what others think and do (Widdicombe and Wooffitt, 1995). For Bakhtin, these concerns are taken up as a matter of concern to be settled by him; whereas for ethnomethodology, the taking-on of these concerns (of individual authenticity) as an accountable matter is itself an investigable phenomenon. It is a matter of concern for participants; and for ethnomethodology, the interest is in exploring how it is attended to by them as such in their talk.

Thus, the question of individual authenticity is, within ethnomethodology, regarded from within an analytic approach that sees individual subjectivity as an accomplishment of and in talk (Sharrock and Button, 1991). Pollner (1987: 134) takes up the issue of the individual in his discussion of mundane reasoning practices:

Mundane reason is the 'construal' of 'construing "ourselves" in relation to reality"'. 'I' do not construe mundane reason: mundane reason construes 'I'. The notion of the subject ... is so deeply enmeshed in mundane discourse that we almost boggle at conceiving of action as description without reference to an 'individual' or 'person'. If persons are constructions what does the constructing? ... if mundane autobiography establishes a subject over and against an object, what casts itself in this fashion?
In terms of the conversational material we will consider in this thesis, this issue of subjectivity is central to the analysis of how speakers attend to the potential for their contributions to be construed as raising a range of implications which they work to foreclose in the very design of their contribution (see especially the analyses in Chapter 4, below). In other words, we will explore not only how speakers foreclose the potential for their talk to be construed as raising a range of implications in terms of their individual motivation (either as racist or as culturally [un]aware); but we will also examine how in so doing, those speakers also reflexively attend to the potential for their activity of attending to such foreclosure work itself to be construed as raising further implications for their individual authenticity.

Thus, with regard to the issue of individual subjectivity, Bakhtin and ethnomethodology differ in the degree to which they consider the issue to be constitutive of their own analytic undertaking. Ethnomethodology suspends the question, addressing it only insofar as it is a participants’ concern while Bakhtin enters into the debate using the insights of a dialogic take on interaction in order to inform an analysis of the issue of individual subjectivity. To this degree, both Bakhtin and ethnomethodology are concerned with dialogic interaction, but ethnomethodology is more ubiquitous in the degree to which its analytic methods are counted upon to do the work of theorisation.

Analytic Materials

The prior discussion has been concerned with looking at some of the theoretical issues that bear on an analysis of talk about prejudice on the one hand and cultural difference on the other hand. In particular, the concern there was with how the two are oriented to in talk as mutually co-implicative concerns in the work that conversational interlocutors pursue to account for their presence in the Middle East. The point of this thesis, then, is that the business of accounting for Western involvement in the Middle East (as well as the way that speakers attend to how they themselves might be regarded as personally implicated in the demands for accountability that are entailed thereby) is accomplished by speakers in the conversational material under analysis through and with the work that they do to
manage the conflict between competing demands for accountability. That is, the conflict is *constitutive* of the talk by which such accounting is accomplished.

The analytic corpus itself is comprised of a tape-recorded archive of some sixty hours of face-to-face, open-ended interviews that were collected in various locations throughout Kuwait over a ten-month period in the year immediately following the Persian Gulf War of 1991 — from October 1991 to July 1992. All such recordings were fully transcribed and, in total, amounted to a printed output of some one-thousand, two-hundred pages of single-space, type-written material. Participant subjects numbered fifty-five in total and were selected from among the community of British and American expatriate residents of the area. These individuals were employed in various professions, including that of corporate and privately owned business administration, military personnel, diplomatic representation, journalism, higher and secondary education, etc. Furthermore, the overwhelming majority of interview participants had been resident at different times in other countries throughout the region as well (Bahrain, Egypt, Lebanon, Oman, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, etc.).

The actual selection procedure itself was somewhat more idiosyncratic in that the researcher collected data from those who were willing and able to participate. Potential interviewees were approached as opportunities arose, either fortuitously or as the result of directed effort. That is, contacts with potential interviewees were made by the researcher who initially depended upon a network of personal acquaintances with whom he was familiar in the expatriate community. These initial interview encounters soon resulted in other contacts being made as participant interviewees referred the researcher to additional friends and acquaintances with whom he was not then familiar; and while initial efforts to canvass participants with requests through the post resulted in the collection of some quite interesting and useful materials, the overwhelming number of interviews came about as a result of the spontaneous and unanticipated referrals made available through word-of-mouth.
Table 2 List of Participant Subjects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudo-initials</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Citizenship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JA [32]</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>late 20s</td>
<td>Engineer</td>
<td>British</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA [20]</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>early 20s</td>
<td>Student/Ex-Soldier</td>
<td>American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DB [44]</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>late 20s</td>
<td>Junior-Level Diplomat</td>
<td>American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RB [49]</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>early 40s</td>
<td>Private Business Owner</td>
<td>British</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UB [50]</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>30s</td>
<td>Business Manager</td>
<td>American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC [62]</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>late 20s</td>
<td>Bomb Disposal Expert</td>
<td>British</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LC [41]</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>50s</td>
<td>Educational Consultant</td>
<td>British</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OC [18]</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>early 40s</td>
<td>University Instructor</td>
<td>American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RC [62]</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>late 20s</td>
<td>Retail Food Distributor</td>
<td>American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC [18]</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>40s</td>
<td>Business Manager</td>
<td>British</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TC [64]</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>20s</td>
<td>Quantity Surveyor</td>
<td>British</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ND [13]</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>50s</td>
<td>Business Manager</td>
<td>British</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OD [48]</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>late 20s</td>
<td>Tax Accountant/Attorney</td>
<td>American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WD [14]</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>40s</td>
<td>Business Manager</td>
<td>British</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OE [08]</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>early 20s</td>
<td>University Instructor</td>
<td>Kuwaiti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VE [37]</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>40s</td>
<td>Business Manager</td>
<td>American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DF [61]</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>early 40s</td>
<td>Business Manager</td>
<td>British</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TF [46]</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>40s</td>
<td>Senior-Level Diplomat</td>
<td>British</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UF [07]</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>early 40s</td>
<td>Librarian/Information Scientist</td>
<td>American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BG [19]</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>40s</td>
<td>Business Manager</td>
<td>American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OG [60]</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>30s</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CH [16]</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>40s</td>
<td>Educational Consultant</td>
<td>British</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DH [31]</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>Interior Designer</td>
<td>British</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH [63]</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>30s</td>
<td>Education Consultant</td>
<td>British</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TI [06]</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Civilian Military Advisor</td>
<td>American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RJ [23]</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>early 20s</td>
<td>Private Business Owner</td>
<td>British</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RK [06]</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>early 30s</td>
<td>Civilian Military Advisor</td>
<td>American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AL [61]</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>50s</td>
<td>Business Manager</td>
<td>British</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JL [61]</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>early 50s</td>
<td>Business Manager</td>
<td>British</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NL [61]</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>early 20s</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>British</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AN [49]</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>late 30s</td>
<td>Private Business Owner</td>
<td>American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CN [03]</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>early 40s</td>
<td>Architect</td>
<td>British</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EN [33]</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>early 20's</td>
<td></td>
<td>British</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GN [59]</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>40s</td>
<td>Senior-Level Diplomat</td>
<td>American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WN [33]</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>early 20s</td>
<td>Junior-Level Diplomat</td>
<td>British</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AO [25]</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>early 30s</td>
<td></td>
<td>American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MO [25]</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>30s</td>
<td>School Headmaster</td>
<td>American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP [29]</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>early 30s</td>
<td>Corporate Sales Representative</td>
<td>American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IP [48]</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>late 20s</td>
<td>Management Consultant</td>
<td>American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TQ [32]</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>late 20s</td>
<td>Engineer</td>
<td>British</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IR [40, 43]</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>early 40s</td>
<td>University Instructor</td>
<td>American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS [53, 55]</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>early 20s</td>
<td>Private Business Owner</td>
<td>British</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IS [53, 55]</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>early 20s</td>
<td>Market Researcher</td>
<td>British</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ET [48]</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>early 20s</td>
<td>Administrative Assistant</td>
<td>American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PT [22]</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>20s</td>
<td>Junior-Level Diplomat</td>
<td>American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UT [38]</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>30s</td>
<td>Corporate Sales Representative</td>
<td>American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU [40]</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>60s</td>
<td>University Instructor</td>
<td>British</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DW [25, 26]</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>20s</td>
<td>Unemployed/Ex-Soldier</td>
<td>American</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Representativeness

One possible objection that could be raised with regard to the selection of these particular materials for analysis involves the question of representativeness. To what extent, it might be asked, does the talk recorded in the interviews typify interaction among the community of British and American expatriates in the region? This chapter has, in some sense, been an effort to address this sort of objection by working to problematise the very assumptions that inform its asking in the first place. More specifically, the question of *sui generis* representativeness is dealt with in the analysis of these materials (where it arises) as a participants’ concern, made available as a way of attending to the business-at-hand of that talk on the occasion of its use. Thus, the question of representativeness is simply not relevant here because the work of discourse analysis informed by social constructionism (as discussed above) shares with ethnomethodology an emphasis upon the *in situ* constitution of meaning as an accomplishment brought off in and on every occasion of talk (Dubois and Sankoff, 1992; Heritage, 1984, 1995: 402-406; Heritage and Roth, forthcoming; Schegloff, 1993; Sharrock and Anderson, 1987).

Treating talk as a unique instance of the discursive resources that speakers employ — that is, as situatedly contingent — is not the whole story, however. Another possible objection is that the interview is somehow tainted, as it were — that the setting up of an interview situation is itself to affect what people say and do. This need not be regarded as a problematic, and in fact can rather be seen as an interesting feature of talk. In particular, it is precisely this feature of interview data and of attending to the interview situation as one that entails a range of specific demands which is of particular interest here in this thesis. In short, this means that the circumstances in which talk is produced for the purposes of being overheard as an instance of data upon which particular sorts of analytic conclusions might be drawn is one to which speakers themselves attend to as constitutive of the occasion.
For example, as we have seen in the analysis of Extract 1.0 above, the interviewee is confronted with the conflict as between being forthcoming and ‘giving the interviewer what he wants’ on the one hand, while also attending to the potential for his own remarks to be construed in just the way that he works to foreclose. It is the management of this conflict — between the providing for of warranted data and the foreclosure of potentially damaging inferences which that activity might itself be seen to entail — which is the task of the interviewees in the encounter under consideration.

Similarly, the interviewer is faced with his own paradoxical task of managing the conflict between being seen to elicit information relevant to the experience of British and American expatriate residents of the region, and yet not be seen as implicating his interlocutor (the interviewee) in the damaging implications that that activity might otherwise be taken to make available. Note that it is not simply the case here that speakers could, if only they wanted to do so, somehow bypass these problematic conflicts in order to get on with the business of their talk. Rather, it is the skilful management of these problematics which is the business of that talk. In other words, it is this management which is constitutive of the very setting. Thus, this thesis is an investigation into talk about Western involvement in the Middle East. The talk under analysis is not, as I have tried to say above, to be regarded as a tool whereby that experience can be accessed; rather, that talk is the data.\textsuperscript{47} The thesis is thus an investigation into the concerns that speakers take to be relevant in accounting for their presence in the Middle East; and as I shall go on to substantiate in the analytic chapters which follow, these concerns involve a range of assumptions about demands for an awareness of cultural difference and prejudice. Citing Psathas (1995: 45), Edwards (1997: 89) remarks:

\begin{quote}
Data may be obtained from any available source, the only requirement being that these should be naturally occurring, rather than produced for the purpose of study, as in the case of laboratory experiments or controlled observations. In practice, this has meant interactional phenomena that would have occurred regardless of whether the researcher had come upon the scene; therefore, conversations, news interviews, therapy sessions, telephone calls, dinner table talk, police calls, as well as all manner of interactional phenomena that the researcher may be able to come upon and record are potential data sources.
\end{quote}
The interviews are, of course, produced for the purpose of study; and yet their ‘naturalization’, as Edwards refers to it, treats the interaction of the interview situation itself as the object of analysis (Edwards [1997: 89] refers to Widdicombe and Wooffitt, 1995; Wetherell and Potter, 1992; and Wooffitt, 1992; as providing examples of such naturalization of data; see also related discussion in Potter and Wetherell, 1995).

The task of this thesis is to explore how theorising about the nature of prejudice and cultural difference is a practical accomplishment in and of mundane conversational interaction. Further, it is concerned with how that theorisation is consequential for the conducting of that interaction. Thus, the thesis does not take prejudice and cultural difference as its concern except insofar as it is a consideration for interlocutors in the conversational episodes that we consider in the analyses. This is not to say that matters of prejudice and cultural awareness are of little or no significance — that they are somehow unimportant — but rather that it is precisely the way in which their importance is provided for (in what specific contexts and in terms of what interactional business is accomplished thereby) that is of interest here. One could do no differently to pursue an investigation into the situated attention to concerns categorised as (racial and/or ethnic) prejudice and cross-cultural contact than to explore the specificity of mundane interactional encounters wherein such concerns are attended to by social actors. The question thus becomes: what actions are involved in the mundane theorisation of prejudice and cultural difference and to what interactional business does such theorisation attend? It is with this analytic task that this thesis is concerned.

_Transcription Conventions_

Finally, a word is in order about the conventions employed to transcribe the audio-recorded interviews. With the exception of all but the exchange recorded in the latter section of Chapter 2 and in note 18 of that same chapter, the written record of talk examined in this thesis is based on the well-known system originally devised by Gail Jefferson (1985) and extended with a number of substantive modifications as developed by John Du Bois and his colleagues (Du Bois, 1991; Du Bois et al., 1993). In his detailed description, Du Bois (1991) argues for the merits of these
modifications to the Jefferson conventions on the basis of five basic design principles: (1) ‘category definition’, (2) ‘accessibility’, (3) ‘robustness’, (4) ‘economy’, and (5) ‘adaptability’. Without reproducing the details of his arguments here, suffice it to say that, among other things, these modifications are designed to make for a transcription that, among other things, is easier to read. As Ochs (1979) and others point out, the task of transcription is itself one that involves making a range of interpretive decisions with regard to the (audio- or video-taped) material of which it is a record (see also related discussion in Wetherell and Potter, 1992: 225-226). In short, the rendering of a transcript involves making theoretical decisions about the sorts of events which occurred in the interaction of which that transcript is a record. This point is in keeping with the theme of this chapter generally: viz., that any analytic undertaking — be it one that involves theoretical explication or the ‘mere’ presentation/transcription of what constitutes that talk — is similarly interpretive. The particular choice here with regard to adopting these conventions, however, is that of rendering the materials not only more easily accessible for analysis, but also to render them available for whatever other sorts of analytic tasks the conventions specifically work to make it available to.

Conclusion

This chapter developed a dialogic approach to interaction. It situated this in relation to the set of problematics that define a Cartesian dualism, especially as these are attended to in anthropology and taken up in related theoretical discussions concerning the adequacy of ethnography. A dialogic approach to interaction (such as that developed in the work of Bakhtin) is significant to this range of concerns because of its respecification of the issues involved. Specifically, if alterity is a gloss on the problematics surrounding representationalism, then to approach that set of problematics as both the topic and heuristic means of investigation is essentially to make problematicity an investigative concern which is itself attended to in and through a reflexive display of same. Alterity becomes the investigative object where it is a topic for participants, and it is in pursuit of that topic (by participants) that they bring their activities off as a display of that very activity to which they refer (in and as does this construal thereof).
The concern with dialogue is also of particular importance here too because it points up how meaning is negotiated in situ. That is, just as we saw in analytic reading of the dialogue between the investigative interviewer and the junior-level diplomat (Extract 1.0), a responsive orientation to alternative voices is not an activity that involves an appeal to pluralism. Rather, the orientation to particular alternatives is an activity whereby speakers work to deny the availability of a particular argumentative trajectory to their interlocutor(s). This relates to the entire issue of alterity as it is taken up in the debate surrounding the adequacy of ethnographic description because implicit in that debate is often just such an appeal to pluralism. That is, the ethnographic enterprise is approached for its accountability in 'letting the Other speak', or 'letting the voice of the Other be heard'. In respecifying this question in terms of dialogue as negotiation — of dialogue as an activity wherein what the voice of the Other is, is itself taken to be a matter of concern to and competition between interlocutors — then that debate is taken up as the analytic concern itself.

Thus, even an appeal to pluralism is one that is oriented to the assumption that alternative perspectives merit attention. As such, that appeal itself works to accomplish the rhetorical task of marginalising the alternative perspective which regards some voices as not worthy of attention. The analytic significance of this here is not to articulate a position for or against pluralism, rather it is to topicalise how such assumptions are made available in dialogue where dialogue is itself taken up as an issue of concern by participants. What, we want to know, are the concerns attended to with such activity? What rhetorical work does one set out to accomplish in addressing the situated rhetorical nature of perspective? In the materials we will consider in the analytic chapters to follow, it is attending to demands for accountability to assumptions of both pluralism and the definitive privileging of a particular position — the truth (even if only specific to this instance) — that speakers work to accomplish in their talk.

Notes

1. Indeed, as Pollner (1987) shows, this is the assumption that informs mundane reasoning in the explanatory work of day-to-day accounting practices. Representationalism becomes particularly evident where conflicting accounts of events — reality disjunctures — are adjudicated (see further discussion in Potter, 1996: 53-57).
2. Bruner nicely summarizes the sorts of concerns that define the social constructionist take on interaction — basically in terms of intersubjectivity. More to the point of how this relates to the Enlightenment project of distinguishing subject and object, with reference to the representational models of meaning developed in the 17th Century, and citing Taylor (1985), Bruner notes: ‘Such doctrines have the effect of marginalizing the essentially intersubjective nature of human meaning-making. Designative theories of meaning gave such pride of place to the achievement of objectivity that only opprobrium could be left for subjectivity with its potential for self-deception and folly. This was all part of the battle against enchantment being waged by science’ (1995: 20-21). The point here is that perspectival and the Other — that is, the perspective construed of the Other — entails the assumption that there exists some unmediated access to transcendence. This is the yearning of the Enlightenment. The quest to reveal perspectival limitations depends upon or assumes that there is some independent, perspectiveless or transcendent criteria of measurement with which to determine the extent that culture affects one’s view.

3. Latour and Woolgar (1986) extend the work of Gilbert and Mulkay on this point by suggesting a range of variation as between the binary opposites of mind-independence and perspectival contingency. This is represented as a scale of modalities (scale, minus the italicised glosses at either end, reproduced in Edwards, 1997: 57):

- **Empiricist repertoire**
  - [...] (that is, implicitly available and therefore not necessary to make explicit)
  - X
  - X is a fact
  - I know that X
  - I claim that X
  - I believe that X
  - I hypothesize that X
  - I think that X
  - I guess that X
  - X is possible

- **Contingent repertoire**

The point that Latour and Woolgar make here is that scientists appeal simultaneously and in varying degrees to different and competing assumptions about the nature of mind in order to account for their activities. In other words, the appeal to contrasting assumptions about the nature of mind and reality is not simply a matter of selecting one or the other contrastively opposed assumptions; but that in any given case where such an appeal is made, both assumptions are necessarily invoked, though to differing degrees (see also related discussion in Potter, 1996: 112-113).

4. Pollner remarks upon this feature of investigative inquiry into the social: ‘[P]ractical inquiry’s recognition of itself as practical depends on the availability of contrasting alternatives, [between ‘lay inquiry’ and some other] one of which is scientific inquiry. The two modes of inquiry are in this way dialectically dependent upon one another for the reflexive sense of themselves. [...] What is specifically excluded from scientific and practical inquiry’s puzzlement with the world is the ways in which inquiry manages to furnish itself with a world which can be the object of its concern’ (Pollner, 1987: 9-10, 11).

5. Here Gergen’s remarks are particularly useful in addressing the criticisms directed at the former position concerning how the implications of a constructionist position are taken reflexively to include itself: ‘Is the social constructionist position not itself a social construction? To this the coherent constructionist can only respond yes. The arguments for constructionism are, after all, social artifacts: tied together by metaphor and narrative, historically and culturally bounded, and used by persons in the process of relating. However, in taking such a stand, the aspiring critic has essentially vindicated the constructionist position. That is, the attempt to undo constructionism in this case is based on the same constructionist premises that the critic strives to undo: it seeks to establish the socially constructed character of constructionist arguments. [...] The critic now stands in the same ontological space as the
target of the putative attack—thus adding further weight to the constructionist thesis' (1994: 76-77, emphasis in original).

6. Relatedly, Danziger (1997), in a review of the influential series of publications edited by Kenneth Gergen and John Shotter released under the banner title Inquiries in Social Construction points to a lack of consensus among contributors to the series, especially with regard to their respective approaches to issues of power and social structure. One of the features of an ethnomethodologically informed take on interaction that distinguishes it from some of the other strands of work to which Danziger refers is an insistence on the in situ constitution of meaning and structure, the attention to structure as a participant concern, and a resistance to efforts at the reification of such structure as an analytic resource (see McKinlay et al., 1987; Potter and Litton, 1985; Potter et al., 1990).

7. The reference to anthropological discourse here ignores the subtle features by which, say, social and cultural anthropologies are distinguished by professional practitioners (Watson, 1984). For present purposes, what is of concern is the way that alterity is discursively accomplished relative to the activity whereby it is made accessible as Other (Watson, 1997).

8. Denzin (1997) refers to Hammersley’s position with the term postpositivism — as involving a response to the reflexive implications of an appeal to the situated contingency of discursive production which itself works to reestablish the epistemological authority of an account with reference to ‘a set of rules that refer to a reality outside the text’ (1997: 6; see also Guba, 1990 for an approach similarly grounded in a critical realist ontology).

9. Compare this with the reflexive approach developed by Ashmore (1989: Ch. 3) who argues that the fact that claims regarding situated contingency necessarily include themselves within their scope need not be taken as self-refuting; but, on the contrary, can be seen as displaying the very point that they work to make with regard to such contingency. In other words, that a claim concerning how claims are situationally contingent is itself contingent only goes to show that this is the case — it is consistent with itself (see also Edwards et al., 1995). Along related lines, Gergen remarks: ‘The typical objection leveled at the constructionist [position] ... is its seeming absurdity in the face of an obdurate reality. [...] Although laced with the full rhetorical power of everyday convention, such objections are ultimately based on a misunderstanding of the constructionist position. Constructionism makes no denial concerning explosions, poverty, death, or "the world out there" more generally. Neither does it make any affirmation. As I have noted [in preceding remarks], constructionism is ontologically mute’ (1994: 72). In addressing the question of whether this might not be read as linguistic or social solipsism, his response is that: ‘constructionism does not yield the conclusion that there is no world outside of its representation. Constructionism is simply mute on matters of ontology. [...] One may, within a local perspective, take up a study of some object. However, the reflexive moment in the constructionist process then serves as a safeguard against reification and universalization’ (ibid.: 300, n. 3).

10. Notice that reference to some representation-independent reality itself involves a contradiction since its independence as such is constituted in the referral thereto (Gergen, 1994; Fuller, 1993; Barnes, 1974).

11. This same sort of drift is a feature of some of the other work that Hammersley considers as well. For example, consider the following remarks by a participant in the discussion concerning the adequacy of ethnography in reference to the debate itself: ‘I agree with Rosaldo (1989:181) that the dismantling of objectivism "creates a space for ethical concerns in a territory once regarded as value-free. It enables the social analyst to become a social critic." Marcus and Fischer (1986:42-43) argue that this is, in fact, the point of all this postmodern experimentation with ethnographic form: to revitalize anthropology by repatriating it as cultural critique. Not, as Tyler (1986:139) forcefully points out, by "hawkting pictures of alternative ways of life as instruments of utopian reform," but by making ethnography's "own contextual grounding part of the question."’ (DiGiacomo, 1992: 114, emphasis in original). It is this making of ethnography's own grounding as part of the question which my concern for the reflexive aspects of the investigative interviewing is concerned. The interview is concerned with its own doing (that is, it involves the reflexive display of concern with its own
accomplishment) but too it is concerned to attend to the issues of its own authority relative to the assumptions regarding the nature of ethnographic and social scientific investigative work to which it is a contribution and to which participants display to one another that they take the encounter to be about.

12. Norman Denzin discusses responses to the reflexive implications of representational dualism in terms of their development through various moments, from positivism to postpositivism on to the postmodern and what he refers to with the term critical poststructuralism: `antifoundational and poststructural elements merged with a commitment to an emancipatory project shaped by feminist, cultural studies, postmodern ethnographic, and interpretative perspectives . . . [a terrain both] complex and contradictory, enfolding within its borders multiple paradigms and epistemologies . . . ' (1997: 27, n. 2; see also related discussion in Denzin, 1996). In terms of what this implies for this thesis, the project and the implications to be developed in the analyses in chapters to follow are concerned, among other things, with how these very issues regarding the reflexive implications of representational dualism are taken up as participant concerns in talk where culture and prejudice are at issue. The point is that the management of the contradiction between the dualistic assumptions of a representational model and the reflexive implications of that model are constitutive of discourse where representation is at issue. As such, the identifying of different moments that Denzin undertakes, while heuristically useful, nevertheless underplay the extent to which the implications of reflexivity are at issue even in those moments which he refers to as positivist. In short, it is quite possible to read even the most apparently dualistic texts in an ironic vein — as a sort of sacramentalist exercise by which the text implicitly celebrates its own production in and through the explicit denial (or, at least, marginalisation) of the reflexive implications which it entails. It is the issue of this sort of take on that production which is simultaneously explored and displayed in the conversational interaction considered in Chapter 3 (`Incumbency and Entitlement: Category Membership and Identity as Participant Concerns') to follow. In terms of the analysis of participants’ talk (where matters of culture and prejudice are at issue), the relation this has to the different moments that Denzin identifies is that of pointing up the discursive work which participants pursue in order to attend to the reflexive implications of ironisation without, however, giving up the appeal to objectivist assumptions which that rhetoric provides for. ‘The unfolding pro-postmodernist, anti-modernist canon envelops the concerns of the promodernist text while erasing the distinction between fact and fiction and exploring in detail . . . multiple forms of verisimilitude and poststructural validity’ (Denzin, 1997: 20).

13. Fabian is adamant on this point: ‘If coevalness, sharing of present Time, is a condition of communication, and anthropological knowledge has its source in ethnography . . . then the anthropologist qua ethnographer is not free to “grant” or “deny” coevalness to his interlocutors. Either he submits to the condition of coevalness and produces ethnographic knowledge, or he deludes himself into temporal distance and misses the object of his search’ (1983: 32, italics in original).

14. Geertz refers to this sort of rhetorical work as involving the claim of having ‘been there’: ‘The ability of anthropologists to get us to take what they say seriously has less to do with either a factual look or an air of conceptual elegance than it has with their capacity to convince us that what they say is a result of their having actually penetrated (or, if you prefer, been penetrated by) another form of life, of having, one way or another, truly “been there.” And that, persuading us that this offstage miracle has occurred, is where the writing comes in’ (1988: 4-5, cited in Hammersley, 1992a: 52).

15. The common feature of all of these different approaches is taken up in Denzin’s (1997) discussion of what he refers to with the gloss critical poststructuralism. What is important for our purposes here is the feature by which responses to contingency appeal to the very assumptions that they set out to interrogate. Thus, ‘the discussions of logical, construct, internal, ethnographic, and external validity, text-based data, triangulation, trustworthiness, credibility, grounding, naturalistic indicators, fit, coherence, comprehensiveness (see Eisenhart & How[e — sic], 1992, pp. 657-669), plausibility, truth, and relevance (Atkinson, 1992, pp. 68-72) [are regarded] as attempts to reauthorize a text’s authority in the postpositivist moment. Such moves cling to the conception of a “world-out-there” that is truthfully and accurately captured by the researcher’s methods’ (Denzin, 1997: 6). Similar work toward the development of ‘standpoint epistemologies’ is of particular relevance to the theoretical responses
of Hammersley, Fabian, Geertz and others for the rhetorical significance such efforts entail (see Fabian, 1991 as well as other contributions to the volume in which it appears). Specifically, in celebrating the partiality of knowledges — as from their own and others’ perspectives — such epistemological positioning effectively works to resist rhetorical efforts for any particular take on reality to be held accountable to an assumption concerning the possibility of transcendence from the specific conditions of its production. Just as the assertion that ‘we are all each constrained by our own cultural perspectives’ has the effect of affording its speaker with the warrant for an appeal to transcendence (since, in the activity of proffering the concession involved, he or she displays an awareness of his or her own cultural contingency and paradoxically displays him- or herself not to be constrained thereby); so too standpoint epistemologies, in the very claim to champion situated knowledges, work implicitly to mount a transcendent position (McKenzie and van Teeffelen, 1993).

16. Though, as we will see, this is not always the case as some conversational participants do reflexively attend to such mediation when engaging in parody. See related analysis of Extract 4.2 and Extract 4.3 in Chapter 4, below.

17. Similarly, the assumption among social actors that they share identity in perspective — the assumption of intersubjectivity — is likewise itself the outcome of interactional work (Pollner, 1987).

18. This is not to say that an account is so oriented simply by virtue of its ontological distinction to some alternative (but otherwise unnamed or unindicated) account(s), but rather that the orientation of an account is displayed as a manifest feature of its design. Edwards describes this particular aspect of talk’s production in his discussion of description: ‘There are all kinds of ways to describe any given activity or scene, and any description could always, in principle, be further explicated or extended. So the selection or assembly of any particular, description (where all descriptions are particular ones) may be inspected, by participants as well as by analysts, for its specificity from amongst an indefinite set of possibilities, and therefore as performing some action and making available some implication. Those actions and implications are not themselves another infinite set, but precisely the ones that participants’ subsequent talk will, in some manner, deal with’ (1997: 100, emphasis in original). It is part of the business of this thesis to consider the details of how the contrastive rhetorical design is brought off in the talk that comprises the analytic corpus under investigation in Chapters 3-6 to follow.

19. Of course, the reflexive work of a given account can never fully anticipate the response with which it might be met if for no other reason than that the anticipatory work is itself something to which a response might be generated. And even providing for the possibility that one can work at a further step’s remove, as it were, to anticipate just such a response (to one’s anticipatory work itself) only puts off the anticipation one step further since that effort is also something to which a response can be generated. In other words, there is always an open-ended aspect of dialogue — referred to by Bakhtin with the term unfinalizability — by which the response to a particular utterance can never fully be anticipated. It is the emphasis upon this particular feature that distinguishes a dialogic approach (as developed in the writings of Bakhtin and explored in the work of some social constructionist research) from a Kantian dialectics whereby an utterance is regarded as fully determined by the statement to which it is a response (for further discussion, see Holquist, 1990: 59-66).

20. Thus, negotiation is not — as some uses of that term might be taken to imply — a matter of coming to agree about the legitimacy of ones position (though, of course, negotiation is necessarily involved in and where such agreement is accomplished); rather, negotiation involves the interactive establishment of a dialogically contrastive position in the work through which a particular construal of one’s contribution is anticipated in its design. Coulter’s remarks on the distinction between understanding as opposed to interpretation as a member’s practice are of particular relevance here: ‘Note well that, even if we grant the (disputed) claim that contextualisations are uniformly or inevitably both ‘assumptive’ and ‘interpretive’, this would not in itself bar them from invocation in resolving doubts or deciding cases of specific sorts. What is there to prevent someone from basing an effective or decisive adjudication upon an ‘interpretation’ — provided it was the right interpretation? The claimed omnirelevance of ‘interpretive work’, ‘perspectivality’, and ‘acts of interpretive construction’ is actually undermined by recognising the inter-articulated nature of conduct-and-its-context(s): the
supposedly free play of ‘interpretive’ construction is harnessed by the common practices of practical relevancy determinations, except perhaps where ‘contexts’ are being ‘constructed’ as disengaged, purposeless, or ‘idle’ exercises’ (1994: 697, emphasis in original).

21. Clark and Holquist contrast Bakhtin’s approach with that of Derrida as distinguished by, among other things, the former’s ‘concentration on the possibility of encompassing differences in a simultaneity’ (1984: 9). That is, where for Derrida meaning resides in the structure of the general possibility of difference, for Bakhtin the activity of dialogue is one in which individuals ‘work to comprehend . . . disparate energies simultaneously’ (Clark and Holquist, 1984: 10). Citing work published under the name of one of Bakhtin’s close associates (Voloshinov, 1973: 85-86), Clark and Holquist elaborate: ‘the word is a two-sided act. It is determined equally by whose word it is and for whom it is meant . . . A word is territory shared by both addresser and addressee, by the speaker and his interlocutor’ (1984: 15, emphasis in original).

22. Even assuming that one attempts to foreclose a particular construal of one’s own anticipatory foreclosure work itself only puts the problematic back a step, since those attempts at second-order foreclosure do not anticipate a third-order response with which they can be met.

23. A description of the data collection is included below in the penultimate section of this chapter. See the Appendix for a description of the transcription conventions employed here and throughout the analytic chapters in this thesis.

24. That is, the question-and-answer format is the way in which speakers work to generate the content of their talk and to bring off its accomplishment as that of the doing of an interview. By contrast, in other circumstances, questions might be the means by which speakers establish the relevance of certain background knowledge or accomplish some other such interactionally relevant work (Clayman, 1992). That speakers can also accomplish interactionally relevant work in the broaching-of-questions in an interview situation is not at issue here; rather, it is the specifics of that work’s interactional relevance which makes the interview situation different from other kinds of talk.

25. Not only here in talk concerning the Gulf War but elsewhere throughout the corpus, speakers reflexively attend to the significance of their contribution in terms of its implications for their own accountability in the circumstances in which it takes place — that is, in the context of the interview situation as the generating of interaction through the asking-and-answering of questions. At the same time, the talk is also reflexively oriented to by the participants as the doing of a (perhaps sociologically informed) investigation into the sort of practices of which it is itself constitutive. Addressing this issue in relation to the investigative work of anthropology, Pollner remarks that ‘the respondent is often treated, albeit implicitly, as a social scientist vis-à-vis his or her own life’ (1987: 152, n. 7). In the conversational material here, this is demonstrated in that the participants orient to their interaction as the doing of an investigation into the socially constituted and situatedly contingent nature of shared knowledge — that is, into accounting practices — regarding the Gulf War.

26. Here we have the use of what Harvey Sacks (1972, 1974, 1992) refers to as a Standardized Relational (s-R) pair — a subset among a broader set of Membership Categorization Devices (MCDs) the use of which involves speakers orienting to the distribution of certain rights and/or knowledge within some kind of relational configuration definitive of that MCD’s referents (see also related discussion in Schegloff, 1991). In the case of an s-R pair, such rights and/or knowledge are regarded as distributed between members in a pair-part relation (referenced with glosses like husband-wife, boss-employee, etc.) rather than between constituent members of some larger unit (such as that glossed with a term like family, or team). Jayussi (1984, 1991) has extended Sacks’ notion of an MCD to reflect members’ joint orientation to both asymmetrical power relations between category bound members in a duplicitively organized or pair-part relationship as well as a distinction in status as between different social groups (see also Edwards, 1991).
27. The reflexive feature of situated activity — in this particular case, that of the conducting of an interview — is such that that activity is the analytic object. Remarking upon this same concern, Baker notes: 'The interview itself is a site for displaying the cultural knowledges that can be used to account for oneself as a competent [member] ... These cultural knowledges turn on the naming of or sometimes merely alluding to category, category-relations or category-bound activities' (1997: 135).

28. Alternatively, he might just as easily have made the distinction accountable with a question as to the relevance and motivation of the relational contrast in the first place. For example, a possible response on the part of speaker KM here might have included something like 'What do you mean by personal opinion? As opposed to, what, state secrets?' or any other response that would have called into question the relevance of the contribution to which it constituted uptake. Of course, his doing this would involve formulating a contribution having a similar status to that of the response in question here (the contribution of speaker DB represented in line 24) in that its speaker calls the relevance of the interviewer’s immediately previous contribution into account as ill-conceived or not sufficiently informed through his (speaker DB’s) uptake thereto. At the same time and while so doing, however, he also provides a means with which the interviewer can make his initial question so relevant — i.e., the very category distinction in terms of which his implicit request for an account is worded. It is in this way that speaker DB very elegantly works to make the distinction essential to the carrying on of the conversation.

29. For a discussion of the theoretical implications of a dialogic approach to interaction, see the work published under the name of Voloshinov entitled Marxism and the Philosophy of Language (1973), as well as related discussion in Morson and Emerson, 1990: 38-40.

30. Of interest in relation to the anticipatory foreclosure undertaken in dialogic interaction is the theoretical concern with utility and excess. In particular, the notion of the excessive can be related to that responsive feature in dialogic interaction which is beyond an interlocutor’s attempt at anticipatory foreclosure (see note 19, above). Pawlett remarks that ‘utility and excess must not be conceived as binary oppositions, as mutually exclusive. Clearly, what might be in excess of the usual, right or proper in one age may be deemed perfectly acceptable in an earlier or later one’ (1997: 95). In terms of how a dialogic take on social interaction would differ in its approach to that here, the norms of acceptability to which Pawlett refers are conceived in terms of their situated use within conversation — an ‘age’ being conceived as constituting the scope of some turn-at-talk. As we have shown, it is the pursuit by interlocutors of this open-ended potentiality of meaning in one another’s contributions that sustains or drives conversational interaction, keeping it going as it were. Respecifying excess in these terms means that we need not go further afield than situated interaction in order to see utility and excess as mutually co-implicative. In this way, we can retain an emphasis on the eminence of social structure while nevertheless attending to the theoretical concern in sociology for the trans-individual nature of structure. That is, we can regard dialogue and what takes place with and in the appropriation of a participant’s efforts at anticipatory foreclosure by that participant’s interlocutor(s) in terms of Durkheim’s and Mauss’s concern for the irreducibility of the social and collective to the sum of individual action’ (Pawlett 1997: 94; see also related discussion in Ashcroft, 1994). Pawlett’s reference to Plotinsky’s (1993) treatment of Nietzsche’s, Bataille’s and Derrida’s take on general economy in terms of Bohr and Heisenberg are similar to Holquist’s (1990: 115-120, 155-162) discussion of parallels with relativity theory in the work of Bakhtin.

31. This distinction between the relevance of the Other in talk is one to which Heritage refers in differentiating between accountability as a ‘running index’ of implicitly available assumptions to which speakers hold one another accountable in the turn-by-turn pursuit of conversational interaction and accountability as an explanatory activity pursued from within that running index: ‘[S]hared methods of reasoning generate continuously updated implicit understandings of what is happening in social contexts — a ‘running index’, as it were, of what is happening in a social event. [...] Both ethnomethodology and conversation analysis are thus concerned with two levels of ‘accountability’. On the one hand, there is the taken-for-granted level of reasoning through which a running index of action and interaction is created and sustained. On the other, there is the level of overt explanation in which social actors give accounts of what they are doing in terms of reasons, motives or causes’ (1988: 128).
Similarly, Edwards, in his discussion of knowledge structures, remarks: ‘The notion of ‘shared knowledge’ has three senses that I shall use: (1) Cultural knowledge – things that people generally know about the world or can be expected to know, within a given speech community, and that they use across different occasions of talk. [...] (2) Mutual knowledge – things that individuals in interactions assume each other knows, and think the other person knows [that] they know (and so on), and that they update continuously as the conversation proceeds. (3) Pragmatic intersubjectivity – shared knowledge as a participants’ practical concern; what their talk treats as shared, and when, and how. [...] [T]he study of pragmatic intersubjectivity ... overrides and subsumes the other two senses of ‘shared knowledge’ (1997: 114-115, emphasis in original).

32. And for me here to topicalise the distinction between analyst and participant as such is itself to work up the concern of participants as both similar to and different from myself in this thesis. This itself is to pursue the business-at-hand of the thesis as distinct from that of participants; and further, it works to make such a distinction between levels of analysis (as between participant and analyst) itself distinct from the work that those very participants themselves (the ones under consideration here in this thesis) do to distinguish between levels of analysis (as between participant and analyst). In other words, in the same way that the problematisation of level-mixing is here made available to accomplish the analytic business-at-hand of this thesis, so too speakers in the talk we shall examine work to problematise level-mixing in order to accomplish the business-at-hand of their own talk. The business of that talk is different from the business of this thesis, and yet it is the same in that it deploys the situated topicalisation of distinction (alterity) as such to accomplish its end. So, in a rather paradoxical manner, where that end is different is in its very similarity (see related discussion of similarity and difference in Mulkay, 1985: 133-177; 1988).

33. This includes most notably the work of the Russian novelist Fyodor Dostoyevsky as well as other well-known novelists of the 19th and 20th Centuries. Bakhtin’s work with regard to literature is comprehensive, involving a theoretical historiography of the literary form from its earliest appearance in the European tradition with the ancient Greeks to the work of the early 20th Century, and including a detailed analysis of the Mennipean satire and the carnivalesque. For further discussion, see Bakhtin’s own Problems of Dostoyevsky’s Poetics (1984) as well as the review of Bakhtin’s work in Morson and Emerson, 1990.

34. This rendering into English of the Russian term smysl (as utterance) involves a particularly extended definition of that word so as to include not only (though possibly primarily) verbal contributions to conversational interaction; but also all and any intonational, kinesic, gestural or other sort of contribution that interlocutors might orient to as significant for the conducting of their interaction (Morson and Emerson, 1990: Ch. 4). In reference to intonation, for example, Morson and Emerson note that ‘[o]ften tone is all an utterance conveys. [...] Often gestures serve a similar function, carrying a silent intonation (or they may be accompanied by an intoned word). Indeed, tone itself is a sort of gesture, and the two are typically fused. Such “meaningless” words and gestures may be complete, and highly expressive, utterances’ (ibid.: 134-135). Relatedly, see also Sacks’ (1992, Vol. I: 81-94) lecture concerning the way that glance features interactionally and compare, for example, Wittgenstein’s remarks that '[w]e do not see the human eye as a receiver, it appears not to let anything in, but to send something out. [...] (It casts glances, it flashes, radiates, gleams’ (1967: 40e, para. 222) or “Consciousness is as clear in his face and behaviour, as in myself” (ibid.: 40e, para 221).

35. Similarly, ethnomethodological work from its very inception has been critical of a Parsonian sociological analysis for what are regarded as autonomously existing social norms and values as independent of and determinative of situated actions rather than eminently accomplished with and in those actions. For further discussion, see Schegloff, 1984; Hilbert, 1992; Heritage, 1984: 7-36.

36. Mehan and Wood discuss this in terms of related ontological implications: ‘A metaphysics drawn from the hermeneutic spiral identifies constitutive Being with Interpretation [à lô the hermeneutic-dialectic tradition] and identifies deterministic Being with Understanding [à lô the logico-empiricist tradition]. Interpretation and Understanding are related to each other as are understanding and interpretation. The latter exhibit in the everyday epistemological microcosm what Understanding and
Interpretation exhibit in the Empyrean ontological macrocosm. Like interpretation and understanding, then, the two Beings are related as are night and day. Neither is said to be the source, and the other the emanation. Each is at once source and emanation. Each is independent of and dependent upon the other. Neither is denigrated, neither is elevated. As constitutive Becoming and deterministic Becoming, the two are mutually constitutive. As constitutive Being and deterministic Being, the two are mutually contained. Indexicality and reflexivity generate these relations. Constitutive Being indexes deterministic Being. By so indexing, constitutive Being both emanates from and becomes a source for deterministic Being . . . . The former relation is established by constitutive Being's dependence upon deterministic Being's horizon of possibility. The latter relation is established by constitutive Being's reflexive disappearance into deterministic Being, thereby recasting that Being. Constitutive and deterministic Being are, therefore, One and Many' (1975: 202-203).

37. Shotter (1993a: 59-60) outlines the main emphases in his approach to conversational interaction as involving (1): a Vygotskian emphasis on what Shotter calls joint action, (2) responsiveness in Bakhtin's sense of dialogism, (3) Billig's emphasis on the rhetorical, (4) Vico's notion of sensory topic — "the rhetorical enthymeme in which an argumentative structure, unavailable to an individual speaker, is completed by the speaker's audience as an aspect of joint action" (ibid.: 60). These concerns inform related work in ethnomethodology as well, of course. For example, Vico's notion of sensus communis, topoi and the way that the shared understandings are inexpressible but yet form the grounding for activity and the sense accomplished in and through that activity relates to similar emphases in ethnomethodological work (Garfinkel and Sacks, 1970; see also related discussion of Vico in Shotter ibid.: 54-56).

38. Mehan and Wood describe the reflexive implications of an analysis of (lay) analytic practices whereby participants make sense of their world thus: 'To claim that any reality, including the researcher's own, exhibits a coherent body of knowledge is but to claim that coherence can be found upon analysis. The coherence located in a reality is found there by the ethnomethodologist's interactional work. The coherence feature, like all features of realities, operates as an incorrigible proposition, reflexively sustained. [...] All realities may upon analysis exhibit a coherent system of knowledge, but knowledge of this coherence is not necessarily part of the awareness of its members. Features emerging "upon analysis" is a particular instance of reflexivity. These features exist only within the reflexive work of those researchers who make them exist. This does not deny their reality. There is no need to pursue the chimera of a presuppositionless inquiry. Because all realities are ultimately superstitious, the reflexive location of reflexivity is not a problem within ethnomethodological studies. Rather, it provides them with their most intriguing phenomena' (1975: 18, 19; emphasis in original).

39. As presented here, ethnomethodology is seen as a monolithic and unitary practice. Not all versions of ethnomethodology, of course, are of this sort. For example, there is some debate surrounding the nature of conversational 'mechanisms' (Jayussi, 1984, 1991; Lynch, 1993 as well as McHoul, 1996) as well as some discussion concerning the extent to which the analytic activity (of ethnomethodology) is reflexively extended to be self-inclusive. For present purposes, Schegloff is chosen as emblematic of what is referred to as an ethnomethodological take for the shared concern with the eminence of social structure that distinguishes the work of Garfinkel, Sacks and others.

40. Similarly, in Giddens' (1984) structuration theory, there is a concern with the in situ accomplishment of social structure in specific episodes of interaction. Thus, Giddens' take differs from a Parsonian approach to the social in that he does not maintain that there exists social structure independently of the activity whereby it is instantiated. At the same time, however, Giddens nevertheless maintains a theoretical distinction between action and structure — specifically on analogy with language and linguistic structure. For an ethnomethodological approach which emphasises the eminence of social structure, however, such a theoretical distinction is of concern only where it is made relevant by participants as a resource for the pursuit of their own interactional business. Just as when Giddens regards language to be 'virtual and outside time' (1976: 127; quoted in Thompson, 1989: 60); he accepts the sorts of assumptions that talk about linguistic structure makes available (compare, for example, Bakhtin's 1981: 72-233] treatment of Russian Formalism [see also related discussion in
Morson and Emerson, 1990: 16-23]) — i.e., the sorts of assumptions about language being 'virtual and outside time' that speakers invoke in situations where they work to make one another accountable in the form of their talk — so too, in regarding social structure analogously, he fails to consider the sorts of situated work that participants set out to accomplish with the invocation of the related assumptions about the independence of social structure as such. In essence, he simply takes these assumptions on as his own rather than considering what activity that work itself (the situated activity of making it one’s own concern) does in the circumstances of its use (Schatzki, 1997). Giddens’ approach thus succumbs to the same sort of problematics that a traditional Parsonian approach entails and which forms the basis of the ethnomethodological objection to mainstream sociology — viz., he conflates analytic objectives with participant concerns.

Now, this is particularly significant to this thesis because it is this very activity of conflation which occurs in the talk where speakers attend to the issues of prejudice and cultural awareness. By breaching the distinction between analyst and participant as does Giddens, and by drifting back and forth between the two, participants are able to attend to their own accountability. That is, the drift between analyst concerns and participant concerns functions (for speakers in the talk) as a resource by which they can manage the conflicting demands for accountability with which they are confronted in their talk. Thus, the whole issue of eminence of social structure and the drift between structure as an analytic topic and resource is relevant here in at least two different ways: (1) as a theoretical concern in the analysis of conversational interaction and (2) as a concern for participants who employ it as a resource in their interaction.

41. In what is an otherwise excellent review of Bakhtinian and ethnomethodological work related to the dialogic constitution of significance, Jacoby and Ochs remark upon the related issue of historicity: ‘This is not to say . . . that co-construction is not historically and culturally situated. Any present moment is paradoxically both responsive to its immediate interactional sequential environment and is the complex product of a history of conversations and interactional moments (and their consequences) experienced individually and collectively over time, though it is rather more challenging for analysts of discourse, language, and social interaction to sufficiently demonstrate [sic] this latter point’ (1995: 178). Again, for ethnomethodology, the responsiveness of any moment is eminent to and made perspicuous in the situated activity of that moment. This includes the responsiveness of activity as ‘the complex product of a history’. In other words, the historical situatedness of an activity — its historicity as such — is eminent to the situation in and where participants orient to the historical as the business-at-hand of that activity’s conduct (Coulter, 1985). In this way, the historical link of an episode — that is, the status of any given event as itself related to some past event and as involving the production, reproduction and/or alteration of same — is itself established by participants as locally relevant to the business-at-hand of their interaction. (This would, of course, include the link made available in and with Jacoby and Ochs’ remarks above, as well as in these remarks here which attend to those remarks as so related).

42. Similarly, this is a concern taken up in Heidegger’s discussion of what he refers to as the ‘they’. Simply put, Heidegger’s concern here seems to be analogous with that which Bakhtin takes up in his own discussion of voice. For Heidegger, as for Bakhtin, our own being, our unique place of answerability (Heidegger employs the same term), is established in relation to some Other — the ‘they’; and one’s own individual uniqueness lies in his or her ability to alter, as it were, the understanding of the Other (the ‘they’) in dialogue. Steiner remarks on Heidegger’s concern for authenticity as so defined: ‘Inauthentic Dasein lives not as itself but as ‘they’ live. Strictly considered, it scarcely lives at all. It ‘is lived’ in a hollow scaffolding of imposed, anonymous values. In inauthentic existence we are constantly afraid (of other men’s opinion, of what ‘they’ will decide for us, of not coming up to the standards of material or psychological success though we ourselves have done nothing to establish or even verify such standards)’ (1978: 91-92). Bakhtin develops this in a disparate set of writings that Clark and Holquist (1984: Ch. 3) refer to with the title The Architectonics of Answerability (see also related discussion in Holquist, 1990: Ch. 6).

43. Similarly in remarking on the Cartesian cogito, Nietzsche notes: ‘“There is thinking; consequently there is that which thinks” — that is what Descartes’ argument comes to. Yet this means positing our faith in the concept of substance as “a priori true.” When there is thinking, something must be there
which thinks—that is merely a formulation of our grammatical habit, which posits a doer for what is done’ (1976: 455, italics in original).

44. It is this concern for and emphasis upon individual authenticity that Bakhtin’s analytic approach has in common with Merleau-Ponty’s (1962) project of phenomenological investigation. In contrast, an ethnomethodological take makes no ontological distinction between the individual and the structured interactional events of and in which he or she takes part as a constituent member. Remarkings upon this point, Sharrock and Watson note that: ‘ethnomethodology is interested in actions, activities and courses of action, and not in individuals at all (thus, one can talk about ‘the member’ not as a ‘person’ at all but as a ‘mastery of natural language’ (see Garfinkel and Sachs [sic — Sacks, 1970: esp. 342-5]) (sic) . . . . The way to avoid this kind of misapprehension on this occasion is (perhaps) to say something about the way in which we ask ‘what is involved in doing X?’ which is not to be understood as ‘what is involved in an individual doing action X?’ since this gratuitously formulates the question in a way which isolates individual action . . . ’ (1988: 62-63).

45. The researcher was, at the time, employed as an instructor at the national university where he had already been working for two years (from 1988 to 1990) prior to embarking upon the collection of interview data.

46. My own ‘being there’: on a personal note, I would of course be grossly remiss were I not to acknowledge the generous hospitality to which I was treated by those who agreed to speak with me. This remark is not intended merely as an expression of the gratitude that I owe to my former hosts (though it is, of course, that as well); but is also meant to convey a sense of the sort of occasions upon which the talk was recorded. These took the form of something more along the lines of very friendly social gatherings to which it was kindly consented that I bring a tape-recorder rather than that of a formal interview setting. Thus, this fieldwork stage of conducting the research project was indeed a personally enjoyable experience that involved being treated to quite a few rather satisfying meals, exposed to a variety of interesting professional routines by different people in workplaces to which I certainly would otherwise not have had access, and generally enjoying the stimulating company of new and interesting people with whom I would not otherwise have had the opportunity to speak at such length. While I, of course, treat the accounts in their talk as discursive material to be analyzed, the task of recording that interaction was an immensely rewarding personal experience and for that I am duly grateful.

47. It is in this way that talk is to be naturalized (Edwards 1997: 89) — that is, treated as natural (versus being treated as an otherwise adequate means or method of producing something else which is to count as data). Heritage, in discussing this particular feature of an occasion’s eminent accomplishment notes: ‘Insofar as the participants in an institutional setting such as a courtroom [or a social science interview] pervasively organize their turn-taking in a distinctive way that is fitted to the roles and tasks of the setting, it can be shown that they are also pervasively oriented to this ‘institutional’ context and its associated tasks and roles’ (1995: 408).

48. For a detailed description of these conventions, see the Appendix below.
Chapter 2

WORK ON WORK ON (WORK ON) THE OTHER
Literature Review — Writing an Argumentative Foil

THIS CHAPTER IS TO BE READ BACKWARDS — for (reflexively significant) reasons that will (have) become evident, I(’d) hope(d)

[Open this with a quote from Marx — where’s that statement he makes about the bourgeoisie deconstructing everything except itself?]

The situation wouldn’t be so bad if only he would let me spell out, clearly and precisely, the relation between reflexivity and fictioning. But he won’t, I know he won’t. He’s obsessed by this idea of doing and not saying, or doing the saying by means of the doing, or acknowledging what one does while one does it.

(Ashmore, 1989: 166)

This is possibly the most difficult thing I’ve ever written. How to write about reflexivity and display that point about which you’re writing without saying so in so many words (since in that case, you’d be doing something other than accomplishing such a display — or would you).

Just Do It — advertising campaign slogan for Nike sportsgear

[Look, play the fool here! Be as brazenly critical of the lack of reflexivity in these comments as you can. That way, you’ll succeed in eliciting the same criticism of your own analysis of that work by your reading audience.]

In the previous chapter we were concerned with the task of introducing the analytic work undertaken in this thesis and with relating it generally to certain strands of research inspired by an ethnomethodologically informed analysis as compared to some of the theoretical insights developed in the work of the Russian social philosopher and literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin. In particular, we were concerned with key notions in ethnomethodology having to do with how the eminent constitution of meaning is regarded as the fundamental business of a situated interactional encounter and with how participants, in their orientation to one another’s responsive contributions (or the potential for such), work to constitute that encounter for what it is. In this way, participants work to render a given sense to their activities from within the meaning
provided for by those activities themselves — as endemic to those activities — in what Shotter (1990) refers to as knowing of the third kind (see also related discussion in Shotter, 1993a; 1993b). More specific to the analytic work of this thesis, however, our interest with these concerns involves the way that they relate to how participants regard matters of both prejudice and (cultural, racial and national) identity as relevant to the activities in which they are involved. In other words, we are concerned here with how issues of prejudice and cultural awareness are taken up as matters of concern for participants in their own talk. We want to explore how participants approach these matters in attending to the business-at-hand of the interactional encounter of which they take part in the interview encounters we shall consider, and how it is those participants constitute the social structures to which they refer, orienting to such structures as relevant or germane to the sense-making of their own social interaction (Schegloff, 1991).

Now, in this chapter, our concern will be to situate this thesis in the context of related scholarship having to do with matters of prejudice and the awareness of cultural difference. Doing this, however, is perhaps more complicated than it might at first appear. This is because the relevant literature is of at least two different sorts. On the one hand, there is a tremendous body of work in which prejudice and cultural difference are worked up as the phenomena of investigation. On the other hand, there is also the body of scholarship which takes just such work as its own object in a sort of second, meta-level of analysis.¹ So, for example, the literature of anthropological ethnography is situated in this first group in that it constitutes a body of work whose production is an activity through which cultural difference is made observable as such. The historical relation of anthropological scholarship to its precursors in missionary and travel literature (van den Abbeele, 1992) makes its production a professionalised practice in which cultural difference is constituted in and through the diversified range of conceptual apparatuses that it brings to bear in formulating its object (everything from models of kinship to linguistics to the anthropologies of food and medicine). Similarly, included in this first group is the extensive literature devoted to matters of prejudice. This includes research into the nature of national character (Adorno et al., 1950), as well as the immensely divergent range of theoretical and experimental work in the (social) psychology of discrimination and
prejudice. Also included here is the work in social cognition on intergroup relations (Tajfel, 1978; Turner and Giles, 1981), attribution theory (Fiske and Taylor, 1984; Forgas, 1981); for critical reviews, see Potter and Wetherell, 1987; Wetherell and Potter, 1992; and Edwards, 1997) as well as the experimental research into racial and ethnic discrimination. Ultimately, the modern interest in matters of prejudice can be related historically to the writings of Condorcet and the ideologues of the French revolution (Billig, 1982).

All of these different sorts of discursive productions constitute this first body of scholarship with which we are concerned. It is, however, the second sort of literature — research which takes this first kind of literature as the object of its own analytic investigation — that is more closely related to the concerns of the review in this chapter. This body of work comprises the range of deconstructive analytic readings to which this first body of scholarship has itself been subjected. Thus, this second, meta-level analytic literature, then, is a range of post-structuralist deconstructive critiques of the work undertaken in the first sort of literature. Such meta-level readings concern themselves, for example, with the work that anthropological theory accomplishes in order to develop temporal models that render culturally distinct perspectival systems observable and which situate those systems relative to one another on an evaluative scale of teleological development (Fabian, 1983; McGrane, 1989). Also included here is a range of work informed by the discourse analytic project of Michel Foucault (1972, 1973) which approaches (social) psychological and psychoanalytic research as a practice by which the definitional marginalisation of the insane works to organise a conceptualisation of the social and thereby to enact a particular distribution of power within that organisation as so defined (Parker and Shotter, 1990; Rose, 1990, 1996). More generally included here is a body of research which sets out to investigate matters such as gender and sexual identity (Dollimore, 1991; Henriques et al., 1984; Kitzinger, 1987), the Sociology of Science and Technology (Haraway, 1991; Law, 1991; Woolgar, 1988), media studies (Chomsky, 1988; Kellner, 1995; Said and Hitchins, 1988), post-colonial theories of globalisation (Anderson, 1983; Gates, 1986; Gilroy, 1987; Moore-Gilbert, 1997; Pratt, 1986a, 1986b), and (post)modern sociological theories in general (Berman, 1982; McGowen, 1991; Smart, 1991, 1993). While the different kinds of
work in this second, meta-level of analysis are quite divergent with regard to the sorts of discursive materials that they take as their analytic object, what they have in common is a shared emphasis upon historical and cultural relativism and with the development of what Gergen (1982) refers to as the transformation of social knowledge because they objectify the very activity whereby social knowledge is itself objectified at a further, meta-level of remove.

**Methodological versus Theoretical Appeals to Transcendence**

It is with the matter of exactly how extensive the transformation to which Gergen refers that is of particular concern in this chapter. Specifically, this touches upon a debate in the human and social sciences surrounding the issues of constructionism and realism. The details of the arguments are rather involved, but basically what is at issue in this debate are the anti-foundational implications that a dialogic approach to the construction of meaning entails; and perhaps more importantly, what these suggest for a project of social criticism. In other words, this debate relates to how the theoretical assumptions brought to bear in the analysis of discursive materials are themselves related to the analytic work which a reading of those materials itself sets out to accomplish. Thus, there is a great deal at stake in the issue of how an analysis itself relates to the theoretical and methodological assumptions that it works to develop in relation to its own object.

One way to begin approaching the details of what is involved is with the observation that an inevitable feature of any deconstructive critique is that it implicitly depends upon the very assumptions of an essentialist model of representation which it works to make both observable and accountable in the discursive practices that it takes as its own analytic object. That is, in exploring the different representational practices of the discursive products that it considers as its own object of analysis (such as those mentioned in our first category of scholarship, above), such research works to objectify the very objectifying practices which it finds accountable in the work of its own analysis. It is this particular aspect of the analysis of social interaction that Pollner (1987: 119, emphasis added) refers to as an inevitable feature of any sort of analytic enterprise. It is simply a characteristic aspect of any interaction
that it must in some sense itself be exempt from the deconstructive work it sets out to achieve in order successfully to accomplish that work.

[It is perfectly conceivable that the meta-sociological framework can be relegated to the field of data by the adoption of a meta-meta-sociological framework ad infinitum. In this linear fashion, any particular position can be rendered an object of analysis. But at each level of inquiry, insofar as there is to be an inquiry, the position from which all other positions are viewed is accorded asylum from its own programmatic formulations in order to produce the distinction between analysis and object.

These remarks suggest that not only is the selective deployment of essentialist and nominalist assumptions a characteristic feature of analytic work, but that it is constitutive of that work. In other words, in that the activity of analysis is itself a discursive undertaking with which objectification is accomplished, then no analysis can occur without the making available of essentialist assumptions which that act of objectification entails. This is necessarily the case with analyses that work to make nominalist assumptions relevant in explaining their own analytic referent (i.e., the objectifying practices which they take as their object) at a higher meta-level of analysis. Thus, where analysis is concerned to examine the objectifying work accomplished in and through discursive activities per se, the higher meta-level analysis by which that work is subsumed as its own object of reference must necessarily engage in this selective and variable occasioning of different models of discourse in order to accomplish its work. Where the critical upshot of an analysis is such as to make the deployment of essentialist assumptions an accountable matter — where, for example, the ‘accuracy’, say, of representation is at issue — then that reading must necessarily rely upon the very sorts of essentialist assumptions whose deployment it finds accountable in order to give the nominalist reading of those practices their critical purchase.

So, for example, work in the tradition of critical linguistics (Caldas-Coulthard and Coulthard, 1996; Fairclough, 1989, 1995; Fowler et al., 1979; Hodge and Kress, 1988; Kress, 1985; van Dijk, 1993, 1994) approaches discourse and discursive interaction as an activity constitutive of its object of reference so that the assumptions made available in the discursive practices by which its objects are referenced are said to constitute that referent. At the same time, however, the adequacy of that objectifying activity is decided in such meta-level analyses with reference to a range
of alternative assumptions that are not made available in the discursive interaction under consideration but whose relevance is provided for in the reading of that activity. Matters such as class, gender, race, etc. are regarded as relevant to an interaction's accomplishment (even when and where those issues are not attended to in the talk itself) as a means of accomplishing the critical work of the second, meta-level analysis. The point here is that both essentialist (realist) and nominalist (constructivist) assumptions are selectively appropriated relative either to the analysis' object or else to the analytic activity accomplished in the meta-level reading of that object itself.

Similarly, the research of some discourse analysts who work to develop a range of Marxist implications to their analyses have been criticized for doing the same (Parker, 1989; Burman and Parker, 1993). So too, work in Serge Moscovici's theory of social representation (Farr and Moscovici, 1984; Moscovici and Hewstone, 1983), while exploring different discursive representations of the social, employs the very categories whose use it sets out to investigate as a resource to accomplish that investigative work itself (see related discussion in Potter and Litton, 1985). Crucially, the problematics of social representation theory relate to the variation in accounts that given individuals in the same situation may work paradoxically to make available. Representational accounts are thus not considered for what they do for the participants who use them and for how they relate to alternative representations, so much as they get employed (by those working in social representation research) to specify a set of criteria with which to define those groups. Social representation theory assumes a homogeneity to representations which overlooks the fluid and situationally contingent nature of the accounting practices which are taken by Moscovici to be an expression of such representations (see also related discussions in McKinlay and Potter, 1987; McKinlay et al., 1993; Potter and Billig, 1992).

Further, even certain strands of ethnomethodological work have been criticized for this kind of selective occasioning of different assumptions concerning objectification. More significantly, it is the failure reflexively to consider that this selectivity is an inevitable feature of analysis (rather than that it takes place) which is regarded as problematic. What all of these various analyses have in common is the selective use of these different assumptions. More importantly, perhaps, this drift
between essentialism (realism) and nominalism (constructivism) is employed in order to pursue a rhetorical project of critique — that is, a project of making the practices which these analyses take as their own object accountable to a range of assumptions provided for with and in that analysis. In short, these approaches do not assume of their own activity what they assume of others — viz., that accounts are rhetorically oriented and contingent upon the circumstances of their production.

The approaches to discursive interaction that we have touched upon in this section thus reify their own objects of analysis — be it with their objectifying reference to ‘discourse’, ‘social representation(s)’, (the Foucauldian) ‘episteme’, ‘social structure’ or whatever other gloss they may provide to effect their work. The very analytic activity that accomplishes this reification is activity that does that which it claims that its object of analysis does. Now, in and of itself, this is neither problematic nor particularly objectionable. Where it raises difficulties, however, is with the work of critique which such analyses are employed to accomplish. Essentially, the problem with analyses of this kind is the problem with all critical analyses that work to make objectification an accountable matter: that in pursuing its critical work, it undermines the very basis upon which that critique might be effected by doing the very activity that it works to make accountable. That is, it sets itself up for critique by pursuing the very activity of making the basis for that critique relevant to and for the analysis. In working to make objectification accountable, the critique renders itself subject to the self-same demands for accountability which that analysis is itself employed to effect.

The problem with the analytic work we have considered here, then, is not that it grants asylum to its own project of scrutiny; but rather that, to varying degrees, it fails to consider this as an inevitable feature of any analytic undertaking — including its own. In other words, it is unreflexive about the implications that it raises, selectively providing for their relevance in order to pursue the critical work for which those implications are appropriated. This is problematic because while the making available of essentialist (realist) assumptions is an inevitable feature of any analysis, the failure reflexively to take that fact into consideration means that the analysis makes itself vulnerable to the demands for accountability that it sets out to make available. By contrast, when and where the accountable adequacy of a first-level (that
is, subsumed non-meta-level) analysis of objectifying practices is regarded as lying not in some implicitly realist criteria of comparison but rather elsewhere (say, with an appeal to some other factor eminent to the interaction [Rorty, 1980; 1982; 1989; 1991a; 1991b]); or where an analysis remains agnostic regarding the adequacy of its object’s own analysis (in what Garfinkel and Sacks [1970] refer to with the term ethnomethodological indifference), then these problematics raised with a critical approach to discursive interaction are no longer of relevance. They simply lose their force. Furthermore, where this is the case, the analysis of objectifying practices can paradoxically display the very point they work to make (in regard to their own object of analysis) in and through the very activity of objectification which they must pursue in order to make that point.4

In the discussion which follows, we shall consider these issues in greater detail for how they relate to the literature that is of more direct concern to this thesis — literature that concerns itself with the objectifying practices by which the (Arab) racial and cultural other is referenced. Also, we will be concerned with how these issues relate to the talk we will consider in the analytic chapters to follow. In particular, we will be concerned to examine the way that, in discussing Western involvement abroad, the British and American expatriate speakers whose talk we consider are oriented to the conversational situation as one in which they are accountable to the very demands that both sorts of literatures make available. That is, speakers attend to the potential to be held accountable as informed by the concerns to which both of these bodies of scholarship attend. Thus, not only do they work to show themselves to be aware of cultural difference (especially with regard to Arab culture) as informed by the sorts of assumptions of this first kind of literature, but they also address the potential for their remarks to be held accountable as informed by the critique of objectifying representational practices whereby the Arab Other is rendered observable as well. In this regard, talk in the interviews shares a great deal with both of the different kinds of scholarship in that the speakers attend to the demands which they work to make available.
One body of research that relates rather closely to the debate concerning the adequacy of ethnographic description that we considered in the previous chapter is the critical work of the literary theorist Edward Said. Said’s work is extensive, addressing a broad range of topics; but in particular, his book entitled *Orientalism* has perhaps been his most influential piece of work, providing the impetus for a range of related research (Barker et al., 1985; Sharabi, 1990). Such work expands upon various critiques of anthropological ethnography by focusing upon the specific body of scholarship which takes as its own analytic object the society and culture of the Middle East. Included here in this corpus of literature is a very broad range indeed of philological-linguistic, historical, sociological, literary and other writings whose production spans at least two centuries. Further, such writing is itself said to be related to a body of earlier European Christian polemic directed against Islamic thought (McGrane, 1989). Also included for consideration within Said’s analytic scrutiny is the range of work referred to as Middle East and/or Asia Area Studies. Said’s analytic object thus encompasses a vast range of otherwise thematically disparate work under the rubric of Orientalism, the different writings having in common a shared concern for and analytic orientation to the particular geographically associated, socio-historically related peoples referred to with the term *Orient* (or some other functional equivalent).

Further, what it is that makes these writings the object of Said’s analytic concern — that is, what it is that makes them candidates for inclusion as instances of orientalist work — relates to the critical objective that he pursues with his analysis. Specifically, this criteria is that the relevant texts are deployed in the legitimation of a Western project of exploiting the Orient, employed as a means in the control of that object. This is particularly interesting because the analytic undertaking which Said pursues in *Orientalism* is one that involves establishing its criteria of objectification with reference to the critical implications which that inclusion itself works to make available.

Said is clear as to the details of what this inclusional criteria involves. Specifically, orientalist writings are said to legitimate Western exploitation and effect control of the Orient on at least two different levels. In the first place, with the very
activity of referring to the Orient as alter — that is, in taking its object of reference (the Orient) as an entity which somehow exists independently of and distinct from the very discursive activity whereby it is referred to as such — the Orient (geographically, ethnically, religiously, socio-culturally, etc.) is said to be textually constituted as an object; and thereby, in that particularly discursive sense, controlled. In the second place, the writings which Said includes are regarded as contributing to Western exploitation because the range of assumptions made relevant in and through those writings work (as anthropologically oriented ethnography is said to do generally, [cf., Fabian, 1983, especially remarks in the Preface and Acknowledgements, pp. ix-xv]) to legitimate the project of physical, military and social colonisation of the Orient by the West. It is with these two ways of defining control that Said delineates the corpus of writing which constitutes his analytic object.

Now, what is particularly interesting about these points for how they relate to this thesis is the way that the marshalling of these criteria itself involves the use of different and competing assumptions about the nature of language and discursive representation. Specifically, Said’s analysis entails a theory of language and discursive interaction such that linguistic representation is regarded as reflecting a reality which is independent of that representation and which, to a greater or lesser degree, can be analytically regarded as accurate. At the same time that he relies upon such assumptions, however, Said also makes implicitly available an alternative assumption which presupposes that reality is constituted from within discursive practices — that is, as endemic to those practices. From such a model, discursive interaction regards reality as attending to the relevances provided for by participants in their interactional encounters, from within those encounters. Thus, Said draws upon both nominalist and essentialist assumptions in the pursuit of his own critically directed project of analysis. So, for example, in the introduction to Orientalism, he comments (ibid.: 5, emphasis added):

There were—and are—cultures and nations whose location is in the East, and their lives, histories, and customs have a brute reality obviously greater than anything that could be said about them in the West. About that fact this study of Orientalism has very little to contribute, except to acknowledge it tacitly. But the phenomenon of Orientalism as I study it here deals principally, not with a correspondence between Orientalism and Orient, but with the internal consistency of Orientalism and its ideas about the Orient . . . despite or beyond any correspondence, or lack thereof, with a "real" Orient.

71
Or further on in the same introduction, Said remarks *(ibid.: 21-22, emphasis in original)*:

Another reason for insisting upon exteriority is that I believe it needs to be made clear about cultural discourse and exchange within a culture that what is commonly circulated by it is not "truth" but representations. [...] In any instance of at least written language, there is no such thing as a delivered presence, but a re-presence, or a representation. The value, efficacy, strength, apparent veracity of a written statement about the Orient therefore relies very little, and cannot instrumentally depend, on the Orient as such. On the contrary, the written statement is a presence to the reader by virtue of its having excluded, displaced, made supererogatory any such real thing as "the Orient." Thus all of Orientalism stands forth and away from the Orient: that Orientalism makes sense at all depends more on the West than on the Orient, and this sense is directly indebted to various Western techniques of representation that make the Orient visible, clear, "there" in discourse about it.

Now, what is interesting here is the particular way that Said oscillates between the assumptions attending to both essentialist (realist) and nominalist (constructivist) theories of discursive representation. That is, it is not only the case that the attendant assumptions of these two positions are made relevant; but also that in making these assumptions available as he does here, Said works to bring about a particular rhetorical effect in terms of the analysis his reading accomplishes. Specifically, the critical purchase of his reading is one that implicitly depends upon the relevance of the set of realist assumptions that he makes available through his tacit acknowledgement of that ‘brute reality’ which is the object that orientalist writing purports to describe independently of that description itself (see emphasized statement reproduced in quotation from p. 5, above). That is, in the course of his analyses, the efforts he employs to deal with what he refers to as the ‘internal consistency’ of the different discursive practices (i.e., those assumptions which are said to objectify the Orient, constituting it as an external entity) themselves implicitly employ as their comparative criteria of adequacy the very different entity that his ‘tacit’ (realist) acknowledgement makes available. Thus, it is the realist model of discourse that gives the constructivist model its critical bite. Ultimately, then, Said trades off between opposing models of the discursive, making available a range of realist assumptions by way of bolstering his own (deconstructive) constructivist reading of orientalist discourse(s). He makes realist assumptions available in order to give critical purchase to his reading and yet he adopts a theoretically constructionist approach in order to bring that realist reading off in the first place.6
Said's work itself constitutes a discursive product which seeks to manage the availability of competing theoretical demands. That is, Said's writing on the representational practices by which the Orient is made observable itself comprises the work of managing the extent to which the demands for accountability as between essentialist and nominalist assumptions are made relevant (Said, 1981, 1985, 1989). What makes this interesting is that it allows Said to attend to very different sorts of work in and with his own writing. In particular, it allows him to keep the Orient open-ended, to sustain a continuing dialogue on the nature of the Orient as an object, suspending any sort of judgemental or evaluative take thereupon. That is, it allows Said to make selective use of essentialist assumptions without providing any criteria in relation to which the degree of a representation's accuracy might be measured. At the same time, however, it also allows Said to manage the reflexive implications of a nominalist model by drawing upon essentialist assumptions as a way of giving critical purchase to those very efforts in suspending judgement. The two sets of assumptions are thus co-implicative in that attending to the one (nominalism/constructionism) provides for the other (essentialism/realism), and vice-versa. The object which that appropriation of an essentialist position works up is itself the discourse of Orientalism.7

These concerns for what we have been referring to as nominalist and essentialist takes on representation are of relevance to the conversational material we shall consider below as well. There we will see that speakers also make available such assumptions in a similarly co-implicative fashion. In their conversational interaction, they work to manage the reflexive implications of a constructivist model of representation, working to foreclose the potential for their talk to be construed as entailing the use of a reductionist account of Arab identity. To do this, however, Said's work differs from what the speakers in the interview situation do because while those speakers attend to the potential for their talk to be made accountable to the implications of a constructionist model, they nevertheless do so while providing for an evaluative judgement on the Orient — that is, they do so in order to make a statement about what Arab culture and society entails. In contrast, Said works to suspend just such a judgement. Thus, his attention to the implications of a realist model extends only to the point where doing so grants critical purchase to his analytic
reading of orientalist texts. In this sense, then, the management work he does is more limited in its scope than that of the speakers in the interview material. Said works to suspend judgement; speakers in the interviews work to shield their judgement from being undermined as an instance of reductionism.

It is this feature that distinguishes the interactional work conducted in the interview situation from that of Said’s analytic reading of the texts he takes under his purview. In a sense, talk does more than Said because it displays an awareness of and sensitivity to issues of cultural content which Said does not venture to undertake. It hazards to provide a judgement on the Arab Other as a way of displaying an awareness of cultural difference. Thus, speakers orient to the interview as a situation in which they are accountable to display an awareness of and sensitivity to cultural difference. In this way, speakers orient to the situation as involving a more extensive range of demands for accountable (to assumptions regarding the cultural and the prejudicial) than does Said. Thus, Said’s dilemma and the speakers’ dilemma are somewhat different. It is, among other things, this difference in the extent to which the conflicting demands for accountability are managed that distinguishes Said’s work from the work that participants pursue in the interviews.

The interview situation is thus one in which the participants are working interactively to determine what it is that constitutes their activity. That is, they work to determine when and to what extent the conversational circumstances call for them to display cultural awareness (and therefore to participate in a discourse of ethnographic description) as well as whether and how the situation calls for them to attend to such description itself as an instance of prejudice. In other words, speakers are faced with the demands required in assuming either an essentialist (realist) or a nominalist (constructivist) approach to culture as an object of inquiry. What they do is both. The reason is that the two are dialogically related. Similarly, Said attends to these competing demands in writings such as Orientalism. Where his writing differs from the talk in the interviews, however, is that Said attends to essentialist assumptions only to the extent that doing so undermines the writing which he himself takes as his object of analysis. The two different participants work to accomplish quite different rhetorical tasks, though the concerns that they each attend to in the pursuit of their respective tasks is quite similar. Specifically, in that Said makes no
claim to engage in the sorts of practices which the writing he considers is said to accomplish, and in that he does not hold himself accountable to do so in the same way that the speakers in the interviews attend to their accountability for producing an ethnographic accounts, these two differ. Nevertheless, we can see that the two sorts of concerns are dialogically related, and that attending to the accountability for the one necessarily entails accounting for the other as a constitutive feature of the discursive undertaking itself.

In terms of how this relates to the analytic undertaking of this project itself, one aspect that distinguishes the thesis' analysis from the sort of work that both Said and the conversational interlocutors that we consider is that this project attends to the mutually co-implicative nature of these different assumptions in discursive interaction where issues of Arab identity are a part of the business-at-hand of that interaction. Thus, this thesis seeks to examine the details of how two sets of otherwise mutually exclusive assumptions necessarily implicate each other, and how it is that this aspect of discursive interrogation is exemplified in the analytic material under consideration (the interview data). That is, it seeks to make evident the way that issues of prejudice (related to constructionism and the making accountable of constructivist assumptions) are both implied by as well as implicative of issues of awareness (related to realism and the making accountable of realist assumptions). In other words, the accountability for the making relevant of one set of assumptions necessarily entails the making relevant of the opposite set of assumptions. Said could have sought out the ways that the discursive work he takes as his object attends to this feature — that is, how orientalist writers anticipate and work to foreclose particular readings of their work as predisposed to find the features of the Orient which they claim to reveal. He does not do so, however. So, one way that this thesis differs from Said’s project is that it examines the way that speakers attend to the very sorts of critiques which his (Said’s own) selective appropriation of the conflicting demands for accountability itself exemplifies. Furthermore, this project also seeks to draw attention, in a way that Said does not, to that fact itself — that is, to the fact that all discursive production of the sort that concerns itself with the examination of some analytic undertaking necessarily must do this as a condition of the (analytic) undertaking which itself it sets out to accomplish. This thesis thus works to display not only that essentialism (realism) and
nominalism (constructivism) are dialogically related in a co-implicative fashion, but that a relationship whereby the two necessarily entail one another to their mutual exclusion arises 'as an inevitable feature . . . of the same style of sociological argument as it [i.e., such argumentation itself] applies to other substantive areas' (Woolgar and Pawluch, 1995: 224). Thus, we are concerned here to draw attention to how Said's analysis engages in the same sort of practices which affords it with its own critical bite, and that to do that is an inherent feature of all analytic practices, as also exemplified in an examination of the interview material (with a reading of that material in just those terms).

**Social Cognition and Racism**

Another body of research that is of some relevance to this thesis is a discourse analytic project directed at addressing matters of ethnic and racial prejudice. Particularly relevant here is the work of Teun van Dijk (1984, 1986, 1987a, 1987b, 1987c, 1991, *inter alia*). This work is quite extensive in terms of the diversity of discursive materials that it addresses in examining racism, but what makes this research of particular significance to this thesis is the model of cognitive processing that informs his analysis of these materials. This work provides a rather interesting case for comparison with which to contrast the sort of ethnomethodologically inspired approach adopted here in that it draws attention to the problems inherent in a mentalistic model of interaction.

So, whether in his insistence on analysing textual organisation as reflective of a hierarchical structure of cognitive schemata (van Dijk, 1979; van Dijk and Kintsch, 1983; compare with textual organisation as treated in Woolgar, 1988: 73-77), to his assumption of shared cognitive processes as definitive of social groups (as aspect of his writing that draws upon Moscovici's work in social representation theory), van Dijk's work ultimately approaches discourse and discursive interaction as the manifestation of underlying mental structures. This is not to say that he does not consider discursive interaction as a means of accomplishing structure in the orientation of participants to the relevancies whose availability they provide for in attending to their interactional business; but van Dijk nevertheless regards these two — the cognitive and social structure — as ontologically distinct. Thus, in his
analyses, he ultimately conceives of interactional business as a vehicle through which underlying mental structure is, to varying degrees of success, manifested or given expression.

It is this insistence upon a mentalistic model of interaction that results in the encountering of a range of analytic difficulties in dealing with account variability and contradiction in talk. In particular, when analysing contradictory claims made by the same speaker in the course of his or her talk, one way that van Dijk deals with this is through recourse to a theory of face-saving (Goffman, 1990) which is employed to retain the essentialist assumptions that inform his reading of the interaction. In other words, where speakers express contradictory argumentative positions in the course of their talk, claiming to oppose racism but making some statement that might be construed as racist, van Dijk’s analysis privileges one of those positions (the latter) as expressive of what the speaker truly believes. Further, he accounts for the contrastive claim (the former claim opposed to racism) as a manifestation of some ideologically based social constraints which are said to have the effect of modulating the expression of the speaker’s essentially durable beliefs.

This response to variability in talk is problematic for a number of reasons. For one thing, such an account takes the nature of the ideological constraints to which it refers as unproblematically external to the speakers; and in that it does so, it fails to consider how the notion of an ideology can be distinguished from personal belief as such. By what means, one might ask, are such ideological positions incorporated into a speaker’s cognitive structural apparatus? What distinguishes these ideological structures from the ‘real’ beliefs that their expression contradicts? What, indeed, if not the very essentialist assumptions which that privileging makes available. Thus, rather than taking contradiction and the situated work that is accomplished with the management of contradiction as his analytic topic, van Dijk’s task would seem to be that of contributing to the project of developing an essentialist model of the mental and of the individual by the deploying discursive materials that he does.

Interestingly, however, this essentialist approach does not mean that van Dijk fails to give analytic consideration to the matters of interactional work that is accomplished in talk. Consider, for example, van Dijk’s (1987: 91) remarks under the heading ‘Apparent denial and negation’:
One of the most stereotypical moves used in prejudicial talk is Apparent Denial, which usually contains a general denial of (one's own) negative opinions about ethnic groups, followed by a negative opinion: "I am not a racist, but . . .," or "I have nothing against foreigners, but . . .." [...]. We call this Apparent Denial because it is not a real denial of what was said, but only a denial of possible inferences the recipient may make, as well as a statement that is inconsistent with what is actually stated in previous or next assertions.

The theoretically significant problem with this, of course, is that van Dijk fails to provide any criteria with which to distinguish between ‘what was said’ and the ‘possible inferences the recipient may make’. That is, he fails to provide some meaningful analytic means by which to differentiate between what he refers to as real as against the apparent — except, perhaps, (by implication here) that the former entails an unequivocal assertion which is not in any way inconsistent with what the speaker might say elsewhere. Why this is problematic is in the assumption that the equivocal is somehow disingenuous, that speakers cannot maintain inconsistent positions, that ‘X cannot both be a cause and an effect of Y’ (Mehan and Wood, 1975: 174).

Another, perhaps more significant, problem with this is that van Dijk reads participants’ anticipatory foreclosure work as a concession to or ratification of the very reading which that work sets out to resist. That is, he sees participants’ work (of foreclosure) as transparently indicating some underlying racist cognitive schemata. What is interesting about this here is that his efforts to relate the talk to underlying structures (here glossed in terms of motives) leads van Dijk to ignore the very interactional concerns of the speakers themselves — concerns which he takes as a manifestation of that structure. Specifically, it is in anticipatory foreclosure of the very sort of reading that van Dijk develops in his analysis of their talk that speakers direct their contribution. In other words, van Dijk’s analysis is exactly the sort of reading which their contribution reflexively works to resist. As an analytic take on that talk, therefore, van Dijk’s reading surely fails to engage in an analysis of participant resources and of how those resources are employed in response to the very concern by which that response is occasioned. It is in this way that van Dijk’s research abandons the analytic work of explicating participant resources in favour of engaging in the meanings and interpretations that arise as a result of their use. Furthermore, this sort of analysis is such that it not only ‘finds’ racism, but it also
removes the analyst from the culpability that such an analysis makes relevant in the first place.

It is a result of van Dijk’s insistence on referring to these rhetorical positions in terms of underlying cognitive structures and his related assumption that such structures cannot be inconsistent that results in his analysis encountering considerable problems. In contrast, an analytic take which instead sees argumentative positions as rhetorical resources — resources with which speakers work to situate their contribution in anticipation of its potential reception — is one that provides a more interesting take on what occurs in, and indeed as constitutive of, the setting. In other words, by regarding the expression of these alternative and often contradictory positions in terms of the interactional work of situating one’s voice (thereby foregoing the question of cognitive structures), such an analysis not only puts such problematic features to one side — making them non-problems, in effect — but it also works to explore how social structure is eminently constituted by participants in situ. That is, it attends to what the speakers themselves are doing. In contrast, van Dijk’s insistence upon cognitive schemata and his implicit insistence on consistency lead him to ignore the most obvious features of the talk — the inferential potential to which speakers attend. In contrast, the analytic take developed in this thesis is one which regards such argumentative positions (on issues of prejudice, for example) in terms of their situated use, and which deals with contradiction by examining the ways in which speakers work to manage the conflict in the implications raised by their conversational contributions — in limiting the extent to which certain of those implications are made available and others are foreclosed.

More to the point of this thesis, in his eagerness to privilege a particular reading of the talk he considers, van Dijk fails to explore how speakers manage the extent of the inferences in their talk. So, while van Dijk acknowledges that speakers attend to the potential for their talk to be construed as raising a range of inferences; he does not consider in any detail the relationship between those inferences which are ratified and those which are sanctioned, especially as regards the extent of their mutual constraint. For van Dijk, racist discourse is simply racist discourse. There is no variation in the extent to which speakers endorse the implications of attending to race and ethnicity as a significant consideration in the pursuit of their own
interactional business, nor is there any consideration of how that attention might be *constitutive of* that interaction’s business.

In sum, then, van Dijk’s work on racism constitutes an analysis which, again, implicitly privileges a particular account of motivation in terms of underlying cognitive structures — one which the speaker works to foreclose. What this fails to do is to explore the situated work that the speakers do reflexively to constitute the significance of their own activities in favour of the relevancies which his analysis assumes. Moreover, his failure to do so overlooks the creative way that speakers employ the very sorts of category terms (that is, what constitutes ‘prejudice’) that he himself brings to bear in the analysis. It is not that van Dijk is unaware of the situated nature of the work that these speakers do (as he makes clear in his statement about the ‘real’ and the ‘apparent’, reproduced above); but that he fails to consider the problematic nature of a range of implicit assumptions about cognitive structures. His analysis is in great part, therefore, determined by these assumptions. This also means that he cannot attend to contradiction in any other way except by privileging a particular version over another.¹⁰ This is also problematic because it means that in dealing with contradiction, van Dijk is unable to provide any procedural criteria for choosing one version over another (Potter and Wetherell, 1988). In favouring a cognitive approach, he must necessarily disregard the situated work that speakers attend to in employing contradictory assumptions.¹¹

**Reflexive Implications in Social Constructionism**

So far we have considered two examples of research into discourse where the topics of concern to the participants involved — those whose writing and/or talk is under analysis — are taken up as considerations by the researchers as well. Specifically, where the Orient (in the case of Said’s work) or the psychology of racism (in the case of van Dijk’s work) are of concern for the participants themselves, so too the researchers who examine the production of discursive products where those concerns are dealt with employ their analysis of those products as a way of addressing the self-same concerns raised therein. Now, one interesting aspect of the relationship between the literature on Orientalism (or social psychology or whatever) and the discourse which is the analytic object of that literature is the question of whether and how the
production of such discursive interaction constitutes a response to prior analytic work for which it is an object.

*Mapping Various Directions: The Language of Racism*

Up to this point, we have also considered a range of different research that in some way or other relates to discourse concerned with prejudice and cultural difference. We have already noted that a great deal of this work is problematic for this thesis because, to different degrees, it approaches such issues as unproblematically straightforward, so that prejudice and/or culture are more or less regarded as given. That is, it takes prejudice and/or culture to be ontological primitives even while it attends to the nature of those primitives as constituted in discursive interaction (just as we have seen in the case of Said’s work). Now, where this thesis departs from such work is that rather than regard prejudice and culture as presumably known and known-about — as ‘out there’ — it seeks to examine precisely how such matters are attended to themselves as participant concerns. Thus, we want to explore in what ways and under what circumstances speakers display an orientation to these issues as relevant to the interactional business of their talk. Where and to what effect are prejudice and culture matters of speaker concern?

Closely related to this, we are also interested in examining the way that such concern is itself variably occasioned. That is, we are interested in exploring the range of different interactional business that speakers attend to in taking such matters as their concern. This aspect of variability in interactional business is important because it relates to the contingent nature of the relevant assumptions (about prejudice and culture). It points up the way that what gets taken as an instance of prejudice or what is regarded as an expression of culturally determined behaviour, for example, is *itself* the outcome of interactional work and not predetermined prior to that works’ accomplishment. Thus, where that interactional work varies, so too the nature of the assumptions whose relevance is provided for varies in relation to the business those assumptions are called upon to do (Edwards, 1991).

One piece of research which takes up this analytic task is that of Margaret Wetherell and Jonathan Potter’s *Mapping the Language of Racism* (1992). This book is a rich resource not only for how it covers the broad extent of theoretical work
concerned with racism and the contingent nature of that category's relevance as provided for in research which takes race as its topic (see, for example, the discussion of Miles' [1989] work, pp. 14-33), but also for how it explores the way that categorisation is variably worked up in talk. It is this latter feature of their work that is of particular relevance to the work of this thesis. Specifically, Wetherell and Potter examine the details of how culture gets taken as a relevant matter in talk among white New Zealanders — descendants of the Europeans who colonised the islands. Of concern in their analyses is the way that a range of different assumptions as to what constitutes culture are made available relative to the argumentative implications which those assumptions entail in the specific context of their use. Talk about culture thus becomes a resource with which to argue for, among other things, the legitimacy of difference (culture-as-heritage), where the responsibility for social inequality lies (culture-as-therapy), or the sources of social unrest (culture-as-ideology). Wetherell and Potter thus show how the category of culture varies with the discursive context in which it is made available. As such, their work might be regarded as exploring the reflexive implication of the use of culture-talk in order to demonstrate how the significance of such talk is related to the context of its use. In this regard, this thesis shares a similar concern with their work.

One way that this thesis seeks to extend the work that Wetherell and Potter do on variability is to consider the relationship between the assumptions whose relevance is provided for in talk about culture and the interactional context by which that work is occasioned. What this means is that where Wetherell and Potter consider the argumentative implications of the various assumptions made relevant in talk about culture, specifically addressing their analyses to the way in which those assumptions provide for a range of different argumentative inferences; in this thesis, we will consider how the assumptions made available in talk about culture are co-implicationally related to a contrastive range of assumptions provided for in talk about prejudice, and with the way that the conflicting demands for accountability which those assumptions involve are mutually related as providing the grounds for their relevance. It is this relationship between competing demands for accountability and the connection which that has with the variability in talk about either culture or prejudice which is the point of departure for this thesis. So, while Wetherell and
Potter explore how the assumptions made available in talk about culture are variably employed argumentatively to legitimate exploitation (much as I do with cultural sensitivity and the legitimation of U.S. involvement in the Gulf War in Chapter 6, below), they do not examine how these are related to demands for accountability to assumptions regarding prejudice. More importantly, they do not deal with how these two sorts of demands are related in a mutually co-implicative fashion as manifested in actual episodes of talk and with the work that speakers do to manage the conflict involved.

Wetherell and Potter’s book thus focuses primarily on talk about practical politics, exploring the way that attending to issues of prejudice and sensitivity to cultural difference are employed as resources to argue for the legitimacy of a certain configuration of social relations. This thesis, in contrast, expands upon that work by examining the way that talk about prejudice and sensitivity to cultural difference are employed in attending to concerns such as the speaker’s epistemological warrant — matters related to the significance of the speaker’s contribution as constitutive of the setting in which it occurs. In commenting upon the limits of their project, Wetherell and Potter remark: ‘we suspect that talk about . . . the discursive small-change recognized as prejudice, will prove just as flexible and inconsistent in practice as the discourse of practical politics’ (1992: 198). In fact, it is to issues such as what it is that constitutes such discursive small-change and its recognition as prejudice (and to the implications that this holds for the participants involved in formulating that recognition) that this thesis expands upon the work of Mapping the Language of Racism.

All of this is not to say that Wetherell and Potter neglect the matter of how speakers work to foreclose the construal of their talk in terms of prejudice. On the contrary, they deal with this matter in considerable detail. Their work, however, focuses specifically upon the talk of political legitimation. In fact, they implicitly assume a model of discourse that differs from an ethnomethodological treatment of social structure. Thus, social structure, while considered as the topic-of-talk in the conversational materials Wetherell and Potter analyze, is still considered independently of the talk’s occasion. Consider, for example, the following (Wetherell and Potter, 1992: 214):

83
Attention to the [different] interpretive resources alone misses the flexible application of that resource in practice. When we look at practice it becomes clear how prejudice discourse begins to double back on itself so that what was once an accusation or critique of racism becomes mobilized as an important part of the rhetorical work which maintains the status quo.

By distinguishing, as they do here, between the use of resources and their practical application — between talk and practice — Wetherell and Potter equivocate with regard to the ethnomethodologically relevant point about how talk is practice, and with how social structure — the ‘status quo’ to which they refer here as distinct from talk — is eminent to that talk. To provide for a distinction between talk and the consequential implications of that talk in practice (talk-in-its-practical-consequences), while perhaps potentially valuable as a rhetorical device to promote the utility of one’s analysis, is nevertheless to ignore the theoretical issue of how the practical consequences of talk are such as to effect the concerns that are of relevance to that setting from within that setting (Knorr-Cetina, 1981; 1988). To regard the situated occasion as a manifestation of some social structure which transcends that occasion is the business to which speakers attend in their talk.

Of course, Wetherell and Potter are not entirely consistent in this regard (a response, perhaps, to the analytic use made by Ashmore [1989: Ch. 5] of inconsistencies in both their own prior writing [Potter and Wetherell, 1987] and in related work). At certain places they attend to these ethnomethodologically informed theoretical concerns with the eminence of social structure; but in pursuing (the practical task of) their work, they necessarily employ a description which distinguishes between talk and its implications-for-practice — a distinction which the talk they consider itself makes available — in order to address that conversational activity. So another important way that Mapping the Language of Racism relates to this thesis is in respect to their take on discursive interaction and social structure.

‘Studies of Work’ as New Literary Forms

One area of ethnomethodologically related work that is also significant to this thesis is a body of analytic research referred to as the ‘studies of work’ project, in distinction to an approach referred to as ‘talk and social structure’. The theoretical significance of this distinction is the topic of concern taken up in a special issue of
Human Studies (1995, vol. 18, no. 2-3) edited by George Psathas and entitled ‘Ethnomethodology: Discussions and Contributions’. In particular, this publication is concerned with the degree that social setting is constituted in the interactionally accomplished activity of making and orienting to setting as relevantly available or the possibility that ‘what they [participants in an encounter] are engaged in doing is also analyzable in terms of more than the immediately available interaction’ (Psathas, 1995: 142). This is an important issue because if, as Schegloff and others argue (as discussed in the earlier part of this chapter), it is the concern of participants to make such relevancies available — that is, to do social structure in the activity of making its relevance available — then to do as Psathas suggests (that is, to offer an analysis ‘in terms of more than the immediately available interaction’) is itself to engage in doing what participants do: to provide for the availability of the extra-situational as relevant to and, to some degree, determinate of the activity which takes place there in that situation itself. It is to make a claim for the claim-independence of the referent.

The very claim to claim-independence achieved in this way is, therefore, contradictory in that the activity of discussing the claim-independence of the activity (‘in terms of more that the immediately available interaction’ [Psathas, 1995: 142]) is itself constitutive of the activity of making those otherwise irrelevant concerns available. That is, it accomplishes that which it says is done in the very activity of saying that it is not done. In this way, the very relevancies which the analyst seeks (as independent of the situation to which it is referred) are found — provided for — in the very activity of his or her seeking.

Now, this is paradoxical. It is also reflexively brilliant in that one can read such claims as working to display the very point that a talk-and-social-structure type analysis (Schegloff, 1991, 1992) itself works to make — viz., that the object of analytic activity (whether it be that of an ethnomethodologically informed activity, or that of the lay members whose methods such an analysis purports to investigate [see Garfinkel, 1974]). The claim to claim-independence and the claim-dependence thereof is displayed in the claims of such analysts to be seeking for ‘more than the immediately available interaction’ (Psathas, 1995: 142). Further, the fact that that itself is what they claim participants are about (viz., granting asylum to their own
situated analytic activities, then to do the same with their very own analytic activities is reflexively to display the very point about the situatedness and contingency of structure which they seek to make — in and through the very activity of calling that point into question (Ashmore, 1989: Ch. 3).

This is how I choose to read this take on what work by the likes of Graham Button, etc. (what Psathas glosses as the ‘studies of work’ research) are doing. So, for example, the contentiousness of their position itself provides for the relevance of the very point about how the situation-independence of structure is always ever provided for in situ. Thus, for example, at the ‘Symposium on Cognition and Action’ held at the University of Nottingham on 15 October 1996 (proceedings organised and moderated by David Greatbatch under the auspices of the School of Social Studies at that institution), the remarks recorded below were made during the question-and-answer period following the presentation of Graham Button’s contribution entitled ‘The Fallacy of Distributed Cognition’. Among other things, Button provided a contrastive analysis of working operations in a mass-production printshop by way of developing a critique of the analytic work in Edwin Hutchins’ book Cognition in the Wild (1995):

**Button:** it’s perfectly possible in the- in- in- in- in the world to find that people can go around um- uh- describing the world in intelligible ways, and that what- where the problems come, and most of the problems come, is when we enter the scene, as sociologists (laughs), and want to now redescribe it, yeah? And then have good fights. You- you know, make our careers, out of debating with one other which is the best way of redescribing it. And I think a lot of problems with social science, the problems with human science, is the problem of redescription, and I think that’s what Hutchins in doing.

**Antaki:** But you’re not. You’re not. [smiley voice]

**Button:** I don’t know.

(audience laughter)

**Greatbatch:** Mike. [offers floor to Michael Lynch] (sighs) (audience laughter)

**Suchman:** Time for a beer! [smiley voice] (laughs) (audience laughter)


At a latter point in the same question-and-answer period, the discussion continues:
**Potter:** I think the sharp issue— one sharp issue here is uh— are we treating
members’ practices as somehow homogeneous or cons- or consen- or
consensual, or is it possible that within this universe that you’re
looking at, of print workers, there are for example the kind of
alternative vocabularies like— that Gilbert and Mulkay [1984] show in
their study of biochemists. Because your story sounds to me very much
like the official story of the biochemists. Where they tell it all working
very properly or smoothly, not giving these other sides, these
problematical (indistinguishable), and of course for Gilbert and Mulkay
their— their point is not that one or either of these stories is correct,
that you could go and check one out, but both of them are part of the
culture of biochemistry. Both of them are used to do particular things.
And I’m wondering whether there are voices and stories in your
materials that are actually— don’t allow you to simply say "Ah, this is
what the participants say", because you’re faced with the problems
(indistinguishable) participants are saying more than one thing, more
than one kind of thing.

**Button:** It’s a very simple thing, printing, uh— it—
(audience laughter)

*some lines omitted*

**Button:** In— in the— the simil— the similar situation uh— where you walk— where
you go into uh— uh— a— a particular setting, um— I don’t know whether
or not what I’m being invited to do is to see some managerialist um—
uh— version uh— of the world, um— all I can do is to kind of like
describe the activities and the actions um— as those activities and
actions are presented, in terms of the ways in which they display
certain orientations, um— and the ways in which they display certain
orientations such as uh— "we’ll do the finishing after the printing’s been
done", that "we’ll do x after uh— uh— y has been done", that there are
um— ways in which we can um— uh— work to um— put an order to
something, and then ways in which we can work to then reorder that
thing when we put an order to it, um— I don’t know if that’s— it’s—
that’s um— necessarily uh— I didn’t— I wouldn’t know what it is to have
a— a variety of voices on that. Uh— oh— oh— you might get a variety of
voices on— on it in terms of uh— um— uh— "this is an exploitative
way" or "this is uh— entire—" something other way, you know, I just—
I just do not know what it would be to say, yeah, that these people are
working in such a— it— d— d— other than to say in doing x they’re
displaying some orientation to a sequential order of printing. I don’t
know what it— I don’t know what another voice would be there. But it—
you know, if you can show me there is one, I’m— I’m pleased.

*some lines omitted*

**Button:** What I’m just trying to say is for some of the act— for some of the
activities that you can see, uh— I just don’t know what it would be to—
to— to have some other sorts of descriptive category. I just don’t
know what it would be. If somebody could tell me that then I might—
might have— w— w— well take that into account. I just do not see what
it would be. To say that when- that uh- uh- that a- (sighs) "that this-
this process", yeah, "is organised to precede this process" is not an
orientation to some sort of notion of a sequential order, then there's a
lot of work that's been done to make that order play out as they want
it to do, but I just know that it would be to describe that other than-
you know- I don't mind, you know, like you mean use another word,
that's not what he's [refers to Potter] meaning.

In the first of these exchanges (with Antaki), Button contrasts the sort of description
that he develops in his own analysis of printshop activities with that which Hutchins
provides in his analysis of the coordination of seamen's activities on a naval vessel.
In particular, Button is quite explicit in contextualising this contrast within the set of
problematics that he claims are definitive of the social and human sciences. Now,
what is interesting about this is that by offering his analytic take on participant
activities in the way that he does — that is, in privileging his own analytic work over
Hutchins' and by granting his own analytic work asylum from the scrutinising
deconstruction that he wields against Hutchins — Button literally begs the question
as to the transparency of his own analytic undertaking. In so doing, he works to
display the very point that situated analytic practices (including the analytic practice
of examining others' practices) grants itself asylum from analytic scrutiny, and that
it must necessarily do so if there is ever to be any analytic practice at all.

In other words, if the theoretical point of an ethnomethodological
investigation is to show that participants employ a range of (ethno)methods by which
to make sense of their situated activities, and if the point is further to show that social
structure is constituted thereby for those participants in their mutual orientation to
such structures as efficacious to the circumstances in which they take part; then the
implications of this theoretical point is itself also no less the case of the situated
activity of analysing those participants' analytic practices (such as that pursued by
Button in his analysis of printshop activities).\textsuperscript{15} Put another way, the point about
analytic asylum is just as true of ethnomethodologists as it is of those whose situated
analytic practices ethnomethodologists set out to investigate. Thus, by begging the
question as to how his own analysis of printshop activities constitutes a redescription
('in what ways am I producing a redescription'), Button refuses to take his analytic
practices themselves under analytic consideration and thereby displays the very point

88
of an ethnomethodological theory — viz., that structural relevancies are eminent in participants’ analytic sense-making practices. To do otherwise — that is, to have engaged in the subsequent analytic scrutiny of his own analytic practices (those accomplished in his take on printshop work) — would be to have done something other than to have granted his own prior analytic activities scrutinising asylum. It would instead be to pursue analysis at another (meta-)level. It would be to have turned to engage in a different analytic activity — viz., that of considering his own prior analytic activity of printshop workers’ activity. In that case, however, the activity with which he would then and thereby be engaged would be accorded the same analytic asylum which had formerly been the privilege of that prior analytic practice (of describing the printshop workers’ activities) before it had been subjected to scrutiny. Moreover, for him also to have said that that was itself the case — that is, that the subsequent subjecting of his analysis of printshop workers’ activities to analytic scrutiny was an activity which, in its very undertaking, would be granted analytic asylum — would itself be to have engaged in yet another (meta-meta-)level of analytic scrutiny which would also thereby be granted analytic asylum. Thus, by begging the question as he does, Button ceases from engaging in the proliferation of analytic level-jumping. More importantly, however, he also works to display that this is what he is doing without his having to say so in just so many words.  

In saying something like ‘I just don’t know what it would be to- to- to- to have some other sorts of descriptive category’ or ‘It’s a very simple thing, printing’, Button fails — that is, refuses — himself to provide for the relevance of alternative categories. Thus, in so doing, he again paradoxically displays the very point about how such relevancies are made available in participants’ activities of providing for their significance (or not, as the case may be). Again, by failing himself to engage in analytic consideration of his own prior analysis; Button works, in and through his refusal, to display the ethnomethodologically relevant point that situated analytic activity grants asylum to it’s own analytic practices.  

Again, this is further displayed in the second exchange (with Potter) in and through the concessionary remarks Button makes concerning the introduction of such an analysis by some other party (‘if you can show me there is one, I’m- I’m pleased’, ‘If somebody could tell me that then I might- might have- w- w- well take that into account’). The point here
is that, with these remarks inviting (though not engaging in) the introduction of an alternative analytic take, Button displays the way in which such an analytic gesture would itself constitute a subsequent occasion for mutual orientation in and with the uptake on his own prior analysis.¹⁸

Now, the sort of response to Button's remarks that I have provided here are quite interesting; but they are contentious. It is possible to offer an alternative reading of those remarks and indeed of a variety of ethnomethodological work in general. It could, for example, be argued that analysts in the 'studies of work' line (Button and Sharrock, 1993; Bjelić and Lynch, 1992; Coulter, 1989; Watson and Seiler, 1992, inter alia) are simply failing to be reflexive about their own work. That is, it could be argued that they are not pointing up the reflexive nature of their own analytic activities but are merely privileging the analyst's (their own) take.¹⁹ Essentially, this is the position taken in this review with regard to the work of those discussed in the previous sections. The same could be said in relation to an ethnomethodologically informed sociological project generally. For example, consider this recent critique of the ethnomethodological insistence upon the constitution of meaning as eminent in situated practices (May, 1996: 97, emphasis in original):

[A sociological concern with 'truth' as related to time and convention] is the theme which variants of CA [conversation analysis] appear to overcome by generalizing about conventions of language free of social context as if reasons for actions were causes of actions. If such practices are submitted to the original canons of referential reflexivity which ethnomethodology has called for, it would clearly fall short of meeting these standards. Instead, what is now produced is a supposed authoritative inquiry which fails to see how its own grounds of thinking are themselves constituted as a product of social relations (McHugh et al. 1974).

One of the assumptions made relevant here is that if, as the argument might go, they — ethnomethodologists — were to refer to the reflexive implications of their own analysis (that is, the asylum which they accord to their own analysis), then perhaps they might be more convincing to their audience if for no other reason than for their consistency. However, if they were indeed to do this (that is, make the effort to point this up), then in so doing they would no longer be effecting the display itself but would instead be working to accomplish something different than to display the inconsistency of making the claim about claim-independence. They must be inconsistent in their claims-about-consistency in order to achieve the reflexive display
concerning the theoretical point — i.e., that analysis grants asylum to its own undertaking (Garfinkel and Sacks, 1970). Interestingly enough, to criticise it for doing this is to engage the very point it works to make — albeit to reject its efforts, or to fail to accept the relevance of those efforts. In so doing (that is, in rejecting), it nevertheless paradoxically buys into the very point such a reflexive analysis sets out to make in order to make that rejection effective.

Thus, the phenomenology of a ‘studies of work’ analysis itself reflexively displays the very point it works to make about analytic practices as such. In regarding such studies in this way, I choose to read Button, etc. as working with their analysis to author the sort of reflexive work that Potter (1988: 49) refers to in his discussion of New Literary Forms; and further, I choose to read both Antaki’s and Potter’s remarks at the Nottingham symposium as facilitating just such a reading of Button’s work by providing for its relevance in their taking of Button’s remarks as problematic. In other words, their remarks provide an argumentative foil that works up the issues Button (and, by implication, the ‘studies of work’ project generally) seeks to display, and thereby also articulate the objections whose expression makes those very concerns for consistency availably relevant. The point here is that the expression of disagreement itself also works to display the point about how the relevance of in situ concerns is itself provided for in situ — even the situation independence of those concerns is only ever provided for in situ. It goes without saying that this relates to the thesis project here in that I seek to work to display the reading of the situated (analytic) activities of the participants in the interview material as a reading, and thereby to display the point about how New/Alternative Literary Forms reflexively call attention to the sort of work that participants accomplish in their own execution. [Strike that last sentence out as it is inconsistent with your overall point.]

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have examined a range of different research all of which takes as its topic issues related either to ethnic and racial prejudice or else to cultural difference. What all of these different bodies of research have in common is a concern to explore the relationship between discursive activity and the nature what
is referred to as the object of that activity. A crucial difference that distinguishes much of the work we have reviewed, however, is that related to reflexivity. Simply put, this involves the theoretical assumptions concerning what exactly is involved in representation. Thus, for some, in taking instances of discursive representation as its own analytic object, the object of that first-level discursive reference (that is, the discursive activity being so scrutinised) is regarded as distinct from that activity of representation itself. Thus, language/discursive representation itself is taken as mirroring its objects of reference to greater or lesser degrees of accuracy. Such a theory of language usually remains implicit in such work in that the comparative criteria by which that measure of accuracy might be determined is itself left inexplicit. Particularly interesting here is the fact that such work lacks a reflexive aspect in that it grants analytic asylum to its own activity of scrutiny, failing reflexively to consider the implications of its own activity of distinguishing between its object-of-discursive-reference (that is, the first-level discursive activity which it objectifies) and that objectifying activity itself. That is, such work sets out to deconstruct discursive representation, demonstrating how the object of reference and the activity of referral are inherently related. This work then seeks to discredit or undermine that discursive representation on the implicit assumption that the inherent relationship so demonstrated is not inaccurate. In this way, the subject-object distinction is therefore selectively made available as a means of affording critical purchase to the deconstructive work of the analysis by which it is made available in the first instance.

Notes
1. Edwards (1997: 271-276) distinguishes between at least three types or levels of analysis where in Type 1, a text develops a sort of picture of events (as with ethnographies and oral histories), in Type 2 the first level type texts are themselves treated as objects, as constituting a technology whereby things and/or events are represented to a greater or lesser degree of accuracy, and in Type 3 where discourse is the analytic object such that the issue of a representation’s accuracy is irrelevant to that analysis. Edwards includes his own research in the latter category of analysis. In so doing, however, he implicitly addresses matters of the analysis’s adequacy (if not accuracy). That is, Type 2 analyses are implicitly taken to be inadequate in that they make available the assumption that there exists some correct or unmediated version of events by which the adequacy of their object (the Type 1 texts in question) can be determined. In implying that the Type 2 analyses are inadequate, Edwards engages in the same sort of work that those (Type 2) analyses do to determine the adequacy of the Type 1 representations which they take as their object of analysis. In other words, the issue of accuracy is
replace here with the issue of adequacy. The issue is one of mediation: to what degree is a text’s referent provided with direct access.

2. The mutually co-implicative relationship of social structure to the conceptual apparatuses by which the classification of distinct groups (the sane and the insane) is accomplished is explored creatively in Will Self’s brilliant novelistic work *The Quantity Theory of Insanity* (1991).

3. So, for example, in response to the suggestions for the development of ethnomethodology as a project of social criticism that McHoul (1988) develops in his reading of Coulter’s (1971, 1973, 1979) work, Bogen and Lynch remark: ‘Rather than situating Coulter’s arguments for ‘disinterested analysis’ against the backcloth of *explanatory theorising*, McHoul takes Coulter to be expressing a *blanket* indifference to, and hence, *total* detachment from, the normative commitments intrinsic to the analytic ‘object’ (viz., language). […] The central confusion in McHoul is that he makes pointed nonsense of Coulter’s notion of ‘disinterested description’ by construing it as a blanket claim to the transcendental correctness of analysts’ descriptions (the descriptivist fallacy), rather than as a reasoned indifference to the successes of specific conventional methods of sociological and philosophical explanation. That this confusion leads him to misinterpret the ‘critical’ import of Coulter’s analyses is evident throughout the text’ (1990: 516-517, emphasis in original).

4. This relates to the discussion in McHoul which in turn involves McHoul discussing what Mehan and Wood (1975: 162) describe as the Reflexivity problem — the Rr-problem: ‘Herein lies the rub of my attempted (dis)solution of Rr as a trouble. In *doing actual investigations*, ethnomethodology might usefully rely upon the research heuristic (‘myth’) that the phenomena it treats comprise a real order of events, that they are objects in an independently existing world. In its investigative mode (for want of a better term) ethnomethodology’s self-understanding is that it is codifying or explicating practices which indeed do exist in the lay (=non-ethnomethodological) world absolutely independently of ethnomethodological interests in them but which are (simply) unthematised in that lay world. Such a ‘realist heuristic’ it might well share with other analytic forms of life (including, presumably, transformational grammar and psychoanalysis). However, in *addressing itself as such a phenomenon*, ethnomethodology can, by contrast, hold that those very objects and practices (which it takes as ‘topic’) in fact emerge as a product of the concerted, reflexive work of the ethnomethodological tradition and discourse. Here what previously looked like existents in a real and independent world beyond ethnomethodology become discernible as effects of ethnomethodology reproducing its own form of life’ (1982: 101, emphasis in original).

5. More specifically, Said develops the notion that this is accomplished in the way that orientalist writings address their object from within a set of internally available assumptions having as their corollary the comparative placement of that object (the Orient) in an inferior position, as determined on an evaluative scale which those writings make relevant. Thus, in constituting its object with reference to those assumptions, such writing is said to achieve the relational prominence or preeminence of the West over the Orient. Said thus remarks upon how ‘Orientalism depends for its strategy [of control] on this flexible *positional* superiority, which puts the Westerner in a whole series of possible relationships with the Orient without ever losing him the relative upper hand’ (1978: 7, emphasis in original).

6. This particular feature of Said’s work has been noted by at least one other writer as well: ‘[T]he entirely correct refusal [by him] to offer an alternative to Orientalism does not solve the problem of how Said separates himself from the coercive structures of knowledge that he is describing. What method can he use to analyze his object that escapes the terms of his own critique? […] This problem can be seen to be more serious as a general level in relation to the whole project of the book (Orientalism) in which, according to the logic of Said’s own argument, any account of ‘Orientalism’ as an object, discursive or otherwise, will both repeat the essentialism that he condemns and, more problematically, will itself create a representation that cannot be identical to the object it identifies. In other words, Said’s account will be no truer to Orientalism than Orientalism is to the actual Orient, *assuming there could ever be such a thing*’ (Young, 1990: 127, 128; emphasis added). Notice too that even in Young’s claim here that Said’s work fails reflexively to engage the critical implications that
it raises, Young himself engages in the same activity for which he works to make Said accountable. This inevitable feature of any sociological analysis (Woolgar, 1988; Woolgar and Pawluch, 1985) means that not only is this the case of Said’s work and of Young’s analytic reading thereof; but that it is also the case of an analysis of that analysis (or a disclaimer of that analysis’ work as in the statement ‘as in this statement here’, ad infinitum). It is this open-ended, potentially infinitely defeasible aspect of a retrospective take on a prior dialogic turn that Bakhtin (1984) refers to in his discussion of unfinalisability (see also related discussion in Morson and Emerson: 1990: 36-49).

7. This sort of selective making-relevant of realist and constructionist assumptions is quite similar to what Woolgar and Pawluch (1985) refer to with the term ontological gerrymandering. Said’s work differs from ontological gerrymandering, however, is that it attends to the potential to be rhetorically undermined as an objectivist account (that is, as objectifying the Orient), even while working implicitly to give critical purchase to his deconstructive project with the making available of realist assumptions. In other words, Said attends to and manages the demands between the two assumptions in a way that the work which Woolgar and Pawluch discuss does not. So, in discussing several instances of research involving this selective availability of the different theoretical assumptions, Woolgar and Pawluch note that ‘the authors fail to acknowledge that their identification of . . . or their assertion of the constancy of a condition or behaviour [analogous, here, to the objectification of the Orient], can itself be construed as a definitional claim’ (ibid.: 217). Said, however, does do this. He is thus reflexive in the endogenous sense though he is not, however, reflexive in the referential sense (see note 15, below). For a discussion and extension of the notion of ontological gerrymandering to include the selective making relevant of phenomenon in description, see Potter 1996: 183-187 as well as related discussion of what Sarbin and Kitsuse (1994) refer to with a distinction between ‘strict’ and ‘contextual’ versions of social constructionism.

8. This is not to suggest that Said neglects such concerns, only that he attends to a different set of rhetorical considerations as occasioned by his participation in the circumstances than do the Western expatriates whose talk we consider. In contrast to the way those speakers attend to assumptions about cultural sensitivity, Said deploys the work of category entitlement in references to his personal history as a member of the Palestinian diaspora community. Consider for example the following remarks: ‘Much of the personal investment in this study [Orientalism] derives from my awareness of being an "Oriental" as a child growing up in two British colonies. All of my education, in those colonies (Palestine and Egypt) and in the United States, has been Western, and yet that deep early awareness has persisted. In many ways my study of Orientalism has been an attempt to inventory the traces upon me, the Oriental subject, of the culture whose domination has been so powerful a factor in the life of all Orientals. [...] Along the way, as severely and as rationally as I have been able, I have tried to maintain a critical consciousness, as well as employing those instruments of historical, humanistic, and cultural research of which my education has made me the fortunate beneficiary. In none of that, however, have I ever lost hold of the cultural reality of, the personal involvement in having been constituted as, “an Oriental”’ (Said, 1978: 25-26). In that Said makes relevant the implicit claims to category entitlement that are available in these remarks, his comments work to foreclose the potential that they might be construed as personally motivated — a consideration that would not, of course, arise for those British and American speakers whose talk is under consideration in this thesis.

9. Similarly, research into what is referred to as the new racism (Barker, 1981; see also Gilroy, 1987 and related discussion in both Gabriel, 1994: 184-194 and Solomos and Back, 1996) relies upon the assumption of an underlying racist motive or intention in any discursive efforts to foreclose a reading of one’s contribution as an instance of racist discourse.

10. In the note to an article in which he attempts to relate discourse analytic work with more traditionally informed work in social cognition, Shi-xu writes: ‘Of course, pluralistic social settings and environments may impose contradictory and even contrary demands on the social individual in a particular situation but it does not follow that these cognitions themselves — ideologies, attitudes, group representation — are inherently inconsistent. It merely means that they may come into conflict in specific social situations, such that they become combined, lopsided, or smoothed over and that they may appear varied when compared across situations or may feature even within one situation. Thus,
according to Kress (1985: 27, 39), text may appear as the expression of several competing, contradictory pieces of social information. In a similar vein, he claims that texts are more unstable and unpredictable whereas 'discourse and ideology', more a category of the social domain and two sides of the same phenomenon, are relatively consistent in themselves. But then it may also be observed that people do maintain some degree of continuity of social cognition across different situations. Since a 'dilemmatic' theory of social cognition fails to account for this phenomenon [the allusion is to both Billig, 1987 and Potter and Wetherell, 1987 as cited in prior remarks], it cannot be supported' (1992: 287). Here, Shi-xu's citation of Kress is in keeping with the entire tenor of his remarks in that they work simply to reiterate the very position which he initially introduces as problematic without, however, addressing the theoretical concerns by which it is informed.

11. Similarly, in examining news materials, van Dijk's (1991) insistence upon a social cognition approach leads him to adopt the rather inadequate method of word counting as a device with which to indicate what he implicitly assumes to be the underlying cognitive structures that news items express (see review by Potter, 1992b). Again, this overlooks an entire range of rather interesting rhetorical work accomplished in and with news reporting and fails to consider how contradiction and the topicalisation of same is itself deployed in news items as a way of attending to the situated rhetorical work of privileging competing versions of events (see Edwards and Potter, 1992: Ch. 3).

12. Potter remarks on this: 'it's a fudge really rather than a developed social structured view' (pers. comm.).

13. The analytic activity itself constitutes its object of reference just as does the activity of the participants. This is consistent with the point that an ethnomethodology sets out to make: that the distinction between an object of discursive reference and the discursive activity are in some sense indistinguishable. This reflexive aspect of the analytic practice of examining participants' activities demonstrates the point it sets out to make, and is simply a characteristic feature of any interaction — that is, that it must in some sense itself be exempt from the deconstructive work it sets out to accomplish in order successfully to accomplish that work.

14. Other attendants whose presence features here include Charles Antaki (Loughborough University), Michael Lynch (Brunel University), Jonathan Potter (Loughborough University) and Lucy Suchman (Rank Xerox).

15. Pollner refers to these two different emphases in the ethnomethodological project as the concern for endogenous reflexivity ('how what members do in, to, and about social reality constitutes social reality') on the one hand and referential reflexivity (which 'conceives of all analysis — ethnomethodology included — as a constitutive process') on the other. 'Thus, ethnomethodology is referentially reflexive to the extent it appreciates its own analyses as constitutive and endogenous accomplishments. Referential reflexive appreciation of constitution is radicalized when the appreciator is included within the scope of reflexivity, i.e., when the formulation of reflexivity — as well as every other feature of analysis — is appreciated as an endogenous achievement' (1991: 372, italics in original). It is this radicalization of referential reflexivity — that is, the inclusion of the appreciator within the scope of reflexivity — which is the problematic feature of an analysis since any effort to make that work of analysis explicit is one which, in so doing, departs from the undertaking it works thereby to objectify. It is, again, to do something else — something other than that activity to which it makes reference. The way around this problematic is to engage in a sort of question-begging analysis of analytic practices that implicitly (or, rather, inexplicitly) invites the reader to consider the implications for the first-level analysis of the second-level analysis which such a first-level analytic reading accomplishes.

16. Garfinkel refers to the eminence of participants' mutual orientation in the situated activities in which they engage with the phrase tacit knowledge — in short, that aspect intrinsic to any interactional event such that that 'event means for both the witness and the other more than the witness can say' (Garfinkel, 1967: 56; cited in Mehan and Wood 1975: 100). In light of the responses Button provided at the Nottingham symposium then, consider Mehan and Wood's (1975) remarks on Schwartz's (1971,
n. d.) reading of Garfinkel’s project wherein he (Schwartz) points out that, just as with any other analytic practice, so too ethnomethodology is an ironising undertaking; and that “to analyze subjective phenomena necessarily distorts such phenomena. He [(that is, Schwartz) therefore] says that subjective phenomena should [instead] be displayed” (Mehan and Wood, 1975: 153, emphasis in original). I want to read Button’s remarks here as providing just such a display. Further, I want to be read as reading Button’s remarks as providing such a display, as well as to be seen here to be read as reading Button’s remarks as providing such a display, as well as . . . [Stop here.]

17. Even work which attempts to consider the implications of its own doing can only ever do so after the fact, as it were. That is, in considering the reflexive implications of one’s own activity — even (and perhaps especially) when that activity involves the work of reflexively considering one’s own analytic practices — that consideration is itself something different than the object of analysis: the theretofore subjective activity then becomes objectified. Thus, the moment that one turns to consider their own activity, they are thereby engaging in an activity (that of the turning, so to speak) that is different than that which they are then considering. Schutz (1967) captures this rather nicely with his metaphor of a cone of light. For a related discussion of how this particular matter is handled in what the pioneering semiotician Charles Sanders Pearce refers to with the categories of firstness, secondness and thirdness, see Rochberg-Halton, 1986.

18. Or, as per Pollner: ‘Reflective explication of the ethnomethodological practices through which the claim that “meaning is a construction” is achieved might commence with the observation that neither the indexical character of conversation nor the interpretive practices used to achieve closure are experientially self-evident to either conversationalsists or analysts. […] Radical reflexivity stimulates a sluggish imagination at the metalevel. By inducing equivocalities that threaten to paralyze or subvert ordinary analytic discourse, radical reflexivity interrupts its normal operation, unsettles any version of reality, and makes visible the work of settling. It is in the face of the potential paralysis or subversion that inquiry encounters innumerable textual, embodied, cognitive, interactional, and institutional (e.g., Wolfe 1990) processes and practices operating like a gravitational field to keep discourse, inquiry, and inquirers within the realm of the "settled"’ (1991: 375, 276).

19. For example, during a meeting of the Loughborough University Discourse and Rhetoric Group (26 July 1995), Derek Edwards commented thus:

*Edwards*: Because what’s Cartesian and wrong (according to Button and Sharrock’s [1993] characterisation of social constructionism) is the distinction between the two the- and the relationship between the two (reality and representation). It just so happens that the standard story has reality first and representation following it. But all, you know, Woolgar does is just turn it round, you know, and have representation coming first and reality following that, but he hasn’t done anything radical like get rid of it, you know, they’re still doing the same dualism, and they’re just just inverting it. Now, what that misses, I think, is a- is another crucial bit of Woolgar’s [1988] little book. Which is the notion that ontology is investigated via epistemology. That ep- epistemology, which is “How do you know”, “What counts as reality” becomes the topic, so that when Woolgar actually does his inversion, you’re not left with the same reality you had, before being produced. He doesn’t mean that when you do physics, black holes pop into being somewhere in the “real” universe. You know. He’s not- he’s not actually saying that representational practices create the reality world that on the first model is the one you think is out there that we just study. It’s not actually just an inversion at all. It’s a reconstitution of reality as what’s counted as reality by practices, and reality becomes part of, topic of, practices. Rather like, in my view, it does in ethnomethodology. And these guys just haven’t got that. And one reason they haven’t got it is that they’re unreflective about their own descriptive practices, and they’re a bunch of realists. You know, who keep on having this reality out there as a weapon to wield against constructionism.
20. Button and Sharrock comment thus: ‘The world of natural facts against which we act (and in our
actions produce) is a socially standardised world. One of the points made by Garfinkel’s so-called
experiments was to reveal the extent to which we display our agreement about these facts in our
activities, so embedded in our activities is that “agreement”. Whilst we constantly attest to the
background, the scaffolding, of natural facts and of agreement in our activities we cannot, as a matter
of course say, in detail, of what this agreement consists. Whilst this agreement is constantly accountable
in our activities it is not the topic of our activities. It is, in Garfinkel’s apocryphal expression, "seen
but unnoticed” (1993: 16, emphasis added).

21. Potter remarks upon this in the following terms: [T]here is no principled difference between our
readings of the original extract and our readings of participants’ readings of the extract. In other
words, there is no basic distinction between scientists’ texts and texts-which-are-reading-those-texts
(Potter et al., 1984). The latter species of texts are not somehow transparent and straightforward in
a way other texts are not. […] The discourse analytic report is thus itself a New Literary Form; that
is, a specific textual organization designed explicitly to draw attention to the constructed nature of the
analyst’s readings. […] DA is fundamentally an interpretive exercise which offers up readings of texts
for scrutiny. In this way DA embodies one kind of reflexivity, which is reflected in the very form of
having to do with the history of the literary form, prefers to employ the term ‘Alternative Literary
Form [ALF]’ rather than ‘New Literary Form’ [NLF] in referring to the use of this kind of writing in
the social sciences (see Mulkay, 1991: xvii). Whichever of these particular glosses one may choose
to employ, however, what they have in common is an emphasis upon the reflexive nature of analysis
as displayed in texts’ expression — what Pollner (1991: 372) refers to as the radicalization of
reflexivity (see note 15, above).

22. Thus, the problem of analytic adequacy dissolves where the criteria for disinterestedness is
regarded as simply untenable: ‘The sociologist doing reading-analysis inevitably trades on his/her
competence as a cultural member in recognising the activities that s/he and a text, as participants to
interaction, are engaged in; for example, it is by virtue of my status as a competent member that I can
recurrently locate in my readings instances of ‘the same’ activity. […] This is not to claim that
members are infallible, either as members doing reading or as members doing reading-analysis, or that
there can be ideal/perfect statements contending for the title 'what is really going on here'; it is only
to claim that no resolution of problematic cases can be effected by resorting to procedures that are
supposedly uncontaminated by members’ knowledge. For there is no way of even imagining what such
ideally clean procedures could look like. In any event, we are not (by contrast with some forms of
textual analysis) concerned to tease out meanings and interpretations from texts but rather to explicate
the technical resources readers and texts conjointly and concertedly employ on any occasion of a text
being read, whatever meanings and interpretations arise from that occasion. […] This requires the
analyst to, as far as possible, explicate the resources s/he shares with other readers in making sense
of the scriptural utterances composing a stretch of writing, a text, or part-text. At every step, inevitably,
the analyst will continue to employ his/her socialised competence while continuing (as and in the very
analysis) to make explicit what these resources are and how s/he employs them (cf. Turner, 1971, p.
177)’ (McHoul, 1982: 107-108, emphasis added). In terms of the concerns of this thesis, one question
this raises, then, is that of what distinguishes an ethnomethodology. That is, if these remarks are true
of, say, Said; then why should he not be considered to be an ethnomethodologist? The reason is
because he is not concerned to examine the technical resources that readers and texts employ, whatever
those meanings might be. Instead, Said is interested in examining those meanings and in engaging
them. He employs his own competence, but does so not in order to explicate their use, but to further
employ them to engage the upshot of the arguments to which they are a response. Said’s work
constitutes a kind of situated repair — a subsequent interactional turn, as it were. In contrast, an
ethnomethodological analysis does not seek to engage in that conversation, except insofar as it
facilitates the explication of that conversation’s resources.
Chapter 3

INCUMBENCY AND ENTITLEMENT
Category Membership and Identity as Participant Concerns

In the preceding discussion, one of the principal tasks with which we have been concerned has been that of establishing the theoretical significance of the responsive orientation that speakers display in dialogic interaction, and to examine the implications this has for an analysis of the details of talk. In particular, we were concerned with the matter of how reflexively providing for the relevance of various assumptions in an interactional encounter is a fundamental feature of the business that participants attend to in their talk. In particular, we considered how it is that participants work to provide for the significance of their contributions to an interactional encounter and how, in so doing, they work up their contributions as constitutive of that encounter’s sense.

So, for example, in the exchange we examined in Chapter 1 above (Extract 1.0), we saw how it was that in making relevant a distinction between personal opinion and government policy (or some other unnamed category of knowledge to which personal opinion was taken to be relationally contrastive), the speakers involved were working to manage the subsequent implicational trajectory that their respective contributions made available in the setting where category membership might potentially be employed to hold one accountable for the adequacy of his or her subsequent response (Jayussi, 1984). Our point there was not to claim that either participant’s contribution was or was not adequate (as determined against some independent criteria of comparison), but rather to examine how such matters are taken up by participants themselves as a way of displaying what they take the significance of one another’s contributions to be. In this way, the distinction itself was employed as a resource in shaping the very context in which their talk was pursued. That is, in the responsive orientation whereby speakers attend to the implications that category membership might be taken as making available, they simultaneously work reflexively to establish what it is that constitutes that talk’s business. Pervasive to this responsive
orientation is the rather delicate and often subtle work of attending to a set of conflicting demands for accountability (see Billig, 1987/96; Billig et al., 1988).¹

Now, in this chapter, we will continue with the concern for category membership that we touched on in our discussion of responsive orientation by examining how identity features as a resource that speakers employ in attending to a range of different demands for accountability which they take their participation in the circumstances of their talk to entail. Among other things, this will involve examining how expatriate identity features as the source of tension between the potentially damaging inferences that one’s category membership can be taken to make available as against the category entitlement that otherwise arises from that membership. That is, we will explore how it is that in displaying an understanding of membership in a particular way, certain inferences are encouraged while others are foreclosed. One specific example of this that we will focus on is how expatriate identity can be the basis for a range of more or less noxious inferences about the speaker, his or her views, attitudes and so on; and how, at the same time, that identity can also serve as the basis for speaker credibility where the experience of Westerners living abroad is taken to be at issue in the talk. It is the management of this tension between these competing possibilities that is one of the principal activities to which speakers attend in accounting for their presence abroad. Speakers thus work to be construed as expatriates to the extent that their identity as such — that is, as expatriates — works to make them credible speakers in the circumstances of their talk.² It is managing the degree to which speakers are themselves implicated in the demands for accountability that they attend to which is the business of their talk.

Speaker Incumbency and Identity as Participant Concerns

In their analytic work concerned with the language of youth subcultures, Widdicombe and Wooffitt (1995) examine a range of devices whereby speakers attend to the potential implications that their identity as subcultural group members might be construed to make available. Commenting on the details, the authors point out how speakers display (176):

a sensitivity as to the kinds of inferences which could be warranted by a simple positive assessment of their identity or lifestyle as punks or whatever. That is, they
seem to be orienting to the way a characterisation of affiliation in terms of identity or identity relevant features, or the social benefits of affiliation, could make available certain unfavourable inferences about the basis of and motivation for their involvement. For example, to affirm the importance of subcultural identity may invoke implications of conformity and the loss of individuality. On the other hand, characterising affiliation in terms of benefits thereby accrued may be taken to imply that the motivation for affiliation is simply based on what they get out of it; that is, membership is merely instrumental rather than a matter of commitment.

Now, while these remarks are concerned with talk in interviews among members of youth subcultures, Widdicombe and Wooffitt’s findings have broader implications for issues related to social identity (as, indeed, they themselves make clear). Among other things, the point that Widdicombe and Wooffitt make here is that speakers reflexively attend to the issue of identity as potentially significant for the way that their contributions might subsequently be construed by others, present or non-present (see also Leudar and Antaki, 1997). In other words, speakers display in and through their response to interviewer questions about their identity what they take the significance of such queries to be. In the case of the speakers whose talk Widdicombe and Wooffitt consider, this involves attending to, and thereby making relevant, a range of assumptions having to do with individual authenticity. It is through such a display that speakers work to show that they are not mere unreflexive ‘cultural dopes’ (to employ Garfinkel’s [1967] gloss) who are the simple object of social scientific investigation, but rather that they actively attend to the analytic concerns which they construe the interview of which they are a part to be about.

Similarly, in the interview encounters we will consider in this chapter, speakers also work reflexively to display what they take the identity relevant features of their participation in the circumstances of the talk to be. A particularly interesting aspect of this involves the direct conflict that arises between the assumptions that speakers orient to as relevant for a discussion of expatriate identity and the reflexive implications of taking part in such a discussion itself. In other words, there is a tension between the implications involved in what a speaker has to say about expatriate identity and the inferences raised in and through his or her activity of saying it in the first place. By working to show themselves to be competent participants in (and thereby entitled to contribute to) the interview situation of which they are a part, the very talk by which speakers attend to this task is itself potentially construed as making available a range of inferences which they work to foreclose. At
the same time, the very activity of resisting this range of unwanted implications has the effect of undermining their entitlement — their epistemological warrant — to speak as expatriates in the context of the interview. The task with which they are faced, then, is to manage these conflicting demands by working to show themselves to be credible commentators on the matters at hand without at the same time making themselves vulnerable to the accusations to which they attend in their talk about those concerns.4

Accounting for Social Mobility

To get an idea of what the details of this sort of discursive work involves, we shall begin by considering how identity features in talk where social status and its relation to one’s financial resources is at issue. Consider the following extract which was taken from an interview involving a young married couple in their early twenties who, at the time, were working as business professionals in Kuwait. As we shall see, speakers work to foreclose the construal of their presence in the Middle East as specifically motivated by a desire for financial gain and upward social mobility.

(3.1) Interview, 53 — private business owner, market researcher

1 CS: Another thing is most people in Kuwait are fairly secure in their jobs. Most expats. [And they-] go to work day in, day out, fo=r
2 IS: [Mm.]
3 CS: their two-year contract, their five-year contract or whatever, and they’ll know that for that period, they’ve got the job. It doesn’t matter what they do. [And-] so you don’t really have to work
4 IS: [Mm.]
5 CS: very hard to maintain a reasonable lifestyle.
6 IS: Well I think everyone here has a much higher standard ANYway than they would back home. A lot of the people that I’ve seen here I sometimes wonder, because you come over here and this- suddenly they’ve got thi- this money that they’ve never had, and uh- they’re meeting people that have a lifestyle that they’ve never known, or have never been able to afford. And they just go crazy. They- this is it. And a lot of them turn into real snobs and- <P because they really they- they just love themselves for having done this P>, but you do get that. You meet some people that you know back in wherever they come from, probably not be able to afford any of this. And I guess, when you go back ho- when you go back to wherever you come from, your neighbours, whatever, probably resent you, because = you’ve come from there and uh- the next
thing they know you’re coming back on holiday in your new car, or
whatever, and you’ve bought yourself all these things and-
KM: I mean, has that happened to you.
...
IS: Not really.

CS: No= l- I get on really well with my <@> neighbours [in the]
IS: @@]
CS: UK @> @@. But I don’t know about the UK but I can see it
happening more over here.
IS: How do you [mean.]
CS: [Um-] Well, people coming out and especially being
British, going up, say, one rank in society, yeah. Okay, you get the
maid, u=m- and then you start to assume the attitude of someone
who’s always had, [say, domestic help or whatever.]
IS: [Yeah. That’s exactly what I’m trying to say.]
Yeah.
KM: Mm hm.

IS: They just u=h- sort of get all these airs and graces. Which is a bit
ridiculous.

There are, of course, a number of different considerations that the speakers attend to
with this talk; but of immediate interest to us here is how the matter of financial
earnings and the related matter of social mobility feature as concerns for the
participants. Specifically, the desire for increased earnings is made accountable in this
particular context precisely where expatriate identity is at issue in the talk. This is
interesting because one could easily conceive of a range of contexts in which the
desire for increased earning capacity might be attended to very differently. For
example, one could imagine circumstances in which a speaker might argue about the
appropriateness of his or her pay as a measure of intrinsic worth or as adequate
renumeration for the relative merit of his or her contribution to the work efforts for
which it serves as payment, marshalling a range of assumptions to argue for an
increase in wages. In just such argumentative circumstances, it would not be the
desire for an increase in earnings, but rather the failure in attempting to earn more
money that might be made accountable. In this way, someone might be held
accountable, say, for not attempting to realise their earning potential.

The point to all of this is that the desire for social mobility and a relative
increase in earning power need not necessarily be made accountable in the way that
the speakers do here, but that doing so is occasioned in these circumstances to attend
to a very specific set of situated concerns. In particular, the speakers here treat the
desire for higher earnings and increased social status as accountable and in taking up a critical stance as they do, employ a range of comparative distinctions (in social class and resident status) as a way of attending to the potential for their own presence to be construed along similar lines.

With regard to the details of how this work is brought off, this would include the glossing of expatriate identity in terms which make relevant the assumptions regarding the accountability of social position (‘a lot of them turn into real snobs’, line 15). This is further emphasized in this talk with an ascription of those features’ typicality (‘but you do get that’, line 17). Indeed, it is this aspect of scripting up expatriate activity as somehow conforming to a set of characteristic features that betokens the conflict between the work that speakers do to display themselves as somehow departing from that set of features while nevertheless still retaining their entitlement (and the epistemological warrant to be derived therefrom) to speak as expatriates.5

Further, in this particular exchange, such a formulation of expatriate identity progresses along a rather interesting trajectory. Specifically, the assumptions initially made relevant in this talk concern the accountability of motivation as it relates to job security and work as an intrinsically desirable pursuit in and of itself (‘they’ll know that for that period, they’ve got the job. It doesn’t matter what they do. And- so you don’t really have to work very hard to maintain a reasonable lifestyle’, lines 5-8). The speakers here work to make the motivation for job security accountable as a matter of personal complacency. At the same time, while attending to the accountability in this way, the speakers also work implicitly to minimalise the relevance of these glosses to and for themselves (Well, I think everyone here has a much higher standard ANYway than they would back home’, line 9). This latter work is even more explicitly attended to in the exchange which follows speaker IS’s turn-at-talk (lines 24-29). Note also the corroborative nature of this work in that the implicit availability to which speaker IS’s remarks attend are further made available in the interviewer’s uptake (`I mean, has that happened to you’, line 24) which, in turn, occasions a response from both speakers IS and CS. Speaker IS’s laughter (line 28) provides for the relevance of the formulation as attending to this sort of concern. The point here is that not only is the conflict between competing concerns managed by the
participants, but that that work itself is reflexively attended to as such in the implicit referral thereto (line 24) and in the responsive laughter with which it is met in interlocutor uptake (lines 27-29). The management of the inferences that these glosses make available is both a jointly pursued undertaking and one which also reflexively attends to the potential for that work itself to be construed as motivated. The joint activity of these speakers here anticipates and forecloses the potential for the work it accomplishes itself to be construed in term of its motivatedness. Overall, then, the speakers here employ expatriate identity as a resource to make the desire for social mobility accountable while at the same time working to foreclose the negative inferences which their own status as members of that category might otherwise make available.

One interesting feature of how this work takes place is that speakers do not seem to have any problem with distancing themselves from the noxious inferences made available with the expatriate identity they work to formulate in the first place. That is, speakers IS and CS offer no reason why they themselves are not similarly affected by the experience of living abroad, except to say that this is not the case (lines 24-27). The question here is why this should be so. How is it that the speakers do not find it necessary in this context to foreclose the potential to be similarly so implicated? The reason for this has to do with the endogenously reflexive nature of the interaction as involving the sort of understanding that the participants display in that interaction. It is as if there is an unspoken agreement, realised in and through the activity of conducting the talk itself, that the interviewees will provide the sort of responses which their entitlement as expatriates warrants them to make in exchange for which they will not be held accountable by their interlocutor to the assumptions those responses potentially make relevant. Thus, it is significant here that such demands are not explicitly imposed by the interviewer, speaker KM (though, as we have already noted, their relevance is implicitly provided for in his remarks and in the responsive laughter that they occasion). It would appear to be the case, then, that the interviewees themselves can attend to the potential to be implicated when and if they choose to do so, but the same is not true of the interviewer (or, at least, not without that activity involving a threat to the tacit agreement — the display of assumed good
faith — upon which the entire encounter is based and which it depends for its ongoing conduct).  

Yet another interesting aspect of this talk involves something to which Michael Billig refers with his use of the term *kaleidoscope of common sense*. Specifically, what this refers to is how the different inferentially argumentative resources that speakers employ and the assumptions that those resources work to make available are related to one another in a sort of mutually-implicative and self-validating fashion. Thus, the intelligibility provided for with the use of one resource is *itself* made available through the use of an alternative resource. Discussing how this takes place, Billig (1992: 48, italics in original) points out:

> It is not the case that some beliefs are always used as justifications (as *explanans*) which support axiomatically a set of beliefs to be justified (the *explanandum*). *Explanans* and *explanandum* swap places. One moment a belief acts as a justification, and the next moment it finds itself being justified by the very bit of common-sense which it has been justifying. Around the beliefs can go in their kaleidoscopic whirl.

In other words, the various resources work to occasion one another in providing the grounds for each other’s intelligibility. In terms of how this relates to the talk recorded in Extract 3.1 above, the assumptions about social class that are involved in making a desire for upward social mobility accountable themselves contradict the very assumptions which expatriate identity is formulated to make relevant.

In other words, the demands for accountability in virtue of which expatriate identity is formulated themselves depend upon the assumption that the individuals referred to (the ‘expats’ who are said to ‘go crazy’ and ‘turn into real snobs’, lines 1-15) are somehow inauthentic — that by enjoying a lifestyle to which they would not otherwise have access, they are somehow violating an essential feature of their own identity. It is as if they are masquerading, enjoying a lifestyle to which they are not entitled. Now, the crucial point here is that that identity of which they are said to be in violation is itself paradoxically determined in virtue of their socio-economic status in their home country. That very entitlement is itself defined in terms of certain social circumstances by which it is rendered intelligible (or meaningfully relevant) in the first place. Thus, the speakers here work to make expatriates accountable for taking earnings as an indicator of social status, but they themselves do that very activity (of taking earnings as an indicator of social status) in order to give purchase to their
demands. In this way expatriates are implicitly criticised for assuming a social station to which they are not entitled, and yet that entitlement is itself defined with reference to their supposed financially derived social status in a different setting. The status of the expatriate as defined in terms of social setting is variably occasioned in that it is accorded sanction to the degree that it applies to their status in their home country, but not in the country to which they have expatriated.

This variable feature of conversational logic is even more evident in the following extract. The material here is the partial record of a much longer interview with a secondary school teacher in her mid-twenties.

(3.2) Interview, 30 — secondary school teacher

EB: U=m- well, I don’t know. I mean, I think people do= gen-
genuinely like it here, most people like it,

KM: Mm hm.

EB: and if they don’t like it, they go <p obviously p> so people who are here like it, and, I mean, I think they like it because- I really think that most- the reason- the most important reason why they like it is because um- they find they’re somebody. They’re somebody important. I really think that’s it. I mean, you know, you get- I don’t know if you can tell- I mean, I- this is- <P I’m not being snobbish here, okay, but P> I don’t know if you can tell the difference between different uh- English dialects, okay, the way people speak, but um- you get people out here uh- who um- their accent- you know how accents give a lot- lot- lots away, eh?

KM: Uh huh.

EB: So they’re- they’re talking, they’ve got a real um- Geordie accent or something, and [you can s-] Ge- Geordie, these are from Newcastle,

KM: [A real what?]

EB: [[okay,]] and they- um- and just by looking at them, you know, or

KM: [[Uh huh.]]

EB: whatever, <p the way they talk, whatever p>, you can tell they’re um- they’re- they’re working class in England, say, and they come out here and they live, you know, in a fabulous villa and um- I mean, you know, and they’re- everybody knows them and they’re- you know, they’re um- you know, they’re having a really good time, they’re making lots of money, and that’s why a lot of people STAY here because all of the sudden they’re- you know, they’re- they’re um- they’re doing really WELL. You know, they- and they go back to England and they’re a nobody again, you know, they’re [just somebo]dy from- from Newcastle. I think people do like to be

KM: [Uh huh.]
EB: SOMEbody, I mean, this is IT. This is human nature, you know,
.. 
KM: Well, yeah.
.. 
EB: and um- they like- they love it here. You know, they’re- they’re-
they’re doing- you know, doing really well and- and not only that,
they go back home and everybody thinks "Wow", you know, "wow,
you earned lots of money" and
.. 
KM: Mm hm.
.. 
EB: "gosh, look at this house", I mean, a typical- okay, the re- reason
I’m saying this is I went to this- these- this couple the other day,
and um- these- these- this couple are re- real Geordies, okay, um-
very very wor- very nice but they’re obviously very working class
and they had all these snapshots of their- this villa that they were
living in Kuwait, and the wife was telling me that she’d gone back
to England and was showing all her friends these pictures you see,
and her friends were saying to her "That’s- wow, you’ve really
done well", you know, "in your life you’ve done really really well",
and, you know, that’s obviously- I think they- they really LOVE it.
Of course they love it, you know, because all their friends are
jealous of them and everybody thinks they’re doing really well, you
know, and that’s how people like it in Kuwait

Just as with the talk we examined in the previous extract, so too the speakers here
work to hold certain individuals accountable for implicitly laying a claim to a
particular social status to which they are said not to be otherwise legitimately entitled
in virtue of their presumed group affiliation in the home country. That is, the
assumption made relevant here is that the living standard they enjoy is somehow false
or illegitimate relative to the comparative criteria of their socio-economic status in the
different setting of their country of origin.

Again, what is particularly interesting about this is that the implicit accusation
of disingenuity or subversion involved is itself one that depends upon the relevance
of the very assumption it finds objectionable in order to give it any sense. That the
legitimacy of certain actors’ claims to social status is made accountable to an
assumption that the nature of identity as not legitimately established by income (and
associated group affiliation) is itself made meaningful here with reference and in
contrast to an identity which is attributed to them on the basis of just such criteria
(‘just by looking at them, you know, or whatever, <P the way they talk, whatever
Thus, the substantiation of the implicit criticism or complaint depends for its sense upon the very assumptions the terms of which that complaint makes accountable. Specifically, speaker EB works to make the individuals she describes accountable for deriving their sense of identity and worth from their superior socio-economic status relative to the compatriots with whom they are contrasted in their homeland ('the most important reason why they like it is because um- they find they’re somebody. They’re somebody important’, lines 7-9). At the same time, she also works to provide for a contrastive group affiliation in relation to which that very contrastive identity can itself be made accountable. In this way, the upshot of her remarks is that expatriates enjoy the privilege of a station which is not appropriate to the identity attributed to them in their homeland ('they go back to England and they’re a nobody again, you know, they’re just somebody from- from Newcastle’, lines 29-31). It is as if they are really, authentically, merely the persons of that former station masquerading with the trappings of the financial privilege they have acquired but which is not, in the end or by other criteria, appropriate to the essence of their identity. Interestingly, it is in rejecting this set of assumptions that speaker EB also works to display an awareness of the potential for this sort of self-delusion to occur and, in so doing, works to avoid being implicated in the demands for accountability involved.

We see in examining these extracts, then, a rather delicate balance where assumptions about individual identity are made intelligible with reference to issues of class membership, which is itself employed as a resource in the service of establishing that identity. In other words, class identity and the assumptions made relevant with that identity are employed as a resource in the formulation of expatriate identity which, in turn, is itself employed as a device to foreclose the construal of implications that it raises for the speaker. At the same time, this talk also works as a way for the speaker to foreclose the potential to be construed as similarly so motivated.
Minimising the Relevance of Socio-Economic Mobility

So far, we have examined how participants attend to the potential for their own residence abroad to be construed as motivated by the desire for financial gain and social mobility. In particular, we saw that through their efforts both to make such a desire accountable and to display a critical regard for those who they construe as illegitimately appropriating a superior social status to which they would not otherwise have access, speakers work both to sanction and to distance themselves from such a characterisation. Now, another means by which speakers attend to these potential demands for accountability is to render the relevance of social mobility unavailable as an explanatory resource in their particular case. That is, speakers work to minimise or show as irrelevant the significance of their income to account for their own presence abroad. Thus, while they do display an orientation to the desire for social mobility as an accountable matter, its relevance to their particular circumstances is put at issue. In this way, speakers engage in a rather different sort of work than that which we examined in the previous section.

Consider, for example, the following extracts of data wherein speakers minimise the relevance of their pay as a way to account for their presence abroad. The first of these two extracts is taken from an interview with a couple who had returned to Kuwait to resume the operation of their private business in the aftermath of the then recent Gulf War. The second extract is taken from an interview with a long-term expatriate who had lived and worked in different locations throughout the world and was then employed as the local manager for an international business conglomerate with operations in Kuwait.

(3.3) Interview, 49 — private business owners

1     KM: well this is a question I ask < P and not everybody wants to answer
2          it so- p > but how much money do you make. Um- I mean, to be
3     rather direct, or how would you compare it with how much money
4     you could make, say, in the UK or something.
5
6     RB: I'm making a lot of money.
7          ...
8     KM: Okay. (Hx)@ @[@ (H)@]
9     AN: [Hm@]
10    RB: I mean I'm talking uh- uh- se- serious money, this- this year I- I'm-
11       after- making a lot of money and uh- yeah, put it this way, I- I used
to work for an American company in (NAME OF EUROPEAN CITY) in 1980 before I came here and I was making about seventy-thousand dollars net because there was—there was no taxes at the time, I left partly because I wanted to make more than that,

KM: Uh huh.

RB: and, you know, I’m—

KM: So I imagine— I imagine you’re making over a hundred-thousand dollars a year.

RB: Seriously over a hundred-thousand dollars a year.

KM: Two-hundred thousand dollars. [(Hx)@]

RB: [Oh,] you’re getting close now.

KM: Okay [1 well- 1]

AN: [1 Wo=w! 1] @@@ <@ I never know that, @> why don’t you ask me <@ how [2 much I’m making, 2]

RB: [2 @@@@ 2]

KM: [2 Well now, 2] wait a se@[3 co@nd no@w,

RB: [4 No, but I’ve been 4] putting uh- a lot of it back into business you see,

KM: Uh huh. No, I mean, [how-]

RB: [now] I’m not. Now- now- uh- if you ask me now, I’ve- I just uh- stashed away uh- you know every month I’m stashing away [on- on] that level.

KM: [Mm hm,]

RB: [But I- I mean] I haven’t been uh- living on that lifestyle,

KM: Mm hm.

RB: because I- I’ve been earning a lot of money over the last few years but I- I invested most of it back in business,

KM: Yeah.

RB: and the Iraqis took half of it.

(CONTINUES WITH DISCUSSION OF LOSSES INCURRED AS A RESULT OF EVENTS RELATED TO GULF WAR)
(3.4) Interview, 37 — business manager

1 KM: So it sounds like- (Hx)@ I mean, you have uh- more spending
2 power at least, uh- is it- is that because the costs are lower when
3 you go abroad or is it because you make more money going abroad.
4 Or is it a combination of the two.
5 ...
6 VE: Well, no I- you’re referring to spending power and I’m not actually
7 referring to spending power [at all.] I’m talking about LIFeStyle,
8 [Oh, I see.]
9 KM: Uh huh.
10 VE: it’s not the money aspect because in the early days when I
11 was living abroad I saved no money at ALL, I mean it was- hu@h,
12 you know, hand-to-mouth, u=m- because your expenses are- are
13 high and in many respects that you don’t imagine. To buy a
14 magazine costs typically double NEWSstand price and you for- can
15 forget about a subscription because if you want to get it uh- by
16 subscription you have to pay ten times as much or something to get
17 it air mailed, and to get it by uh- SURface so that you get it six
18 weeks after it appeared on the newsstands in the States (Hx)@
19 who@@ ca@res you know,
20 KM: Mm hm.

Notice, that in both of these extracts the work speakers do is not the same as making
alternative implications available in accounting for their presence in the Middle East.
Instead, they work to minimise the relevance of the implications about the desire for
socio-economic mobility. In other words, they do not express a principled objection
to the cogency of demands for accountability that are made relevant with a certain set
of assumptions; rather, they question the relevance of those demands to account for
their specific circumstances. Thus, even while these speakers attend to the issue of
their income as a potentially accountable matter, they work to minimise its relevance
as a way of accounting for their presence in the area. For example, in the first
extract, speaker RB works to show that an account of his behaviour in terms of the
desire for social mobility would not be relevant in that the money he makes is not
something from which he derives personal or individual benefit given that he is said
to reinvest it in the business that he owns (‘But I- I mean I haven’t been uh- living
on that lifestyle, because I- I’ve been earning a lot of money over the last few years
but I- I invested most of it back in business,’ lines 48-51). Notice that in this context,
the effectiveness of this explanatory account depends upon the implicit assumption
that the pursuit of business interests is an activity from which the speaker derives no personal benefit (or at least that such benefit is irrelevant in accounting for his presence in Kuwait) despite the associated increase in earnings (and presumably in professional status) relative to that in the countries where he has formerly resided. The glossing of this distinction in terms of ‘lifestyle’ (line 48) is the way by which he provides for the relevance of this difference in order to obviate the demand for accountability that might otherwise be made available.9

In the second of these two extracts, the glossing of activities as ‘lifestyle’ features in very much the same way (‘you’re referring to spending power and I’m not actually referring to spending power at all, I’m talking about LIFEstyle’, lines 6-7). With this gloss, speaker VE is similarly able to make relevant a distinction between earnings and the benefit he can (or cannot) derive to himself as a result. Specifically, he accomplishes this with the reference to unanticipated expenses (lines 12-21). In this way, he is able to minimise the relevance of earnings to account for his presence abroad. Thus, even though at another point in the same interview while describing his earning capabilities, speaker VE emphasises the advantages that he enjoys relative to his American business peers for a number of reasons (such as the tax gains incurred as a result of living abroad, benefit of luxury accommodation provided for him at company expense, etc.); in this particular context, he is able to minimise the relevance of earning power to account for his presence abroad.

The Root of All Evil

So far we have considered how talk about money and earning power is made accountable in this context. Our interest in looking at this talk was to examine the discursive means by which speakers attend to the potential for their presence abroad to be held accountable as motivated by the desire for upward social and economic mobility. In the interactional encounters we considered, we saw how speakers attend to the potential demand for earning power to be made accountable, though in different ways. With one strategy, speakers work to foreclose the potential to be held so accountable with a display of rhetorical distance from those they depict as so motivated. Interestingly, we saw that accomplishing this work involves displaying the very assumptions whose demands were made accountable in the first instance. In
addition to this, we also saw that when accounting for their presence in the region, speakers introduced an implicit distinction between potential and currently realised assets so that in actual terms they are construed as not-so-well-off (such actual terms often being determined by the comparative criteria of the homeland). In virtue of this distinction, speakers attend to the demand for accountability through a rather elegant specification of its scope, thereby undermining its relevance in their own particular circumstances.

What is of interest in the way that speakers attend to these matters is that the desire for an increase in one’s earning capacity is taken as accountable in the first place. The relation this bears to our concern with expatriate identity is that of how speakers manage their own credibility in circumstances where their implicitly available category entitlement is potentially damaging to the effective formulation of their contribution in and to the circumstances of the talk. Expatriate identity thus features as a device in attending to the demands that might otherwise be made relevant to account for the speakers’ participation in the circumstances of the talk to which he or she is then currently a party. It is in this way that speakers display what they take the business-at-hand of the talk to be about. By construing expatriate identity in particular terms from which they work to distance themselves, speakers foreclose a similar construal of their own participation in the talk.

**Anticipating Criticism: Reductionism and the Description of Culture**

In our discussion in Chapters 1 and 2, we examined a range of literature which takes as its object either the cultural and ethnic Other, or else the rhetorical means by which that body of literature itself is said to constitute the object of its own analysis. As we pointed out, this difference is one that involves distinguishing between the critique of a particular body of writing and the objectifying practices whereby that body of writing is itself taken to be an object of analysis in the accomplishing of that critique. Now, in this section, we will continue with a consideration of the concerns surrounding category membership by exploring how it is that speakers orient to the potential for their own residence abroad to be construed in terms of the sorts of ironizing, deconstructive critique to which ethnographic and anthropological writing have been subjected in the body of work which takes that rhetoric as its object of
analysis. That is, we will be exploring how speakers work to foreclose the potential for their experience of living abroad to be subjected to the same sorts of implicit criticisms as those developed in the second, meta-level body of analytic work that we considered in detail in Chapter 2 — the work that critiques ethnographic writing as objectifying the Other.

Our claim here in this is not that speakers are responding to the concerns that they have encountered through exposure to this ironising literature — that is, as a result of exposure to such literature — but rather that they display an orientation to the same sorts of demands for accountability as are made relevant there. Specifically, this involves attending to the potential for the descriptive practices in one’s work to be construed as involving the use of some socio-cultural cliché, say, as an instance of stereotyping. That is, speakers attend to the potential to be construed as viewing Arab culture and society along fixed and inalterable parameters in their references to customs of behaviour, religion and dress. Another, similar set of inferences that speakers work to foreclose are those in which their residence abroad is seen as motivated by the desire to pursue sexually promiscuous behaviour that would not otherwise be available to them in their country of origin. The question of how representations of the Arab Other involve a sexual aspect is another of the sorts of concerns that is taken up in the second, meta-level research on writings about the Orient (as will be discussed in further detail below). As we will see, identity features in the talk we consider here as a resource to foreclose these sorts of inferences in the same way that expatriate identity is employed to foreclose the inferences potentially raised in talk about earning capacities. One difference in these materials, however, is that the identity involved is not always that of the expatriate but also includes compatriot identity (of those from the speakers’ own country of origin). What these sorts of identity have in common is that their use involves the description of features from which the speaker works to distance him- or herself.

Again, it is the issue of speaker credibility to which participants attend in the interview talk under consideration here. That is, there is a tension involved between the epistemological warrant made available to a speaker by virtue of his or her membership in the category referred to with the identity formulation (expatriate) and the extent to which he or she is implicated in the demands for accountability which
that category membership might otherwise be deployed to make relevant. One crucial
difference in the materials where the identity of compatriots (versus fellow expatriates) features is that epistemological warrant implicitly accrues to a speaker as
the basis for a critical comparison of one’s outlook as informed by the experience of
travelling abroad versus that of the relative inexperience arising from exclusive
residence in one particular country. In other words, category entitlement arising from
membership in either category (that of expatriate and of exclusive-resident-in-the-
speaker’s-country-of-origin) means that a speaker is potentially able invoke the
experiential authority of the one identity to inform an assessment of the other. As we
will see, this involves some rather complex interactional work.

‘I Really Try to Avoid Talking to Them’ — Of Friends and Acquaintances

Consider the following extract of data taken from a different part of the same
interview we examined in Extract 3.4 above. In the particular episode of talk
represented here, reference to compatriot identity is attended to as a matter of some
importance.

(3.5) Interview, 37 — business manager

    1    KM: I mean, for example, how do you describe being here
    2        ..
    3    VE: X-
    4    KM: when you go back to the United States, I mean, uh- I assume that
    5        uh- people you know there must ask you what it’s like to live here,
    6        ..
    7    VE: No.
    8        ..
    9    KM: No?
   10        ..
   11    VE: No they don’t really and- I mean I think that’s the first thing is that-
   12        that your real friends don’t bug you about "Do the women really
   13        wear veils", you know, your friends, your family don’t ask you
   14        dumb questions like that,
   15    KM: Mm hm.
   16        ..
   17    VE: u=h- whereas uh- the waiter who finds out that you’re from
   18        Kuwait, "Is it true that they all have four wives, and they keep them
   19        in harems and"- uh- I don’t know what, u=m- these kind of
   20        questions come from people that really DON’T know and- and they-
   21        I really try to avoid talking to them.
This extract is particularly rich in terms of how the identity of compatriots is deployed as a device in attending to the speaker's accountability to assumptions concerning the nature of representation as a reifying activity. The sort of work for which that identity is deployed is occasioned by the interviewer query regarding the sort of portrayal of experience living abroad that his interlocutor (speaker VE) might render to compatriots ('I mean, for example, how do you describe being here when you go back to the United States', I mean, uh- I assume that uh- people you know there must ask you what it's like to live here', lines 1-5).

Notice here that it is with the initial broaching of the question in just such terms that the interviewer displays an orientation to description as potentially problematic for the inferences it might involve. Specifically, in requesting an account of the sort of description that might be included in a report rather than eliciting a more straightforward description per se (say, as worded with a remark like 'please describe your being here in the Middle East'), speaker KM works not only to display an orientation to the potentially accountable nature of the assumptions entailed but he also works to foreclose the sorts of inferences that might be raised with the activity of his introducing the question in the first place. In other words, speaker KM works to foreclose his being held accountable for ratifying the assumptions whose relevance the question makes available in the first place since the query involves the request for an account of an account, as it were. This additional step-of-remove is one through which such work is elegantly brought off.

In the uptake to this question, speaker VE displays a similar orientation to the reflexive implications that such a description potentially entails. Further, his management of these is more complicated for how he works to foreclose any potential to be implicated as endorsing the assumptions that a description might provide. In that any kind of description he might provide could be heard as endorsing certain assumptions, by responding as he does with the conversational repair (line 7) with which he rejects the presumptions that speaker KM explicitly invokes (line 5), speaker VE's response is one with which he very elegantly forecloses that potential.

At the same time, however, speaker VE is nevertheless able to attend to the related assumptions as an accountable matter with his description of the waiter and in the report of the conversational encounters that he relates in quoted speech. By
articulating the substance of the assumptions (about Arab culture) in the quoted voice of the waiter, speaker VE is able to display a familiarity with the details involved in those assumptions ('the women really wear veils', lines 12-13; 'they all have four wives, and they keep them in harems', lines 18-19) without himself being implicated as ratifying them. In this way, he is able to foreclose the implications that a cataloguing of such details might otherwise raise while also attending to their use as accountable. Further, the distinction he makes with the phrase 'real friends' (line 12) is especially significant in this context. The implication involved in this choice of lexical items is that what distinguishes a real friend for speaker VE (as opposed to, say, a false friend or someone with whom he otherwise routinely comes in contact as a matter of happenstance) is that particular individual's lack of orientation to the features of presumed Arab social custom that speaker VE catalogues in the reported speech attributed to the waiter. It is with the implied choice in this distinction — one which he also makes explicit ('I really try to avoid talking to them', line 21) — that speaker VE is able to display an orientation to the demands for accountability made available in the interviewer question while also working to manage the extent to which his activity of doing so might itself be taken to implicate him in the assumptions that are involved. In this way, compatriot identity and the distinctions he works to make feature as a resource to manage his own accountability for the assumptions whose particulars he relates. In other words, he deals with his accountability by distinguishing between different kinds of compatriots (those who ask dumb questions and those who do not), affiliating with the latter category.

‘Had I Never Come Here’ — Travel and Epistemological Warrant

So far, we have examined the way that distinctions in identity are deployed as a device by which speakers attend to the problematic of accountability involved in producing a description while at the same time providing a resource to foreclose the potentially damaging inferences that such a description might entail. In the following extract, we will consider how a similar sort of work is accomplished in talk about travel and the experience that is said to be gained by it. The following is taken from an interview with two ex-U.S. soldiers who were working in Kuwait as civilian advisors to the Kuwaiti military at the time the encounter was recorded.
world is screwed up", and that "America is the greatest", and- a lot of them are very prejudiced, lines 2-7). Further, these speakers work to foreclose a construal of their own talk as reductionist while at the same time working up their description in terms of a sensitivity to cultural difference in a detailed inventory of the activities and behaviours the articulation of which might otherwise be taken as accountable (‘the Islamic belief’, lines 10-11; ‘if you touch an Arab with your left hand’, lines 17-18; ‘Putting my bare foot- your bare foot up to them’, lines 20-21; ‘wearing a <AR dishdash AR> ((MEN’S ROBE-LIKE GARMENT))’, lines 22-23). The reported representation typifying both Arab religious beliefs and details of custom delicately attend to competing demands of the talk in much the same way that speaker VE’s quoting of speech by the waiter does in the talk recorded in Extract 3.5.

Perhaps more interesting still in Extract 3.6 is the way that Kuwaiti identity features in the talk here as a resource in attending to the reflexive implications involved in the discussion where the details of what are oriented to as reductionist accounts are related. Again, the potential problem for the speakers here is to display an awareness of certain details (about Arab customs and behaviour) and to attend to the potential for that awareness to be taken as an instance of reductionism without, however, thereby compromising the potential for such a display to be regarded as expressing a sensitivity to cultural difference. Here, the speakers are able to accomplish both of these tasks with the reference to Kuwaiti deference (‘And everybody we’ve talked to, all the- all the Kuwaitis that we’ve talked to and stuff said "It’d be an honour", you know. "It’s great that you would want to try to be more like us"’, lines 26-28). The voice of the Kuwaiti Other features as providing the collaborative account by which the details of custom are corroborated. Further, this has the additional advantage that Kuwaiti category incumbency entails the entitlement by which such an account in warranted.

Moreover, American identity is also deployed here in attending to the potential for that prior work accomplished with the use of Kuwaiti identity itself to be made accountable as motivated. In other words, the very work by which the speakers attend to the competing demands to be construed as neither reductionist nor as insensitive to differences in customs and behaviour is itself work which might be held accountable. This is so because the prior talk of speakers TI and RK itself
I think getting to travel a lot like that really helps you develop and
to grow too to have a better understanding. A lot of people are- like
the farmers in the US that have always stayed, you know, down
South somewhere, never been out of the country, they think, you
know, these- these thoughts about "Everybody else in the world is
screwed up", and that "America is the greatest", and- a lot of them
are very prejudiced, because they've never had to interact with other
people and get the experience to learn why certain countries or
certain people have beliefs that they have, uh- just like the Muslim,
had- had I NEVER COME here, I'd have never understood the
Islamic belief like I do now and- and been able to relate to their
feelings and their ideas about why they do certain things. Uh-

\[\text{What do you mean.}\]

\[\text{That means you go a lot on conjecture, you know, [[what]]}\]

\[\text{[Yeah.]]}\]

somebody's told you, you know, like uh- like if you touch an Arab
with your left hand, you know, they'll be just absolutely insulted if
you uh- oh what are some of the other ones, [1 Well, like- 1]

[bare foot- your bare foot up to them, [2 xxx, 2]

\[\text{Or wearing a 2} \ < \text{AR}\]
dishdash AR> ((MEN'S ROBE-LIKE GARMENT)). Like [3 THAT was
supposed to be an 3] insult to them, [4 xx- 4]

\[\text{[3 xxxxx. 3]}\]

[4 And everybody 4] we've
talked to, all the- all the Kuwaitis that we've talked to and stuff said
"It'd be an honour", you know. "It's great that you would want to
try to be more like us", you know, u=h- and you know w- the
Americans are the same way, we think it's cool that people want to
be like us but then sometimes we- all the sudden we get this
two-faced attitude "Well- oh they're trying to copycat us", you
know, and- and everything, it's like "Who the hell do you think you
are", you know, "trying to be like us", you know?

In the same way that the speakers whose talk is represented in the previous extract
display an orientation to the potential for a description of their experience to be
construed as somehow reductionist, so too these speakers deploy identity as a way of
attending to the same potential. In particular, the identity of the secluded, insular
American farmer is employed as a resource in attending to the potential for the
speaker's contribution to be construed as prejudiced ('like the farmers in the US that
have always stayed, you know, down South somewhere, never been out of the
country, they think, you know, these- these thoughts about "Everybody else in the
world is screwed up", and that "America is the greatest", and- a lot of them are very prejudiced, lines 2-7). Further, these speakers work to foreclose a construal of their own talk as reductionist while at the same time working up their description in terms of a sensitivity to cultural difference in a detailed inventory of the activities and behaviours the articulation of which might otherwise be taken as accountable ('the Islamic belief', lines 10-11; 'if you touch an Arab with your left hand', lines 17-18; 'Putting my bare foot- your bare foot up to them', lines 20-21; 'wearing a <AR dishdash AR> ((MEN'S ROBE-LIKE GARMENT))', lines 22-23). The reported representation typifying both Arab religious beliefs and details of custom delicately attend to competing demands of the talk in much the same way that speaker VE's quoting of speech by the waiter does in the talk recorded in Extract 3.5.

Perhaps more interesting still in Extract 3.6 is the way that Kuwaiti identity features in the talk here as a resource in attending to the reflexive implications involved in the discussion where the details of what are oriented to as reductionist accounts are related. Again, the potential problem for the speakers here is to display an awareness of certain details (about Arab customs and behaviour) and to attend to the potential for that awareness to be taken as an instance of reductionism without, however, thereby compromising the potential for such a display to be regarded as expressing a sensitivity to cultural difference. Here, the speakers are able to accomplish both of these tasks with the reference to Kuwaiti deference ('And everybody we've talked to, all the- all the Kuwaitis that we've talked to and stuff said "It'd be an honour", you know. "It's great that you would want to try to be more like us"', lines 26-28). The voice of the Kuwaiti Other features as providing the collaborative account by which the details of custom are corroborated. Further, this has the additional advantage that Kuwaiti category incumbency entails the entitlement by which such an account is warranted.

Moreover, American identity is also deployed here in attending to the potential for that prior work accomplished with the use of Kuwaiti identity itself to be made accountable as motivated. In other words, the very work by which the speakers attend to the competing demands to be construed as neither reductionist nor as insensitive to differences in customs and behaviour is itself work which might be held accountable. This is so because the prior talk of speakers TI and RK itself
establishes the context of assumptions that are in conflict with the interactional work these speakers act to achieve here. The dilemma involved is that if the details of Arab customs and behaviour are not of the sort mentioned in the description they provide (as these speakers seem to suggest through their implicit criticism of those details provided for with the term ‘conjecture’, line 15); then to that extent, the experiential authority that such a display might afford them is thereby undermined. By deploying American identity as a comparable case in this discursive context, speaker TI is able to provide for the latter assumptions which warrant the implicit claims to experiential authority (‘the Americans are the same way, we think it’s cool that people want to be like us but then sometimes we- all the sudden we get this two-faced attitude’, lines 29-31). This work is quite subtle in its elegance because it potentially involves all the speakers (including the interviewer) as implicated in a further range of additional demands for accountability. Specifically, where such a claim about disingenuity as characteristic of Americans is involved, any efforts to resist or interrogate such a claim is potentially implicative of the speaker. That is, in this context where all participants are implicated as ‘American’, to deny the claims made about what Americans do has the potential itself to be regarded as defensively motivated. It is precisely this feature of American identity which here makes it a particularly effective device to foreclose the potential availability of inferences made relevant with the invocation of Kuwaiti identity in the talk by which it is immediately preceded.

‘Crazy Weird Stuff’ — The Orient as Playground

We have so far examined how speakers attend to various demands for accountability in and through their talk, and how that very activity itself creates a context where additional, often contradictory, assumptions then come into play in the talk. Throughout, we have seen how various identities feature as a resource in conducting this work, in some cases providing a device with which to legitimate the deployment of one particular identity in the context of its use (as, for example, where reference to geographically associated, socio-dialectic identity is deployed in working to provide an implicit accusation of disingenuity or subversion that we saw in the analysis of Extract 3.1 and Extract 3.2 above).
In all such talk, what is of particular interest for us here is the way that speakers display an orientation to both issues of category membership and the activity of providing for the relevance of identity itself as accountable matters. Paradoxically, identity is thus made relevant as a way of attending to the making-relevant-of-identity itself as an accountable matter since in talk where speakers display an orientation to that activity (viz., the activity whereby identity is made relevant as an accountable matter), they themselves employ identity relevant features to accomplish that work.

Now, in this section, we will conclude our examination of how identity features as a participant concern in this chapter by examining one further extract of data. Consider the following transcript of an exchange that occurred in an interview involving a woman in her thirties who, at the time of the interview, was employed in Kuwait as a regional sales representative for a major U.S.-based agri-business concern.

(3.10) Interview, 38 — corporate sales representative

1 UT: You know, there’s some people who come here and have good
2 working relationships with Kuwaitis and there’s some who just do
3 nothing but complain. I mean they sit and "Ah these dirty Kuwaitis,
4 they’re- don’t know what they’re doing, their government’s stupid,
5 their- people are ignorant, their women are arrogant and selfish",
6 and it ju- everything about them they hated but they were all here
7 making money, you know, and I- I just couldn’t listen to that. Tsk
8 (H) a=nd (Hx) some expatriates come here and they do crazy weird
9 stuff and, I don’t know, I think sometimes there’s a lot of women
10 who come out here and think that- because their- this i- their
11 families aren’t here (Hx) that they can do whatever they want,
12 (Hx)= such as sleeping around with men an=d drinking a lot and
13 that sort of thing, I- I always stayed away from that. It was just- ki-
14 it was just sort of like this- when people are real decadent and
15 immoral here they go all the way, [(Hx)@=] <@ whether
16 KM: [Yeah.]
17 UT: they’re => Kuwaiti or whatever they are. (Hx)@= I have heard- I
18 have known people who I’ve heard they’ve done some of the most
19 @ sick, dirty things, [and you know.] you just wonder "What for".
20 KM: [Like what. (Hx)@]
21 UT: O=h, people who have parties and the stewardess- some- there are
22 some stewardess from Kuwait Airways, there- there’s a- sort of a
23 mentality about some of the stewardess here in the Gulf that their
24 earnings are so small that they supplement their income, with
25 prostitution, so= I’ve heard these parties where they’re having

121
orgies, or people who makes films of themselves, o=r- (Hx)@
you@- crazy stuff like that,

At the very outset of the encounter recorded here, we can see how an orientation to identity is itself taken up as an accountable matter in talk about the motivation for representation of Kuwaiti nationals ('there's some people who come here and have good working relationships with Kuwaitis and there's some who just do nothing but complain. I mean they sit and "Ah these dirty Kuwaitis, they're- don't know what they're doing, their government's stupid, their- people are ignorant, their women are arrogant and selfish", and it ju- everything about them they hated', lines 1-6). Just as we saw in our analysis of Extract 3.2 above, so too here the work of attending to the accountability for the use of (in this case, Kuwaiti) identity has the effect of implicitly making expatriate identity available in and through the contrastive reference to 'some people' (line 1). This is further made available with the reference to earning capability (where the issue of income might otherwise be of no such significance where permanent residents of the region are concerned) as an accountable matter ('but they were all here making money', lines 6-7). Finally, the category relevance is made explicit in the subsequent reference to expatriate identity ('Tsk (H) a=nd (Hx) some expatriates', lines 7-8). Such work is not dissimilar to the way in which identity features in the talk we have considered in previous extracts.

One way in which expatriate identity is oriented to here that is different from the sort of work we have considered previously, however, is that the issue of morality features in the terms that speaker UT specifies in her talk ('they do crazy weird stuff and, I don't know, I think sometimes there's a lot of women who come out here and think that- because their- this i- their families aren't here (Hx) that they can do whatever they want, (Hx)= such as sleeping around with men an=d drinking a lot and that sort of thing', lines 8-13). Here, speaker UT construes expatriate identity in terms of an implicitly available set of demands for accountability that she glosses with the words 'decadent' (line 14) and 'immoral' (line 15). At the same time, she attends to the potential to be similarly so implicated, both with a gloss that is non-inclusive ('some', line 8) and with remarks by which she explicitly works to distance herself from the activities so described ('I don't know', line 9; 'I always stayed away from that', line 13). Of interest here is the delicate balance she works to manage between
her own epistemological warrant and the potential inferences that this raises in terms of her own culpability. Specifically, the implicit claim involved is that she is not the kind of person who has an interest in these sorts of activities, and yet the activity of making just such claims could undermine her entitlement to speak about these things in the first place since she might not otherwise know about them. By making these claims as she does, she is able to manage the delicate balance between the competing demands involved in employing identity as a resource to make a particular set of assumptions regarding morality available while also limiting the extent to which she herself is implicated in the identity as so construed. 13

In addition, another interesting feature of this talk that is the way that reference to the region itself works as a resource to account further for behaviour that is otherwise made sense of with the formulation of identity in the first instance. Specifically, speaker UT works to foreclose the potential for her own formulation of expatriate identity itself to be construed as dismissive — as perhaps involving an implicit claim to moral superiority on her own part — by offering a mitigating account wherein the geographic region itself features as the cause of the activities she holds accountable (‘when people are real decadent and immoral here they go all the way’, lines 14-15). The making available of this inference is quite delicately managed here though in that this mitigating work is itself oriented toward the reflexive implications (for a construal of her own motivation) that her immediately prior talk might be taken to raise, but not so much so that it impinges upon the assumptions about the nature of that behaviour (as censurable) that she works to make available.

Here, it is as if expatriate residents are absolved from responsibility for their own actions abroad since their behaviour is somehow effected by their presence in the region itself. And yet, at the same time, there is an ambiguity involved. On the one hand, the implication is that residence abroad provides a justification for those individuals in question: being far from the demands of their home provides them with an excuse to do what they would not do in that environment (‘there’s a lot of women who come out here and think that- because their- this i- their families aren’t here (Hx) that they can do whatever they want’, lines 9-11). On the other hand, the accountability might also be taken to lie with the geographic region which provides them that excuse. It is this ambivalence in regard to the ultimate cause of
accountability that speaker UT deploys to foreclose the potential for her own formulation of expatriate identity itself to be construed as dismissive. In other words, she works to excuse expatriate behaviour without claiming that it is legitimate. To do otherwise would potentially be to contravene the work she does to foreclose the construal of her own category incumbency in the terms she holds accountable.

Notice here also the subtle work that speaker UT does to attend to the potential for this work itself to be taken as implying criticism of Kuwaitis (‘<@ whether they’re @> Kuwaiti or whatever they are’, lines 15-17). In the work she does to excuse expatriates for the behaviour that she holds accountable, she employs a mitigatory explanation the use of which itself might be taken to implicate Kuwaitis as well. This is particularly problematic for speaker UT here because her remarks could be heard as an instance of complaining — an activity which she herself has taken care to hold accountable in prior remarks (lines 1-6). Thus, the very work to foreclose one particular construal of her talk itself creates the basis upon which further inferences can be drawn — inferences which, in this case, involve her potentially being taken to imply that the behaviour she claims is inherent to the region is characteristic to its indigenous population. Thus, she manages the very delicate business of construing the activities she holds accountable as inherent to the region without at the same time attributing personal responsibility to its Kuwaiti residents. In this way, she can display that she regards such concerns (for the accountability of expatriate behaviour) to be that about which the encounter is concerned while at the same time working reflexively to foreclose the potential for her talk to be taken as implicating others. Overall, making reference to the region in just this way is a very delicate undertaking in which the speaker attends to a range of conflicting demands that are raised by both category incumbency and the reflexive implications devolving from the activity of attending to such incumbency.

One interesting aspect of this reference to the region is that of how similar such explanations feature in the critical accounts of representations of the Orient. For example, in discussing 19th and 20th Century literature, Said (1978: 190) remarks upon the way in which the Orient is constituted as a space of sexual alterity, a domain of erotic free-play that contrasts with that of the European space in opposition to which that identity is constructed:
The association is clearly made between the Orient and the freedom of licentious sex. We may as well recognize that . . . sex had been institutionalized to a very considerable degree. On the one hand, there was no such thing as "free" sex, and on the other, sex in society entailed a web of legal, moral, even political and economic obligations of a detailed and certainly encumbering sort. Just as the various colonial possessions—quite apart from their economic benefit to metropolitan Europe—were useful as places to send wayward sons, superfluous populations of delinquents, poor people, and other undesirables, so the Orient was a place where one could look for sexual experience unobtainable in Europe. [...] What they looked for often—correctly, I think—was a different type of sexuality, perhaps more libertine and less guilt-ridden . . .

Now, this similarity between the very different settings where the Orient is imbued with this sort of significance raises a very interesting issue regarding the nature of shared knowledge. In particular, the issue is that of whether these two discursive contexts are related to one another independently of the sort of speculative connection made in an analysis (such as this one) where the two are compared. In other words, is it the case that speaker UT draws upon the same basis of knowledge that Said does in his remarks concerning the assumptions made available in the literature he considers? After all, in both cases, their remarks seem to be oriented to an association between geographic location and the issue of the legitimacy of sexual activity. Might it be the case, for example, that speaker UT is familiar with Said’s writings? In short, to what extent are the two different contexts related to one another?

It has been the approach of this thesis to respecify just such questions in terms of participant concern. Specifically, the similarity in the discursive work that both speaker UT and Said accomplish with their remarks is a correspondence worked up in a comparative consideration of that relationship such as is accomplished with these very remarks above. What the relationship between the two contexts is not, however, is a concern that either speaker UT or Said take up in their own respective discussions. In other words, the question of similarity here is not made relevant in the participants’ interaction. It is quite beside the point of their talk (though, of course, it is not beside the point of our discussion in considering whether it is their concern).

This question of the relationship between different discursive contexts is taken up by Widdicombe and Wooffitt (1995: 205) in their discussion of the commonsense knowledge that is said to define the cultural milieu — that is, the shared cultural resources — of talk among the speakers that they interviewed about subcultural identity:
Some respondents' orientation to the political or ideological dimension of punk was obviously resonant with both the sociological and lay theorising about the meaning of the subculture. This is not surprising, for sociological interpretations have permeated the media and become part of our lay or common-sense knowledge about the meaning of subcultures; so that it is a culturally available assumption that punks are 'rebelling against society'. These kinds of explanatory formulations for social behaviour are interpretative resources which both insiders and outsiders can draw upon in making sense of the subculture. Moreover, it is perhaps because of the availability of the sociological assessments of the subculture's meaning that respondents' descriptions of punks' rebellion often had the character of formulaic assessments.

And again in the footnote that accompanies this passage: 'Indeed, this assumption informed the interviewer's question, in which she referred to media portrayal or whatever' (ibid.: 207, n. 8). This particular take on the talk that Widdicombe and Wooffitt consider in their work differs rather markedly from the ethnomethodologically informed approach that they otherwise advocate. In particular, it differs from the arguments for a sociological analysis that they develop in pointing out how speakers take questions as raising a range of implications, and demonstrate with their talk that they do so; but it is in the taking — that is, in the uptake — that the question has this status (as raising the implications which the speakers address), and not (for ethnomethodology, that is) in the question itself, as monadically or independently informed by social psychological or any other literature (or any other source, for that matter). In other words, for ethnomethodology, the status of an event (like a question) and the nature that it has (as being so informed, or not informed, etc.) are matters that are constituted in the situated activity of retrospective accounting (as displayed in uptake). The account that Widdicombe and Wooffitt provide of the nature of the question is only another of these accounts; and even the status of their interview questions which they claim were informed by the concerns of the sociological and social psychological literature, is itself a retrospective gloss upon their investigative interviewing activities created in the analytic reading (their write-up) that they provide.¹⁵

Further, for an ethnomethodological approach, what it is that Widdicombe and Wooffitt refer to as the resonance between punks' accounts and the theorising about the meaning of the subculture is itself constituted in the very display which those responses make available (viz., that the questions raise just such implications), not in some lay or common-sense knowledge that exists independently of such a
display. In addition, the very significance of that display is itself constituted in the analysis of it as itself orienting to the prior turn-at-talk as raising just such implications (as is the significance of Widdicombe and Wooffitt’s analysis of that talk constituted in this reading of it). To refer to the meaning of subcultures (or the meaning of anything else, for that matter) as drawing upon culturally available resources (that is, commonly held assumptions or knowledge) is itself to construe the commonsensicality and sharedness of the assumptions which the researchers regard their respondents to be taking the interview questions to be making available. A more satisfactory way to deal with the issue of the relationship between discursive contexts would involve a reflexive gesture in the analysis. In the case that Widdicombe and Wooffitt consider here, it would involve pointing out either that punks’ responses imbue the significance of the utterance to which they constitute uptake, and that their own analysis of that uptake imbues it (the uptake) with the significance it has as meaning-imbuing (as does this analysis of Widdicombe and Wooffitt’s analysis). If the point of an ethnomethodological analysis is that participants constitute for themselves the very sorts of structures and referents in their joint activity of mutual orientation, then the point that an analytic practice which employs the same sorts of analytic activities only goes to demonstrate the very point which that analytic practice is itself being employed to substantiate.

Conclusion

Our concern in this chapter has been with the reflexive implications made available in talk — that is, with how talk is reflexively constitutive of the activities of which it is a part. Our specific concern here was with the way that the formulation of identity in which the speaker is potentially implicated as a category member involves some rather complicated and delicate interactional work in terms of managing the conflict between epistemological warrant and the availability of noxious inferences. In formulating expatriate identity as a participant concern, speakers attend to the competing tasks of constituting their contributions to that talk as the activity of a co-participant of an investigative encounter where identity features as an issue, as well as managing the availability of inferences which their category membership potentially entails. Attending to category entitlement is in direct conflict with attending to
epistemological warrant, and the successful management of this conflict involves working to provide for category membership to the extent that the one is warranted in making the claims which he or she does, but not to the extent that one is implicated in the demands for accountability that are thereby entailed.

Even though we have examined how identity features as a resource in this talk, this chapter is not, strictly speaking, concerned with identity per se. Instead, the concern here has been with the paradoxical tension involved in talk about identity where a speaker is potentially implicated in the inferences that related category incumbency might otherwise be taken to imply. In the talk we examined here, this involves a range of negative inferences, but the same tension would also exist where inferences are positive as well — as, for example, where a speaker’s talk might be taken as an expression of boastfulness (Mulkay, 1984; 1985: Ch. 6). In either case, the reflexive implications raised in talk where category membership potentially includes a party or parties present to the talk is a matter that speakers attend to as relevant to the setting. In this chapter, we focused on talk about identity also because we wanted to explore some of the assumptions on which their implicitly critical formulations depend. That is, we wanted to examine the assumptions involved in the activity of accounting for the residence of expatriates in the region. We saw that, among other things, these include a range of assumptions about the accountable nature of formulation itself, as well as the concern for issues like earning capacity and other concerns all of which speakers display an orientation to as associated with expatriate identity. Again, attending to these concerns is related in a complicated fashion with the tension between both the entitlement and availability of potentially damaging inferences that category incumbency entails. It is that managing of that tension which is the principal business of speakers in the talk where they formulate their identity.

In the following chapter, we will continue with an exploration of what is involved in this tension by examining a further range of assumptions having to do with the accountable nature of attending to race and national identity. In other words, we will explore how the question of attending to race and national identity are taken up as participant concerns and with the relationship this has to accounting for Western presence in the Middle East.
Notes

1. Rorty (1991b) refers to this sort of conflict in his discussion of *transcendental mysticism* and contingent irony.

2. That is, speakers work to make relevant their identity as expatriates to the extent that this identity is definitive of their participation in the encounter to which they are contributing. At the same time, they work to distance themselves from this identity to the extent that it allows for a range of implications which they do not want to be taken as warranting. This tension between incumbency and disassociation itself involves the insider-outsider problematic that is constitutive of any anthropologically oriented interrogation (whether it involves investigating the socio-cultural, or any other domain) as discussed, for example, in the work of Geertz (1988). See Latour (1981) for a discussion of this problematic as constitutive of a sociology of scientific knowledge — one which works toward ‘the demystification of science, *in the name of science*’ (ibid.: 205, emphasis in original) and thereby cultivates its insider-outsider status. As Latour describes this: ‘All methodologies must derive from this axiom: no account qualifies as an explanation if it simply restates the account it is supposed to explain. The difference between the two accounts is the qualification which permits us to see one account as an explanation of the other’ (ibid.: 201, emphasis in original). He elaborates further in his remarks that: “Repetition” should be understood in a narrow sense. If I record with great care a myth that is told to me, I am not repeating it; rather I am putting it in a new framework (field study, sheaf of papers); this is enough to fulfil the requirement of the axiom even if I have no theory or grand explanation of this myth’ (ibid.: 214, n. 7). For further discussion along related lines, see also Mulkay’s (1985: Part 2) treatment of repetition (including especially his take on Borges’ *Pierre Menard, author of the Quixote*, ibid.: 142-144) as well as the related discussion in Mulkay, 1988a.

3. Widdicombe and Wooffitt devote a great deal of attention to reviewing the details of a variety of theoretical literature on social and personal identity, all of which differs from the ethnomethodologically informed approach which they themselves seek to develop in their analysis of talk among youth subcultures. This literature includes research in macrosociological theory (Burkitt, 1991), role theory (Greenwald, 1980; Jones and Pitman, 1982; McCall, 1987; McCall and Simmons, 1982; Schlenker, 1980; Snyder, 1979; Tedeschi, 1981), social cognition (Abelson, 1981; Eiser, 1986; Leyens and Codol, 1988; Schank and Abelson, 1977; Tajfel, 1981), social identity theory (Hogg and Abrams, 1988; Tajfel, 1972; Turner et al., 1987), and certain specific developments within an analytic approach to discourse that draws upon the work of Foucault (Burman and Parker, 1993; Marks, 1993). While these bodies of work differ from one another in important ways, what is of significance for how they compare to the approach advocated by Widdicombe and Wooffitt is the assumptions they share with regard to the nature of social structure as an independent analytic concern distinct from identity as a concern for participants in social interaction. In contrast to such work, Widdicombe and Wooffitt explore the details of how social actors display an orientation to social identity in specific episodes of conversational interaction, and thereby approach the issue of individual agency and social structure in order to ‘show that individual and society are inseparable, the one utterly implicating the other’ (1995: 3).

4. Referring to this particular aspect of talk in their investigation of Oliver North’s testimony in what has come to be referred to as the Iran-Contra hearings, Bogen and Lynch remark upon the way ‘that stories routinely display intransitive elements that bind them to the present context [of their telling] and to the unique entitlements of their current teller’ (1989: 203). What this means in terms of talk about expatriate identity is that speakers work to foreclose the availability of a range of implications which their own participation (as representative of those living abroad in the Middle East) makes available, and that they also attend to the implications which that identity implies for their competence as participants in an investigation into that very identity. This involves them in a conflict of situated interests because to the extent that they attend to their category entitlement, they also make themselves vulnerable to accusations which that work might potentially be construed as making available. In other words, in working to show themselves to be knowledgable speakers entitled to remark upon a range of different issues where their status as expatriates might be of relevance (such as, say, cultural
difference), the very talk with which they attend to this task is potentially construed as making available a range of inferences which they work to foreclose. At the same time, to the extent that they work to foreclose the potentially unwanted implications which that category entitlement makes available, they undermine their credibility to act as participants in the interactional encounter of which they are a part. The task with which they are faced, then, is to manage the conflict between these competing demands, working to show themselves to be credible without making themselves vulnerable to the accusations to which they themselves attend in their talk.

5. For related discussion concerning the situated employment of script formulations, see Edwards, 1997: Ch. 6; 1991; 1995; in press.

6. Notice, the claim here is not that speakers never attend to this potential to be so implicated. The activity of attending to the potential for one’s own category entitlement to implicate him or her as a member is analyzed as a prominent feature of expatriate talk in Chapter 4 to follow.

7. Heritage, quoting Garfinkel (1967: 41-42), refers to this aspect of talk in his discussion of the inherently moral significance of social interaction as involving a ‘demand for various forms of interpretive co-operation’ by which participants ‘are themselves entitled and entitle others to claim that they know what they are talking about and that what they say is understandable and ought to be understood. In short, their seen but unnoticed [that is, not remarked upon] presence is used to entitle persons to conduct their common conversational affairs without interference’ (1984: 96). What this means in the setting we consider here is that where epistemological warrant arising from category incumbency meshes smoothly with the regard for accountability which that category incumbency otherwise involves, it is a constitutive feature of that interaction itself. In other words, it is because implicating a speaker in the demands for accountability that his or her use of identity makes relevant would itself constitute a morally sanctionable violation of the interpretive co-operation upon which interaction depends that talk about identity can work in this paradoxical way.

8. This feature of what an activity is or might be taken to be as apparent is referred to by Sacks (1992) with the term subversion. On this matter, Edwards remarks: ‘[subversion] consists in the enlisting, by participants, of actions’ visibility, such that actions will be taken for what they appear to be […] It is a matter not so much of deception, machiavellianism, or insincerity (though it can be, or be taken to be), as of Garfinkel’s [1967] dictum regarding the accountability-seen-to-be-done nature of social actions’ (1997: 98-99, emphasis in original). In the talk we consider here, the issue of insincerity is a participant concern as is displayed where speakers topicalise the issue of how an activity can be enlisted for how it (that activity) is likely to be taken as part-and-parcel of attending to their own situated activity of enlisting how that activity (i.e., the topicalisation) might be understood in the situation of the interview setting where it occurs.

9. Note too that the talk in the first of these extracts by which speaker RB brings this off involves the use of a particular rhetorical device that Atkinson (1984: 157-163) explores in his discussion of the three-part list (see also related discussions in Jefferson, 1990; Potter, 1997: 195-197). In Extract 3.3, this occurs in speaker RB’s mention of mitigating causes as involving: (1) lifestyle, (2) reinvestment in business, and (3) losses incurred as a result of events related to the Gulf War (lines 48-53). Also, in Extract 3.4, this occurs in the interviewer question with speaker KM’s mention of: (1) lower costs, (2) travel abroad, and (3) a combination of these two factors (lines 2-4).

10. Similarly, van Dijk (1984) provides a list of such features that recur in interview material he considers, reading these as an outward expression of some underlying mental organisation or structure. One way that such an approach differs from that taken up here is that it fails to consider how a concern for the (stereo)typicality of such aspects itself features as a participant concern.

11. Hollway (1984), citing the work of Jahoda (1961) and Fanon (1968), remarks in passing upon her own, prior derogatory reference to ‘women’ as denoting a discursively constituted group identity from which she works to exclude herself, comparing her gesture with similar moves among West African and other speakers who refer to ‘blacks’ as a group from which they (those speakers) work to distance
themselves thereby, according to Hollway, 'reproducing the racist discourses with which whites position them' (ibid.: 260, n. 2). Of concern to us here, however, is not whether such discourses are racist (or sexist or whatever); but that the identities which speakers orient to and which they make available in their talk (whether as black, white, woman, man, expatriate, Arab, what-have-you) are deployed as resources in attending to the work of situating their contributions in anticipation of a range of responses with which they might be met in uptake. In this sense, while the deployment of identity is certainly oriented to as making available a range of assumptions (regarding that which terms such as black, white, male, female, expatriate, etc. refer to); to claim, as Hollway does, that their deployment thereby reproduces some autonomous discourse or discourses (of racism or sexism, etc.) is to introduce a range of concerns which are foreign to the interaction in which they occur. Thus, reference to categories of women, blacks, expatriates, etc. is not necessarily made in order to perpetuate racism, sexism, culturalism, etc.; but to attend to the concerns which an alternative, ironizing reading of those terms' use (such as that accomplished in Hollway's account) itself makes available. Along similar lines, Hollway herself remarks: 'I was attracted to men, partly because I aspired to be like them' (ibid.: 229). Aspiring to be like men — from within a form of life in which men are seen as different from and better than women — is not at all the same thing as perpetuating a discourse of sexism from within that form of life itself.

12. In terms of the sorts of considerations taken up in a dialogic analysis, Bakhtin (1984: Ch. 5) might refer to this sort of interactional work as involving the use of what he refers to as the word with a loophole.

13. This is a feature of talk referred to by Potter (1996: 124-132; 1997: 150-158) as stake inoculation — a pervasive aspect of talk’s reflexive character that we will also encounter in our analyses of interaction in subsequent chapters below.

14. For an interesting critique of Said’s writing in which the author discusses his (Said’s) work for its lack of reflexive analysis, see Young (1990: 119-140). In brief, Young finds in Said’s work the very constitutive activity which he (Said) works to distance himself from. ‘Said’s hope is to illustrate the formidable structure of cultural domination involved in the duality of ‘the Occident’ and ‘the Orient’ and by doing so perhaps to eliminate it altogether. But if he shows how Orientalism works by this opposition he does not so much try to undo it [the opposition] as simply deny it, with the result that he repeats the inside/outside structures of dualistic thinking himself. […] The problem of Orientalism is that without a concept of an inner dissension Said is constantly led simply to condemn Orientalism’s projections of dissonance on to external geographical or racial differences — even as he himself repeats such a structure by identifying Orientalists as ‘for’ or ‘against’. Meanwhile Orientalism’s own internal divisions re-emerge inexorably in the series of theoretical contradictions and conflicts in Said’s text’ (137, 140). In terms of how this relates to the analysis of the talk considered in this thesis, there is at issue, again, the paradoxical and yet co-constitutive aspect of the talk in which participants attend to their accountability for calling into being the object of their reference while nonetheless employing that reference to do so. That is, speakers work to make the use of certain terms accountable and in so doing employ the very terms whose accountability they work to put at issue. The accountability for racism or orientalism (or any other -ism, for that matter) is paradoxical in this sense. It is the failure to engage this particular aspect of discursive production which Young finds wanting in Said’s work.

15. This is not to say, of course, that the matter of the relationship between a particular account and a similar account as such is never made available by participants. Where this is the case, however, the issue of shared knowledge, background, etc. is then attended to by participants to conduct whatever work that they might attend to in that case. The difference here is between shared knowledge as a participant concern and as an analyst concern. On this account, Widdicombe and Wooffitt are not consistent, appealing in some places to the former and in others eliding the distinction.
Chapter 4

REFLEXIVITY, RACISM AND
THE VOICE OF THE OTHER

In the previous chapter, we examined how speakers employ talk about identity as a way of managing the availability of a range of implications with which their talk and their participation in the circumstances of that talk's production (the interview) might be construed. In particular, we saw how speakers work to situate their contribution in relation to the dialogic counters they take to be constitutive of the talk of which they are a part through theorising about category membership of various social actors ('expatriates', 'Americans', 'farmers down South somewhere', etc.) in talk where identity is topicalised.

Now, in this chapter, we will consider how the identity of the cultural Other is similarly employed as a resource in situating the speaker's dialogically contrastive position relative to the conflicting demands with which he or she is confronted in talk. Specifically, in referring to the perspective of the cultural Other — that is, in construing what the perspective of that Other might be — speakers thereby display a sensitivity to the view of that Other in the very pursuit of that discursively constructive activity itself. In this way, their talk is oriented to foreclosing the potential accusation of insensitivity to or unawareness of Arab cultural difference. At the same time, however, this proves problematic because in pursuing such foreclosure work, speakers occasion further demands for accountability. The very perspective which they construe to be that of the Other is displayed in ways that speakers might otherwise work to make accountable as an instance of prejudicially reductionist representation (i.e., with the sorts of cataloguing or description of Arab custom and behaviour that we examined in the previous chapter).

In exploring the details of what this sort of problematic involves, we will be attempting to cash out some of the theoretical notions of a rhetorico-responsive approach to conversational interaction as extended from Mikhail Bakhtin's work on voice that we initially touched on in Chapter 1 above. To review briefly, voice is the term that Bakhtin employs to refer to the rhetorical positioning that a particular interactional contribution has relative to possible alternatives in anticipation of which
it is directed. It is in working to anticipate a particular construal of one’s own
contribution that a speaker establishes the significance of his or her voice as
relationally contrastive to a set of possible alternatives and thereby establishes in that
talk what he or she takes those alternatives to be. Thus, it is in this anticipatory
work (which Bakhtin refers to with the term *addressivity* [see Holquist, 1990]) that
the voice of the Other is constituted for its significance at any given point in an
episode of conversational interaction.

In addition to this, there is also a feature of talk about the Other that in the
course of pursuing this anticipatory activity, what it is that the voice of the Other
entails can *itself* be taken up as a topic of concern among participants. Thus, in
actually addressing a conversational interlocutor, the work of topicalising addressivity
*itself* can feature as the means by which the situated activity of anticipating that
interlocutor’s discursive position is accomplished when and where the perspective of
some third party — some other Other — is itself the topic of that talk. The
implications this holds for our analysis of the talk we will consider in this chapter is
that relational situatedness of voice here does not, then, simply refer to the
perspective of the cultural Other *per se*. That is, it is not merely a way in which a
speaker construes his or her own contrastive viewpoint relative to some cultural
Other. Rather, what is involved is how the voice (or perspective) construed of some
cultural Other is *itself* employed in pursuing the work of managing the inferential
concerns which the speaker takes to be that of his or her interactional Other (the
conversational interlocutor). Because of the way in which talk about the Other raises
this set of rather complicated reflexive implications for its own use, it is absolutely
crucial to make this analytic distinction between the voice of the Other as a
rhetorically contrastive position in relation to which speakers work to situate their
own contribution — the argumentatively oppositional alternative construed in the work
of anticipatory foreclosure — and the voice of the Other as a theoretical construct,
the situated analytic concern for which can itself be employed reflexively in talk as
a way of effecting the contrastive situating of voice in dialogue. This chapter is
concerned to explore the details of how this takes place. As we shall see, this will
involve looking at the identity of the Arab Other both as the topic-of-talk and as a

133
position the details of which are articulated in reported speech imputed to various Arab Others.

**The Spectre of Racism**

In exploring expatriate identity as a device as we did in Chapter 3 above, we considered a range of different inferences that speakers work to foreclose in their talk — inferences related to the desire for socio-economic mobility and accountability for the use of category generalisations. Now, another issue which we will see that speakers attend to in their talk is that of racism. There is, of course, a vast literature devoted specifically to issues of race and of how race as a category is employed in the discursive/representational constitution of identity. For example, a great deal of work has been devoted to exploring the psychodynamics of racism (for a review of how this relates to both mainstream sociological and psychological treatments of race, see Wetherell and Potter, 1992; Dollimore, 1991). Based initially on the research into personality and national identity originally conducted by scholars working with Theodor Adorno in the period immediately following World War II (Adorno et al., 1950), such work is concerned to explore the cognitive structures and shared mental representations by which social categorisation is said to take place (Billig, 1982). One way that such work differs from the discursive approach adopted here is in this very foundational assumption that racism is the expression of perceptual mechanisms which it is the task of the researcher to reveal. Rather than regard racism as the manifestation of underlying cognitive structures or mechanisms which determine the way that social actors discriminate between individuals across a range of different situations, a discursive approach instead seeks to explore how issues of race and racism are consequential to the production of talk where they are at issue in that talk. This means examining how the issue of perceptual distortion and/or influence is *itself* regarded as a topic among conversational participants as well as how their attending to this issue as a concern in their talk has consequences *for* that talk (quite apart from the consequentiality of perceptual distortion which it may be the business of that talk to consider). Thus, a discursive approach to racism considers how talk *about* racism is itself oriented to the interactional business of participants in the circumstances where it takes place. In contrast, by assuming (as it implicitly does) what it is that
racism consists of, work in the tradition of research which seeks to reveal perceptual distortion fails to examine those very settings where racism itself features (viz., actual occasions of mundane social interaction where racism is taken up as a concern by participants). In this way, a discursive approach seeks, among other things, to bring about a respecification of the working assumptions that inform research into racism or any other matter of relevance to investigating a psychology of the social.

One rather interesting result of this respecification is that one does not ever encounter talk that is taken by the participants themselves to be an expression of racism. This is so because where racism is taken up as topic, it is necessarily regarded as accountable. That is, to even topicalise racism as such is to attend to the activity by which the relevance of race is made available as itself an accountable matter. Thus, what we do not find in talk where racism is an issue is the activity of speakers working, say, to undermine someone on the basis of race. Rather, what we find is that it is the business of such talk to make available a range of assumptions regarding the accountable nature of discrimination on the basis of race. In other words, we do not ever find participants engaging in talk which they themselves regard as an instance of racism.6

This stance contrasts rather markedly with that adopted in the analytic investigations of van Dijk (1986, 1987a, 1991, inter alia) where not only does he work to find prejudice in discourse (1984) — in particular, working to read certain interactional contributions as expressing underlying (racist) attitudes and opinions — but where he also takes speaker efforts to anticipate and foreclose just such a reading of their talk as an instance of impression management and therefore as a confirmation of the presupposition which he (van Dijk) brings to the analysis. What is significant about such work for the approach we take up here is that it fails to appreciate both the way that racism features as a concern for participants, and how participants work to attend to racism as an accountable matter in and through their very work of foreclosing a reading of their talk as racist.7 This is not to say that there are not occasions where speakers construe either their own or an interlocutor's talk as an instance of racism, but rather that this activity itself involves the taking up of an ironic stance with which those speakers attend to racism as an accountable matter. As we will see, even where participants work to provide for a reading of their own talk

135
as racist, their activity of doing so is brought off as a part of their overall efforts to attend to the reflexive implications of their talk as otherwise making that very reading of their activity available.

Thus, for how the issue of race relates to our interests in this chapter, our principal concern is with the way that speakers attend to the potential for their talk to be construed as racist; and also with how, in so doing, those speakers simultaneously work to construe what it is that constitutes racism as such. As we will see, what it is that speakers formulate as an instance of racism is itself contingent upon the circumstances in which racism is taken up in the talk. That is, what it is which speakers take racism to consist of is very much a determinate of the sort of rhetorical work by which the discussion of racism is occasioned in the context where speakers seek to address the inferences of their own talk.

In addition, we will also see that attending to racism is a much more involved and potentially delicate matter than the sort of work we saw in the previous chapter where speakers account for the desire for social mobility or where they attend to the potential for their talk to be construed as reductionist. This is because the very categories which speakers make available are so readily appropriated in the terms which they themselves elsewhere work to make accountable. The discursive task of the speakers, as it were, is to talk about Arabs and Arab culture as well as Kuwaiti and other nationalities and to employ such category glosses while at the same time working to ensure that their own use of these terms is not itself construed as motivated by racism. The interesting analytic question, then, is one of how speakers attend to this dilemmatic aspect of their talk. How do they work to make participants accountable for the use of categories which they themselves employ in their talk about categorisation? In short, how do speakers employ identity as a resource in order to make the employment of identity as a resource an accountable matter?

Contingent Definitions of Racism: Attention to National Identity and/or Phenotype

Consider the following transcript of conversation taken from a latter point in the same interview that we initially encountered in our analysis of Extract 3.1 and Extract 3.7 in the previous chapter. In the talk recorded here, the conversation turns from the
matter of expatriate identity to that of theorising the relationship between racism and national identity.

(4.1) Interview, 53 — private business owner, marketing researcher

CS: And plus especially for a Brit, colonialism comes into it. You know, because you are treated like you're so much better than your fellow workers, be they Indian, Thai, Filipino, whatever, and, so [refers to bodily movement by CS]

IS: [That's going to make] a noise on the tape. ((REFERS TO BODILY MOVEMENT BY CS))

CS: I suppose lots of people do start to feel that they ARE themselves better than their Indian workmates or whatever.

IS: I think it- it also makes a lot of people more racist. Because you could come from a background in wherever, and be quite happy having lived in a lot of your life with whatever, different races. Because most countries- most Western countries now have got a mix of many different races. But you come out here and all the sudden you're put on this pedestal because you are white or whatever. And even someone who probably wasn't racist before, because he hears everyone else say "Oh, bloody Arabs" or "Bloody Indians" or whatever, they'll start to behave that way as well. And you can end up being a racist person, when you started off not being so at all. Because everyone else says "Well, all Arabs are stupid, so they must-", you know, that sort of thing.

KM: Mm hm.

CS: You start to believe it. And also, [refers to bodily movement by CS] It's true. ((SMILEY VOICE))

IS: And also maybe the- because you have a certain way of living, and uh- you've- you've always been accustomed to the other races in your country having the same sort of way of life, but you come here, and the Arabs and the Indians here REALLY ARE different. They think differently, they do everything differently. So you just assume that they're stupid because they don't do things the way you do.

CS: Mm. In fact I had a friend of mine who worked in university, he reckoned I don't know what he feels now about- he's still in country, [refers to bodily movement by CS]

IS: [refers to bodily movement by CS]

CS: Yeah, Richard. when he first came out, after the first year or so, he thought Kuwait was more racist than South Africa was. Or more segregated.

IS: Yeah, he lived in South Africa as well.
CS: Yeah. THAN South Africa was.

KM: In= what way. I don’t understand. I mean-

... 

IS: It’s the way everything’s nationality in this country.

CS: Yeah.

IS: The minute you meet someone, the first thing they want to know is where you’re from. They’ll always- they’ll always ask you that. It’s like the second question they ask you. Whereas= somewhere else, certainly in England, they don’t even bother to ask you. They just take you for what you are. In this country they have to know. And that changes their entire perspective on- on YOU and what you’re like. So if you say "Well, I’m from England", "Okay. That’s good". If you say "Well I’m from Philippines", it’s completely different attitude. They’ll change the way they react towards you. And it’s that sort of society where everything depends on where you- where you’re from.

KM: Who changes their attitude. Who are you talking about. xx-

IS: I’d say mainly it’s u=m- oh I’ve always had this with uh- with probably Arabs and Kuwaitis. They always want to know where you’re from. The first thing they want to know. And that’s why you notice all the ID’s and everything in this country carries nationality. It really isn’t that important at all. If you have an ID in the States, that doesn’t- does it say nationality? I don’t think it does. In England it doesn’t say nationality. They just assume that you’re whatever. But here it’s one of the most important things, nationality.

There is a range of quite complicated interactional business taking place in this encounter, not all of which we have space to consider here. We will instead confine our analysis of this extract to the work that the speakers do in attending to issues which they gloss initially with the terms ‘colonialism’ (line 1) and ‘racist’ (line 11). Notice here that attending to the issue of racism entails some rather delicate work in order to make the regard for national origin accountable as an instance of racist discrimination. Specifically, the distinguishing of individuals in terms of national identity is implicitly made accountable as an instance of racist behaviour (‘The minute you meet someone, the first thing they want to know is where you’re from. They’ll always- they’ll always ask you that. It’s like the second question they ask you. Whereas= somewhere else, certainly in England, they don’t even bother to ask you. They just take you for what you are’, lines 48-52). One particularly interesting aspect of how this takes place is that while the speakers work to make such categorisation accountable, they also make national identity and group affiliation relevant in order
to accomplish that work. In other words, the accountability of group affiliation falls along lines which are themselves made sense of in terms of national identity. For example, the very attention to national identity which is made accountable as an instance of racist behaviour is itself related to a contrastive case the sense of which is provided for through the making relevant of, again, national identity (‘If you have an ID in the States, that doesn’t- does it say nationality? I don’t think it does. In England it doesn’t say nationality’, lines 64-67). It is in the United States and in England that national identity is said not to be attended to as relevant. In addition, the censuring of the making-relevant-of-group-affiliation is also itself undertaken in terms of group affiliation (‘I’ve always had this with uh- with probably Arabs and Kuwaitis. They always want to know where you’re from’, lines 60-62). In other words, speakers employ the very sorts of explanations whose use they otherwise work to make accountable. This is very much the same sort of activity that we have seen in our analysis of Extract 3.2 and Extract 3.3 in the previous chapter where, in talk concerning the accountability of social mobility, speakers make available the very assumptions (about earnings as an indicator of social status) which they themselves work to hold accountable. Here, again, we see the same sort of conversational logic in which, as a result of the context-shaping and context-renewing features of talk, explanans and explanandum emerge as mutually self-validating argumentative resources.

Another interesting feature of the talk in Extract 4.1 above is the way that the speakers also work to make relevant a range of assumptions about social influence as a way, again, of attending to the potential for their own talk to be construed as motivated by racism. Specifically, what they do here is not so much resist the potential accusation of racism as to make their activities accountable on other grounds. These speakers thus do not offer a denial of racism. Neither do they work to establish how the particular set of activities which might be construed as racist can be regarded as exceptional and thereby excluded as an instance of same (Billig, 1996: 148-185). Rather, what they do here is to construe their activities as a product of racist social influence (‘And you can end up being a racist person, when you started off not being so at all. Because everyone else says “Well, all Arabs are stupid, so they must- “, you know, that sort of thing’, lines 20-22). In this way, they abrogate
the need to account for their behaviour since, being the result of such influence, racism is not something for which they need be held personally responsible given that it is beyond their control. 8

Note further that in this context, the speakers even work actively to provide for an account of their activities as an instance of racist behaviour. This is really rather interesting because it is by so doing that they can manage the conflicting demands with which they are confronted in their talk. In the first place, by adopting such a position, they demonstrate and attend to the talk of which they are a part as that of an encounter which has racism as its concern. They thus attend to racism as a complainable or accountable matter. At the same time, however, in providing an explanation of that behaviour as determined by social influence, they are able to manage their own accountability. Thus, not only do they foreclose the potential for their talk itself to be construed as motivated by racism (by working to obviate the need to account for that behaviour); but at the same time they are still able to attend to racism as an accountable matter. Further, their doing so in this way also entails the additional feature of attending to the speakers’ epistemological warrant in making the claims that they do. Specifically, by providing the grounds for an account of their activities as an instance of racist behaviour (even while denigrating the relevance of such an account), they also demonstrate their warrant for making such a claim. In short, who better to understand what racist behaviour entails than someone who engages in such behaviour themselves? Who better to know what racism is than a racist? In this way, the account also works reflexively to foreclose the potential for the talk itself to be construed as involving the disingenuous denial of racism. Far from denying racism, these speakers display a concern for the accountability of their activities to just such assumptions; and, in so doing, they attend to the demand for such accountability even while countermanding its relevance. This particularly subtle attention to the conflict between epistemological warrant and the expression of concern for the accountable nature of racism is a particularly elegant bit of discursive work.

Another interesting aspect of this talk involves the way that speakers attend to other concerns as well which relate to these demands in complicated implicational relations. For example, just as we have seen in the talk about culture that we
examined in the analysis of Extract 3.5 and Extract 3.6 in the previous chapter, so too here speakers also attend to the demands for an awareness of and sensitivity to cultural difference with their remarks about how residents of the area characteristically think and act (‘but you come here, and the Arabs and the Indians here REALLY ARE different. They think differently, they do everything differently’, lines 29-31). Through this reference, they display with their talk a concern for cultural difference. In addition, however, they also attend to the potential for this very situated construal of such difference itself to be made accountable as an instance of prejudice (‘So you just assume that they’re stupid because they don’t do things the way you do’, lines 31-33). Again, by working to preclude the need to account for their activity (in terms other than that of social influence), the speakers are able to demonstrate with their talk a concern with racism while foreclosing the need for the activities to which they refer themselves to be made accountable. They are able to refer to the activity which they construe as realising racism in order to attend to the demands it would otherwise make relevant while at the same time advancing their epistemological warrant in doing so. In this way, the speakers are able very elegantly to manage the different demands with which they are faced in pursuing their talk, including the reflexive demands of anticipating how the anticipatory work they do is itself potentially construed in subsequent uptake. They work at a range of different levels, as it were, managing the issues of sensitivity and prejudice and attending to their warrant for doing so, while also managing the implications which that management work itself might be taken to involve.

Another point to notice about this talk is that with the comparative example of the South African regime by which the speakers develop and substantiate their account of social contagion, it is in reference to some third party’s implicitly evaluative claim that their own work is accomplished (‘when he first came out, after the first year or so, he thought Kuwait was more racist than South Africa was. Or more segregated’, lines 40-42). In identifying the comparison as one formulated by a ‘friend’ (line 36), the speakers attend to at least three different concerns here. Firstly, they attend to the credibility of the claim itself since, presumably, the referent’s having lived in South Africa would render him in a position to know. Secondly, they attend to the warrant for their own claim about that comparison since,
presumably, the intimacy of their acquaintance would mitigate against the possible motivation for misrepresentation as well as providing the basis for knowledge of what he (the South African friend) said. Thirdly, they also reflexively attend to the potential for the comparison and implications it makes available themselves to be held accountable as motivated since they are said to originate from a different source. Thus, with this account attributed to the former resident of South Africa, the speakers are able here to foreclose the implication that the construal of Kuwait as a racist country is itself simply designed to substantiate the work of attending to their (the speakers') own accountability for racism with a theory of social contagion. This account acts as a sort of collaborative viewpoint, providing a corroborative take that rather neatly lends credibility to both the substance of and motivation for the speakers' explanation.

Finally, another way in which speakers attend to the potential inferences that their category entitlement might be construed as making available is with a range of qualifying remarks employed throughout this episode of talk (‘be they Indian, Thai, Filipino, whatEVER’, line 3; ‘lived in- a lot of your life with <P whatever P >, different races’, lines 13-14; ‘because you are white or whatever’, lines 16-17). This qualification — signified with the word ‘whatever’ — works to manage the speakers’ commitment to the categorizing terms they employ, providing their situated activities with a ready-made resistance to undermining that Potter (1996: 124-132; 1997: 150-158) refers to with the term stake inoculation. That is, by qualifying their commitment to the categories of nationality, race and physical phenotype; speakers attend to the potential for their use of the associated glosses (‘Indian’, ‘Thai’, ‘Filipino’, ‘different races’, ‘white’) to be construed in terms which they themselves work to contravene. In this way, the speakers are able to employ the very category terms whose use they themselves work to make accountable.

_Situated Implications of Theorising: Changing Definitions in the Topicalising of Racism_

In the talk that we have considered so far, we were primarily concerned with the way that the speakers employ the very sorts of categories whose use they work to make accountable. In particular, we examined how the sense with which attending to
national identity is construed as an instance of racism is itself provided for in the context where national identity is made relevant to foreclose a similar construal of racism on the part of the speakers themselves. This involved exploring the hermetically self-sufficient way by which the account of social contagion makes this possible. That is, one's attending to national identity in the course of making attention to national identity itself accountable is a pursuit by which speakers employ the noxious inferences they contravene in and through the very provision for their relevance. In particular, the talk about social contagion heads off the demand that the speaker be held accountable to the assumptions about national identity and racism that he or she works to make available. The implication would seem to be that while it is indeed racist on the part of the speaker to attend to national identity, this nevertheless only goes to confirm the whole point regarding social influence. Thus the pervasively innocuous nature of racism is doubly accountable for being contagious as well, and the relation that this has with social contagion is mutually supportive of the work that speakers do to attend to racism in the first instance.

Another interesting feature of such work is how these efforts raise yet further implications to which speakers then attend in subsequent talk. In brief, the talk about social contagion is double-edged because while it provides speakers with an explanation for their activities, to the extent that those activities are still regarded as racist, the speakers remain implicated. Speakers are thus in the paradoxical situation where providing for the relevance of expatriate identity enhances the epistemological warrant upon which they base their claims for accountability, but at the same time this is accomplished at the expense of potentially implicating themselves in the very assumptions whose accountability they work to make relevant. 'Around [they] go in their kaleidoscopic whirl' (Billig, 1992: 48). Speakers thus can't win, so to speak, since their efforts in attending to one demand raises the opposite to which it is related; though, of course, they do win in the sense that managing this tension itself constitutes the way that accounting for their presence in the region is ongoingly conducted as a situated activity. In this section, we will continue to explore how speakers manage this tension by examining the way that what is taken to constitute the substance of racism is itself contingent on the reflexive implications involved.
Consider the following extract of material taken from a latter point in the same interview as that recorded in Extract 4.1 above and which begins here with the turn-at-talk immediately following the contribution of speaker IS which ended that exchange.

(4.2) Interview, 53 — private business owner, marketing researcher

1 KM: Mm. What u=m- Yeah. I- I mean I- it sounds like you had some-
2 some people in mind though. I mean maybe some expatriates as
3 well that, you know, I mean-
4 ...
5 IS: You want us to name names?
6 KM: No, no! [I don’t want you] to name NAMES, that’s not what I’m
7 IS: [@@]
8 KM: [[saying, but]] I’m just trying to get the perspective of= uh- you
9 CS: [[xx.]]
10 KM: know, you mentioned uh- you know, it’s- that "Nationality is
11 important to Kuwaitis to Arabs", you said, [and so-]
12 IS: [Even Arabs!] Yeah!
13 KM: Uh huh. And so I’m thinking "Well, okay then, what about uh-
14 those of us that are here from, you know, the States or the UK or
15 something, what- [I would xx- 1]
16 IS: [1 Oh. Would they- would 1] nationality matter to
17 them? [2 <x You x> think? 2] I don’t think so.
18 KM: [2 Right. 2]
19 CS: U=m- yes. I’d say so. To lots of people. It rubs off. [3 Yeah,
20 because 3]
21 IS: [3 After they’ve been here 3] for a while.
22 CS: after you’ve been here for a while, you’ll tend to see other people,
23 <p or other races p>, the way the people around you see them.
24 You know like, say you’re looking through a cv and it says "Date
25 of birth, place of birth, country of origin" and it says "India", uh-
26 you’re not going to look at it in the same way as if it said he was a
27 Brit or an American or a European.
28 IS: I don’t really agree with that. I’m sorry.
29 ...
30 CS: I do.
31 IS: No I don’t think so. [1 If- 1] Well you’ve always been raised as the-
32 CS: [1 xx. 1]
33 IS: [2 <@ xxxxxx. @> 2]
34 CS: [2 xx. I haven’t been- 2] [3 I HAVEN’T been x. 3]
36 @@ (Hx) @
@ No. I don’t think so. I- uh- I think you would sort of read the rest of it. I think-[Well it- it depends,] I mean,
[Yeah. There is-]
[[he’s talking about]] expatriates like they’re all exactly the same.
[[Sure.]]
You’re going to get some racist bastards who- who are living out here. You get them everywhere else in the world, why shouldn’t they come out here.
.. CS: Mm hm.
.. KM: Mm.
But, I don’t agree with that. In general, a normal level-headed expatriate wouldn’t do that. But then what is a normal level-<> headed expatriate. <>
[I mean-] I think this nationality thing is- is more important with the Arabs. I mean even KuWAITis- and this really gets me, is that you get some Kuwaitis who are really dark, you know they’ve- they’ve got sort of black u=m- African whatever, and THEY are really <> racist as well >. > It’s quite amazing that if you are a- a black Kuwaiti, you’re discriminated against. So for example the Crown Prince, I’ve heard Kuwaitis say "Oh, he’s just a nigger". You@ kno@w. And it amazes me. And they’re always- They’re being really RACist. And I just can’t believe it. It just shocks me when they- when they say things like that.
I’ve never heard that.
[I’ve] heard a lot of Kuwaitis say that, and it- it just- it’s just incredible. So you get that- that sort of racism with- within the Kuwaitis. And of course if you happen to be an Egyptian or whatever who IS dark, or Sudanese, then of course you’re discriminated against as well. There were a few black Americans here, <> there are not many >, and they were discriminated against. Even though they said "Look, I’m an American", but they were because of their colour. And that is really shocking.
.. KM: Mm hm.
.. IS: That they do that sort of thing. But I think as far as what C was saying, they are- it is a very rare na- racist nation.

We can begin looking at this episode of talk by examining the exchange between speakers IS and CS recorded on lines 31-34. At this particular juncture in the talk, a disagreement takes place between speakers IS and CS regarding the relevance of the account of social influence in reference to the circumstances which speaker CS
describes as an example of racism (the scrutinizing of details concerning national origin as contained in a c.v., see lines 24-27). That is, speaker IS works to anticipate how the identity of the speakers (herself, and by implication, her interlocutors) is implicated in the assumptions regarding social contagion that her partner makes available in reference to expatriates. She works to resist the account he offers as a way of foreclosing those implications. There is a tension here, then, between the particular devices that each of the two speakers — IS and CS — work to employ, and the interactive (co-operative) way of making a particular device available is itself a matter which the speakers attend to in the pursuit of their talk.

In addition to this, however, the exchange is interesting for how the speakers reflexively deal with the implications of their own respective contributions in making social influence a relevant concern. In other words, they do not simply show disagreement over the matter of social influence, but they also employ that disagreement itself as a resource to display their attention to the implications for accountability which that work raises. They adopt an ironising detachment from their own detached ironisation in the course of its very enactment. So, in the exchange recorded on lines 31-34, speaker IS can make assumptions concerning social influence relevant as a way of accounting for speaker CS’s disagreement with her over the issue of social influence itself. Her argument would seem to be that speaker CS’s maintaining the explanatory relevance of social influence can itself be accounted for as a result of just such influence (‘Well you’ve always been raised as the- <@ xxxxxx @>', lines 31-33). In this way, she can work reflexively to recruit speaker CS in her efforts to argue that he himself is in the wrong by drawing attention to the paradoxical nature of that position. That is, if social influence accounts for one’s stance, then the stance speaker CS adopts here (viz. that social influence accounts for one’s stance) can itself be dismissed since the credibility of his independence in arguing for that position would be thereby undermined. In this way she can marshall the very assumptions that he seeks to make relevant as a resource in arguing for their irrelevance.

This is all pursued in a rather jovial, reflexively self-parodic fashion, as displayed in the attendant laughter, in speaker CS’s reflexive response wherein he colludes with the assumptions made available by speaker IS (‘I haven’t been- I
HAVEN'T been X', line 34) and in speaker KM's remarks that ironically address the couple’s disagreement as escalating into physical violence ('Put- put the ashtray down. Put xx. @@ (Hx) @’, lines 35-36). The point to all of this here is that the speakers employ the very resources they make relevant to manage the demands for accountability to which they attend in their talk — demands which they address and those which arise both in the course of and as a result of their activity of attending to these demands in the circumstances where they are made relevant — and that through their reflexive display they are able to demonstrate their attention to this itself being the case.

The reflexive work pursued in this way dovetails rather elegantly with the work speaker IS then does in managing the extent to which the assumptions of social influence implicate the speakers themselves. Specifically, in introducing the distinction between level-headed expatriates and racist expatriates (lines 40-50), speaker IS is able to manage the extent to which she herself is implicated in the assumptions which that identity might otherwise be taken to make relevant, even while then moving on to develop an account of racism among Kuwaiti(s and) Arabs (lines 53-62). In other words, the distinction between level-headed and racist expatriates is employed to attend to the problematic which the device of expatriate identity raises in the first place. So, in the previous chapter we saw how these same speakers employed expatriate identity as a device with which to construe certain motivation and in so doing distance themselves therefrom thus foreclosing the potential for their own talk to be taken as motivated in the same way; here we see how that identity is problematic for the implications it makes available for the speakers in that the identity so construed potentially implicates the speakers themselves.

Again, there is a tension involved here having to do with the speakers' credibility. The speakers enhance their warrant in an interview wherein they speak on behalf of expatriates to the degree that they are themselves expatriates. At the same time, this identity, is double-edged in that when employed as a device to foreclose the construal their own involvement, it potentially implicates them. The rub is that to the degree that their use of the device is effective — to the degree that they are portrayed as credible expatriates — it also implicates them in the very construal
which they work to foreclose. The question here, then, is: how do the speakers manage to play these two off against the other? How do the speakers manage to enhance their credibility as participants in the circumstances of the talk while nevertheless resisting the implications which this makes available? This is accomplished with the distinction between kinds of expatriates. In this way, while discussing social influence, the speaker can employ expatriate identity as a device to display a concern for racism while at the same time enhancing her epistemological warrant in the circumstances (if for no other reason than that that identity is potentially implicated as racist).

Note too that the work of accounting for racism among Kuwaiti(s and) Arabs involves a subtle shift here from attending to the making relevant of national identity as an instance of racism to that of attending to physical phenotype (‘I think this nationality thing is- is more important with the Arabs. I mean even KuWAITis- and this really gets me, is that you get some Kuwaitis who are really dark, you know they’ve- they’ve got sort of black u=m- African whatever, and THEY are really <@ racist as well @>. @ It’s quite amazing that if you are a- a black Kuwaiti, you’re discriminated against’, lines 53-58). With these remarks, speaker IS effectively equates racism with discrimination on the basis of bodily physical features. In this way, she very elegantly balances the range of different demands which constitute this form of talk: demands for epistemological warrant, for accountability to assumptions regarding racism, and to the reflexive work of managing the implications for accountability raise in the very pursuit of the talk’s work itself.

Another interesting feature of this extract is what we mentioned in relation to Bakhtin’s work on voice. Specifically, that has to do with the way that different speakers employ quotation as a device for attending to the implications that might be raised in the talk they pursue. For example, this occurs where speaker KM broaches a question which implicitly attends to the reflexive implications of making attention to national identity itself accountable while attending to national identity in the course of doing so (‘you mentioned uh- you know, it’s- that "Nationality is important to Kuwaitis to Arabs"’, you said, and so- Uh huh. And so I’m thinking "Well, okay then, what about uh- those of us that are here from, you know, the States or the UK or something’, lines 10-15). That is, the question broached by speaker KM regarding
the relevance of national identity is one which itself also makes national identity
relevant in the very asking thereof. The question depends upon attention to national
identity to interrogate the reflexive implications of making attention to national
identity accountable through the paradoxical making relevant of national identity —
in a sort of triple stage of remove, as it were. Speaker KM’s question does the very
thing it asks about in the activity of asking itself (which is, of course, also that very
activity about which it asks as well). That is, through referring to the remarks of
some other party, speaker KM is able to raise the issue of the paradoxical nature of
the demands for accountability that were raised beforehand — that is, the paradoxical
nature of attending to national identity as an instance of racism — while managing the
potential for this to be construed as an accusation. His contribution here is one which
occasions the subsequent work of speakers IS and CS in reflexively attending to the
self-sufficiency of the talk, and in this way it constitutes the co-operative interaction
through which the speakers mutually orient to the pursuing of their conversational
interaction as talk which has just such issues as its concern.

This particular extract, then, shows speakers attending to a rather complex
range of work. In particular, we can see them constituting the basis for the pursual
of their subsequent talk. In other words, we can see how speakers attend not only to
the various demands with which they are engaged in the talk — demands related to
cultural sensitivity and prejudice — but we can also see how their reflexive attention
to the same itself attends to the potential to be made accountable as designed. That
is, their efforts are reflexively attentive to their own doing. Thus, it is not that
speakers are unaware of what they are doing — of the reflexive implications of their
talk and their talk’s work — but rather that their awareness can only be expressed in
the terms which they are employed to elucidate in the first place.

Self-ironising parody thus is one of the devices by which speakers reflexively
manage the implications for accountability that their pursuit of accountability
requires. Specifically, it is in the reflexive gesture afforded by parody that speakers
are able to display the awareness of the reflexive implications of their talk in terms
which that talk works to interrogate. In ironising their own contributions, speakers
can attend to this aspect of their talk. This sort of work is accomplished with
intonational cues which it is difficult to capture in transcription but whose relevance
is provided for in interlocutor uptake, such as that of laughter, etc. We shall consider
one more, single brief extract taken from the same interview involving speakers CS
and IS by way of example. This exchange occurred at a point following an
interruption to the interview proceedings.

(4.3) Interview, 53 — private business owner, marketing researcher

1 (SOUND OF KNOCK AT DOOR)
2 IS: You turn that off? (REFFERS TO TAPE RECORDER)
3 CS: around- Come in!
4 (...) (BRIEF PAUSE OF INDETERMINATE LENGTH DURING WHICH
5 TAPE RECORDER DISENGAGED)
6 KM: We took a time out, and here you are. (Hx) @
7 IS: @@
8 CS: Right then. U=m- and then there’s the stereotype that you get after
9 living out here and observing them for a while. That on the whole
10 they’re brainless morons.
11 IS: Tsk! C! @
12 ...
13 CS: [Well?]
14 IS: [@@@]
15 CS: I’ll [[< x keep to x > the point then.]]
16 IS: [[Well, no uh-]]
17 KM: @@ (Hx)
18 IS: Everyone wants to put everybody into um- into nationalities and
19 describe each nationality, but on the whole, u=m- it’s difficult
20 working with Arabs because they do have a different way of looking
21 at things.

This is a rather interesting exchange — a sort of light-hearted moment in the
interview proceedings which, despite its apparently frivolous nature, belies some
complicated and elegant interactional work. In particular, this involves the
responsive orientation of speaker CS in his initial turn-at-talk upon resumption of the
interview (‘Right then. U=m- and then there’s the stereotype that you get after living
out here and observing them for a while. That on the whole they’re brainless
morons’, lines 8-10).

The issue here, both for the participants involved and for us conducting an
analysis of this talk, is how to understand these remarks. Are they the (perhaps vulgar
and crude) expression of racist sentiment on the part of speaker CS, or are they
instead remarks that are reflexively oriented to the possibility of just such a reading?
That is, might they not be ironic? Evidence for the latter such reading lies in the

150
response with which these remarks are met in the interlocutor uptake that they occasion. Included here is the laughter by speakers IS and KM (lines 4 and 7, respectively). In addition, the formulative gloss that speaker CS provides of his remarks as tangential also works to accomplish this reading (‘I’ll <x keep to x> the point then’, line 8). Thus, not only do speakers attend to the demands for accountability to assumptions concerning racism, their own epistemological warrant, etc.; but they also work to foreclose the potential for that work itself to be construed as motivated through a sort of self-referential parody.

Attending to Arab Identity: Race, Nation and the Voice of the Other

So far, we have examined the way that speakers work to construe racism along certain lines — as involving the attending to of either national identity or physical phenotype. Continuing with a theme from the last chapter, we also saw how this is related in subtle ways with the work that speakers do to manage the demands for accountability which their own identity as expatriates potentially makes available. This includes work to obviate the need for accountability in the first place, as with the making relevant of certain assumptions about the contagious nature of social influence. Also included here would be the work speakers do to circumscribe their own category membership as when a distinction between different kinds of expatriates is introduced.

We will now go on to explore how speakers manage the availability of potentially damaging implications of talk about race and racism through the use of third-party accounts — that is, through reference to the voice of the Other. We have already mentioned this in our analysis of Extract 4.2 above where we were reminded of the relevance of Bakhtin’s work on voice. Here, however, we shall be concerned with a slightly different set of issues. This will involve looking at the talk imputed to the Arab Other — specifically, where the voice of the Arab cultural Other is employed as a device in taking up the concerns construed of the speaker’s interlocutor(s), the interactional Other(s). This means looking at how speakers employ the reporting of third-party talk to manage the need to account for their (the speakers’) own potentially damaging inferences raised by the making relevant of assumptions about Arab culture and identity. The difference in the way third-party
reports feature in this context is that the details concerning the criteria by which the
cultural Other is to be distinguished are presented as mediated in employing that
Other’s voice as a warrant.

In order to see what this use of the Other’s voice entails, we will first
consider the following, rather lengthy extract of conversation in which the speakers
take Arab identity as the topic of their own talk. This particular extract is taken from
an interview involving a group of friends — all of whom had resided for lengthy
terms at various times and in different locations throughout the Gulf region. Here, the
speakers represented in this extract include a married couple (speakers JL and AL; husband and wife, respectively), their son (speaker NL, whose contribution to the
discussion here is negligible) and a business associate of the husband and long-time
friend of both he and his wife (speaker DF). This exchange was recorded in the home
of the couple during a dinner party kindly hosted, in part, for the benefit of speaker
KM as a way of providing him with the analytic material recorded here.

(4.4) Interview, 61 — business managers, spouses, student

1 AL: And I’m sure if you speak to some Arabs already they’re
feeling, well Arabs have said to me, that already they’re
feeling the loss of identity.

2 DF: What do you mean by “Arab”.

3 ...

5 JL: Kuwaiti, Bahraini,

6 AL: No no no, Bahraini is Bahraini. Bah- uh- Bahraini does not cou-

9 DF: No, hang on.

10 AL: is not an Arab. A Bahraini is a Bahraini.

11 DF: Okay. What do you mean by Arab. Because that- that’s an

12 interesting concept which in certain areas has very different

13 meanings.

14 JL: You- you said "The Arab is [1 f- feeling that he’s losing his

15 identity". 1]

16 DF: [1 J, J, 1] <@ let her x @>. (Hx)@ <@ Let her

17 [2 answer. @ > 2]

18 AL: [2 The Arab, 2] where do I take the Arab [3 from. 3]

19 DF: [3 Yeah. 3] Where is

20 [4 that x. 4]

21 AL: [4 U = 4]=h- from the top of the Gulf to the bottom of the Gulf

22 to=-.

23 ...
JL: Do you mean a Yemeni, an Egyptian, a Lebanese, a Jordanian, a Palestinian, a Moroccan, an Algerian, a Gulf Arab?

DF: [Hang on.]

AL: Nothing in North Africa is—by a true Arab is classed as an Arab. The majority of Saudis do not live in the Gulf. The Gulf Arab?

DF: Include Palestinians.

AL: No they’re not Arab.

JL: Well THEY think—they say they are. They are part of "the Arab—"
But [Arabs-]  
"Great Arab brotherhood".  
Well right. Gulf Arabs do not class Palestinians-  
No, what do [you=,] you know,  
[as Arabs.]  
[[D’s question was "What do you mean by an Arab.]]  
[[Well- uh- uh- what were you trying to get across,]] because I- I  
honestly don’t understand it. There’s many people have so many  
different things. And I would actually include Algerians.  
No, they’re North Africa.  
But they are Arabs.  
Yeah.  
They’re NO=T.  
Sorry, I [1 want- 1]  
[1 THEY 1] consider  
[2 themselves to be Arabs. 2]  
[2 look I’m- what [3 I’m- I’m trying to get 3] 2] is what YOU  
[3 @@@ 3]  
would.  
This is why the Damascus Con- Conference- what do you= define  
as an Arab when you say that "The Arabs] uh- do this, the Arabs  
[Sorry, I- I- I was- I was brain- I was-]  
are this, the Arabs are doing this, the Arabs, the Arabs, the Arabs".  
What do you mean by "the [Arabs]."]  
[I sup]pose I was brainwashed back in  
1974 uh- no I wasn’t brainwashed, I was shown an old <x world  
> map by Khalid, and he said "These are the only true Arabs".  
Okay, so [what did Khalid tell you were the Arabs. What do you  
think are the Arabs.]  
[And I’m trying to think- I am trying to think-] no Egyptians are  
Arabs, nor Palesti[[nians.]]  
[[In your]] mind what are the Arabs.  
U=ḥ- from the top of the Gulf to the bottom [1 of the Gulf. 1]  
[1 Okay, 1]  
[2 but what- what countries does that include. 2] [3 Iraq? 3]  
[2 xxxx. @@@ 2]  
[3 Well, x- 3] uh-  
no. Yes. Yes Iraq.  
Iraq,
JL: Jordon, 1
AL: [1 No, 1] no no. They’re [2 xtians. 2] No, they’re
DF: [2 Just Iraq. 2]
AL: [3 tians. 3]
JL: [3 I 3]raq, Jordan,
...  
AL: No. [No. Iraq-
JL: [No, not Jordan.] Iraq-
AL: Iraq, Kuwait, [[and]] um-
JL: [[Kuwait,]] Saudi,
...  
AL: Saudi.
...  
JL: Yemen,
...  
AL: Yemen.
...  
JL: Oman,
...  
AL: Yes.
...  
JL: UAE,
...  
AL: Yes.
...  
JL: Qatar,
...  
AL: Yes.
...  
JL: Bahrain.
...  
AL: Yes. No, Bahrain is Bahraini.
...  
JL: Tsh- Bah-
JL: [Bah- Bahrain.]
...  
JL: U=h- Somalia,
AL: No.
...  
JL: Sudan,
AL: No.
...  
JL: Egypt,
AL: Nope,
...  
JL: Syria,
AL: no.
JL: Lebanon,
AL: No,
... 
JL: S- okay. So that's your definition of "an Arab".

AL: The others are Syrian, Lebanese,
NL: Mm.
AL: Palestinian,
...
JL: Yeah but they consider themselves-
AL: Algeri[ans,]
JL: [Ar]ab.
AL: Yeah [[but they're not. They- Khalid]] explained it. In- on this old
NL: [[x there not xxx poLtitical.]]
AL: map. They are not true Arabs.
...
DF: Yes but Genghis Khan @@ [wasn't either. @@@@] (Hx)@ (Hx)@
AL: [Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.]
DF: Yeah.
...
KM: Well when you talk about "Arab", what are you talking about. [Are
you talking about-]
AL: [A true] Arab- a true Arab is someone- anybody who has tight curly
hair is not a true Arab. Algerians, curly hair.
...
KM: Are you talking about [biological] race?
AL: [Egyptians-]
AL: Uh- (CLEARS THROAT) no. U=m- an Arab has soft hair, the
Bahrainis have soft hair, Kuwaitis have soft hair,
JL: Apart from the [1 fifty percent 1] of them that have got negroid
AL: [1 Saudis- 1]
JL: fea[2 tures 2] because [3 they're x. 3]
AL: [2 Yes. 2]
DF: [3 @@ 3][4 @@@ 4]
AL: [4 x, yeah. 4] But you look at the
u=m- <p XXXXX bloody have an Egyptian, do@n't they@ p>.,
u=m-
...
JL: You- you look at it as a- a- an- an- a- the Arab as the- the GULF
Arab, but then [there's the] Middle East Arab,
AL: [Yes.]
...
AL: Yeah but the Le[ban]ese doesn't- a Lebanese says "I'm LebanESE".
JL: [Uh-]
...
JL: Yes.
AL: He doesn't say "I'm ARab Lebane=se".
One of the very first things to note about this rather lengthy sequence is the business to which speakers attend in interrogating the criteria by which Arab identity is to be established in their talk. In the contributions they make and in the uptake with which those contributions are subsequently met, the speakers demonstrate that they take the issue of (what it is that constitutes) Arab identity to be that about which their talk is concerned and it is only at a single juncture that this matter is itself negotiated as potentially problematic (‘Uh- what do you mean what do I mean by an Arab’, line 44). Further, in pursuing this issue, speakers attend to criteria of both national origin and features of physical phenotype as problematically constitutive of Arab identity. The issue here is one of the very terms by which Arab identity is defined. The work they pursue is to conjecture upon identity — to raise the issue and to display an attention to it as problematic.

This is interesting because in pursuing this concern as the business-at-hand of the talk — that is, in raising the issue and in attending to it as problematic — speakers actively work to suspend a resolution to the decision whose terms they articulate. Even minimal efforts to formulate (in definitive terms) the expression of concern with identity are passed upon here, as when speaker KM works to gloss the criteria to which speakers attend in terms of race (‘Are you talking about biological race?’, line 193). Such efforts are responded to (with the notable absence of uptake) as beside the point of the encounter.

Of more relevance to our concern with the voice of the Other, what is particularly interesting about this talk is how the perspective of that Other whose very identity is problematised in this way is construed and is itself deployed in the course of pursuing the business of the talk. For example, the relevance that geographic origin has to formulating Arab identity is addressed in terms of the very assumption which
it sets out to interrogate in speaker AL’s remarks concerning the indigenous inhabitants of North Africa (‘Nothing in North Africa is- is by a true Arab is classed as an Arab’, line 33). In a similar fashion, the assumption that there exists some definitive Arab identity is itself made available in specifying the problematicity of its relevance to determining Palestinian identity (‘Well THEY think- they- they say they are. They are part of "the Arab-"’, lines 70-71; ‘Well right. Gulf Arabs do not class Palestinians-’, line 75). That is, the very object of analytic concern on the part of the speakers is itself employed in the talk to substantiate the classification by which it is addressed. The very assumptions about identity that are being problematised are themselves made available as a way of doing that problematising work. The point here is not merely that speakers provide for the relevance of geographic origin as a relevant criteria by which Arab identity might be defined, but also that they employ (what they construe to be) the viewpoint of the Other to do so. Thus, the very problematising of Arab identity and the interrogating of criteria by which that identity is constituted is itself oriented to as an Arab problem — that is, one that is of concern to those for whom the issue’s very resolution is definitive (‘Well THEY think- they- they say they are. They are part of "the Arab-"’, lines 70-71; ‘"Great Arab brotherhood"’, line 74). In this way, the very work of taking Arab identity as an issue is warranted in and through reference to the issue as one with which the Arabs in question are themselves concerned.

Things are more complicated than this, however; because at the same time that speakers employ Arab identity as a warranting device, they also reflexively attend to the potential for this very work of warranting itself to be made accountable as an instance of just such work. In other words, reference to the perspective of the Other itself involves attending to conflicting demands for accountability because the very work of construing what that perspective entails can itself potentially be made accountable as motivated. For example, with the very work of employing the perspective of the Other in attending to the relevance of national origin as constitutive of Arab identity, both speakers DF and JL work to distance the claims of their interlocutor, speaker AL, from the perspective of the Arab Other whose identity is at issue (‘Sorry, I want- look I’m- what I’m- I’m trying to get is what YOU would’, lines 89-94; ‘This is why the Damascus Con- Conference- what do you= define as
an Arab’, lines 96-97). That is, they resist the work that speaker AL does to warrant the work to which they attend with reference to the perspective of the Other. The paradox involved here is to sustain the very activity of interrogating the perspective of the Other while also sustaining the alterity of that perspective. Thus, the voice of the Other is not only employed as a resource with which to warrant claims concerning the identity of that Other, but the distinction of that identity as Other is sustained with and in the pursuit of working to understand what it is.

Elsewhere, reference to the perspective of the Other is similarly employed as a resource in the warranting of attention to both national/regional origin and phenotypical characteristics as constitutive of Arab identity. For example, speaker AL’s deferential orientation to the voice of the Other effectively forecloses the demand to account for her construal of the Other’s perspective itself while at the same time still displaying her sensitivity to that voice (‘Sorry, I- I- I was- I was brain- I was- I suppose I was brainwashed back in 1974 uh- no I wasn’t brainwashed, I was shown an old <x world x> map by Khalid, and he said "These are the only true Arabs”’, lines 98-103). She demonstrates attention to the voice of the Other, thereby working to foreclose the potential for her talk to be construed as insensitive to or unaware of that perspective, while employing the voice of the Other as a device with which to construe what it is that constitutes Arab identity.

This is still further complicated here in that with her self-referential remarks, speaker AL also works to attend to the accountability for deploying the voice of the Other as a device — as itself motivated. Thus, the self-deprecatory assessment involved in her gloss as ‘brainwashed’ (line 101) is one that forecloses the potential for the reading of the activities it references itself to be construed as motivated. In glossing her awareness like this, she attends to the potential accusation that her willingness to be persuaded in this way — or rather the report of her having been so persuaded — is itself designed to render her attending to Arab identity accountable. Even this is itself ambiguous in that the remark can potentially be read as either self-deprecatory or deprecatory-of-Other as well — as expressed with the subsequent retraction of her remarks (‘I suppose I was brainwashed back in 1974 uh- no I wasn’t brainwashed’, lines 101-102). Throughout, then, we see that efforts to attend to certain demands for accountability themselves generate further such demands making
the talk's work a sort of self-perpetuating activity which, in principal, is infinitely defeasible. The demands for accountability are themselves generated here through efforts to attend to them.

Notice also that just as in the talk discussed in the analysis of Extract 4.2 above, so too here the matter of attending to national origin alters with that of phenotypical characteristics. That is, speakers take up the issue of identity as problematically involving either national origin (geographic residence) or phenotypical features. In pursuing the activity of interrogating and/or problematising the determination of (implicitly racial, Arab) identity, speakers attend to issues regarding the adequacy of definitive criteria as involving either of these concerns. Even this distinction between origin and phenotype is itself rather complicated where the two are inferentially related in remarks by speaker AL (‘A true Arab- a true Arab is someone- anybody who has tight curly hair is not a true Arab. Algerians, curly hair’, lines 190-191). Finally, notice again that speakers employ the voice of the Other to warrant the claims they make. For example, speaker AL employs the voice of the Other to warrant attending to physical characteristics (‘Algerians, Yeah but they’re not. They- Khalid explained it. In- on this old map. They are not true Arabs’, lines 178-182).

One final aspect of this talk that merits mentioning here is how, in discussing the issue of Arab identity, speakers not only display with their contributions that they take the significance of their talk to be about that identity, but they attend to the possibility for their contribution to be construed otherwise in efforts to foreclose an alternative reading. So, at the single juncture mentioned above where the self-evident nature of the topicalisation of Arab identity is potentially problematic (‘Uh- what do you mean what do I mean by an Arab’, line 44), the extended question-and-answer sequence initiated by speaker JL is talk in and through which the speakers subsequently display their orientation to the relevance of national origin as significant to the constitution of Arab identity. Similarly, speaker DF works to foreclose a reading of their talk as attending to something other than identity with both the formulation of the issue as topic (‘Okay, I mean that’s a major problem’, lines 61-62), as well as the formulation of his talk as sincere (‘Well- uh- uh- what were you trying to get across, because I- I honestly don’t understand it. There’s many people
have so many different things’, lines 79-81). Formulation thus works to keep the talk on track, as it were, so that the issue of Arab identity and the taking of that issue as a participant concern is the indexical work that formulation accomplishes.\textsuperscript{13}

**Recruitment and Corroboration: Colluding with the Voice of the Other**

So far in this chapter, we have explored the way that speakers deal with the problematics involved in discussing both racism and Arab identity as topics of their talk. One of the common features of the talk we have examined is the way that national identity and physical phenotype are attended to as relevant matters where either racism or identity are concerned. Where either of these concerns is at issue, we have seen how attention to national origin is related to that of physical characteristics in ways that are mutually implicative. The formulating of identity, whether attended to as an instance of racism or else when pursued by speakers as a concern to be dealt with by themselves, is a matter of which national origin and physical phenotype are integrally constitutive.

Now, in this section, we will consider further how the perspective of the Other is employed in warranting claims about what that perspective entails. In order to see what this involves, consider the following extract taken from an interview in which the speaker — a medical training doctor whose work brings him in contact with different people in a variety of related professional settings — recounts an event related to his experience of working in the area.

(4.5) Interview, 24 — medical consultant

1. KM: but uh- well I mean, you told me about what you like, is there
2. anything you don’t like.
3. GP: Well, yeah, there’s a=- a- I’ll- I’ll sum it up by what one of my
4. students s=- said to me <P an Iraqi P>, but he speaks generally of
5. the culture, alright, rather than as an Iraqi or a Kuwaiti or anything,
6. KM: Mm hm.
7. GP: a=nd I went to visit him in Baghdad just uh- prior to the war
8. ((REFERS TO GULF WAR)), <P and I had uh- been here a couple of
9. times and we had gotten together here, we were- we had served on
10. architectural juries and one thing or another here in Kuwait, and so
11. p > u=h- wh- when he picked me up in= outside of the Sheraton
12. Hotel in= Baghdad, u=h- <P after a comedy of errors coming
13. from the airport and being told not to use my camera and, you
14. know, even taking a picture of the taxi cab driver changing a dead
tire from our Chitney cab from Baghdad airport, and all that, he finally picked me up, and he uh- I went down to his car, and it was a twenty year old Mercedes with a cracked windshield and wipers that one of them worked and one of them didn’t, the headlight lens was cracked, it was dusty, dusty as hell, and he opened the door that the handle damn near came off in his hand, and with a great flourish he said "Welcome to the Twelfth Century".

This sequence of talk is particularly interesting here in terms of the way that speaker GP relates the speech which he reports of the Other to the concern with things cultural. In particular, speaker GP relates an event in response to the interviewer’s question which he (speaker GP) takes as eliciting a concern with notions of culture. That is, he orients to the question as related to cultural expectations and not, say, to issues about working conditions, pay or any of an infinite number of other concerns that it might have been construed to indicate. The point here is that both speakers pursue the topics they discuss as concerned with culture and that the talk in which they are engaged here is one in which they pursue issues of what it is that counts as an instance of cultural norms. Speaker GP displays this in his response to that effect (‘but he speaks generally of the culture, alright, rather than as an Iraqi or a Kuwaiti or anything,’ lines 4-5), with which the interviewer colludes in his minimal response (‘Mm hm’, line 6). In this regard, the speakers pursue their talk as constitutive of an occasion which has culture as its concern.

In addition, here speaker GP also works to make relevant a range of assumptions related to an evaluative teleology of comparative cultural development. In particular, this relates to the sort of notions taken up in the anthropological literature that we touched on in Chapter 1 in which various cultures are seen as related to one another on an evaluative temporal scale so that the stage of evolutionary development is referred to in terms of time. That is, the relative placement of cultures in terms of development is accomplished with a time scale so that contemporaneous cultures are said to relate to one another not as coeval but as temporally distanced. Geographic movement between various loci of cultures thus becomes regarded as effectively constituting a form of time travel. In Chapter 3 above, speakers were seen to attend to the potential to be made accountable for
occasioning the relevance of such assumptions with talk in which they were critical of expatriates.

Here, the speaker similarly attends to the potential for his talk to be construed in such terms with the use of direct quotation (‘and with a great flourish he said “Welcome to the Twelfth Century”’, lines 21-22). What is particularly interesting about this is that by employing the voice of the Other in this way, speaker GP not only shows himself to be sensitive to the perspective of the Other; but he also works to foreclose interrogation of the claims (about the implicitly evaluative placement on a temporal scale) that he makes in the reported speech of the Other because to call the relevance of this teleological scale into question would imply calling the perspective of the Other into question. That is, in interrogating the assumptions that speaker GP articulates in the voice of the Other, the possibility is raised that that speaker could always accuse his or her interlocutor of insensitivity. ‘It isn’t me who employs the teleological model of time, but the Other that does so.’ Thus, to question the validity of that model would be to question the Other’s right to employ it. The implication is that this would be tantamount to an attempt to impose one’s own viewpoint on the Other — to speak for that Other. Employing the voice of the Other in this way is itself responsively oriented to its possible negative reception. Specifically, if one were to question the assumptions expressed in this way (presumably in the interests of that Other whose voice is supposedly thereby employed), then he or she could be accused of hypocritically attempting to speak for that Other. In other words, there would be available a classic tu quoque in that the very thing one would be accused of (viz., presuming to speak for another) would be available to accuse the accuser (Ashmore, 1989: Ch. 3). ‘What do you mean, I presume to speak for the Other,’ one could retort; ‘isn’t that what you yourself are doing here in launching your objection to my use of quotation?’ The use of reported speech here thus has a sort of in-built resistance to its own deconstructive interrogation. By employing it as he does, speaker GP can reflexively attend to a range of interactional business, providing claims about Arab culture which have the warrant accruing to that voice (the voice of the Arab Other) while resisting the potential accusation of reductionism.
Employing the voice of the Other to do this sort of interactional work need not involve either direct quotation or even reported speech in the way we have seen so far. Another related way in which this can be brought off is with the collusion of the cultural Other as reported in a recounting of events. That is, one can marshal the voice of the Other to do this kind of work through the report of collusive interaction on the part of the Arab Other. Consider, for example, the following, lengthier sequence of talk that took place at a latter point in the same interview of which the previous extract is a record.

(4.6) Interview, 24 — medical consultant

1  KM: For people who are like um- <P Oh I don’t know, let’s say if- oh
2       you must have done this with your kids, you know, and when
3  GP: Hm.
4  KM: they were coming to visit you P>, um- they probably- perhaps they
5       have an idea of what it’s going to be like to come to the Middle
6       East, um- what would you say to them, I mean how would you uh-
7       sort of prepare them to come for a visit, for example.
8  ...
9  GP: We=11, to come here u=h- well first of all they knew- they knew
10     some of the Middle Eastern Kuwaitis, you know, the- the Kuwaitis I
11     knew in the States,
12  KM: Mm hm.
13  GP: and eventually uh- you know, i- i- invited me over here, they were
14     al- they were always guests in my home too, so the uh- the- the- the
15     first Kuwaitis they met, they didn’t meet them in Kuwait, they met
16     them in good old (NAME OF U.S. CITY AND STATE),
17  KM: Uh huh.
18  GP: see, and so they had SOME idea of what kind of uh- people they
19     were, you know and so, you know, they- uh- they didn’t have t-
20     TOO romanticised an idea, and then on my subsequent visits over
21     here and things and, you know, u=h- the- the wa=y when I
22     brought the children over here, uh- <P the kids over here P>, uh-
23     the way they were treated by these Kuwaiti families, <P again with
24     this great generosity a[=nd] uh- P> there was one stereotypical
25  KM: [Mm hm.]
26  GP: thing, which they didn’t have but we thought we’d do it as a joke
27     for fun, uh- there’s the stereotype thing of the rich Kuwaiti with the
28     Rolls-Royce and he just drives here and there and he has all this
29     thing. So I got a Kuwaiti friend of mine, you know with- that had a
30     Rolls-Royce, a[=nd] I said "We’re going to play the ri=ch
31     stereotype tonight with the girls", <P I had all the girl- uh- t- two
32     girls over here then P>, and I said "How about that we’ll pick them
33     up at the airport in a Rolls-Royce and we’ll drive them to this
34     f=ancy restaurant and then we’ll Rolls-Royce it and we’ll have the-
and the man and the chauffeur and all that", and the- he s- he- he went- he went along with it, he thought that was just great. He took them through the go=ld <AR souq AR> ( ((<TR MARKET TR>)), ordered them each a gold u=h- you know, uh- souvenir thing and all that, and played the very rich -

KM: Mm hm.
GP: kind of guy. They loved it. They knew it wasn’t true, but they loved it ][@] anyhow see, so, you know, the- that’s a uh- they’ve had some very good experiences with these people, you know,

KM: [Mm hm.]
GP: The talk in this extract is similar to the encounter that we examined in Extract 4.5 above, except that here the speaker does not attend to the perspective of the Other through direct quotation or through third-party reported speech as he does there. Instead, he recruits the perspective which he construes of the Other in his account of that Other’s collusion in his activities and in the take which he provides of those activities as parodically self-ironising. That is, not only is the Kuwaiti Other here said to go along with the activities speaker GP describes as ‘stereotypical’ (line 24); but it is implied that he does so for the same reasons that speaker GP describes himself as doing so (‘as a joke for fun’, lines 26-27), as indicated with the reported response on the part of that Other (‘and the- he s- he- he went- he went along with it, he thought that was just great’, lines 35-36). Note here that speaker GP attends to the prior description of these activities as potentially accountable with his initially hesitant and faltering remarks by which he works to account for his initial presence in the area as having taken place at the behest of the Kuwaiti Other (lines 9-18). In this way, he describes his own actions in relation to that Other as initially responsive, thereby foreclosing the accusation of insensitivity potentially provided for in an account of his contact as proactive. This lays the grounds for the subsequent work he goes on to do in recruiting the voice of that Other. These remarks work not only to foreclose a construal of the events he describes as accountable to assumptions regarding the holding of prejudicial expectations, but it also does so in a particularly elegant way because it is the matter of the accountability of those activities that speaker GP presents himself as addressing in and through the very pursuit of those activities themselves. That is, the very activities which themselves might potentially be made accountable as motivated by prejudicial stereotyping are themselves the activities through which the speaker describes himself as working to make the relevance of
accountability for stereotyping available (‘to play the ri=ch stereotype’, lines 30-31; ‘we’ll pick them up at the airport in a Rolls-Royce and we’ll drive them to this f=ancy restaurant and then we’ll Rolls-Royce it and we’ll have the- and the ma=n and the chauffeur and all that’, lines 32-35). That he should recruit the perspective of the Other in attending to the accountability for how the perspective of the Other is itself recruited is elegant indeed.

What takes place here is similar to the sort of work that speaker CS pursues with his ironising, reflexive commentaries examined previously in our analyses of Extract 4.2 and Extract 4.3 in that the very accusations of stereotyping which he attends to as potentially accountable are corroborated with the collusion of the Other. In referring to the stereotypicality of images regarding the Kuwaiti, the speaker is able to foreclose the accusation of employing stereotypical images by distancing himself from them. At the same time, however, in providing for the collusion of the Other as he does, he is also able reflexively to foreclose the potential accusation that his employment of this device — this implicit criticism — is itself motivated by the desire to obscure the holding of stereotypes since it is the Kuwaiti Other who concurs with the use of that image itself. Thus, to call into question or interrogate his characterising of the image which is construed as stereotypical, would itself involve countering the voice of that Kuwaiti Other as well. That is, the very activity of construing the stereotypicality of the image of the rich Kuwaiti is inoculated from the need to be accounted for itself. In this way, the perspective of the Other is recruited in attending to the accountability for the recruitment of an Other’s perspective. This is indeed a particularly elegant bit of rhetorical work.

Yet another aspect of interest in this sequence is the way that speaker GP attends to the potential for his contribution to be construed as complaining through his gloss on Kuwaiti social contact as characterised by generosity (‘the way they were treated by these Kuwaiti families, <P again with this great generosity a=nd uh- P>’, lines 23-24). This is in keeping with the description of social reciprocity that speaker GP initially develops in his precursory remarks (‘invited me over here, they were al-they were always guests in my home too’, lines 13-14). With the referral to such reciprocity, the speaker is able to account for those activities relative to a range of potentially incriminating takes on what that interaction might involve. In other words,
this description attends to the demands in the talk for both cultural sensitivity on the one hand and prejudice on the other in that the speaker shows himself to be aware of different perspectives as demonstrated with his interaction with Kuwaiti friends. At the same time, working up the responsive aspect of that interaction attends to the potential construal of the encounters to which it refers as prejudicially motivated. Again, the point here is not to suggest that speaker GP is somehow attempting to misrepresent his otherwise genuine concerns, but rather that he attends to the interaction as an encounter in which these concerns are pervasively relevant and that he displays in his attention to them that he regards this to be the case.

Similarly, the interviewer attends to these concerns in his question through the employment of the sort of devices by which he works to distance himself from responsibility for the inferences potentially made available with those queries (‘<P Oh I don’t know, let’s say if- P>’, line 1). Not only is there a lowering of tone and speeding up of delivery by which the relative import of those inferences can be intonationally provided for as minimally significant, but the question to which that is a preface is one in which the interviewer marshals the perspective of his interlocutor as a device to attend to his (the interviewer’s) potential accountability for attending to the assumptions that the question might be regarded as making available (‘<P you must have done this with your kids, you know, and when they were coming to visit you P>’, lines 2-4). In other words, the interviewer works to recruit his interlocutor in ratifying the assumption (about preconceptions) that informs the question. In this way, the interviewer is not only able to employ the identity of his interlocutor (speaker GP) in attending to his own accountability for the making relevant of the assumptions concerning expectations, but can also employ the absent voice of the children to whom he refers in and through a construal of their expectations (‘they probably- perhaps they have an idea of what it’s going to be like to come to the Middle East’, lines 4-6). That is, by referring to the expectations of the children, the interviewer is here able to address the possibility of what might otherwise be construed as prejudicial thinking on the part of his interlocutor (speaker GP) without making that interlocutor himself accountable to those assumptions. Note that even this is itself attended to with the modification of the clausal adjective from ‘probably’ in the first instance to ‘perhaps’ (line 4). That is, a similar sort of hedging or distancing
occurs here as between the upshot of the assertion and the interviewer's situated commitment thereto. By equivocating in this way, the interviewer's question raises the issue of potential accountability for the holding of preconceived (prejudiced) expectations while attending to the potential for his having done so itself to be made accountable.

In all of this, then, we can see that this particular interactional sequence involves some rather complicated accountability work, both in terms of the conflicting concerns which are constitutive of the encounter and in terms of the problematics which arise from their situated attention. The voice of the Other — or rather the voice of different Others — is employed as a device in the management of conflicting demands for accountability with which speakers are confronted in their talk. In addition, the interactional work involved in doing this raises further implications to which the speakers attend in their talk.

In this way, both speakers KM and GP attend to the interaction as an encounter which has the dual and conflicting demands of cultural sensitivity and prejudice as its concerns. This work is interactively negotiated in the sense that it is collusively managed: concern for issues to which the speakers attend is a joint undertaking. Where speakers deploy particular devices, the effectivity of that work is an outcome of the uptake with which it is met. So, for example, deploying the Other's voice with reference to the expectations of speaker GP's children is made effective in and through interlocutor uptake in his response where he attends to the concerns thus made available. Again, notice here that even while collusively managed in this way, such interactional negotiation does not involve unqualified alignment. In his response, speaker GP qualifies his support for the assumptions made relevant in the interviewer question even while still attending to them as relevant concerns ('so they had SOME idea of what kind of uh- people they were, you know and so, you know, they- uh- they didn't have t- TOO romanticised an idea', lines 18-20). The uptake to the assumption made available in the interviewer question is modified to the extent that it potentially makes the referents (GP's children) accountable. In this way, speaker GP attends to the potential for his to be construed negatively by working to undermine it through his qualifying remarks. At the same time, however, he attends to the accountability it makes available. The extent that the interviewer question
attends to the accountability for holding expectations while working not to implicate speaker GP is provided for in the response which speaker GP produces (just as is the effectiveness of the similar devices that speaker GP employs made effective in the uptake of the interviewer). Thus, here speaker GP delicately works to provide for (or allow) the question such that it makes those concerns relevant but not to the extent that it implicates his children. In doing so, he shows that he takes that to be the relevance of the question as proffered; and in going on with the talk as indicated with his minimal response (lines 12, 17, 25, 40 and 43), the interviewer cooperatively and interactively works with his interlocutor to accomplish their talk as being about such issues. In this way, the speakers jointly attend to the pursuit of these concerns by employing the voice of an Other while also attending to the noxious inferences which the situated use of voice potentially makes available.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we began by looking at how racism features as a participant concern in talk where speakers account for their experience of living in the Middle East. In particular, we were concerned to explore how a range of reflexive implications arise in the setting where attention to national identity and/or physical phenotype are regarded as instances of racist behaviour. Thus, we saw that in talk where discriminating on the basis of national identity is taken up as an instance of racism, speakers are themselves potentially implicated in the selfsame demands for accountability that they work to make available in and through the very activity by which they provide for its relevance in the first place. The accountability for attention to national identity is itself limited in scope to those category members referred to using the categories of (national) identity the relevance of which is made accountable in the first instance.

It is this reflexive feature of talk which then occasions further work to manage the extent to which speakers are themselves implicated in the demands for accountability. As we saw, this includes the work of limiting the scope of these demands so as to exclude the speaker, as with the distinction between level-headed and racist expatriates that we encountered in our analysis of Extract 4.2. This contrasts with the work by which speakers employ the reflexive inferences as a way
of warranting their account, as when they actively work to establish the basis for their own incrimination in the claims they make about social influence as we initially saw in examining Extract 4.1. We saw that where these two differ from each other is in the extent to which the speaker him- or herself is incriminated (as racist). That is, speakers work to incriminate themselves as culpable, but only up to (and not beyond) the extent that their doing so works to display an awareness of and sensitivity to the Arab cultural Other. Where one’s talk is potentially held accountable as an instance of racism in its detail (that is, in the details of what is regarded as constituting racism, then what it is that is taken to count as racism alters between the attending to of national identity and physical phenotype. It is in this way that speakers are able elegantly to manage the delicate tension between expressing a concern with racism as an accountable matter and the reflexive implications that their activity of doing so raises in the setting of their talk.

Finally, we were also concerned to explore how speakers marshall the perspective of the Other in working to foreclose the potential for their talk about that Other itself to be construed as motivated. Specifically, we saw how the perspective of the Other provides a collaborative voice the category entitlement of which is itself marshalled to corroborate the speakers situated efforts to attend to the reflexive implications made available in the first place. Thus, in Extract 4.5 and Extract 4.6, we saw how, by expressing a particular take on the perspective of the Other with and in the assistance of that Other (in the talk or activities that he or she is reported to have produced), a speaker can work reflexively to foreclose the potential that exists for his or her own efforts themselves to be held accountable. Interrogating the substance of what the perspective of the Other is said to be is tantamount to disalignment with that Other.

Throughout, we saw that speakers are able to manage the conflicting demands which their participation in the talk confronts them in rather subtle and elegant ways. In particular, the conflicting demands for accountability are themselves deployed in a complimentary fashion so that the assumptions attending to one such demand are employed as a resource in foreclosing the potential demands attending to its opposite. The potential accusation of prejudice (either as racist or in some other terms) is itself marshalled to foreclose the demand otherwise made available in a speaker’s
description of the Other’s perspective by which he or she expresses a sensitivity to that viewpoint. Thus, not only does working to solve one discursive problem generate further problems; but that very mutually co-implicative aspect of the talk itself provides the resources by which speakers can manage the problems as so generated.

Notes

1. In the context of developing a rhetorical psychology, Billig (1991: Ch. 7) discusses the perspective of the Other and the work that is done with that perspective in his discussion of what he calls Taking the Side of the Other. He distinguishes between implicit and explicit aspects involved in employing the voice of the Other. Discussing this in light of the multiple and often contradictory implications that a particular argumentative position may entail, he notes how ‘Taking the Side of the Other can involve making explicit what may have been previously implicit. When someone Takes the Side of the Other they may not be developing something totally novel, in the sense that the classic experimental subject, who shows attitude-change, incorporates a totally new piece of information. Taking the Side of the Other involves building upon attitudinal elements which may have been implicit previously. There is a change in the sense that argumentative qualifications may be discovered, as implicit qualifications are made explicit. [...] If a rhetorical approach is to understand a phenomenon such as Taking the Side of the Other, then it must accept that at any time there are both explicit and implicit argumentative features to attitudes. Moreover . . . the implicit features may well be contrary to the explicit ones’ (ibid.: 147). Among other things, it is the relationship between these explicit and implicit argumentative features that this chapter is concerned to address.

2. Referring to the ancient tradition of Greek rhetoric, Billig similarly remarks upon this aspect of talk with his quotation of Protagoras’ maxim that ‘in every question there are two sides to the argument exactly opposite to one another’ (1987: 41; also cited in Michael, 1996: 28). For further discussion of how Bakhtin’s work relates to developments in rhetorical psychology, see the related introductory remarks in the new edition of Billig’s Arguing and Thinking (1996: 17-19).

3. Just as these remarks themselves take addressivity as their topic in addressing the reader.

4. The term voice could equally be replaced with the term viewpoint or perspective with a proviso countermanding the possible suggestion of a monadic, non-interactional autonomous position that the visual metaphor otherwise implies.

5. Although tangential to our concern with the details of how a responsive orientation is brought off in situ, we might still note in passing that in Lacanian psychoanalytic theory this distinction is referred to with the terms big Other on the one hand (corresponding, roughly, to the discursive referent in participants’ talk) and l’object petit a (loosely corresponding to the discursive position in anticipation of which speakers design the contributions in their talk, with the device of this first object, the big Other). For further discussion, see Laclau and Mouffe, 1985 as well as Žižek, 1989; 1994: 87-129.

6. In exploring the rhetoric of neo-fascist discourse, Billig (1991: Ch. 5) similarly points to the way that speakers work to head off the construal of their own formulations as an instance of racist discourse. Where racism is taken up as a participant concern, it is definitively only ever attended to as an accountable matter.

7. As Edwards (in press) remarks in relation to the sorts of work in social cognition in collaborative relation to which van Dijk situates his own projects: ‘It is an extraordinary psychology of mental processes that we are driven to when we ignore how discourse and social interaction work’ (see also
Edwards, 1997 as well as the discussion in Button et al., 1995 of related concerns referred to with the term *spectatorism*).

8. Note how this contrasts with the work that speakers do in the talk that Widdicombe and Wooffitt (1995) examine in which subcultural group members resist the construal of their behaviour as resulting from social contagion. Both in that talk and in the talk recorded in Extract 4.1, it is individual authenticity that is at issue; the difference, however, being that the authenticity of the speaker here would implicate him or her as maintaining a set of assumptions that he or she works to make accountable as racist. This is, of course, quite different from the work that the participants in Widdicombe and Wooffitt’s research do in attending to individual authenticity itself as an accountable matter. (I wish to thank Mary Horton-Salway for drawing this difference to my attention). We can thus see that the accountability of individual autonomy (from the social) is itself contingent on the rhetorical circumstances where it is made relevant.

9. Within the categories of vocalisation types in Bakhtin’s (1984: 181-204) work, this would be classified as vari-directional, double-voiced discourse. Of primary significance to us here is not, however, so much the detailed specification of Bakhtin’s system of classification as much as examining the responsive orientation to which this talk is directed in the circumstances of its use and the relation this has to a dialogic take on conversational interaction.

10. Along these lines, Mulkay notes how ‘it is precisely the symbolic separation of humour from the realm of serious action that enables social actors to use humour for serious purposes (1988b: 1; quoted in Edwards and Potter, 1992: 113).

11. There has been a great deal of theoretical concern with the voice of the Other, especially as related to a project of emancipatory political change. Not least significant of this is a broad spectrum of writing in feminist social and political theory (Braidotti, 1991; Flax, 1990; Gatens 1991; Kitzinger and Wilkinson, 1996; MacKinnon, 1989) as well as in certain approaches to interaction, many of which themselves look to the work of Bakhtin for theoretical inspiration (Sampson, 1993). A great deal of this work, while certainly evocative, is nevertheless somewhat deficient when it comes to actually examining the details of what the voice of the Other entails, confining their discussion to the level of theoretical abstraction. What is often missing is an examination of the details of how the voice of the Other features as a participant concern. More specifically, this involves eliding the distinction between the voice of the Other as a rhetorically contrastive position in relation to which speakers work to situate their own contribution and the voice of the Other as a theoretical construct, the analytic concern for which can itself be employed reflexively in talk as a way of effecting this contrastive situating of the speaker’s own voice.

12. This is very like the activity involved in the breaching exercises that Garfinkel devised in an effort to make explicit the tacit assumptions that are otherwise taken as unproblematically relevant in and on the occasion of talk’s conduct. For example, consider Garfinkel’s (1967: 41) remarks:

The subject was telling the experimenter, a member of the subject’s car pool, about having a flat tire while going to work the previous day.
S: I had a flat tire.
E: What do you mean, you had a flat tire?
She appeared momentarily stunned. Then she answered in a hostile way: ‘What do you mean? What do you mean? A flat tire is a flat tire. That is what I meant. Nothing special. What a crazy question!’

For the participants involved in the interactional encounter to which Garfinkel refers as well as those in the encounter recorded here in Extract 4.4, the matter of reflexively attending to one another’s intentions within the encounter itself is a means by which participants work to establish the significance of their talk. In the encounter here, this means implicitly working to provide for the relevance of assumptions about racial identity in the very activity of interrogating such assumptions (‘What do you mean by an Arab. Is an Arab an Algerian’, lines 45-46). The various means by which that is
brought off can, of course, differ — whether as accomplished with the sort of talk that Garfinkel refers to as involving a ‘hostile’, accusing formulation or with remarks by which categories are problematised as in Extract 4.4. For further discussion of this reflexive work and its practical management *in situ*, see Edwards, 1997: 90-96.

13. Mehan and Wood (1975), in their discussion of Schwartz’s (1971, n.d.) work, review the approach toward reflexivity developed in the ethnomethodological tradition, distinguishing it from an approach that sees reflexive formulation as the doing of situate work very much as it is here. They distinguish Schwartz’s definition of reflexivity from that of Garfinkel, noting the latter’s equating of reflexivity with accountability such that ‘activities whereby members produce and manage settings of organized everyday affairs are *identical* with members’ procedures for making those settings “account-able.”’ (Garfinkel, 1967, cited in Mehan and Wood 1975: 153, italics theirs; but see Garfinkel and Sacks, 1970). It is relevant for our concerns here to note that accountability and the doing of formulation are usefully distinguished in this way in order to deal with the sorts of situated work that formulation does to provide for the mutual orientation of participants to the significance of their activities in a context such as this.

14. Here again is an example of the mutual co-constitutiveness of ‘Being’ and ‘being’ (*das Sein* and *das Seiende*, respectively), to employ Heideggerian terms. The problematicity of what is made accountable — that is, the need to make the activities accountable — arises in neither a derivative nor a preceding relation to the work of pursuing that accountability itself, rather the two — the need to account and the work of attending to that need — are simultaneously produced. This is what Mehan and Wood refer to in their remarks to the effect that Being and being are mutually co-implicative — ‘dependent upon and independent of the other’ (1975: 174) and that some *X* can simultaneously be both the cause and the effect of some *Y*. 
In the previous two chapters, we looked in some detail at the way that identity features as a device to manage the availability of a range of inferences arising from participants' involvement in the circumstances of their talk. In particular, we examined how speakers work to foreclose a particular set of inferences which their participation in the circumstances of the interview setting potentially make available while at the same time working to manage the availability of inferences regarding their entitlement and warrant to make the claims that they do in the setting where the nature of and accountability for the experience of Western expatriates is taken to be at issue in the talk. Of particular significance in all of this was how identity features as a concern for participants in their own talk, and the reflexive implications that are entailed as a result for speakers in the pursuit of that talk itself.

In this chapter, we will continue to pursue this analytic concern for the reflexively oriented nature of talk by considering how personal narratives similarly feature as a resource that speakers employ to manage the range of conflicting demands with which their participation in the circumstances of the interview confront them. So, just as in the talk where identity is deployed to display a regard for the accountable nature of certain assumptions that speakers hold category membership to involve (while at the same time providing for speakers' category entitlement); so too in talk where personal narrative features, speakers work to manage the conflict between competing demands with which they are confronted by the circumstances in which they are participants.

The Analysis of Narrative

The approach to personal autobiography taken up here is one that differs quite significantly from the range of research otherwise conducted under the rubric of narrative analysis. One such body of work is that of the structural analyses of literary and oral narratives (Bal, 1985; Ervin-Tripp and Küntay, 1997; Frye, 1975; Longacre,
1983; Prince, 1982; Propp, 1968; Todorov, 1969) which, in turn, have been appropriated in the social sciences and in psychology in order to develop a model of narrative as an organising metaphor for perception.

While these two trends of narrative analysis differ from one another in important ways, what they have in common is a shared reliance upon the realist assumptions that inform a representational model of language. So, for example, in reference to the structural analysis of narrative, Edwards (1997) points out how the implicit distinction between worked-up versions of events and actual events is one in which the typological categories are privileged over that of any given instance of a story’s telling. The adequacy of a narrative is thus implicitly determined against the criteria of the ideal sequential ordering of events which is itself the outcome of generalised structure stipulated through a comparative study across a range of different story instances. The significance of this is not so much that the analytic criteria are privileged, but that doing so involves the assumption that events are accessible independently of an account as such. Accounts are thus taken to be more or less accurate depending on how they compare with either the dual criteria of some idealised structure or else with that of the supposedly independent reality of events to which those accounts are taken to refer (or some combination of the two).

In a similar way, research in narrative psychology relies upon the same assumptions about the nature of representation in its efforts to appropriate story structure as a metaphor for perception. The analyst is thus assumed to have some sort of privileged access to what are taken to be the actual events that the narrative describes (versus some representation thereof). The problem with this lies, again, not in the comparison as such but rather in the realist assumption that informs the Cartesian dualism foundational to any project — psychological or otherwise — which has perception as its analytic object. Thus, the idea in recent appropriations of narrative study by psychology is that stories are expressive of at least one basic mode of perception (a significant other being the paradigmatic [Bruner, 1986]), and that the cognitive structures that narratives as said to express themselves constitute a potential source of distortion to perception and/or memory (Bruner, 1990; Chafe, 1990; Conway, 1990; Polkinghorne, 1988; Sarbin, 1986; Schafer, 1976, 1982).
In contrast to these particular approaches to narrative, the take adopted here is one that sets aside or suspends such realist assumptions about the nature of language. Informed by work in ethnomethodology and discursive psychology, it explores the reflexive implications that narrative entails in and for the setting of its use. That is, it approaches narrative as a means by which conversational interlocutors accomplish the situated business of their talk, including that of attending to the situated demands for accountability that they make relevant in their interaction. Thus, just as identity featured in the previous chapter as a participant concern, so too here narrative is considered in terms of the sorts of interactional work that speakers pursue in particular settings where it is employed. As we will see, this work involves the sort of foreclose of inferences and the attention to particular demands for accountability that speakers regard as relevant to the business of their talk.

In terms of the detailed considerations taken up in attending to accountability, this means that the deployment of narrative involves speakers in foreclosing the potential for their participation in the setting of the talk to be construed either as prejudicial — as involving preconceptions about the events and experiences in which speakers describe themselves as having taken part as a result of living in the region — or else as unaware of and/or insensitive to cultural difference. In other words, we will see that speakers employ narrative as a resource to manage the conflict between competing demands for accountability so that they can display an awareness of and sensitivity to cultural difference, but not to the extent that their doing so can be taken to implicate them as prejudiced. Likewise, we will see that speakers work to display a lack of preconceptions concerning what they take to be Arab cultural behaviour, but not to the extent that doing so implicates them as unaware of cultural difference. It is the relating of personal, autobiographical narrative which provides a particularly elegant resource in the management of these demands.

The Narrative Time Machine: Temporal Disjunction as a Resource

In the conversational materials examined in the previous chapter where identity features, one particularly interesting point that we touched upon was the way that in attending to the competing demands with which their participation in the circumstances of talk presents them, speakers are involved in something of a conflict.
This could be described in terms of a problem that requires resolution. Specifically, the issue is that of how a speaker can work to make the relevance of category membership available for the epistemological warrant that it provides without at the same time being implicated in the demands for accountability that are entailed thereby. It was suggested that this tension is managed through talk about identity, and that the extent to which a speaker is so implicated is limited as a result of the reflexive implications of the membership category’s situated relevance for all parties present to the talk. Where any one participant is implicated, so too all participants are potentially so implicated. Thus, even though it might be possible to breach the implicit limitations in the extent that a speaker is him- or herself implicated in the demands for accountability, to do so would be to threaten the very basis upon which the interaction is conducted. That is, it would constitute a breakdown in work that speakers do to display an assumption of good faith on the part of their interlocutor as an integral feature of their work to sustain the tacit assumption of intersubjectivity.

Now, here we will see that another way in which managing the extent to which a speaker is implicated in the demands for accountability that his or her category incumbency might be taken to imply is with the recounting of an autobiographical narrative— a story of personal experience. Specifically, it is with the difference between claims that a speaker can make about him- or herself as a participant in past events referred to with the narrative and the implicit claims made with and through the recounting of those events in the account itself that he or she is able to manage the extent of category incumbency. This feature of telling a story is somewhat analogous to the distinction that Bakhtin (1979: 51-52) draws between the I-for-myself and the I-for-other. The crucial point is that in a speaker’s activity of referring to his or her own self, a distinction is established between that self to whom he or she refers and the speaker bringing off that act of referral itself. The participant ‘I’ to whom the speaker refers as a character in the narrative differs from the ‘I’ who is the teller of the account; and, as we shall see, it is the tension between these two which can productively be employed as a resource to manage the conflict between category entitlement on the one hand and the potential relevance of inferences which the work of attending to that entitlement makes available on the other. Because the character of the story is said to act in ways that are at odds with how the teller of the
story behaves in and through the very activity of recounting that story itself, speakers are able to employ certain ways of talking which might otherwise be made accountable. Specifically, this means that narrators are able to discuss their experience with the use of categorizing generalisations about Arab culture and society, even while relating how it was that their failure to employ such generalisations gave rise to the problematic circumstances which it is the point of the narrative to recount. Thus, the very problematicity which is said to have arisen in connection with the events recounted in the narrative attend to the potential for the speakers themselves to be construed as prejudiced. At the same time, the very activity of telling such a narrative — of being able to remark upon just such an event as itself involving such problematics — is one through which speakers attend to the potential for their talk to be construed as indicating an unawareness of and/or insensitivity to cultural difference. Thus, speakers delicately manage the conflicting demands of their own accountability for maintaining a set of preconceived expectations while attending to their accountability as culturally aware.

Now, in order to see what is involved with this sort of activity, consider the following, rather lengthy, narrative account in which the speaker — an American business professional married to a Kuwaiti citizen — recounts an experience that she relates as having taken place in the first year of her marriage at which time she was residing in a house, together with her husband and his family (her Arabic speaking, Kuwaiti in-laws).

(5.1) Interview, 29 — corporate sales representative

1  KM: Now what were your sort of expectations before you came here. I mean I'm-
2  AP: Before I came to Kuwait? [My] expectations? I really had none,
3  KM: [Uh huh.]
4  AP: u=m- tsk I didn’t know what to expect, I didn’t know anything
5  about the place, a=nd it was a- it was a complete- in a way = I
6  think it was probably something that very few people ever have in
7  their life. I felt like I was just kind of like dropped into a
8  completely different world. That’s how it- really, that’s how I felt. I
9  didn’t know anything about it, I didn’t hang out with my husband
10  and his friends uh- so I didn’t have a large group of Arab people
11  that I associated wi=th and that, you know, I was very unfamiliar

178
with the customs or anything like this, so for me when I came to
Kuwait it was- it was a complete shock in almost every way.
[I really] felt like was in a different universe. And so that is very
exhilarating, in some ways, but it was also very stressful. And it
was very difficult. [So the] first year was like- I felt like- I felt like

KM: [Mm hm.]
AP: [after] going through that first year, <P because I lived with my
KM: [[Yeah.]]
AP: in-laws in a home where no one spoke English and it was traditional
and, you know, I had been told nothing, and I was a very
independent person P>, and I went from being very independent,
having a lot of friends and doing exactly what I wanted and, you
know, having the whole world in my hand, to being completely uh-
you know, DEpendent, isolated, lonely, with nothing to do, bored,
and it was- that- that part of it was very difficult, but the other part
of it- of being immersed in something so different, it was- I don’t
know, it was- it was real exhilarating. It’s- it was nice. I [liked it.]
KM: [Can you-]
AP: I mean, do you have any- anything specific, sort of uh- specific
elements or anything,

KM: 
AP: Well there’s just situations of things that- that u=m- you know, you
just assume that you= re- you’re doing things that are okay and
acceptable and you find out that no they’re not okay and they’re not
acceptable, in fact they’re very wrong, u=m- [my-]

KM: [Such as-
AP: my mother-in-la=w um- well my mother-in-law is superstitious, and
she’s cooked- she’s a very good cook, and she’s cooked, you know,
every day of her life probably, I’m sure, u=m- for like a huge
family, like my husband’s family they have uh- <P oh nine, ten,
eleven ki=ds, and then, you know, her and her husband P>, and
for her the afternoon meal, <P like in the afternoon, like at around
two or three P>, is really her- this is for her. This is her thing. The
house, the kids and the f- cooking are her domain, a=nd- so when
she cooks for all of these people you can imagine that there’s a huge
volume of food, [right, well] my mom doesn’t cook, so for- first of

KM: [Uh huh.]
AP: all for someone to cook at all is amazing to me, second of all for
someone to cook for that many people so consistently and so well, I
mea=n, I just was really impressed. So I would co- I- I remember
once I came in and she’d ma- had made out these hollowed out uh-
uh- <AR cousa AR>? That’s called <AR cousa AR>, it’s u=m-
it’s a zucchini,

KM: Mm hm.
AP: zucchini now, and you take and you ha- hollow them out by hand and
then you stuff them, and then you carefully layer them in a big pot
and you cook them very carefully and gently, and the pot is maybe a diameter of like twenty inches by like, you know, twenty inches deep and it’s full of these AR cousa AR s, okay, that took all day of only her working on them. So I came in and I went "(H) Wow, what a huge pot of things", meaning- I was trying to compliment her like "Wow, what a lot of work you did, this is really great, I’ve never seen such a big pot of food before",

KM: Mm hm.

AP: and she just went into orbit, she started screaming and yelling and- and s- having this big tantrum and I’m like-

KM: Why?

AP: "What did I do", it- Why. Exactly, like "(Hx) N- what did I do now", you know, and so I was just like heartbroken, I’m like "Go=d, I can’t win", you know, so my husband g- heard all this commotion and he came in and said "What’s going on", I go "I don’t know, all I did was tell your mother that I’ve never seen such a big pot of food on the stove before, you know", I mean it was this incredible huge pot. And so he’s talking to his mother and- I guess she thought that I gave the food "the evil-e=ye", like you’re supposed to= um- because somebody who spent that much time making a meal, and the family is d- waiting for the meal and it’s- you know, your reputation is on the line with this meal, and uh- and if you= uh- say something like "Wow what a big pot of foo=d" and you don’t say "< AR maash Alla=h AR >", meaning, < P uh-you know, "God willing" or something like this P>, then what happens is you’ve kind of jinxed it, and "It’s going to bu=rm, it’s going to knock over, it’s not going to taste good", I mean something’s going- "It’s going to be too salty, it’s going to be mushy", somehow you’ve- they believe in this "hot-eye", this evil-eye thing, somehow you’ve like CURSED it, you know? Which I’m not like this at all, and so (Hx) it really hurt my feelings that she would think that in the first place, but-

KM: Mm hm.

AP: but she can’t help herself, I mean she’s been raised that way and- and I see- my comment seemed very out of context, it was very very uh- you know, it was a bad thing for me to say,

Obviously, this is a rather involved episode of talk in which the speakers attend to a great deal of different business. For our purposes here, however, it is important to note how the speakers attend to different demands in terms of accountability. Specifically, speaker AP attends to the potential for her presence in the circumstances she describes to be construed in terms of prejudice. In particular, she is not only able to employ a way of accounting for the circumstances she describes in terms of certain expectations or stereotypes, employing talk about Arab culture and social
expectations; but she is also able to attend to her own accountability in and for doing so. Specifically, she describes herself as entering the circumstances without having any expectations as to what those circumstances might entail ('My expectations? I really had none, u=m- tsk I didn’t know what to expect’, lines 3-5). Furthermore, it is this very aspect of her experience which is construed as problematic ('I was very unfamiliar with the customs or anything like this, so for me = when I came to Kuwait it was =- it was a complete shock in almost every way’, lines 12-14). At the same time, however, her description and in particular, her activity of producing such a description is itself one that makes relevant the very sorts of categorising terms which it is the effect of the narrative to demonstrate herself as lacking. Thus, this very story is one which depends upon those category terms for its sense and meaning.

The work she pursues with this talk then, is very delicate in that the upshot is at odds with the means by which that upshot is produced with the talk. The outcome is that she can show herself — as the character in the story — to have been without expectations, while deploying the category terms involved with which to give her story meaning. This is quite subtle in that the teller of the story is able to look back on herself, as it were, in order to make sense of the events which her lack of expectations made confusing and problematic at the time. In so doing, she can attend to the potential accusation that she is prejudiced. It is the production in the narrative of her experience as problematic which accomplishes this. At the same time, and because she accounts for that problematicity in terms of certain expectations, she also attends to the potential to be construed as unaware of or else insensitive to cultural difference and social influence. In other words, it is only after having been in circumstances where a lack of expectations has given rise to certain difficulties that the speaker can then (perhaps reluctantly) arrive at a conclusion as to what to expect.

An interesting feature of the conflicting demands involved in this talk is that it is not the use of generalising categories per se which is made accountable. Rather it is the nature of how those categories are arrived at in the first place which is attended to as significant. In other words, what is made accountable is whether the generalising categories one employs are preconceived or the outcome of some learning experience. It is thus in just such a context that the failure to orient to a set of expectations and generalising accounts is itself made accountable ('but she can’t
help herself, I mean she's been raised that way and- and I see- my comment seemed very out of context, it was very very uh- you know, it was a bad thing for me to say', lines 94-96). In sum, speaker AP can attend to the implications which the use of certain categorizing generalisations might be construed to make available, foreclosing the relevance of those implications with a narrative the point of which is to demonstrate her lack of expectations. At the same time, and through the very recounting of that narrative, she can employ those category terms, thereby making herself accountable for sensitivity to and awareness of cultural difference.

In terms of how this work is accomplished in the turn-by-turn contributions that the speakers make to the ongoing conversation, there is some rather interesting work that takes place in this episode of talk. For example, as in any other kind of interaction, the outcome or upshot of the talk is a jointly managed activity. This means that the telling of the narrative is not the sole responsibility of any single participant, but rather is an activity that involves speakers in jointly negotiating the suspension of the turn-taking activity which provides for the extended holding of the floor by a single speaker. Thus, both the interviewer (speaker KM) and the interviewee (speaker AP) collude in providing for the suspension of otherwise available turn-taking conventions. It is not that the narrative contribution and the provision for its relevance are the result of any one speaker's situate work but that this is jointly accomplished in the talk here. In this sense, they work interactively to attend to the significance of their contributions as constitutive of the setting in which they are involved. In this exchange, this involves not only the sort of recipient tokens whereby the interviewer registers feedback to speaker AP's contribution — the 'mm hm's and 'yeah's that keep things moving, so to speak (lines 16, 19, 21) (see Gardner, 1997; Jefferson, 1983; Schegloff, 1982, cited in Hester and Francis, 1994, n. 11) — but also the more involved work of both occasioning and managing the relevance of the narrative to the interview ('Now what were your sort of expectations before you came here', line 1; 'Can you- I mean, do you have any- anything specific, sort of uh- specific examples or anything', lines 31-33). It is with such contributions to the interaction that the interview occasions speaker AP's orientation to the competing demands for accountability that she attends to with and in her story.
Of course, even though providing for the significance of the narrative is a jointly conducted activity, attending to its actual production is a task in which speaker AP takes the major part in her (jointly-ratified and mutually worked-up) capacity as the teller of that narrative. We can see throughout that her doing this also involves some rather deft interactional work in managing the conflicting demands of attending to her category entitlement, on the one hand (so that she can work to make herself a credible participant in the circumstances of its telling), and working to foreclose the potential for that participation to be construed in terms of prejudice, on the other. In particular, she employs certain categorising terms to the extent that her doing so attends to the potential to be construed as unaware of or insensitive to cultural difference, and yet she also works to eschew the deployment of such terms to the extent that their use can be construed as prejudicial. For example, with her explanation of the circumstances leading up to and surrounding the episode of conflict between herself and her mother-in-law (the preparation of a meal), speaker AP accounts for her reaction to the events described in the narrative in terms other than those which she distances herself from with and in the telling of that narrative. That is, her relating of those events and the retrospective interpretation of them is an activity which itself involves an interpretation that differs from that as related in the narrative itself. So, in describing the preparation of the meal, speaker AP makes sense of those activities in their narrative telling that is different than those which she describes herself as having experienced in the events to which she refers. The preparation of the meal is related in terms of a sort of habitual activity characteristic of the mother-in-law’s category incumbency as matron of the house (‘This is her thing. The house, the kids and the f- cooking are her domain, and so when she cooks for all of these people you can imagine that there’s a huge volume of food’, lines 46-49). The potential for the use of just such a description itself to be construed as prejudicial, however, is foreclosed with the account of those events in the explanation that immediately follows (‘right, well my mom doesn’t cook, so for- first of all for someone to cook at all is amazing to me, second of all for someone to cook for that many people so consistently and so well, I mean, I just was really impressed’, lines 49-53). In this way, she is able to portray herself as having a lack of expectations, thereby attending to the potential for her participation to be construed
as prejudicial, and yet at the same time she is able to employ the explanatory categories whose use might otherwise be so construed.

Her glossing, then, of the very problematicity surrounding the events that she relates (‘my mother-in-law um- well, my mother-in-law is superstitious’, line 40) and her narrative accounting of that glossing (‘she thought that I gave the food “the evil-eye”’, line 79; ‘then what happens is you’ve kind of jinxed it’, lines 85-86; ‘they believe in this “hot-eye”, this evil-eye thing, somehow you’ve like CURSED it’, lines 89-90), makes use of the tension between the speaker’s identity as character in the narrative and her capacity retrospectively to assess the events so described. Note here the analytic point is not that in either case, the speaker is attempting to obfuscate or in some other way conceal her otherwise genuine or sincere understanding of these events, but that she employs the narrative as a device to attend to the conflicting demands with which she is confronted in the circumstances of her talk (the interview situation which has as its concern the experience of expatriates living in the Middle East). 4

Another way that speaker AP attends to this same tension is with her employment of certain tokens whereby she works to distance herself from the implications that her statements might otherwise make available. Just as we saw how speakers attend to this sort of task our discussion of stake inoculation (Potter, 1996: 124-132; 1997: 150-158) in the previous chapter, so too here speaker AP attends to the potential for her statements to be construed along certain lines with her use of different modal expressions qualifying her commitment to the remarks which they modify. In so doing, she can attend to her own accountability for the use of the category generalisations she employs in the explanation she offers throughout the narrative (as indicated here with italics: ‘but the other part of it- of being immersed in something so different, it was=- I don’t know, it was- it was real exhilarating’, lines 28-30; ‘she’s cooked, you know, every day of her life probably, I’m sure’, lines 41-42). The point here is that she attends to the potential for her use of category generalisation to be made accountable in that she distances herself from the inferences they might otherwise entail. In doing so, she again attends to her accountability for the use of generalisations in terms of the potential for their use on her part to be construed as culturally insensitive. In that she employs such terms, and yet modifies
her commitment thereto, she manages the conflict between the use of the terms and
her accountability to assumptions regarding their prejudicial nature.

‘And Then We Later On Found Out’

The previous extract was one in which the principal speaker was involved in a great
deal of discursive work to foreclose the implications with which her talk might be
construed. Because the details of attending the implications potentially made available
can be rather involved, it could be somewhat easy to lose sight of the work that the
narrative accomplishes as a device. Again, this point relates to how both the telling
of the narrative and that narrative’s upshot can be at odds with one another, and how
this tension can be productively employed in managing the range of inferences made
available. Before moving on, we will consider one further, relatively short narrative
anecdote. The following anecdote is taken from the same interview with the two ex-
military servicemen that we encountered in Extract 3.6 from Chapter 3 above.

(5.2) Interview, 6 — civilian military advisors

1 TI: Uh- other things that are really unique, like uh- Arab women here,
2 basically have like head of line privileges and stuff, [when they-]
3 KM: [I’m sorry?]
4 TI: Arab women have, like, head of line privileges and stuff in stores, I
5 mean the= you expect to be= allowed to just- if you’re in the Co-Op
6 buying groceries, at first you’re like "What’s wrong with this
7 woman, she think that I’m not here", you know, and "Boy she sure
8 is r=de", and then we later on found out well that’s- that’s just the
9 way it is, they believe that, you know, she should be able to just
10 walk up there ahead of you and go=

Here, once again, we see a sort of retrospective account of one’s self as different to
the teller of the story. That is, the teller of the narrative here — as in the previous,
lengthier extract — occupies a different sort of position from that which he does as
the character of the narrative account in that he presumably has the advantage of
knowing how things characteristically get done (‘then we later on found out well
that’s- that’s just the way it is’, lines 8-9). Again, it is this lack of foreknowledge
which is key to the problematicity that structures the story itself, and it is that
problem’s resolution which attends to the range of otherwise conflicting demands for
accountability. Thus, the speaker is able to employ category generalisations while
attending to his potential accountability for doing so — that is, while attending to the construal of prejudice that is potentially made available.

**Narrative and the Rhetoric of Experiential Authority**

This notion of experience and of its construction in narrative accounts like this is something which a great number of scholars have noted as characteristic of the rhetoric of experiential authority in various ethnographic writings, especially that of anthropology (Atkinson, 1990; Clifford, 1983; Pratt, 1986; Kitzinger, 1987: 29-30). One feature of such rhetorical work is that it involves the use of personal narrative as a device to attend to a range of conflicting demands. The upshot of such narratives, as is the case with the accounts reproduced above, is to construct a portrayal of the participant in his or her role as narrative character as having arrived at certain conclusions only after a difficult process the very problematicity of which is said to arise as a result of the lack of foreknowledge. In this way, the speaker attends to the conflict arising from his or her category entitlement — working to make him- or herself appear as a credible observer while at the same time attending to the potential for the credibility of his or her assessments to be undermined as prejudicial. Thus, for example, Pratt notes how certain anthropological writings deploy elements of both ‘personal narrative’ and ‘objectified description’ as a textual means that ‘mediates a contradiction with the discipline [anthropology] between personal and scientific authority’ (1986a: 32; cited in Atkinson, 1990: 60). In terms of how this relates to the use of narrative accounts in the talk we are considering here, this points up how speakers attend to both their category entitlement as credible participants in the investigative activity of which the related interview is a part and their epistemological warrant to make the claims which they do in that setting.

In a great number of ethnographic accounts, the narratives which employ these different features of such rhetoric — that is, elements of ‘personal narrative’ and ‘objectified description’ — typically take the form of an arrival story wherein the author relates the problematicity arising from his or her unfamiliarity with the norms and expectations which it is the task of the investigative fieldwork to formulate. These narratives make use of descriptive detail to create a sense of experiential authority (Rosaldo, 1986; see also Fowler, 1977 [cited in Atkinson, 1990: 63-71] for a
discussion of similar work related to literary texts) — that is, to attend to one’s credibility as derived from his or her ‘being there’ (Geertz: 1988). This is an aspect of talk we have already touched upon in our examination of Extracts 5.1 and 5.2 above. The talk recorded there shares with ethnographic writings the attention to conflicting demands for both category entitlement (which is the raison d’être of much ethnographic writing and the maintaining of an objective and value-neutral (in a word, scientific) approach to one’s object of analysis.

Atkinson (1990: 27), in his review of Clifford (1988: 34), discusses this aspect of ethnographic writing:

Clifford describes how the development of ‘professional’ anthropology, post-Malinowski, marked by claims for special expertise and practices, was accompanied by textual representations of anthropological authority. The new monographs introduced a ‘sharp image’ of the outsider encountering and penetrating a new culture, ‘undergoing a kind of initiation leading to “rapport” (minimally acceptance and empathy, but usually implying something akin to friendship)’.

Similarly, certain speakers in the interview corpus relate accounts of their own arrival in Kuwait as made problematic by the lack of foreknowledge as to what to expect. That is, they employ similar ‘sharp’ images — constituting an identity of themselves which contrasts markedly from that of the teller of the narrative. The significance of the arrival narrative is to describe in the starkest possible terms the sort of identity that is in contrast to that which the narrator displays with the telling of that narrative itself.

Two brief examples follow. In the first of these, the interviewee relates the circumstances of her arrival in Kuwait to take up a new position in a library at a local educational institution.

(5.3) Interview, 7 — librarian/information scientist

1 UF: When I came in 1973, well- first of all I had never sought to come to Kuwait, I had never thought of working abroad, this guy walked in the library one day when I was working in (NAME OF U.S. STATE), and asked me if I knew of anyone in my speciality who was looking for a job. And it- I was- I was in a personal relationship that I wanted to get as <@ far away from as I @> possibly could, and the work situation had- there had been a change in the director, and I did not like the change and had been very vocal about it and was in real trouble work-wise so it was a very good time, so I said "How about me", and he told me about the job and at the end of

187
about an hour he said "The job is yours but I have to know by

And I said "Yes" the next day, not having any idea what I was
generating for. @@@ And I- you know, THEN there wasn't a
whole lot of information available about Kuwait. And I- you know,
I found a few State Department reports and a couple of books but I
didn't know a whole lot about it. So I didn't- I didn't have a whole
lot of- I didn't have a whole lot of- @ @ I didn't have any idea what
I was getting in for.

KM: Mm hm. No expec[tations.]

UF: [And uh-] Yeah, no real uh- other than that this

was going to be a real adventure, you know. I'd go for two uh- my
plans were to go for two years, come back and get a PhD. In the
States. And- and uh- when I- I arrived in Kuwait, it was the end of
August, when I stepped off the plane, <p that was back in the old
days where you didn't have the jetways, you know p>, it was
ten-thirty at night and it was a hundred and five degrees. And I
thought "Oh my Go=d".

KM: (Hx)@ (Hx)@ (Hx)@

UF: And I walked into the airport, there was not one Western face in

there. It was all the- you know, men in dresses and women all
covered in black and I thought "O=h my Go@d". @@@

(... (SOME LINES OMITTED)

UF: But it got- it got better very quickly. But I really had no- I didn't- I
didn't have any i- I didn't have a clue what I was in for. Not a clue.
But because of that, I we- I went into it very wide-eyed and sort of
ready for anything

In this second extract, the speaker — an American national who, at the time of her
arrival to Kuwait, was married to a Kuwaiti citizen — relates a similar arrival
experience.

(5.4) Interview, 38 — corporate sales representative

UT: when I first got here I got out of that plane and walked in to that
rece- uh- that waiting area and there wasn't anybody with Western
clothes on it was all men. (Hx)@= (Hx)@ And I thought "Oh
Lord, what have I come to" (Hx) and (H) I walked out and it was
just sort of that image that you see in- in the media about how
there’s Rolls-Royces and these women all covered up and- and
that’s what I saw in front of the airport, all of these expensive cars
with these women that are covered and these people that look like
they walked out of the previous century, (Hx)= a=nd (H) I didn’t
like Kuwait much when I first came here, I mean I- the first night-
couple of nights I stayed in the ho- Regency, that was the most
beautiful hotel here, beautiful beach, everything was just lovely, and
my uh- at the time he was my fiance, took me to his family’s house
and I come to this very stark plain house and uh- we passed these
areas like Hawally and Nugra (SUBURBS OF KUWAIT CTY) which
are really slums and it looked so = Third World I just thought "Oh
my God, I don’t know if I can handle this", but then I== this was
my only boyfriend that I ever had and I was really in love with him
and I waited two more years after that at home before I married him
and THEN I moved here, and after a while after you live here and
you associate mainly with Kuwaitis you don’t see all that after a
while, you know, you- you focus more on your family and u=m-
your friends, u=m- you don’t- I didn’t associate- I cut off any
association with other Arab nationalities because I couldn’t stand to
listen them complain all the time,

KM: Complain about-
...

UT: Complain about Kuwait, their lives, this and that and the other
thing.

These two accounts, though different in the details of the background circumstances
that the speakers discuss as having brought them to Kuwait, are strikingly similar in
a number of important respects. In the first place, the speakers each recall the details
of their arrival employing very similar narrative constituents. For example, they set
the scene of the arrival by attending to the details of time and temperature, and by
providing a description of the clothing worn by those whom they are said first to have
encountered. Even in such descriptions, speakers display a sensitivity to the potential
for their terms to be construed as reductionist as expressed in the ironic comparison
with Western styles of dress. That is, speakers refer to such details not merely in
passing, but they subtly display an orientation to the substance of such descriptions
as just the sort of thing that typically gets noticed. This is made explicit in speaker
UT’s reference to media broadcasting (‘it was just sort of that image that you see in-
in the media’, lines 4-5); but more interestingly, perhaps, is the implicit way this is
accomplished with the choice of pronominal reference by which the existential claim
is made. That is, rather than referring to such details with a remark such as ‘There
were [details of description]’, the speaker employs the pronoun ‘it‘ and the definitive
article ‘the’ by which to make available the assumption of mutual understanding (‘It
was all the-you know, men in dresses and women all covered in black’, Extract 5.3, lines 34-35; ‘it was all men’, Extract 5.4, line 3).

Another interesting feature is that in each account, the speakers also relate a sort of narrative peak with an expression of surprise through the use of a self-quotation involving an invocation of the deity (‘and I thought ”Oh my God”’, Extract 5.3, line 35; ‘I just thought ”Oh my God, I don’t know if I can handle this”’, Extract 5.4, lines 16-17). While both these sorts of narrative details and the accompanying quotation provide for a heightened sense of one’s ‘being there’ (Geertz, 1988); they simultaneously attend to something else as well. With and in the very use here of these particular devices, the speakers employ the sorts of categorizing generalisations whose accountability it is the purpose of the story’s telling to attend to. That is, speakers attend to the potential for their use of such generalising categories to be made accountable in the narrative telling of the related experiences that are said to be involved. By relating these details as giving rise to problems — as unexpected or surprising — the speakers provide for their relevance in accounting for the circumstances of their presence. At the same time, however, it is the unexpectedness of the circumstances so described which occasions the narrative’s telling in the first place. This is an aspect that this narrative shares with respect to the relating of personal experience that we saw in Extract 5.1 above. Just as with that narrative, these narratives work to warrant the speaker’s employing of certain category generalisations in that their use is demonstrated to be the result of experience rather than prejudice. In this way, the use of the category generalisations is itself made accountable to the assumptions regarding the prejudicial nature of such terms. The speakers thus demonstrate themselves to employ such terms legitimately — that is, only after having gained the experience from the troubles which it is the upshot of the story to relate. In both of these extracts, the speakers attend to their accountability for the use of such category generalisations, managing the conflicting demands between their category entitlement (working to ensure their credibility as participants who are aware of and sensitive to cultural difference) while working to foreclose the potential for that entitlement to be construed in terms of prejudice.
This work to manage the conflicting assumptions by which cultural difference is made sense of is similar to what takes place in accounts by scientists of their own professional activities. In their discussion of what they refer to as the truth will out device (TWOD), Gilbert and Mulkay (1984) note how the relevance of temporality is made available to manage the inconsistency as between contingent and empiricist accounts of success in the promotion of a scientific theory. Remarking upon this, Potter and Wetherell (1987: 155, emphasis in original) note:

The problem [for the scientist who accounts for success as the outcome of various contingent factors] is that his own scientific actions begin to seem arbitrary and pointless. Why continue researching if beliefs are only accepted because of personalities and power [i.e. reasons articulated with the contingent repertoire]? However, the looming contradiction can be dealt with by producing a temporal separation of elements. There may be contingent factors operating at the present but in the future empiricist factors will come to dominate.

Time thus features as a means by which scientists work to manage the conflict in their accounts. Similarly, in talk where prejudice and culture feature as situated concerns, time is deployed as a device in that a narrative account creates a temporal disjunction between the situated circumstances of the story’s telling (the actual talk in the circumstances of its use) and the events which that story documents. Further, cultural difference emerges as ontologically privileged, tested in the crucible of the story-teller’s own ignorance as recounted in the narrative of his or her personal experience. In this way, the speaker can manage the degree to which he or she endorses the lack of any preconceptions — viz., to the extent that it does not implicate the speaker as prejudiced. While it is the case that speakers attend to both demands for an awareness of cultural difference as well as to demands not to be construed as having preconceptions (that is, as prejudiced); in their temporal situating (their recounting within a temporal framework, so to speak), it is cultural difference that emerges as the ‘truth’ that ‘will out’. Just as the TWOD works both to manage the conflict between the empiricist and contingent repertoires and to promote the former of the two as more basic to scientific understanding, so too the deployment of personal narrative displays a teleological trajectory which promotes cultural awareness as more basic to cross-cultural understanding.

Notice also how the talk recorded in these extracts relates to the remarks about the rhetoric of anthropological authority produced in an ethnographic account.
Recall, for example, that the ‘sharp image’ (Atkinson, 1990: 27, quoted above) by which anthropological authority was said to be derived itself involved the display of some sort of positive ‘rapport’. Now, what is interesting about Atkinson’s remarks in the context of these extracts above is that Atkinson fails to distinguish between the activity of recounting one’s initial arrival on a given scene and the events as so described. The suggestion is that the rhetorical effectiveness of an arrival account possibly derives from the expression of positive regard for the Other — the expression of ‘empathy’ and ‘something akin to friendship’. However, as we can see in examining the talk reproduced above, (especially in Extract 5.4), this is not necessarily the case. Indeed, a speaker can express a negative disposition — something akin to hostility — to those whom he or she describes while nevertheless providing for the warrant that the temporal disjunction affords. For example, we saw in Extract 5.4 that speaker UT expressed this sort of hostility which she goes on to detail (‘I didn’t associate- I cut off any association with other Arab nationalities because I couldn’t stand to listen them complain all the time (…) about Kuwait, their lives, this and that and the other thing’, lines 23-30). The point here, then, is that an analysis of such arrival narratives should not elide the warrant made possible by the reflexive implications raised in and through the activity of recounting a narrative with the actual claims made in that narrative.

**Constructive Analysis: Theorising One’s Presence**

We have already seen how speakers employ narrative and the situationally relevant implications that the activity of a story’s telling affords as a way to manage the conflicting demands with which their participation in the circumstances of their talk’s elicitation present them. It is in and through the very activity of telling a story that speakers are able to foreclose a range of inferences regarding the nature of how the category generalisations they employ in the course of telling that story are themselves arrived at as an outcome of a certain problematicity which it is the very point of the story to relate. Thus, the activity of recounting the narrative works to manage the availability of a range of different inferences, foreclosing some and making others available.
Now, another way in which speakers work to manage the availability of certain inferences is through direct theorising — what Garfinkel and Sacks (1970) refer to as constructive analysis — by which to make sense of their experience of living abroad. While such theorising is not the same activity as that of recounting a story, it is nevertheless relevant to our concern here with narrative because it shares with that activity the same feature of disjunctive tension between the subject as both the referent of an account and the teller of that account. Where the constructive analysis in talk differs from the use of narrative as a device, however, is that rather than attending to the availability of inferences (about motives, interests and other concerns entailed by their category incumbency), speakers explicitly formulate their concerns about those inferences. This is not to say, however, that in so doing they no longer need to attend to the inferentially available implications of their own talk. Instead, it means that they reflexively attend to the potential for that activity — that of constructing the formulation — itself to be construed as motivated. As we will see then, the work that speakers do with constructive analysis is similar to that of narrative in that they attend to certain assumptions in their talk, except that these are formulated, as such — that activity itself generating a further range of inferences that are then dealt with. In this way, we can see that there is no case where the assumptions for accountability are not made relevant as informing the activity of talk. Even where that activity itself involves the situated theorising of one's accountability, it simply creates a different setting where the business of one's participation is taken up as a concern in the accomplishment of that theorising. There is no 'time out' (Garfinkel, 1967) from orienting to shared assumptions, even where theorising such orientation is the business of that talk.

Consider, for example, the following extract of data taken from the same interview that we considered in our analysis of Extract 5.1 above. In the encounter recorded here, speakers take up the issue of subjectivity and the limitations that the contingencies of one's situation entail. That is, speakers pursue the work of theorising a transcendent position, even while discussing the contingency of perspective. The point in terms of how this relates to a speaker's own accountability is that in pursuing the task of constructing an analysis of his or her own experience, the inference which
the pursuit of that activity makes available is itself in conflict with the theoretical claims for which they are theorised.

(5.5) Interview, 29 — corporate sales representative

1 AP: I- of course I'm married to a Kuwaiti, <p I'm not married to [an Ameri]can so I have a different perspective than someone who is
2 KM: [Uh huh.]
3 AP: married to an American and only for three to five years or
4 something like this p>, I think that any time you= have the
5 opportunity to be exposed to a different culture, religion, language,
6 history, um- you know, it- it's enriching, a=nd it can't help but-
7 but give you something to= relate your own upbringing, your own
8 culture, your own religion to. You see you grow up in a certain
9 environment and you just assume that everyone in the world thinks
10 like you, acts like you, has the same interests, the same
11 motivations, the same, you kno=w, beliefs, and that's not true, you
12 know, the world is a very diverse place, [and so] for ME= it's
13 KM: [Mm hm.]
14 AP: given me a reference point, you know, and so in some ways it’s
15 made me= be= look much more uh- back on being raised as an
16 American, and see where- what really it MEANS to be an
17 American. Now I know what it really means to be an American, at
18 least to ME=,
19...
20 KM: Uh huh.
21 AP: u=h- where if you stay in the States it’s kind of like you- you don’t
22 really ever have anything to compare it to, okay?
23 KM: Mm hm.
24 AP: So it’s made me in some ways very much mo=re an American, in
25 other ways it’s made me very international where I feel like I’m not
26 an American, I’m not a Kuwaiti, I’m not- there’s a group of people
27 that kind of transcends being in a nation and wha- and there’s many
28 of us, you know, uh- many of my friends that- and- and it doesn’t
29 come from being married to a foreigner, it can come from living
30 outside of the States for a long time and having been integrated into
31 another culture for a long time, and it’s kind of like in some ways
32 you feel like every place could be home but no place is home, and
33 so=, you know, you don’t get that sense unless you=’ve been
34 forced to= be outside of what you’re familiar with,
35 KM: Mm hm.
36 AP: it’s- it’s- it’s an interestin=g thing. So I think of it as a very
37 enriching experience. I feel like I’m very fortunate to have had my
38 life take that direction. I think that right now if I had have been in
39 the States I probably would have been, you know, living in
40 suburbia, working on my jo=b, and just having a very mundane
41 boring life, and maybe- I’m not that kind of person ANYway so I
42 think that maybe that’s why I’m here to begin with, you know?
Perhaps the most obvious feature of the talk in this sequence is the work that speaker AP undertakes to provide an analysis of her identity as shaped by a diversity of experiences that she refers to in terms of cultural, religious, linguistic and historical difference ('I think that any time you have the opportunity to be exposed to a different culture, religion, language, history, um-you know, it-it's enriching', lines 5-7). Making these distinctions relevant rather nicely provides for the inference of the speaker's awareness of and sensitivity to cultural difference. In particular, just as is the case with the recounting of a narrative, here theorising about the effect of her own experience works as a reflexive display of the very awareness of and sensitivity to differences which it is the topic of that talk to discuss. In other words, the very activity of recognising, with this talk, the differences in virtue of which her identity 'as an American' (line 16-17) is formulated itself demonstrates that the speaker is aware of and sensitive to cultural difference (even if she does or does not express a positive regard thereto). This is the case since otherwise the speaker would not be in a position to offer such a constructive analysis in the first place. Notice here too that this involves the speaker opening up for interrogation the same assumptions (concerning the contingency of view as culturally determined) that she elsewhere makes available to do the rather different work of foreclosing the potential to be construed as insensitive to cultural difference ('but she can't help herself, I mean she's been raised that way and-and I see-my comment seemed very out of context, it was very very uh-you know, it was a bad thing for me to say', Extract 5.1, lines 94-96). Assumptions concerning cultural determination are variably occasioned by the work that they do in the specific rhetorical circumstances of their use. This ability to recognise perspectival limitations implies that the speaker is not constrained by the limitations so described (McKenzie and van Teeffelen, 1993). Difference is thus here made relevant as a way of formulating her own identity as aware and sensitive. Doing this means that she situates herself relative to alternatives — to the diversity of socially defined experiences ('You see you grow up in a certain environment and you just assume that everyone in the world thinks like you, acts like you, has the same interests, the same motivations, the same, you know, beliefs, and that's not true, you know, the world is a very diverse place', lines 9-13).
A further feature of this is that it allows the speaker, in her capacity as speaker, to take up the different perspectives to which she refers — the American, the Kuwaiti — and yet not to be defined by those perspectives. It is as if they become resources which the speaker can employ but which do not limit her. Culture, religion, language and history are regarded as an available means of enriching the speaker’s experience. In very much the same way that migration can serve as a metaphor for spiritual transformation, so too travel features in a sort of secularised version to bring about the juxtaposition of competing discourses out of which to recover new meanings — meanings which transcend the cultures from which they are derived in a sort of postmodern pilgrimage (Park, 1994: 262; see also Eade and Sallnow, 1991; Rojek and Urry, 1997). At the same time, however, speaker AP also attends to the potential for her claims along these lines *themselves* to be construed as culturally insensitive in that the very meta-position so achieved depends upon the sensitivity to and awareness of the claimed cultural norms and values that it is said to transcend. In other words, she attends to a conflict between the demands of contingency upon which her claims to transcendence rest. Thus, not only does she display in the formulating of her own identity — an identity which she claims is constituted by a range of cultural circumstances — that she is not limited by the circumstances so described, but she also makes the paradoxical claim to achieve transcendence on the basis of the identities as so described. Similarly, Wetherell and Potter (1992: 134), in their discussion of the different ways that talk about culture is employed as a resource among Pākehā (white) New Zealanders to describe relations with the indigenous Māori, note:

Whereas for the Māori, culture is presented almost as a burden, a double-edged and unavoidable duty, for the Pākehā it can be a potential playground. One can learn the Māori language like learning French or learning to ski. The strange is acquired and tamed and made one’s own by an act of mastery. Acquisition for the Māori is, of course, not seen in the same light. Culture and identity are more ambiguous possessions for their ‘proper’ owners . . . but for the Pākehā, Māori culture can be a rich extra dimension, like having a Constable painting to decorate a wall. Pākehā are free actively to choose this culture, Māori can reject it only at the risk of being found anomic. [...] Cultural discourse, unlike race, is, at this period of history, extremely ‘user friendly’. It is about being ‘sensitive’, ‘tolerant’, being sufficiently magnanimous and enlightened to ‘respect difference’ and ‘appreciate’ others.
Talk about culture and cultural difference works to provide a point of contrast relative to which the speaker situates her identity not simply as cultural Other — as an American in contrast to a Kuwaiti — but also as an Other distinct from that vantage of comparison itself — something to which she refers with the gloss ‘international’ (‘So it’s made me in some ways very much more an American, in other ways it’s made me very international where I feel like I’m not an American’, lines 25-27). The norms and expectations thus provided for are fixed in the sense that they are not said to be alterable (Spoonley, 1988; cited in Wetherell and Potter, 1992: 135). That this should take the form of talk about culture and that that culture should be so regarded is itself a feature of the discursive interaction in which the conflicting demands of attending to cultural sensitivity and one’s accountability for the employment of such terms is conducted.

In addition to this aspect of talk, there is also involved certain reflexive implications that the speakers attend to in the talk. Specifically, this involves the *kaleidoscope of common sense* (Billig, 1992: 48) that we also encountered in talk about financial earnings in Chapter 3 above (in the analysis of Extract 3.1). In the same way that a particular assumption is employed argumentatively to legitimate the very notion upon which it depends for its sense (where status relates to one’s earning capacity is *itself* deployed in making accountable that activity of determining status in the first place), here too the argument for the possibility of transcending one’s perspectival limitations depends upon the assumption that perspective is situationally contingent. It is the claim for situatedness of perspective — for the contingency of particular outlook upon the (cultural, religious, etc.) circumstances to which speakers refer — that is at odds with the very claims to transcendence which the reference to situatedness is marshalled to make available. In other words, speaker AP here describes the transcendence of her perspective, implicitly arguing that her view of things is not limited to any single culturally determined perspective and that her exposure to a range of alternatives has thus resulted in the ability to transcend any and all such viewpoints (‘I feel like I’m not an American, I’m not a Kuwaiti, I’m not—there’s a group of people that kind of transcends being in a nation’, lines 26-28; ‘it’s kind of like in some ways you feel like every place could be home but no place is home’, lines 32-33). At the same time, however, that very possibility of attaining a
transcendent vantage point itself depends upon the assumption that one’s outlook is culturally contingency in order to make sense. Contingency and transcendence, though in tension, are themselves mutually co-constitutive. The two sets of conflicting assumptions provide for the sense of their alternatives, the one depending upon its opposite in order to derive its sense in this context of use (Ashmore et al., 1989).

A further way in which his tension between transcendence and contingency (as mutually co-constitutive) is managed in the talk is with the use of certain qualifying statements in which the speaker attends to her accountability for the employment of the one as against its alternative. For example, with the emphatic reference to self, the speaker works to foreclose the potential for her claims to transcendence to be made accountable to the assumption of contingency upon which those very claims depend for their sense (‘and so for ME= it’s given me a reference point’, line 13-15; ‘Now I know what it really means to be an American, at least to ME=’, lines 18-19; ‘So I think of it as a very enriching experience’, lines 37-38). At the same time, speaker AP also works to foreclose the potential for the notion of situatedness that she provides for to be construed as undermining her claims to transcendence with her reference to self as independent of context (‘I’m not that kind of person ANYway so I think that maybe that’s why I’m here to begin with’, lines 42-43). Her claims to transcendence are warranted here to the extent that they attend to the epistemological warrant/category entitlement, but they are also attenuated to the extent that they might be made accountable to the assumptions upon which they depend for their sense — that is, situated contingency. In other words, the speaker warrants claims to transcendence to the extent that doing so manages (or makes available) the construal of her presence in terms of cultural sensitivity — to the degree that it demonstrates her awareness of cultural difference. At the same time, she works against that objective to the extent that it might be made accountable to the notion of contingency on which she draws to render her claims meaningful.

Conclusion

This chapter has been concerned with exploring the way that speakers manage the conflict between competing demands for accountability in their talk through the creation of a disjunction between themselves as the object of some descriptive account
and as the individual author engaged in the activity of formulating that account. Thus, we saw how in the creation of a narrative account of one’s experience, a speaker is able to depict him- or herself as having undergone a transformation whereby his or her initial unfamiliarity with the alien beliefs, habits, and/or customs of Arab culture are said to have created a problematic set of circumstances of which the speaker’s then current knowledgability is taken to provide a solution. In this way, the speaker is able to show him- or herself to be aware of and/or sensitive to cultural difference while at the same time attending to the potential for those efforts themselves to be construed as prejudicial. Again, the effectiveness of this sort of talk lies in the implicitly available distinction between one’s narrative character in contrast to one’s activity in relating the account of that character itself. In other words, it is the activity of making the claim about some past experience which is different from the experience of making the claim in the then present context that makes the narrative account effective. Among other things, it is this emphasis on the action orientation of a story’s telling that distinguishes a discursive psychological take on the recounting of past events from other approaches to narrative.

In exploring the role of narrative in the management of conflicting assumptions that speakers make relevant in their talk, we also touched on the way that narrative accounts are treated in work concerned with the rhetoric of ethnographic description, noting how that work (perhaps inadvertently) elides the effectiveness of temporal disjunction with the experiential authority potentially made available in implicit claims to ‘acceptance and empathy’ (Atkinson, 1990: 27, quoted above). Thus, in our examination of the arrival narratives, among other things, we pointed up this elision by showing an example of talk where the speaker attends to the conflicting demands for accountability (between awareness of cultural difference and prejudice) while explicitly expressing dislike for those whom she describes in her account (Extract 4.5). In this way, we saw how the effectiveness of the activity of recounting a narrative arises not from the claims to transformation in the teller’s outlook that may or may not be made in that account, but from the display of such transformation as afforded by the activity of the narrative’s telling itself.

Finally, we turned to consider the situated activity involved in making claims about a transformation in one’s own outlook with our discussion of the constructive
analysis whereby speakers formulate the theoretical significance of their experience of living abroad. Our concern there was to consider the work that such analyses do for participants in circumstances where they are undertaken. Again, we saw that there is an important analytic distinction to be made between the claims broached with and in that talk — as the topic of that talk — and the activity of realising those claims’ substantiality as manifested in and through the display accomplished with the activity itself of making such claims. It is this distinction which is essential to any analysis that takes up the reflexive implications of talk’s activity in and for that talk itself.

Notes

1. This is the practical analytic heuristic referred to by Garfinkel (1967: 89-94) with the term documentary method. The analytic distinction between category and instance as employed in the analysis of narrative is referred to under various rubrics, depending upon the tradition of research. In the Russian Formalism of which Bakhtin was so critical (see Emerson and Morson, 1990: 21-23, 77-83), the distinction is glossed with the terms sjuzet and fabula (Bruner, 1986). Other terms include historie and recité (Genette, 1988) as well as taleworld and storyrealm (Young, 1987), all of which assume a realist model of language as representation. For further discussion, see Edwards 1997: Ch. 10.

2. Billig et al. (1988) refer to this feature of talk with the term ideological dilemma. While this gloss very nicely refers to the sort of tasks that speakers pursue in their talk; it is nevertheless something of a misnomer because, as we have seen, speakers hardly appear to find themselves at an impasse when taking up the competing demands for accountability that they attend to in their talk. On the contrary, it would appear that they are able to handle the task of showing themselves accountable to conflicting assumptions in a rather elegant and deft fashion. Quite apart from this point, however, to gloss the conflict involved as a dilemma is to imply that managing the tension between the various assumptions at issue in the talk is somehow beside the point of the interaction — a sort of inconvenient distraction from the main business-at-hand of the talk. It is, among other things, the point of this thesis, however, to argue that pursuing conflicting demands is the activity that principally constitutes the business of the speakers in their talk.

3. In Bakhtin’s work, these categories relate to the philosophical concern he pursues with regard to the issue of individual authenticity that we touched on in Chapter 1 above (see also related discussion in Clark and Holquist, 1984: Ch. 3). For our purposes here, we need not pursue the same issues that Bakhtin is concerned to take up in order to examine how the difference to which he draws attention features as a resource for speakers.

4. Our analytic concern here is not with the accuracy of the speaker’s claim that she encountered the situation she describes with a lack of expectations except insofar as that is a concern for the participants — as, for example, would be the case if they were reflexively to attend to the talk itself as a motivated way of obscuring her true motives. The point for us here is not to reintroduce realist assumptions in order to establish what really happened, but to examine the situated rhetorical work that an account such as this works to accomplish.

5. There are a range of interesting reflexive issues that a critique of such anthropological work itself raises for its own practice as well — issues having to do with the constitutive nature of anthropological practice as comprised of the tension wherein the unfamiliarity or alterity of the investigative object (i.e., the cultural Other) sustains the impetus to discover, but wherein the discovery undoes the
impetus. One does anthropological investigation to the extent that one makes the unfamiliar become familiar — to the extent that one sees things differently or from another perspective. To the degree that one is successful in such an endeavour, though, one is then not doing anthropology since the unfamiliar one works to make familiar — the perspective of the Other that one works to make his or her own — is no longer different. Doing anthropology successfully therefore means not doing anthropology at all (by definition, if anthropology depends upon the unfamiliarity of the investigative object). The contrastive assumptions are constitutive of the discursive practice which is anthropology/ethnography, and it is the management of the tension between these conflicting demands that the business of anthropology is all about. A good ethnography (meaning, a successful one) is one that manages the tension between these two gestures such that they can both be sustained.

6. It is rather attractive — though certainly beyond what is warranted by the data here — to read this as a sort of comparative allusion to a teleology that culminates in secularization. For example, just as Lofgren (1985; cited in Shapiro, 1992: Ch. 1, n. 6-10) reads the treatment of animals and their adoption as pets to express a bourgeoise contempt for the agrarian peasantry whose contrastive use of livestock it metonymically represents, so too here the reference to God might be taken to represent an earlier, pre-secularized and therefore unsophisticated persona from which the speakers work to distance themselves with the invocation. The inference would be that the speakers’ narrative of personal experience somehow mirrors or otherwise corresponds with an assumed developmental teleology which is itself being made relevant to give purchase to the overall work of the narrative in elaborating the temporal disjunction that attends to the conflicting demands for accountability. Thus, just as Western society has developed from the pre-secularized, religious state alluded to with the invocation of the deity, so too the speakers have analogously changed from who it is that they were at the time of their initial arrival to Kuwait. Notice, the claim here would not be that such a teleology is manifested in the talk; but rather that a comparative analogy is inferentially made available to effect the display of change that the narrative accomplishes and which that work of managing conflicting demands for accountability depends upon.

7. ‘For the scientist, this device [the TWOD] is important not because it reconciles potential contradictions between versions, but because it re-establishes the importance of the empiricist repertoire’ (Potter and Wetherell, ibid.).

8. See, for example, some of the autobiographical descriptions of the ethnographer’s accounts of their first encounters with the Yanoama people of the central Brazil as reviewed by Smole (1976: Ch. 1-2).

9. Edwards distinguishes between three different levels of analysis where narrative is regarded as providing: (1) a picture of the events to which the narrative account refers, (2) a picture of the understanding that a narrator or narrators have of an event, and (3) a resource by which speakers pursue the business of their talk. In drawing these distinctions, Edwards seeks to subsume the first and second types of analysis into an analytic framework in which representation is approached in terms of its action orientation. Thus, ‘[w]hereas we might assume, common-sensically, that events come first, followed by (distorted) understandings of them, followed by (distorted) verbal expressions of those understandings, type 3 inverts that, and treats both understandings and events themselves as participants’ concerns — the stuff that talk works up and deals with’ (Edwards, 1997: 272).
Chapter 6

RESPECTING THE WISHES OF OTHERS
Providing for the Relevance of Cultural Sensitivity in Arguing for the Legitimacy of Western Involvement Abroad

The previous three chapters have seen us exploring a range of different discursive devices that speakers deploy as a way of attending to conflicting demands for accountability. Specifically, we have examined a range of different ways in which speakers work to attend to demands for accountability to assumptions regarding cultural sensitivity, on the one hand, and prejudice on the other. One of the crucial points we considered throughout the preceding chapters, is that it is in and through the very activity of orienting to these assumptions that speakers constitute their situated undertaking as one for which these very demands are relevant. That is, it is in the very activity of orienting to the task of their talk as one which involves these very concerns, and in the activity of attending to the significance of their contributions for the implications they might potentially be construed as making available, that speakers display and thereby constitute their talk as being about such concerns. We also saw how in managing the conflict between the various demands to which they attend, speakers also work to maintain the availability of both sets of assumptions as relevant to accounting for their own participation in the circumstances by which their talk is occasioned. That is, they show themselves to be oriented to a range of different — and what might otherwise be regarded as conflicting — demands in their talk, thereby working to achieve in their interaction an activity which attends to such demands for accountability as constitutive of the form of talk in which they participate.

Now, in this chapter our concern is to explore how this range of assumptions is made relevant in very specific argumentative contexts as a way of attending to the rhetorical work of legitimating Western involvement in the Middle East. In particular, the issue here is not simply one of how speakers attend to the demands for accountability which they do, but also one of how they deploy these same assumptions while discussing the legitimacy of Western involvement in other parts of the world.
How, the question might be posed, are speakers able to justify their own participation with such involvement in a discursive context where they display an orientation to issues of racism, prejudice and the sensitivity to cultural difference as complainable matters? That is, how do speakers orient with their contributions to the potential construal of their own participation in circumstances to which they refer as accountable (and potentially complainable), while at the same time legitimating that participation? As we shall see, doing so involves some rather complicated rhetorical work. This is the case because not only do speakers act to foreclose the potential for their participation to be construed along these lines (as we have already seen in the preceding chapters); but they also spend time reconstructing assumptions that elsewhere imply the illegitimacy of Western involvement to stress legitimacy. That is, the nature and relevance of these assumptions is worked up in a way that is suitable to the particular occasion of use (Edwards and Potter, 1992; Potter and Wetherell, 1987). For example, we will see the way sensitivity to cultural difference can be reworked so that it is not exclusively available as a way of undermining the legitimacy of Western involvement abroad.

This chapter thus is concerned to explore some of a range of different argumentative contexts in which sensitivity to cultural difference is made relevant as a way of sanctioning Western involvement abroad. What is particularly significant about this is that in talk where speakers attend to a distinction between Western and non-Western identities, those speakers orient to the problematic relevance of these identities while doing so in such a way that nevertheless legitimates sustaining the distinction itself. They are thus able to attend to the demands for cultural sensitivity — that one be aware of, sensitive to, and in general tolerant of alternative perspectives (glossed in terms of cultural values and expectations) — while at the same time working to undermine the basis in alterity upon which that very distinction is itself rendered meaningful. This is an issue that we remarked upon in the preceding chapter with reference to the constitutive work of an anthropological discursive practice. Here, the relevance of these assumptions will be explored for the potential they have to legitimate Western involvement abroad.
Having a Clue: Making Sense of Military Conflict in the Persian Gulf

One of the most frequent and ardently discussed instances of Western foreign involvement throughout the entire corpus of analytic material upon which this thesis draws is that of the Persian Gulf conflict of 1990-91. This particular episode of military confrontation is one for which there are a great number of alternative interpretations and whose significance is a matter of some controversy. This was particularly evident at the time the interview material was collected. In this section, we will explore how the status of the activities surrounding this event (for how they relate to accountability for the conflict, the legitimacy of activities conducted during hostilities, etc.) are argumentatively informed by assumptions regarding the nature of cultural difference. The following material is taken from the same interview as that from which Extract 5.1 and Extract 5.5 in Chapter 5 above are taken. In the particular sequence discussed here, the speakers are concerned with the significance of events leading up to the initiation of armed confrontation between the United States and Iraq, addressing their remarks to the controversial nature (initially glossed as 'criticism', line 1) of competing accounts of U.S. actions. That is, their concern here is not so much one of which party is responsible for the conflict per se (though this is a related matter to which their talk is addressed) as much as it is to address this issue relative to competing accounts. Thus, the issue is not exclusively one of developing an adequate account, but rather also of how speakers work to establish a procedure by which to decide upon the ratifying of a specific account. Speakers are concerned to make sense of the variation in accounts and to manage that variation in the sanctioning of the particular account they seek to promote.

(6.1) Interview, 29 — corporate sales representative

1 KM: there's quite a lot of critifs- criticism that's flying around uh- you know, that the United States uh- it wasn't necessary X to pursue the- the military objective,
2 ... 
5 AP: No= I think anyone who says that doesn't- has never really lived in the Middle East. I think people in Middle East, if there's one thing they understand it's power, a=nd you- it- it's from a very young age kids are taught how to be bullies and that's really encouraged, you know, "You want something, you take it", okay, so people operate here from a position of power, alright, there's no such thing as- let me give you an example, <p I don't know if this makes
sense to you but p>, I had my son in a Montessori school in (NAME
OF U.S. CITY),

KM: Mm [hm.]

AP: [where] everything was like "You're playing with the to=y and
if the child wants the to=y so you come up and you say <CH
'Hello, I would like to play with the toy also, can I have it from
you, or would you like to share with me, okay?" in the- CH in
the Middle East you go into a nursery school the kid's playing with
a toy, the other kid wants it he goes over and punches the kid in the
face and takes it and no one will say anything about it, okay? That's
the way it is. And that's the way they are encou=raged from the
time they're very young. It's a very dog-eat-dog world, a=nd
nothing is understood but power. And that's the way things get
do=ne, alliances- it's- it's n- it's- that's it. And that's the way the
countries interact with each other, it's a=ll- you know, it's power.
A=nd coming in here and saying- slapping Saddam Hussein on the
hand and saying "Shame on you, you shouldn't be doing this", it's
bullshit, it doesn't work over here, people do not think the way that
people in the WEST think, it's a completely different way of
thinking, you know?

KM: Mm.

AP: It's- that's the way it is. [It's a com-] completely different outlook,

KM: [Mm= .]

AP: political, why do you think they have problems in the Middle East,
you know, I mean why are we- why- WE had so many problems
dealing with the Middle East, because we don't understand that.

One of the first things to notice about this sequence in the way in which speaker AP
works to make a range of assumptions regarding socialisation and developmental
processes of socialisation available as explanatory resources with which to account for
U.S. activities (as necessarily responsive to Iraqi actions). Here, the comparative
metaphor of nursery school interaction is worked up as a means of accounting for the
events leading up to and culminating in armed hostilities between the United States
and Iraq. More specifically, this comparison works to make available a particular
range of assumptions concerning the nature of socialisation — viz. that individual
behaviour can be accounted for as determined by a set of norms and expectations
constitutive of one's social environment, and further that such norms are acquired
through a process that begins in early childhood.

Another aspect of this comparative anecdote is that in relating the personal
nature of speaker AP's circumstances (involving, as it does, her own individual
experience with child-care), there is involved an implicit assertion of experiential authority in making the related claim to knowledge. In this way, speaker AP attends to her credibility as a contributor to the encounter. Moreover, this analogy allows for the development of a comparison along a particular trajectory. Specifically, the reference to personal relations that is made relevant here to inform issues of U.S. diplomatic policy is productively ambiguous (Billig, 1991: 147-149; Edwards, 1997: 96-100) for how the individual person of Saddam Hussein is regarded as both metonymically representative of Iraq as well as exemplifying of a characteristic mode of political relations glossed as ‘dog-eat-dog’ (line 23). This ambiguity thus makes it possible to account for U.S. actions in the conflict without, however, imputing responsibility directly to either the Iraqi president or the Iraqi governmental policy. Where the question might arise of whether the incursion into Kuwait merited sanction, then the argument could be made that Saddam Hussein, as a result of his socialisation, acted in an illegitimately violent fashion. Further, where the question of whether U.S. response to his actions was excessive (in that its effect extended to other Iraqi parties), then that response could be legitimated as appropriate since Saddam Hussein represents the intentions of all Iraqis (seeing that they are all, by definition, the outcome of the same processes of socialisation). In this way, the ambiguous nature of the implicit assumptions concerning socialisation are made available to foreclose a potential range of related but competing demands for accountability. Where Iraqi policy might be regarded in terms of what is or is not diplomatically justified, the personality of Saddam Hussein is implicitly available to account for U.S. actions as legitimately responsive. At the same time, where the issue of an individual’s actions are regarded for whether the extent of responsibility lies solely with that individual, then his status as metonymic works to legitimate policy actions. Blurring the distinction between Saddam Hussein-as-individual and Saddam Hussein-as-representative thus works to foreclose demands that U.S. actions in the conflict are accountable as either misdirected or excessive.

In terms of the details of how this is brought off, the account speaker AP develops here works rather elegantly in managing the relevance of the assumptions involved. Specifically, a diplomatic (rather than military) response to the Iraqi incursion into Kuwait is implicitly regarded as not only ineffective, but inappropriate
given the assumptions that a comparison with nursery school interaction makes available (‘A=nd coming in here and saying- slapping Saddam Hussein on the hand and saying "Shame on you, you shouldn’t be doing this", it’s bullshit, it doesn’t work over here’, lines 28-30). Thus, providing for the relevance of such assumptions in this way effectively works to manage the potential for the pertinent U.S. activities to be made accountable as more appropriately having required diplomatic initiative or some other non-military response (such as the exclusive imposition of economic and/or diplomatic sanctions) as implicitly made available with the interviewer question (‘there’s quite a lot of critifs- criticism that’s flying around uh- you know, that the United States uh- it wasn’t necessary x to pursue the- the military objective’, lines 1-3). In other words, speaker AP’s contribution works to address the criticism of U.S. activities by providing for a range of alternative assumptions implicitly made available in the interviewer question.

This work is particularly relevant to our concern with the argumentative implications of assumptions regarding cultural sensitivity in that the mode of interaction which the comparative anecdote makes available is contrasted with what is taken as the Western mode of interaction (‘people do not think the way that people in the WEST think, it’s a completely different way of thinking, you know?’, lines 30-32). This, in turn, makes it possible to account for alternative, non-metaphoric ways of explaining the events surrounding the initiation of armed hostilities — whose credibility speaker AP works here to undermine — as arising from a lack of awareness of socio-cultural difference (‘No= I think anyone who says that doesn’t- has never really lived in the Middle East’, lines 5-6). Further, in that she implicates both herself and the interviewer through the self-deprecatory remarks which this involves (‘we don’t understand that’, line 39), speaker AP also acts to inoculate the rhetorical design of her talk on this point from further interrogation (Potter, 1997: 150-158) since to disagree with the assessment that she offers would entail conceding the very assumptions which are at issue.

In other words, to contest the assumptions made available with her inclusive reference would be to claim that people in the West do indeed understand the Middle East; and this, in turn, would undermine the very demands for accountability to which her comments are addressed. By implicating the participants themselves as included
among the group of those holding Western values, speaker AP can implicate both herself and the interviewer in the U.S. activities in question. In this way, her contribution very nicely exploits the implicational potential of a self-deprecatory remark in that responding with a preferred second turn pair-part (i.e., disagreement) would necessarily entail disagreement with the assertion in the first part (Levinson, 1983; Nofsinger, 1991). Attending to the critical implications of speaker AP’s remarks here in the talk would entail a great deal of additional interactional work on the part of her interlocutor to establish the distinction as relevant to the talk.

On the whole, then, speaker AP’s use of this anecdote as a way of making sense of the events surrounding the U.S. use of military force against Iraq is attending to a great range of interactionally relevant business in this talk. Not only does it work to control or selectively provide for the relevance of a range of assumptions, but it also accomplishes the work of attending to the epistemological warrant (and therefore the credibility) of the account she seeks to sanction in her talk. At the same time, she also attends with this very same account to the significance of her contribution as constitutive of the talk as well. So, just as we have seen with regard to the use of narrative in the previous chapter, so too with the deployment of the anecdote here, she works to foreclose the possibility that her account might be construed as prejudicially motivated. That is, speaker AP attends to the potential for the socialising account which she seeks to sanction to be taken as reductionist with and in the relating of the anecdote itself. Thus, where initially she offers a legitimating account of U.S. activity with a straightforward assertion of characteristic features (‘if there’s one thing they understand it’s power’, lines 7-8), she attends to the potential for her activity of doing so itself to be construed as prejudicial through the comparative analogy which she then goes on to develop (‘and you- it- it’s from a very young age kids are taught how to be bullies and that’s really encouraged’, lines 8-9). In this way, her use of this anecdote rather elegantly accomplishes a range of different business.

Again, this is particularly interesting for how it relates to our concern with the argumentative deployment of assumptions about cultural sensitivity in that this range of work is accomplished in working to legitimate Western involvement with reference to cultural sensitivity. That is, the U.S. pursuit of military confrontation
with Iraq is legitimated as an instance of cultural sensitivity since to have acted otherwise would implicitly be regarded as displaying an unawareness of and insensitivity to the socio-cultural norms and expectations of the region. Thus, in such an argumentative context, for the United States to have refrained from pursuing violent confrontation with Iraq in the Gulf crisis is potentially accountable as the lack of sensitivity. In this way, the use of force and the failure to appeal to diplomatic or alternative avenues for resolving conflict are advocated with reference to cultural sensitivity and tolerance of alternative perspectives. With this implicit appeal to cultural sensitivity, the speaker is thus able to take up a position which, in other rhetorical circumstances, could conceivably be employed to oppose the use of military force in order to argue instead for the legitimacy of military intervention. This involves a rhetorical turning-of-the-tables, as it were, in that what might otherwise be regarded as tough aggression is implicitly worked up as an instance of cultural sensitivity. Specifically, the implication would seem to be that when the United States acts in this way, it is displaying the ability to adapt to the culture of the other.

**Working Against Time: Difference and the Perils of Acculturation**

So far we have explored one sequence of talk where speakers attend to the work of legitimating U.S. involvement in the Persian Gulf crisis as a controversial matter. That is, we have seen how speakers work to situate the particular account which they seek to endorse within a rhetorical context of alternative and competing accounts, and how this involves undermining the alternatives through the implicit providing for of assumptions regarding the merits of tolerance for and sensitivity to differences in socio-cultural norms and values. Yet another competing account of Western involvement to which speakers attend in their talk about the Gulf crisis is one involving duplicity on the part of the United States in its relations with Iraq in the period leading up to the conflict itself. Such an account makes sense of U.S. activities during that time as designed to encourage an Iraqi attack on Kuwait so as to provide a pretext for Western military intervention in the region, presumably as a means of insuring continued Western-based corporate access to the region's oil resources (Benin, 1991; Emery, 1991; Hulet, 1991; Kellner, 1992; Norris, 1992; Stockwell, 1991). Such an account of U.S. involvement — a 'green light theory' of U.S.
diplomatic activity — is one to which a great number of speakers contrast the version of events they seek to promote, just as the speaker recorded in Extract 6.1 above attends to the controversiality of her account. In other words, part of the work of legitimating the U.S. use of military force involves the undermining of an explanation which would otherwise render that activity culpable.

Consider the following extract which is the record of an exchange in which the speakers attend to such concerns. Again, just as we have seen in the previous material, a particularly interesting aspect of this sequence is how assumptions concerning cultural sensitivity are made available as a way of undermining the plausibility of some alternative account. This material is taken from the same interview as that which we encountered in our analyses of Extract 3.4 and Extract 3.5 in Chapter 3 above.

(6.2) Interview, 37 — business manager

1 KM: I mean why- why do you think the United States u=h- pursued the
2 Gulf War, um-
3 ...
4 VE: Well, cynics say that the United States will pursue a policy uh- that
5 is right only when it is also beneficial to us. I mean, when it's
6 morally right and beneficial. When it's morally right but financially
7 "it's going to cost us a bomb we're not going to do it", u=h- and if
8 it makes money-sense but it's morally wrong we may steer away
9 from it for fear of criticism but in the case of Kuwait it- it satisfied
10 both criterias that- you know, it was morally right and also was
11 u=h- something that we would benefit from in the long run, my uh-
12 ...
13 KM: I mean, some critics would go further than that and [say that]
14 VE: [Mm hm.]
15 KM: (CLEARS THROAT) the United States for example um- (Hx)@ in
16 essence uh- lead Iraq into a war, um- drew Iraq in the war as a
17 pretext to attack for the uh- benefit that it- Western corporate
18 interests would derive in this region.
19 ...
20 VE: U=m- I don't know. Uh- I had a discussion just like that the other
day and it- it is quite interesting that the uh- American ambassador
to Baghdad said to uh- the government of Iraq <p just like, X I
think, two weeks before the invasion p> that the United States
u=h- would not involve itself in the affairs of Baghdad vis-a-vis
Kuwait, something like that, and uh- it was uh- understood to be
that if- if uh- Iraq decided to take the Rumaila oilfields that, you
know, the United States would not uh- take action. (Hx) U=m-
certainly the United States knew of the military build-up on the

210
border, I don’t think anybody’s ever argued about THAT, what is also true is that without decent xx we have uh- no way of knowing their inTENtions, they may have been just trying to scare the- the Kuwaitis at the bargaining table, say "Okay, you either sign here or", you know, "I’ve got a hundred-thousand troops sitting on the border and we’re going to storm the place if you don’t agree", u=m- I don’t know, I- I- I- f- first of all I think that our h- our human intelligence effort is- is extremely bad, <P extremely bad, I don’t think we have a clue as to what’s going on in the Middle East P>, (Hx) uh- first of all because the people- (Hx) well, uh- one of the problems that you face, international companies often hesitate to keep somebody in a place for more than three years because they become too local. They start thinking well- "Well accepting bribes is normal- uh- you know, as a way of life, I give bribes, they give me bribes and it’s okay", uh- or as one story went, you know the first year they sent him a bottle of scotch, the second year he told them "I don’t drink scotch, I drink gin", the third year he said "I drink only Beefeaters", and so it gradually goes from a gift to being a solicited bribe you see. So time works against you u=h- and though you do want to have some knowledge of- of the culture in a situation, you want to preserve the uh- culture- the identity uh- that you’re representing so that if I ran this hotel- <P well this is not a good example because we’re in a very odd situation here P>, but let’s say if you sent me to a developing country in Africa, you would not want to come back after three years and find that everything was the same standard as in the country. We were serving nothing but local food at the table and uh- you know, we were all eating with spears and- and I don’t know WHAT you know, that would not be their intention in sending me there, they won’t- sent ME there as a foreigner to bring foreign standards to that hotel, <P foreign standards of cleanliness, foreign standards of service, foreign standards of food P>, and so forth, so uh- if you spend too long in a time there’s the- the danger that you may become too much uh- a part of uh- the society that you’re working in, (Hx) so uh- the- this- the uh- American agencies, <P I guess the CIA is the one that sends the- the "spies" P>, uh- they probably have a- a little bit of a problem because if they send a guy into a country, he doesn’t have a clue about the culture, not really, because he’s not, you know, living it every DAY, he comes in every day, he works- well they- most of them work for an embassies I think, huh?  

KM: Mm mm.

VE: <P I think that’s a typical standard anyway P>, that- and so that- they’re getting all of their stuff from the PX ((POST EXCHANGE)), you know, they get their uh- Hunt’s catsup and uh- you know, their uh- the- everything American, right? Their Oscar Meyer uh- weiners with uh- hamburger and uh- that has pork and I don’t know
what and what, oblivious to where they are, and they’re supposed to
go out there and f- have a feel for what’s happening, when we had
the situation in Iran here, the CIA never saw the thing coming
because their guys were all drinking cocktails with the elite and they
didn’t have a CLUE what was going down on the street, they
weren’t shopping in the markets where there were shortages, they
weren’t you know- and it goes on and on, so uh- you get into
a situation where, you know, how- how close to the culture do you
want to be, (Hx) for the CIA to be very close to the people- to the
culture was- would have been necessary I think to understand
what was going to happen and I don’t think that they were really
there, I don’t think they had enough contacts at the lower levels to
really do it, at the higher levels everybody was walking around
smiling, talking about Arab brotherly love and so forth uh- while
the tanks were all on flatcars heading for the border.

This is a particularly lengthy extract of material involving a rather wide range of
complex and intricate interactional and implicationally related argumentative work.
We might begin exploring this talk by noting how speaker VE attends from the very
outset to the issue of U.S. accountability in a quite astute and dextrous fashion.

His opening remarks (lines 4-11) attend to a range of possible criticisms about
the motivation for U.S. activity abroad while at the same time working to obviate the
demand for the activities to be made accountable in this particular case. In other
words, with his remarks to question the relevance of the distinction in the case under
discussion, he works to establish the exceptionality of the episode in question (‘but
in the case of Kuwait it- it satisfied both criteria that- you know, it was morally right
and also was u=h- something that we would benefit from in the long run’, lines 9-
11). In addition, with his gloss on the account in question as cynical (‘Well, cynics
say’, line 4), and with his remark attending to the potential for U.S. actions to be
construed as reactionary (‘we may steer away from it for fear of criticism’, lines 8-9),
he is able to adopt a kind of situated neutrality in keeping with the suspension of
demands for accountability that he works to achieve here. In this way, he is able to
be responsive to the potential criticism as a complainable matter without, however,
providing for its relevance in this particular case. Thus, he can attend to the interview
situation as an encounter which has these demands for accountability as it concern,
while at the same time working to manage the relevance of assumptions which those
demands make available.5
The uptake with which speaker VE’s contribution is met in speaker KM’s response (lines 13-18) is quite interesting for how he resists this work of suspending demands for accountability in speaker VE’s prior turn-at-talk (thereby displaying that he regards that contribution to be undertaking just such work). In his own contribution, speaker KM aligns himself with the assumptions to which his interlocutor attends while resisting the argumentative significance they might otherwise make available (‘I mean, some critics would go further than that and say’, line 13). In this way, both speakers attend to the reflexive significance of their talk as constitutive of the interaction to which it is a contribution. They are able to sustain the interactional proceedings as an encounter which has as its constitutive concern the range of conflicting assumptions regarding the nature of culture on the one hand and prejudice on the other while simultaneously attending to the work of negotiating the significance of the argumentative positions relative to those very demands. Thus, in addressing speaker VE’s contribution in the way that he does, speaker KM is able to attend to his interlocutor’s contribution as relevant even while deploying that very relevance as a means with which to contest the situated work that it would otherwise accomplish here.

In terms of our interest with how the argumentative implications of assumptions related to cultural sensitivity are developed to legitimate Western involvement abroad, the initial part of speaker VE’s first extended contribution (lines 20-38) is of particular concern. Specifically, the account of activities preceding the Iraqi incursion into Kuwait that he develops (lines 20-27) attends to the potential for U.S. diplomatic activities to be regarded as raising a range of argumentatively significant implications for U.S. culpability. At the same time, however, it simultaneously works to reject the relevance of those very implications. This is further effected through the development of a comparative account of Iraqi actions as strategically designed (‘they may have been just trying to scare the- the Kuwaitis at the bargaining table, say “Okay, you either sign here or”, you know, “I’ve got a hundred-thousand troops sitting on the border and we’re going to storm the place if you don’t agree”’, lines 31-34). In other words, speaker VE’s consideration of an alternative account of Iraqi actions (as intended to frighten) displays a range of possible explanations with which to account for Iraqi intentions. The massing of
troops on the border might thus have been seen as either a prelude to invasion or as a mere scare-tactic — a kind of sabre-rattling.

The point for an analysis of the talk here is that this range of accounts is itself assembled as a way of working to undermine an explanation of U.S. culpability since it implies the possibility of misjudgment on the part of the United States. How, the question might be asked, could the U.S. be held accountable for the response of Iraq given that there is a range of equally plausible explanations for why Iraqi troops were massed on the border with which to contend? In this way, speaker VE can rather elegantly manage the relevance of the assumptions implying U.S. culpability, working not to exclude them from consideration as such but rather to suspend them from interrogation for purposes of the discussion at hand. In other words, he effectively works to realise the talk as an encounter which has as its concern issues of (how, in this case, to determine) accountability per se rather than one that has as its concern which of the principal parties to the Gulf War is responsible for the activities leading up to that event.

All of this situated interactional work further provides an occasion for speaker VE to problematise the issue of U.S. knowledgability concerning the nature of the region’s activities (‘I think that our human intelligence effort is extremely bad, I don’t think we have a clue as to what’s going on in the Middle East’, lines 35-38). That is, he is able to raise the issue of U.S. knowledgability about what he takes to be interactional features characteristically endemic of the region, implicitly offering a critique to the effect that awareness of and sensitivity to such features is itself to be regarded as an accountable matter. In doing so, he is able to develop a range of argumentative inferences which he subsequently elaborates upon at some length in a comparative analogy with work (a matter to which we turn in greater detail below). The immediate implication is that to the extent that the United States is to be held accountable for understanding the Middle East, it is obviated from the demand for accountability for the events leading up to the Gulf War. In other words, the implicit criticism works to suspend the relevance of assumptions by which U.S. responsibility is given purchase since the United States could not possibly have planned (and therefore be held accountable for) events about which its agents did not have sufficient understanding. In this way,
implications which might otherwise be made available to establish U.S. culpability (relative to the assumptions they make available — that is, whether the United States is or is not culturally sensitive) are provided for as a way of managing their relevance in the specific instance under consideration (on managing the argumentative entailments of general and specific inferences, see Potter, 1997: Ch. 6).

Another particularly interesting feature of this talk is that involving the comparative analogy which is made available in speaker VE’s discussion of work and service encounters abroad. That is, in his discussion of corporate policy, speaker VE works to corroborate the argumentative implications he has developed in his immediately prior talk as an account for Western unfamiliarity with the region’s cultural norms (‘international companies often hesitate to keep somebody in a place for more than three years because they become too local’, lines 39-41). In this way, he attends to the inferential work made available with his critique of Western knowledgability as potentially contentious. That is, the work he does here has implications for culpability in the specific argumentative context in which they occur. Further, his doing this involves the relating of anecdotal accounts (concerning the solicitation of a bribe, lines 43-47; and the description of U.S. diplomatic relations in pre-revolutionary Iran, lines 71-81) whose narrative details further work to buttress the inferences made available, rendering it with the credibility appropriate to the category entitlement of someone with a considerable degree of relevant experience. The argumentative implications for culpability are thus substantiated with specific detail.

Note here also the variable contingency of the assumptions regarding tolerance for difference as made available in such anecdotes. Awareness of and sensitivity to cultural difference is informed by criteria which are independent of the values so glossed. Thus, where a tolerance for difference is said to involve the threat of adopting modes of interaction regarded as unacceptable — ‘going native’, so to speak (as with the case of soliciting a bribe) — an opposite failure to exhibit such sensitivity is made available to manage the accountability of U.S. actions in diplomatic interaction (in the case of pre-revolutionary Iran). Thus, assumptions concerning awareness of and sensitivity to different cultural expectations varies depending upon the inferences for accountability made available in the context of their use. In other
words, awareness of and sensitivity to cultural difference is regarded as positive to
the extent that it allows one to anticipate the activities of an Other, but not to the
extent that one becomes tolerant of the implications for accountability that such
activities entail. Awareness of and sensitivity to cultural difference is thus attended
to as accountable, and yet the implications that are potentially made available in
reference thereto can also be employed as a resource in foreclosing the very demands
for accountability which they might otherwise entail.

This sort of tension is particularly apparent in the account of CIA
incomprehension of and failure to anticipate the Islamic revolution in Iran (‘the CIA
never saw the thing coming because their guys were all drinking cocktails with the
elite and they didn’t have a CLUE what was going down on the street, they weren’t
shopping in the markets where there were shortages, they weren’t- you know- and it
goes on and on, so uh- you- you get into a situation where, you know, how- how
close to the culture do you want to be’, lines 78-84). Specifically, providing for a
distinction as between the insular concerns of a diplomatic elite and the more
pedestrian affairs of the local population very nicely attends to the accountability for
U.S. diplomatic activity at anticipating the activities of its interlocutor while at the
same time attending to accountability for awareness of cultural difference. That is,
awareness of difference is attended to as accountable, but it relevance is provided for
only to the extent that it works to attend to U.S. culpability for the events of the
revolution. At the same time, the related deprecation of the U.S. intelligence
community (with which the speakers are implicitly associated by virtue of their
citizenship status) nicely works to display disinterestedness on the part of speaker VE.
In this way, he is able simultaneously to accomplish two different types of discursive
work.

A further, and perhaps more significant feature of the work that speaker VE
attends to here with his discussion of service encounters is to provide an implicitly
comparative analogy by which U.S. military involvement is legitimated. Specifically,
an appeal to cultural identity as legitimating foreign (presumably Western) corporate
involvement attends to the potential for such involvement to be construed as
deleterious to the identity of the cultural Other (‘and though you do want to have
some knowledge of- of the culture in a situation, you want to preserve the uh-
culture- the identity uh- that you're representing', lines 47-50). This appeal rather neatly works to legitimate U.S. corporate involvement as necessary for the preservation of cultural identity while at the same time making it possible to appeal to a demand for tolerance of the wishes of the Other whose identity is to so be preserved. The argument here seems to be that foreign (Western) corporate involvement is necessary in order to sustain the cultural identity of the Other while at the same time attending to the wishes (for foreign standards) which a sensitivity to that identity requires ('you would not want to come back after three years and find that everything was the same standard as in the country [...] that would not be their intention in sending me there, they won't- sent ME there as a foreigner to bring foreign standards to that hotel, <p foreign standards of cleanliness, foreign standards of service, foreign standards of food p>, and so forth’, lines 52-60). For the Other to work at attaining the foreign standards which he or she demands would be to compromise his or her very identity as Other.6

Within the discursive context of the argument speaker VE works here to develop, it is the analogous interest in preserving identity which here implicitly legitimates U.S. military involvement as well. That is, just as the legitimacy of foreign corporate involvement is worked up in reference to the sanctity of cultural identity, so too U.S. culpability for the undertaking of violent conflict with Iraq is managed by appeal to the sanctity of the Other's alterity. Thus, in just the same way as Western corporate representatives cannot be expected to take on the perspective of the Other for fear of adopting negative values, so too U.S. representatives cannot be expected to understand the cultural Other (and therefore cannot be held accountable for anticipating the responsive intentions of that Other). In other words, culture and the notion of cultural sensitivity, while it is made accountable, is nonetheless argumentatively made relevant as a way of attending to the accountability of the United States for manipulating the circumstances that resulted in the military conflict with Iraq. With this comparison, speaker VE is able to manage the demands for accountability to assumptions of cultural sensitivity, while nevertheless argumentatively employing those very demands as a way of obviating the U.S. from responsibility for its involvement in the Gulf War.7 The double-sided nature of alterity is thus useful as a way of attending to accountability. On can either not be
accountable for an Other’s reactions (since the assumption of alterity works to manage the responsibility for one’s contribution in dialogic interaction), or else one can be made accountable for sustaining difference as such. To take the view of the Other is thus potentially held accountable as exhibiting a lack of respect for the sanctity of alterity.

The Palestinian Diaspora and the Legitimacy of Policy

In looking at the talk that we have considered in this chapter thus far, we have been concerned to examine how assumptions regarding the awareness of, sensitivity to, and tolerance for cultural difference are made available to argue for the legitimacy of (Western) foreign involvement in the Middle East. In particular, we have explored how specific aspects of the U.S. pursuit of violent military conflict with Iraq in the Gulf War are worked up as blameless, sanctionable, inculpable — that is, accountable — with reference to a range of concerns which are said to attend to cultural difference. As we have seen, it is in this way that Western involvement in relation to that of its opposite in the Middle East as informed by an assumption of the sanctity of alterity as such is regarded as legitimate — either as owing to the inevitability of difference as consequential to the relation (as we saw in our analysis of Extract 6.1), or else as occasioning of misunderstanding (in Extract 6.2). Thus, in both of the conversational sequences we have examined, assumptions regarding the nature of cultural alterity are made relevant in attending to various demands of accountability.

Now in what follows, we will consider one final example of how providing for the relevance of cultural difference works to legitimate activities related to the Gulf War. In this case, however, rather than specifically considering U.S. activities, we will instead examine talk in which cultural difference is made relevant to legitimate Kuwaiti governmental policy toward the Palestinian community of approximately 400,000 residents in the immediate aftermath of the Gulf War. In particular, in this talk speakers are concerned to address the legitimacy of modifications in post-Gulf War Kuwait governmental employment policy which had the effect of excluding virtually all but a very small fraction of what had been Kuwait’s Palestinian diaspora community from access to the benefits they had enjoyed.
prior to the war; and resulted, for the most part, in their repatriation to surrounding countries (principally Jordan). These issues are worked up in the context of issues concerning Palestinian national identity and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

The principal participant in the following extract (speaker UT) was at the time of this interview, working as a professional sales representative for a major agri-business based in the United States. She was present in Kuwait during the Iraqi incursion on 2 August 1990 and remained there for some months afterwards before relocating along with the group of other Western expatriates prior to the actual initiation of armed hostilities.

(6.3) Interview, 38 — corporate sales representative

Well, the thing is, from the first day of the invasion there are people in certain section of town where Palestinians live, Hawally (SUBURB OF KUWAIT CITY) I'm talking about P, who were absolutely thrilled, were HELPing the Iraqi soldiers. I had a FRIEND who was turned in by a Palestinian, u=m- there were Palestinians that were hurt by other Palestinians, u=m- let's see what else, u=m- Sudanese, some of them were like that, u=h- u=m- but what really made me angry, those who were not for Saddam, those who were against what he was doing and were=- felt threatened as well, when they left here they didn't do anything. They were silent. When we evacuated there were a lot of u=h- Palestinians <P and maybe some Lebanese with American passports>, and well, yes, they're entitled to come with us as well, but when they got out they said nothing. They didn't say one word in defense of Kuwait or any of us that were here. They just went on with their lives, they could have cared less. That made me very sick. U=m- when I got back to my home state, there was a=m- a very v- vocal group of Arabs in my area who were telling lies, were posing as Kuwaitis a=nd saying the most derogatory things about the country and the people.

KM: Like what.

UT: a=nd- Oh, like- I- there was one Palestinian telling people "I am a Kuwaiti", an=d uh- "these people aren't worth saving, this country isn't worth sa-" <P which is a contradictory in itself, "I'm a Kuwaiti but don't save us" P>, (H) u=m- then he said "If I ever saw the Amir"- and they focused on me because I made a personal campai=gn in defense of Kuwait, u=m- he said uh- that- they sa- uh- u=h- they said "Well xx you listen to this U, if I saw the Amir I'd piss on him". That's what they would say. And I said "Well yeah? If I saw Yassar Arafat I'd piss on him". I said you're a
Palestinian you're not a Kuwaiti. And people are too naive, they don't know, they can't uh- differentiate between these Arab nationalities. I know them by their face, by their names, by their-you know, I can tell you, (H) there were others- Arabs from northern Africa who were in our area who were all against Kuwait and the Gulf and I have no sympathy for these people whatsoever, you know? Um- tsh they're just- well first of all, they're not really Arabs because their blood is so mixed, so they don't really hold Arab values, and secondly they're just not the kind of quality people that the Gulf people are, and that sounds very racist and- but it's- I ca- you know, after what I experienced I don't- I used to be very vocal in defense of the Palestinian cause, never again. Absolutely not. They can go fight for their own land. (Hx) could care less what happens to them. (Hx) And the Lebanese many of them- were really with the- Saddam and they could have cared less and this is only a business opportunity here. (Hx) =

KM: Well but do you think that they were necessarily pro-Saddam Hussein, I mean my understanding of the, the Palestinian support for Iraq during the war was not so much for Iraq per se as much as a way of vocalising opposition to Western intervention.

UT: Well, no. The thing was, I mean, they were- gloated over what happened. I mean, you- you see that because it’s sort of how the media portrays it, but in the the war- I’ll give you an example, in a Jordanian paper there was an advertisement for a Kuwaiti maid- as a driver, they don’t just- it isn’t just to bring- focus THEIR situation in the media, or that Westerners are coming here and they’re going to occupy this area, it has nothing to do with that, it ha- it’s focused on- really on the HATE that they feel towards people in this country. People do not understand- in the West they don’t understand the concept of this jealousy that Arabs HAVE, it sounds very juvenile and it sounds very- uh- it doesn’t sound like a re- og- uh- something that could really possibly be but it IS true, they’re very jealous of this region and they think these people in this area of the world are just filthy dirty ignorant Bedouins who don’t deserve any of this, and "By God if WE had that money, WHAT we could do with it", we@ll they’ve sucked a lot of money off of here in the FIRST place. They don’t HAVE to come here. They don’t have to work here, they don’t have to come down here and make their- some of them really do quite well, and some of them or- DON’T do well, I mean there’s a lot of very poor Palestinian that families have been living in Kuwait for years, but there was a lot of money sucked from this area that never gets to those people to help them, it goes in the pockets of the upper echelons of the PLO, (Hx) so
when they say that "Well we- wha- what about our situation, what
about our country, why doesn’t somebody liberate Palestine", well,
it’s a matter of how they went about it. When you go off killing
people and- to liberate your country, who’s going to listen to you,
you know? They- they s- they set themselves up for this. If they had
gone to the other side and said "What Saddam did was wrong a=nd
u=h- this isn’t right what happened to Kuwaiti people", even if they
criticised Kuwaiti people, still- still it’d be better than what they
did,

As with previous extracts, so too here there is a great deal of argumentatively
significant work going on in this particular episode of talk. For our present purposes,
we can begin here by noting the sheer range of different issues with which the
speakers are concerned. These vary anywhere from the question of patriotic loyalty,
to the nature and details of regional party politics, to the issue of whether violence
is a legitimate political tool, among other things. These matters are all worked up for
how they relate to the Palestinian population and matters of accountability for the
circumstances affecting that population.

More specifically, the principal argumentative concern here seems to be with
establishing the extent to which one can be held accountable for empathising with the
conditions of that community. That is, just as with the interactional work that we have
seen in the previous two extracts, so too here the speakers are working to manage the
relevance of accountability as such. In short, at issue here is whether the conditions
of the Palestinian diaspora can legitimately be considered the concern of others,
especially as they relate to the events developing from the war. The question raised
here is that of when and where it is legitimate to hold others accountable for the
conditions of the Palestinian diaspora.9

Now, in attending to this matter, speaker UT rather delicately manages a
range of quite complicated reflexive work. For example, in the initial work she does
in introducing Palestinian identity as a relevant issue, she works to foreclose the
potential construal of her providing for that relevance as itself motivated — as
perhaps preconceived. In other words, she attends to the potential that her talk might
be regarded as an indication of an initial predisposition to dislike Palestinians, and
that it is for that reason that she takes the position she does. Thus, in broaching the
issue of Palestinian identity with reference to the ghettoisation of Kuwait City, she

221
implicitly recounts the stages of an inferential process whereby she can be seen to have determined that (Palestinian) identity ('from the first day of the invasion there are people in certain section of town where Palestinians live, <P Hawally ((SUBURB OF KUWAIT CITY)) I'm talking about P>, who were absolutely thrilled, were HELPing the Iraqi soldiers', lines 1-4). Even the nature of that inferentially significant notice-taking is itself attended to similarly with the remark upon its timely aspect ('from the first day of the invasion', line 1), as well as with the comparative mention of other, non-Palestinian identities as a means to display a lack of exclusivity in attending to identity ('u=m- let’s see what else, u=m- Sudanese, some of them were like that’, lines 6-7).

In this way, the speaker reflexively attends to the potential for her talk and the work that is undertaken with that talk itself to be regarded as indicative of a prejudicial antipathy toward Palestinians. This particular feature characterises her talk throughout this sequence. Further along these lines, she works throughout to portray her argumentative position as a sort of outlook which she has belatedly, if reluctantly, adopted ('I used to be very vocal in defense of the Palestinian cause, never again. Absolutely not. They can go fight for their own land. I could care less what happens to them’, lines 44-46). This is an aspect of her talk that we also saw in the previous chapter when examining the way that speakers attend to cultural expectations as an outcome of events described in the narrating of personal experiences. Here this sort of work rather neatly attends to the reflexive implications of her own talk in that the display of incredulity it involves works to express a reluctance to take up a stance in opposition to the ‘Palestinian cause’ (lines 44-45).

In terms of our more immediate concern in this chapter with the argumentative deployment of assumptions regarding awareness of cultural difference, the relevance of Arab cultural identity is worked up to account for the animosity speaker UT construes as characterising inter-Arab relations. At the same time, such work involves attending to awareness of such characteristics as itself an accountable matter. That is, the implicit critique of ignorance about the details of what she construes to be Arab cultural norm itself displays an attention to the assumptions it raises as relevant to informing the talk ('People do not understand- in the West they don't understand the concept of this jealousy that Arabs HAVE, it sounds very
juvenile and it sounds very- uh- it doesn’t sound like a re- og- uh- something that could really possibly be but it IS true’, lines 65-69). The argumentative implication made available with this critique is that objecting to the particular state of affairs which speaker UT construes as characterising Arab relations would be accountable as an indication of naivete. That is, to reject the assumptions about Arab jealousy would itself constitute an accountable instance of cultural insensitivity.

What is particularly interesting about this is how it relates to the argumentative context. In particular, making the awareness of cultural difference relevant in this way involves more than the work of merely construing what it is that characterises Arab interaction because within the rhetorical context in which this gets done, speaker UT is working to promote the particular take on the motivation of Palestinian activities in opposition to the alternative account of those activities proposed in the interviewer’s prior turn-at-talk (‘my understanding of the- <p for example p>, the Palestinian support for um- Iraq during the war was not so much for Iraq per se as much as a way of u=h- vocalising opposition to Western intervention’, lines 52-55). Thus, her explanation of Palestinian activities (in support of the Iraqi regime) is significant here for the implications it raises for accountability for Kuwaiti governmental policy. Specifically, if Palestinian support for Iraq during the war can be accounted for as an instance of jealousy, then Kuwaiti policy can be said to be legitimately responsive — or, at least, it cannot be held accountable as insensitive to the plight of Palestinians. If, on the other hand, Palestinian activities during the war can be said to be motivated by opposition to Western involvement in the region’s affairs, then there would be no basis upon which the Kuwaiti actions toward the Palestinian community could be made accountable. It is the first of these two accounts of Palestinian activity which speaker UT works to promote with an appeal to the assumptions of cultural sensitivity made available in her critique of Western awareness of cultural difference. Within this context, she also works to promote an account of Kuwaiti activity as against a range of potentially alternative accounts the implications of which are to raise a range of issues for Kuwaiti accountability.

Notice too that while working to promote a particular account over an alternative in this way, that speaker UT also works to undermine that opposing
alternative through an account of its nature as worked up and, by implication, motivated (‘I mean, you- you see that because it’s sort of f- how the media portrays it’, lines 58-59). She further elaborates upon this motivated status with the anecdote concerning the employment advertisement for a Kuwaiti driver. The implication here is that to have regarded a Kuwaiti citizen as a candidate for employment at a job of menial labour constitutes an insult. In other words, a range of assumptions concerning the relative(ly higher) status of Kuwaiti society in relation to other countries throughout the Arab world is made available to give purchase to a reading of the offer for employment as one involving insulting irony. With this particular anecdote, speaker UT very elegantly displays a familiarity with the details of Arab internal relations whose knowledgability she works to make accountable. At the same time, this also works to promote the version of events she seeks to bring about here as a way of attending to the matter of one’s accountability for empathy in the particular case under consideration.

This marshalling of critique is also employed reflexively to attend to the implications potentially made available in the work speaker UT does to undermine alternative takes on Palestinian opposition in her description of this animosity (‘when I got back to my home state, there was u=m- a very v- vocal group of Arabs in my area who were telling lies, were posing as Kuwaitis a=nd saying the most derogatory things about the country and the people,’ lines 17-20). In particular, speaker UT addresses her remarks to the potential objection that the distinction she makes available (between Kuwaitis and other Arab nationalities) is itself designed for the situated purposes of promoting the account of Palestinian motivation she goes on to develop. "How did you know that those individuals were not, in fact, Kuwaitis", one possible objection might go. In making the matter of sensitivity to cultural difference available — here that sensitivity involving an awareness of differences which she construes as internally relevant for cultural participants — speaker UT nicely works to manage the potential for her situated activity (of introducing the relevance of the distinction between Arab identities) itself to be made accountable (‘I said you’re a Palestinian you’re not a Kuwaiti. <P And people are too naive, they don’t know, they can’t uh- d- differentiate between these Arab nationalities. I know them by their face, by their names, by their- you know, I can tell P’, lines 32-36). Sensitivity to
cultural difference is thus marshalled here for the reflexive work it accomplishes. In addition, speaker UT works here to attend to the reflexive implications of this talk in displaying a lack of exclusive attention to Kuwaiti and Palestinian identity ('there were others- Arabs from uh- northern Africa who were in our area who were all against Kuwait and the Gulf', lines 36-38). Throughout, she works to manage the implications of her talk and the potential for the implications she develops with that talk itself to be construed as motivated. Thus, not only does she work to develop the distinction between Arab national identity as a way of bolstering the argument about Arab jealousy (and thereby working to obviate the demand to make the demographic policy effecting the Palestinian population accountable on other assumptions), but she also employs the very assumptions regarding the sanctity of identity as a means of reflexively situating her talk in responsive anticipation of the objections with which it might be met.

Throughout this extract, we can see how this speaker works to manage a range of different concerns. On the one hand, she works to account for the circumstances of the Palestinian diaspora, displaying with that work attention to those circumstances as accountable. That is, she interactively works this up as a matter meriting of concern. At the same time, she also works to provide a specific take on those circumstances which effectively promotes a given explanation over alternatives rendering Western intervention accountable. Details concerning otherwise unnoticed distinctions which she construes as characteristic of Arab culture and the very critique of Western ignorance thereof is thus effectively deployed as a means of inoculating from interrogation her work to account for the circumstances effecting Palestinians as an instance of Arab jealousy. An explanation of Palestinian activity which accounts for support of Iraqi actions in terms other than those she works to promote (viz., as an instance of inter-Arab jealousy) is thus itself potentially made accountable as unaware). Thus, speaker UT forwards her remarks on Arab jealousy in the circumstances of demoting an alternative account — as a plausible alternative ('it isn’t just to bring- focus THEIR situation in the media, or that Westerners are coming here and they’re going to occupy this area, it has nothing to do with that, it ha- it’s focused on- really on the HATE that they feel towards people in this country’, lines 61-65). Inter-Arab rivalry is the explanation that she promotes to make sense of the
Palestinian activity to which Kuwaiti actions are an understandable, though perhaps regrettable, response. The appeal to cultural sensitivity (made relevant with the critical reference) works to inoculate this very account from interrogation.

**Discussion: Repertoires (Reflexively) Revisited (R[R]R)**

We have examined in this chapter at least three different ways that assumptions regarding awareness of and sensitivity to cultural difference are made available as a way of legitimating Western involvement abroad. Thus, we saw how tolerance for cultural difference is deployed to legitimate: (1) the U.S. pursuit of armed conflict with Iraq in the Persian Gulf War, (2) post-Gulf War demographic policies effecting the Palestinian diaspora community throughout the region, and (3) Western foreign corporate involvement abroad. In each of these cases, the assumption of tolerance for cultural difference is made available rather creatively to argue implicitly for the legitimacy of very particular activities, and reflexively to address the potentially controversial nature of such arguments as situated within a rhetorical context of competing accounts. To have acted or to act differently in any of the instances under discussion (in the Gulf War, in response to demographic policy, in business) could potentially be construed as an instance of intolerance for what are taken to be non-Western cultural values. This very elegantly works to construe what it is that those values might consist of while at the same time (that is, with the very same activity) attending to tolerance for cultural difference as itself an accountable matter.

One way of informing this sort of analytic work is with the notion of what Wetherell and Potter (1992, see also Potter and Wetherell, 1987), borrowing from Gilbert and Mulkay (1984), refer to with the term linguistic or interpretive repertoire. Interpretive repertoires involve the use of rather commonplace tropes, metaphors, images and/or descriptions. Such a definition should not be allowed to obfuscate the distinctive characteristic of a repertoire which is the action and situated rhetorical function achieved by means of these commonplace ways of talking. The emphasis here is on action as well as resource. A repertoire is therefore not simply a structure or device as such, but rather is defined in terms of the work achieved by means of that device— that is, the conducting of a range of specific situated objectives through means of particular commonplace ways of talking. In the same way
that a physical object can potentially be employed as a device for an infinite range of purposes (say, a pen can be employed to do anything from writing an epistle to opening a soft-drink can to conducting a symphony); so too, a commonplace way of talking can be employed to accomplish a variety of different purposes. It is the actual range of purposes for which these commonplace ways of talking are employed (versus the otherwise potentially infinite but unrealized or unemployed purposes) which distinguish those commonplaces as repertoires. Addressing this point, Wetherell and Potter (1992: 90-91, emphasis in original) state:

Interpretive repertoires are pre-eminently a way of understanding the content of discourse and how that content is organized. Although stylistic and grammatical elements are sometimes closely associated with this organization, our analytic focus is not a linguistic one; it is concerned with language use, what is achieved by that use and the nature of the interpretive resources that allow that achievement.

Now, one way that this emphasis on use is relevant for the analytic work in this chapter is that one could say that these speakers all employ the same repertoire in pursuing the argumentative tacks that they do in their talk. That is, all of them make use of what we might regard as the same assumptions in order to arrive at very different argumentative outcomes. So, even while the argumentative upshot of the talk we have examined here is very similar in that it involves legitimating U.S. foreign policy abroad, it is nevertheless still possible to provide examples where sensitivity to cultural difference might be employed to argue against the legitimacy of that policy. That is, assumptions about cultural sensitivity could be deployed to condemn U.S. foreign policy. For example, consider the following discussion in Edward Said’s *Covering Islam* (1981: 101, italics in original):

I think it is both wrong and foolish to regard “Islam” as a block, just as I think it is bad political judgement to treat “America” as if it were an injured person rather than a complex system. Therefore I believe that we need to know more about the world, not less; we should consequently expect higher standards of reporting, more sophistication of information, more sensitive and accurate accounts of what is taking place than we are now getting. But this certainly means getting well beyond what is commonly available to newsmen and newswomen who work in a society (a) whose awareness of the non-Western world is essentially determined either by crisis or by unconditional ethnocentrism, (b) whose ability to build an elaborate structure of information for itself out of quickly gathered clichés and narrowly defined self-interest is remarkable, and (c) whose history of interaction with the highly diverse Islamic peoples has been shaped recently by oil and by rulers (like the ex-shah) whose alliance with the United States brings the limited, badly underexamined rewards of “modernization” and anticommunism.
Getting beyond all this will be difficult indeed. Consider that the correspondents of most of the major American newspapers and television networks struggle heroically to fulfil an unremitting duty to bring back a story. Yet usually they do not know the language of the area they cover, they have no background in the area, they are removed after a short tour of duty even after beginning to make important contributions. No matter how gifted the individual, he or she cannot hope to report places as complex as Iran or Turkey or Egypt without some training and a lengthy term of residence in the place.

The particular observations raised here about the nature of U.S. journalistic practice is somewhat evocative of the talk we have seen in Extract 6.2 above. One distinction, however, is that the argumentative upshot is very different indeed. Where in the talk we examined above, the speaker argues for the legitimacy of U.S. policy (or rather, he works actually to obviate the need for that policy to be made accountable), here U.S. policy is held to account, and for very different ends. The implication made available in this passage is that insensitivity to differences in foreign cultural values results in the distorted representation of those values so as to obscure the rationale informing actions of those non-Westerners involved. Thus, to say ‘We don’t understand Arab culture’ would be a way of calling for an engagement of that culture in order to make available alternative explanations of its members’ activities — explanations otherwise obscured when informed by Western cultural understandings. Journalists would thus be encouraged to remain in foreign locations for extensive periods. This is in marked contrast to the argumentative work in Extract 6.2 where speaker VE works to detail precisely what it is those foreign values entail (‘They start thinking well- "Well accepting bribes is normal- uh- you know, as a way of life, I give bribes, they give me bribes and it’s okay”’, lines 41-43). This construal, in turn, very nicely attends to the potential for the corporate policy (of short-term assignments) to be construed in exactly the terms provided for in Said’s account. This is one example of where we can see how argumentative work is situated in a rhetorical field of contrastive accounts: it attends to the demands for accountability which those explanations make relevant in the reworking of the assumptions involved.

Now, all of this is rather interesting as a way of discussing argumentative work, and is informed rather nicely with the notion of repertoire. One problem though that this entails examining the criteria by which repertoire is to be defined. Simply put, to what extent can one be said to be using the same repertoire if and when it is employed to such different (and, as here, often diametrically opposed)
argumentative ends? In particular, if accounts are variable and are contingent upon the situation of their use; then in what way can the similarity in those accounts be established? By what criteria can the sameness of an account be determined seeing that its use will not provide a basis upon which to judge (unless, otherwise, we concede that all accounts are unique given that all argumentative circumstances are unique)?

A reflexive move — and this is what Potter refers to as the inherently reflexive aspect of doing discourse analysis in the first place (Potter, 1988) — is one that would draw attention to how the term repertoire in its use here does the rhetorical work of constituting the similarity. That is, in making the comparison between the different argumentative contexts implied by the term repertoire, and in making the claim, for example, that these different speakers employ the same repertoire to very different effect, this would itself be to produce the similarity as such. That this is the case need not, however, be regarded as a methodological shortcoming since any discursive product is rhetorical in this same sense. To problematise the notion of repertoire by explicitly taking note of how what is constituted as the same is employed to different argumentative effect (just as is done here above), is no less a rhetorical work than to establish its similarity as such. The dilemma involved, therefore, is worked up as a dilemma. Its dilemmaticity is no less constituted than is the similarity made available with the term repertoire.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter has been to explore the way in which speakers work to make a range of assumptions concerning the nature of cultural sensitivity available in their talk. Unlike previous analytic chapters where our concern was principally with the relevance of cultural sensitivity as a way of foreclosing the negative construal of speakers’ talk, here we examined how accountability for an awareness of and sensitivity to cultural difference is employed to argue for the legitimacy of specific activities — activities that might otherwise be made accountable as instances of insensitivity. Thus, we saw how a range of different activities — including U.S. involvement in the Persian Gulf War as well as foreign corporate involvement in the Middle East — are legitimated as instances of sensitivity to cultural difference. We
also saw how making available the relevance of these assumptions is also employed rhetorically to undermine alternative accounts. In this way, speakers are able to employ what might otherwise serve as the basis for drawing negative inferences as instead providing the basis to infer sensitivity to cultural difference. Thus, it appears that cultural sensitivity and the critique that is involved in the assumptions it entails are not simply straightforward matters by which foreign involvement in the Middle East is criticised, but that the significance of those assumptions is worked up in the argumentative contexts in which its relevance is provided for. That the critique of cultural (in)sensitivity is worked up in this way is an indication of the flexibility with which speakers manage the accountability of actions.

Notes

1. As mentioned in Chapter 1 above, these interviews were conducted in Kuwait over a ten-month period in the year immediately following the cessation of armed hostilities between the United States and Iraq — from October 1991 to July 1992. As a matter of some controversy, speakers attended to the issue as one holding significant implications for the legitimacy of U.S. and other foreign involvement in the region.

2. Again, as pointed out in previous chapters, drawing attention to the fact that it is speaker AP who undertakes this work is not to attribute the onus of responsibility to her for the sanctioning of the account which is accomplished with and in the exchange. As with all interaction, the work that is accomplished is a result of joint, interactionally managed collusion on the part of the interlocutors involved.

3. These assumptions informing a Parsonian theoretical approach constitute, of course, some of the fundamental problematics to which an ethnomethodological sociology is addressed (Schegloff, 1991, Heritage, 1984; Hilbert, 1992). Of principal concern for us here, however, is the way in which the speakers in this encounter orient to these assumptions as unproblematically relevant for informing the account they jointly develop; and how in so doing, they thereby constitute the encounter as one for which such assumptions are available — as an encounter which is, in this sense, about these issues.


5. The subtle work of attending to an event as both complainable but not accountable similarly takes place in the exchange that appears in Antaki, in press.

6. Wetherell and Potter (1992), in their discussion of culture talk (culture-as-heritage, culture-as-therapy, culture-as-ideology), similarly note how providing for the relevance of cultural identity attends to a range of contrastive argumentative positions. Citing Cowliday’s (1988) critique of anthropological writing, they refer to her work in noting how “this form of discourse ‘freezes’ culture. The emphasis on the archaic and on the ‘pure’ culture of the past neatly separates culture from politics” (ibid.: 129). Elaborating further, they remark upon how ‘culture has this aura of niceness, of progressiveness and humanitarianism. It covers over the messy business of domination and uneven development through advocacy of respect and tolerance for differences. Colonial history can be reconstructed as a story of clashing values, the modern against the traditional, as opposed to a story of conflicting interests, power
relations and exploitation. There is an inevitability and acceptability in the notion of 'culture contact' not found in the rhetoric of annexation, conquest and oppression' (1992: 137). In terms of the conversational interaction under consideration in the analysis of Extract 6.2 here, it is worth noting the way that speaker VE attends to the potential for U.S. activities to be construed as accountably initiating violent conflict and also of how the assumptions made relevant are employed to inform accounts of both military involvement and corporate involvement, which are themselves mutually supportive.

7. This explanatory analogy involves making available a range of assumptions regarding the nature of corporate interests in the region which is a persistent theme throughout the corpus of analytic data on which this thesis is based. What is interesting about this theme for our concerns here is that the assumptions developed in the one case (corporate involvement) are made available to provide for the adequacy of assumptions in the analogous case (involvement in violent conflict). This analogy is elaborated upon by this same speaker at a latter point in the interview:

1 VE: uh- the key to being happy in the Middle East as it is and-
2 working in Thailand or anywhere else I think is that you have to be adaptable,
3 <p>you have to be flexible obviously &gt;, but you also have to have the
4 ability to see things from a different perspective, and uh- if you don’t, you’ll
5 be frustrated yourSELF because you don’t understand why = THEY’RE not
doing what you expect them to do. You have to understand that their-
6 their uh-priorities are different. They have it- uh- a different set of priorities entirely,
7 uh- generally, and that uh- you have to accept that. You’re in their
country and- and if they figure it’s more important uh- to take a three-hour
8 siesta than to uh- process your visa applications or whatever it is, hey, that’s
9 the way it is. It’s their country. Uh- you have your priorities, they have their’s
10 and you were probably brought there because your priorities ARE different,
11 because you feel the most important thing is to provide great service to your
12 guests or "to maintain the== the electric" uh- "plant working twenty-four
13 hours a day", which uh- the local people don’t seem to put much importance
14 in so they brought you in to- to see that it was operated that way, but you got
15 to understand their perspective, it doesn’t mean you have to be an expert in
16 their culture but you have to have some notion of it and say "Okay, they see it
17 differently and so we have to put a great emphasis on this to make sure that it-it
18 works",

Altery is here the constitutive assumption which introduces not only the problematics to which resolution is to be sought, but also the very resources through which that resolution is provided for as well. It is the demand for an 'ability to see things from a different perspective' (line 4) that entails the sustaining of that perspective as different, as Other.

Here we might just also note about this talk how providing for the relevance of a distinction between flexibility and the adopting of the viewpoint of the Other is productive in foreclosing the potential for the sustaining of difference in perspective itself to be made accountable as motivated ('<p>you have to be flexible obviously &gt;', but you also have to have the ability to see things from a different perspective', lines 3-4). At the same time, awareness of difference in perspective is without content — that is, defined negatively in terms of a lack of prejudicial expectations ('if you don’t, you’ll be frustrated yourSELF because you don’t understand why = THEY’RE not doing what you expect them to do', lines 4-6). While reflexively attending to the situated implications of the talk itself, here speaker VE also continues to develop the substance of what he takes the alternative perspective to entail — viz., lengthy and counter-expedient bureaucratic procedures (three-hour siestas, an inadequate standard of service, etc.). As elsewhere, the implication here is that to demand the adoption of contrastive values which are regarded as characteristic of Western cultural expectations would be tantamount to cultural insensitivity. Thus, the implicit argument is that not only is the sustaining of difference and the use of foreign (Western) expertise necessary as a means for respecting difference, but it is essential thereto.
8. In the period immediately following the Gulf War, the policy of countries throughout the region had a profound effect in displacing the diaspora community of Palestinians who had come to settle in the area since 1948 (see Brand, 1995 and related discussion in Frisch, 1997).

9. Notice here that the question of Israeli accountability is never raised as a relevant concern in this talk. That is, while the matter of Palestinian national identity is made available as problematic, its relation to Zionist identity and the range of problematics potentially attendant thereto is not made relevant.

10. In Vygotsky’s research, this notion is somewhat analogous to the concept of tool-in-use (see Ratner, 1991).


12. The notion of repertoire has variously been criticised as either belying of a ‘cognitive turn’ (Button and Sharrock, 1992; cited in Edwards, 1997: 141, n. 21) or else as some form of reification (Curt, 1994) — as ‘an autonomous thing-in-itself’ (48), a construct of ‘knowledge-mongers who are also critics of knowledge-mongering’ (86; in reference to Potter and Wetherell, 1992 and Edwards and Potter, 1992). As an ethnomethodologically informed, reflexively brought-off undertaking, discourse analytic work would see repertoire as a useful heuristic, worked up in situ for the enterprise of situating its own analytic undertaking within a rhetorical context that provides for its significance. That discourse analytic, discursive psychological or any other discursive activity does so only works reflexively to display the very point it sets out to make regarding the situatedly contingent nature of the endeavour.
Chapter 7

A-CONCLUSION

This thesis has been concerned to explore the details of a particular problematic in talk where speakers account for Western involvement abroad. Specifically, this involves the argumentative circumstances of attending to demands for accountability to competing sets of assumptions about the nature of prejudice on the one hand and of cultural awareness on the other. Throughout the analytic chapters, the (often implicit) claim has been that managing the tension between these conflicting demands is definitive of the discursive undertaking by which speakers make sense of their own experience in the Middle East and, more generally, of Western experience abroad. Issues of identity (both Western and non-Western) as well as issues of how identity is constituted as such are matters which are taken up by participants in the talk as their own concerns (Heritage, 1995; Schegloff, 1997; Miller and Silverman, 1995). Thus, we saw, for example, in Chapter 4, how in their talk about race and nationality, participants attend to the potential for their remarks to be construed as prejudicially motivated; and yet that in the very act of so doing, a conversational context is then created wherein speakers might be construed as insensitive to and/or unaware of cultural difference. Attending to one set of demands for accountability, therefore, creates the context in which another set of demands is (at least potentially) made relevant. Subsequent efforts to attend to those new demands — that is, efforts to foreclose the construal of one’s talk as made possible in the prior talk — further creates a context in which the motivation of one’s remarks might again be construed as motivated by prejudice. In this way, the two assumptions are co-implicationally related. It is in managing the tension between these two competing sets of demands which is the principal activity by which talk about Western involvement abroad is constituted.

Further, we also saw how this is a feature not simply of the concerns which speakers take as the topic of their talk, but also an aspect which is inherent to their very participation in the interactional circumstances where the relevance of their status as experts (that is, as Western expatriates) is implicitly made available as providing the speakers with the warrant for whatever observations that they may care to develop.
in and with that talk. The tension involved in such an encounter is that of attending to both category entitlement and issues of stake-and-interest. Managing this tension involves working so that the relevance of one’s status as expatriate is made available to the extent that it provides the speaker with the epistemological warrant for his or her claims about Western experience abroad, but not to the extent that it implicates him or her in the demands for accountability which those claims are employed to raise. Doing this involves effecting some rather delicate and inferentially subtle discursive work. One of the tasks of this thesis has been to explore exactly how this is accomplished. Along the way, this has meant explicating a dialogic model of interaction in which conversational contributions are regarded as responsively oriented to their potential reception. In this way, a given discursive position is seen as essentially and necessarily contrastive (Billig, 1987/96; Clark and Holquist, 1984; Holquist, 1990).

The analytic chapters were also linked to various related scholarship wherein issues of prejudice and of the representation of cultural difference are taken up as professional analytic concerns (as opposed to that of the participants in the talk). One of the principal features of that scholarship that is not unlike the mundane conversational interaction we examined is that descriptions of the cultural and ethnic Other are considered for their relationship to the circumstances of their production. Thus, we saw in Chapter 2 how scrutiny of descriptive practices in the literature of Orientalism, in anthropological writing at a more general level, and in mundane conversational interaction are (often implicitly) directed at relating these to the circumstantial contingencies which are said to account for their production. At the same time, the reflexive implications of such observations (about the situated contingency of descriptive practices) are taken up as theoretical considerations in that scholarship. In this way, the problematics surrounding the warranting of claims with reference to their status as transcendentally valid (value neutral, objective, unaffected by considerations of their productive circumstances) is taken up as both a topic of analytic concern and as a theoretical problematic.

Not unlike in the conversation we considered in the analytic chapters, the tension in much of the scholarship we considered is thus that of managing the extent to which it is implicated in the very demands for accountability that it works to make
relevant. Just as in talk where speakers work to manage the extent to which they are implicated in the very demands for accountability that they act to make relevant (working to foreclose a construal of prejudice, but only to the extent that doing so does not implicate them as culturally insensitive and *vice-versa*), so too much of the scholarship we considered takes up the issue of situated contingency to the extent that the analytic claims (about contingency) are made available but not to the extent that the activity of making such claims is *itself* included within its purview. It is a case of reflexive policing or monitoring that Woolgar and Pawluch (1985) refer to as *ontological gerrymandering*. As they suggest, this is perhaps an inevitable feature of any theoretical activity which has the social as its concern since to speak (or write) *meaningfully* (or with any *sense*) about social reality, one must privilege their own analytic activity, excluding it from the scrutiny that it works to bring off, even (and perhaps especially) where that scrutiny takes scrutinising practices (and the activity of objectification) as *its* object.¹ The suspension of reflexive implications in the management of the extent to which situated contingency is made accountable is *constitutive of* the activity of sociological theorisation (for a evocative essay on this matter, see Goffman, 1981: 124-159).² The selective review of the scholarship we considered in Chapters 1 and 2 are a demonstration of this point.

**Mundane Navel Gazing**

One area of speculative concern which has some considerable bearing on these analytic results is that of a body of recent theoretical work in contemporary social theory. This work addresses some of the theoretical implications involved with the observations that descriptive practices are worked up by participants as problematic. In particular, the concern here is with how the sorts of discursive practices that we have examined throughout this thesis involve talk where issues of the problematicity of perspectival limitation are attended to *as such*, and with the reflexive consequences this holds for a theory of the social. In these terms, then, the significance of the talk that we have examined does not lie in the documenting of the details of the perspectival limitations of participants — that is, in the contingency of their descriptive practices³ — but rather in how perspectival limitations and the potential for the transcendence thereof are worked up as participants concerns in the first place.
That is, speakers display, in and through their talk, a regard for the encounter as one in which the potential for the transcendence of perspectival limitations in pervasively relevant as both a topic of talk and as an effect brought about with that topicalisation.

It is a concern with these sorts of issues that the discussion in Bruno Latour’s *We Have Never Been Modern* (1993) is directed. Specifically, Latour discusses this under the rubrics of *purification* and *hybridization* (or *translation*). The details of Latour’s discussion of these matters is often somewhat involved, but the point which he works to develop is rather straightforward (if not complex): that a deconstructive critique of a Cartesian dualism is necessarily related — inherently and definitionally — to the very assumptions being subjected to critique/interrogation. The making-an-issue-of-perspectival-limitation (that is, the problematising of the contingency of perspective as *such*) is itself an activity that is subject to the very sorts of implicit demands for accountability which it is employed to raise. In other words, the very activity whereby one works to make visible the assumption of a distinction between subject and object — between one’s view and that of which one’s view is said to be a representation — is an activity where the assumption of the subject-object dichotomy is itself suspended. At the same time, however, and with the very same gesture, the suspension of that assumption itself necessarily and paradoxically entails its availability in order to render the deconstructive reading meaningful in the first place. In other words, only in the context of making it visible that a distinction between subject and object is itself worked up is the activity of neutralising that dichotomy rendered meaningful.

Similarly, only in the context where a distinction between subject and object is *suspended* is the distinction rendered meaningful. The activity of referring to either assumption is meaningful only as informed against the background of its opposite. That is, hybridization entails purification and purification likewise entails hybridization. There can thus be no purification (that is, action of distinguishing between subject and object entailed in problematising the objectification which takes place in discursive interaction) which can be meaningfully discussed except as against the background assumption of hybridization (the neutralization of suspension of that distinction) and *vice-versa*. The purity of subject and object is necessarily assumed in the activity of translating between the two.
It is in this sense that Latour claims that we have never been modern. If purification and hybridization necessarily entail one another, then modernity — as an instance of exclusive purification — has, of course, never existed as such. Latour's claims here are not to do with issues of the temporal but rather with the epistemological considerations by which a temporal distinguishing of the Enlightenment is given purchase, and with the how the basis for that temporality is itself made possible. Latour thus works reflexively to reproblematicise the deconstructive project of the Enlightenment from within its own terms (1993: 11-12):

So long as we consider these two practices of translation and purification separately, we are truly modern — that is, we willingly subscribe to the critical project, even though that project is developed only through the proliferation of hybrids down below. As soon as we direct our attention simultaneously to the work of purification and the work of hybridization, we immediately stop being wholly modern, and our future begins to change. At the same time we stop having been modern, because we become retrospectively aware that the two sets of practices have always already been at work in the historical period that is ending. Our past begins to change. Finally, if we have never been modern — at least in the way criticism tells the story — the tortuous relations that we have maintaining with other nature-cultures would also be transformed. Relativism, domination, imperialism, false consciousness, syncretism — all the problems that anthropologists summarize under the loose expression of 'Great Divide' — would be explained differently, thereby modifying comparative anthropology.

The relation this has to the analytic work of the thesis involves the way that purification and hybridization are dealt with in talk where speakers attend to the reflexive implications of their own conversational contributions as potentially implicating them in the very demands for accountability which they work to make relevant in their own talk.

The Post-Colonial Middle Kingdom

In the context of conceptualising the cultural and ethnic other, Hall (1992) takes up this concern for attending to the reflexive implications of a deconstructive reading in his discussion of the post-colonial. Hall's discussion has important implications for the talk that constitutes the interview corpus we have considered. Specifically, the attending to of mutually exclusive and yet co-constitutive concerns (between issues of cultural sensitivity/awareness and prejudice/racism) itself constitutes the discursive practice of the post-colonial. For example, the implicit critique of racism in the conversational interaction we considered in Chapter 4 does not merely inform such
talk, but is constitutive of such talk. It is in this way that that talk is relevant to the issues which Hall raises (and which Latour takes up at a more general level) because the talk that has the conflicting demands between cultural sensitivity and prejudice as its concern is definitive of the post-colonial. In citing (Hall, 1996: 245) Gramsci’s *Quaderni* III (referring to his own prior citation in Hall, 1988: 138) on the notion of ideological weighting, Hall remarks (245-246, italics in original):

What, in their different ways these theoretical descriptions are attempting to construct is a notion of a shift or a transition conceptualised as the reconfiguration of a field, rather than a movement of linear transcendence between two mutually exclusive states. Such transformations are not only not completed but they may not be best captured with a paradigm which assumes that all major historical shifts are driven by a necessitarian logic towards a teleological end. [...] All the key concepts in the ‘post-colonial’, as in the general discourse of the ‘posts’, are operating, as Derrida would put it, ‘under erasure’. They have been subjected to a deep and thoroughgoing critique, exposing their assumptions as a set of foundational effects. But this deconstruction does not abolish them, in the classic movement of supersession, an Aufhebung. It leaves them as the only conceptual instruments and tools with which to think about the present — but only if they are deployed in their deconstructed form. They are, to use another, more Heideggerian, formulation, which Ian Chambers, for example prefers, ‘a presence that exists in abeyance’ (Chambers, 1994).

This ‘presence that exists in abeyance’ is for the speakers in the interview material we have examined, the use of the very sorts of talk which occasion their own deconstruction. That is, speakers employ ways of talking, working to make particular assumptions about the nature of cultural difference available, and in so doing occasion the very sorts of concerns (for matters of prejudice) which a deconstruction of such assumptions makes available and indeed necessitates. At the same time, the deconstructive concern with prejudice is co-constitutive of the very assumptions regarding cultural difference which give rise to them. Speakers orient to the situation of their talk as one in which the concern for objectification is potentially relevant, and work to Foreclose the potentially damaging inferences that these issue raise vis-a-vis their own talk and their contribution to the circumstances in which that talk is generated (the interview situation). At the same time, to even pursue the talk by which these inferences are occasioned in the first place, speakers must engage in the objectifying practices whose production they work to problematise.

A particularly interesting feature of this talk, however, is that even while inhabiting this ‘Middle Kingdom’ as Latour (1993: 89) refers to it, and in attending
to the matter of situatedness of viewpoint and the implicit limitations that are entailed thereby; participants are nevertheless selective in the way that perspective is made relevant. We saw, for example, in different analyses where descriptive practices regarding perspectival limitations are deployed either to undermine the view of the Other — as with the closing remarks of speaker AP recorded in Extract 5.1 ('but she can’t help herself, I mean she’s been raised that way and- and I see- my comment seemed very out of context, it was very very uh- you know, it was a bad thing for me to say’, lines 94-96) — or else to foreclose the possibility of one’s own remarks being construed as just so determined or limited — as with remarks of speaker RK in his working up of the characterisation of expectations about the Arab Other recorded in Extract 3.6 ('That means you go a lot on conjecture, you know, what somebody’s told you, you know, like uh- like if you touch an Arab with your left hand, you know, they’ll be just absolutely insulted if you uh- oh what are some of the other ones,’, lines 15-19). In such cases, the limitations of situated contingency are selectively deployed as a way of attending to accountability. The extent of perspectival limitation never includes itself. This is perhaps an inevitable feature of any activity whereby one accounts for their social relations (Woolgar and Pawluch, 1985: 224):

[One possible] reading of our critique [of selectively attending to the issue of perspectival limitation] is that the kind of inconsistencies we identify are an inevitable feature both of certain social problems arguments and, more generally, of the same style of sociological argument as it applies to other substantive areas. In this reading, the inconsistencies . . . are unavoidable. They are not mere technical difficulties in social problems arguments, but pervasive features of all attempts to explain social phenomena.

That is, to the extent that an account is provided, it must necessarily exclude itself — even in and through the very activity of attending to itself. Interestingly, in such accounts, the very inconsistency is paradoxically consistent with itself since the very point about perspectival limitation can only be made in the doing, in the demonstration thereof (Ashmore, 1989).

What is also interesting here, as a comment on future investigation, is that attending to the selectivity of attending to perspectival limitation can itself be employed to attend to the potential that a reading such as the one I have developed here can have to undermine their position. Further, it can be employed infinitely. In
other words, the very point that I am making here is that speakers attend to perspectival limitations selectively as a way of accounting for themselves and in some way of justifying their presence in the Middle East. They concede limitation in perspective as a way of doing this in complicated and interesting ways that reflexively attend to matters of their own stake-and-interest, etc. Now, future research might want to consider how comments on that activity (such as the comments I make above) and the implications for accountability raised thereby are themselves attended to at a further step removed, as it were. This relates to infinite defeasibility as discussed not only in Garfinkel’s work but also — to keep the theme of the thesis going — in the work of Bakhtin. There is no last word. This is taken up in Latour’s remarks about the recomposition and extension of social linkage (1993: 108, 109, emphasis in original):

Relativists, who strive to put all cultures on an equal footing by viewing all of them as equally arbitrary codings of a natural world whose production is unexplained, do not succeed in respecting the efforts collectives make to dominate one another. And universalists on the other hand, are incapable of understanding the deep fraternity of collectives, since they are obliged to offer access to Nature to Westerners alone, and imprison all others in social categories from which they will escape only be becoming scientific, modern and Westernized. [...] Modern knowledge and power are different not in that they would escape at last the tyranny of the social, but in that they add many more hybrids in order to recompose the social link and extend its scale.

Further investigation of talk where questions of prejudice and culture are at issue would cease working to mediate between hybridization or purification in favour of one over the other. This would have to be the case if one is to pursue any investigation of that sort of talk since the tension between the two is constitutive of that talk in the first place. A far more interesting question (and, if Latour is to be believed, the only question that remains) is that of how that tension is sustained — of how deconstructive efforts survive their own effects, and indeed, work to extend their scope.

(Gratuitous Set of Reflexive) Notes

1. I said all this already, didn’t I? Yeah, well, you would have to do so though, wouldn’t you, since to be consistent with your point about how scrutinizing practices privilege themselves, then your scrutinizing practice (of scrutinizing the scrutiny of scrutinizing practices) must itself be privileged. And the only way to do that would be to include itself in the scope of that privilege — as a way of
excluding itself from the reflexive implications raised thereby, and to include *that* practice with a
comment such as this one.*

* And one such as *this* upon *that.*

2. As demonstrated in these remarks themselves where the situated contingency of remarks about
situated contingency are themselves contingent upon the analytic circumstances requiring their
problematisation or working up as an analytic concern attendant to the writing of a thesis — and in
*these* remarks where *that* activity is objectified.*

3. Though, of course, this is a concern as well in that considering the efforts of speakers either to
transcend or else selectively to implicate themselves and others in the assumptions for accountability
made relevant in talk about perspectival limitations itself entails working that activity up as situationally
contingent.
APPENDIX
Transcription Conventions

The interview extracts that appear above have been transcribed using a set of conventions which employ a number of modifications to the well-known system of transcription initially developed by Gail Jefferson (1985) as extended by John Du Bois (1991) and his colleagues (Du Bois et al. 1993). Among these modifications, several have been omitted in the transcription extracts above where they were not significant to the analysis. Other conventions which do appear include the following:

ALL CAPS indicate added emphasis

emphasis of first-person, singular pronoun indicated with boldface

syllable lengthening indicated with an equals sign

false starts indicated with a dash

syllable of indistinguishable talk indicated with ‘x’

doubtful transcription indicated with angular bracketed ‘x’

third-party reported or quoted speech indicated with quotation marks

statements accompanied with a speeding up of delivery and lowering of volume indicated with angular bracketed ‘p’

syllable of laughter indicated with ‘@’

that already they’re feeling the loss of identity

So I think of it as a very enriching experience

so you don’t really have to work very hard to maintain a

I think they like it because- I really think that most- the reason- the most important

what is also true is that without decent xx we have

I’ll <x keep to x> the point then

the third year he said "I drink only Beefeaters"

you’ll tend to see other people, <P or other races P>, the way the people around you see them

but they loved it @@ anyhow
wait a se@co@nd no@w

I wanted to get <@ as far away as I @> possibly could

and (H) I walked out and it was just sort of that image that you

families aren’t here (Hx) that they can do whatever they want

(…) 

one day when I was working in (NAME OF U.S. STATE)

we passed these areas like Nugra and Hawally ((SUBURBS OF KUWAIT CITY)) which are

.. 

…

tsh they don’t have to come down here and make

tsk I didn’t know what to expect

wearing a <AR dishdash AR>

<CH I would like to play with the toy also CH>
AP: exhilarating, in some ways, but it was also very stressful. And it was very difficult. [So the] first year was like- I felt like I felt like
KM: [Yeah.]
AP: [[after]] going through that first year, <p because I lived with my
KM: [[Yeah.]]
AP: in-laws in a home where no one spoke English and it was
traditional p>

or with reference numbering:

1 JL: Do you mean a Yemeni, an E[1 gyptian, a Leba 1]
2 DF: [1 XX- X- 1]
3 JL: [2 nese, a Jordanian, 2] a [3 Palestinian, 3] a Moroccan,
4 AL: [2 No, Egyptians aren’t Arabs. 2]
5 DF: [3 Well hang on. X a Gulf. 3]
6 JL: [4 XX. 4]
7 DF: [4 Hang on. 4]
8 AL: [4 No no 4] no no no.
REFERENCES


246


---

253


