

# THE ETHNO-INQUIRIES OF EDWARD ROSE

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## *Abstract*

This paper outlines the analytic mentality to be found in the works of Edward Rose. It discusses the potential of his distinctive 'ethno-enquiries' approach, highlighting the methodological non-ironic mode of explication and suggesting this as an alternative to sociological explananda that seek to compete with members' own accounts of the world provided in the natural attitude.

## *Introduction*

The work of Edward Rose will already be known to readers of *Ethnographic Studies*.<sup>1</sup> My aim here is to explicate his analytic mentality, and the distinctive mode of inquiry that he calls the Ethno-Inquiries<sup>2</sup>. It is my aim, in linking this with the work of Garfinkel and others, to discuss the implications of the ethno-inquiries for a methodologically non-ironic mode of sociology employing what I have called essential reflexivity<sup>3</sup>.

By essential reflexivity I do not intend to suggest any kind of essentialism, rather to define the reflexive project of the ethno-inquires - It is not, for example, intended to be of the same order as eidetic reduction within phenomenology, wherein the essence of an act may be adduced. Rather, the term 'essential' is intended to show the grounding of reflexivity in the incarnate practices of members *qua* practical reasoners. That is to say, essential reflexivity is concerned with

the manner in which accounts and the settings that they describe mutually elaborate each other. This serves to define it as being over and against the more 'stipulative' reflexivities of the sociology of scientific knowledge and the 'new anthropology' of the literary and 'confessional' (*pace* van Maanen, 1988) turns to be found, for example, in Clifford and Marcus's (1996) edited collection. In the latter mode of reflexivity, we find that what counts as a reflexive investigation is determined in advance by the authors, and, as G. Watson (1987) points out, the stipulation of reflexivity does not always apply to the text making that stipulation. Further, the forms of stipulative reflexivity compete with society members' accounts and seek to remedy these through the application of sociological devices that are fundamentally opposed to members' sense making in the natural attitude. In other words, the link between the lifeworld of members and their accounts of it are seen to require *inter alia* re-wording to be fit for sociological purposes.

Rose moves us to a level<sup>4</sup> where we become aware (if we were not already) that the word and the world are intimately linked, interdependent. Rose's work situates sociological inquiry within the context of natural language use by members. His diachronic analysis of what D. R. Watson (1992), in characterising Rose's work, has called 'the wording' of the world' contributes to our understanding of the ways in which, to

employ Sam Burns' term, the world is *made available* in and through language. In what follows I want to unpack the implications of some of Rose's work for an essentially reflexive and methodologically non-ironic sociology.

### **The Ethno-Inquiries**

*'The Ethno-Inquiries have to do with people, with people throughout the world'*

Rose (1982a, p.19)<sup>5</sup>

In this articulation Rose's work is both innovative and situated within a tradition of inquiry into the world as it presents itself to members. We may say that in recognising the heritage of ethnography, Rose has shown that such an enterprise is not simply one which deals with sociology and anthropology, it is a profound and powerful descriptive apparatus that enters into the activities of any society member seeking to make apparent that which they have observed and experienced.

What Rose calls the Ethno-Inquiries has its foundations in the work of the scholars of classical Greece. Rose points out that:

*'Scholarly work in the Ethno-Inquiries is as old and as well-established as is scholarship in all of the learned professions.*

*The accounts of Herodotus on his travels to foreign lands from from Ancient Greece are ethnographies of practices, customs and beliefs of the peoples in those lands quite as much as they are histories of nations.*

*And his comparisons of customs and beliefs in the several countries that he saw are the first contributions to Ethnology, to the science among the Ethno-Inquiries.*

*Herodotus has been called the father of History. And he is known as the first ethnographer, the first ethnologist.*

*Recognition of the great work of Herodotus has honoured Ethno-Inquiries since the Fifth Century b.c.'*

(1992, p10).

Herodotus wrote:

*'Hitherto, I have related what I have seen, what I have thought, and what I have learned by inquiry, and from this point I proceed to give the Egyptian account, according to what I have heard, and there is added something of my own observation'. (Herodotus, Euterpe: 99 Quoted in Rose 1993a, p297)*

The following comment from Rose may serve to highlight the above:

*'Nothing is more ancient in scholarship than Ethnography and though a science called Ethnology is well established, there are now a number of undertakings and concerns in the Ethno-Inquiries that may go with, but stand beside, the established field of Ethnography and Ethnology when these are strictly treated' (1982a, p.18)*

The Ethno-Inquiries are not Rose's 'invention' in that they existed before him, although we may credit him with

the invention of the term which describes the enterprise. We may also credit him with what is perhaps the most engaging articulation of the notion that all society members are, as a part of their everyday lives, ethno-inquirers. In Rose's work there is a profound interpretative democracy - ethnography can be, indeed should be, a thing expressible by and available to members. It should be a presentation of that which is in the world in a manner that allows members' descriptive powers to speak from their engagement with the world, and not to be treated as some deficient versions of 'the real' to which only professional sociologists have access. For Rose, scholarship is not of necessity in the academy: it may well be situated there, but we may regard that as a convenient site, perhaps a temporary one.

### The Humanistic Coefficient in the Ethno-Inquiries

'Social validation'<sup>6</sup> not only yields signs as to what may be taken as the content and application of a cultural idea; it also reveals social locations and extensions of the idea.

Validation thus relates to a *humanistic coefficient* that, as Znaniecki observed, is the critical behavioural characteristic that distinguishes empirical *data* that are culture from empirical *data* that are not the humanistic coefficient takes into account *the views and experiences of others.*'

(Rose 1962, p.173. Original emphasis)

Rose's insightful use of Florian Znaniecki, indicates the centrality of

what we may refer to as an appreciative model of the activity of human beings. Members provide the sense of their own consciously produced arrangements: the sense that humans make of that which they have brought into being is central for the Ethno-Inquiries. Humans are sense-making - **first glossing**<sup>7</sup> - members of interactive groups producing accountable - **second gloss** - commentaries on the world. Ethno-inquirers must take these two glosses into account, quite literally so, in their **third glosses** on the world. Znaniecki notes that:

*'In contrast with the natural scientist, who seeks to discover an order among empirical data entirely independent of conscious human agents, the student of culture seeks to discover any order among empirical data which depends upon conscious human agents, is produced and is maintained by them. To perform this task he takes every empirical datum which he investigates with what we have called its humanistic coefficient, i.e., as it appears to those human individuals who experience it and use it'* (quoted in Rose 1992, p.22, original emphasis.)

Indeed Znaniecki states that those who attempt to understand culture must do so not 'as introspective psychologists, but as *historians*' (Quoted in Rose 1962, p.174, original emphasis). When talking of history here, it is not the history that comprises academic study, but history possessed by members in society, that which allows them to experience things as known. History here is the competence of ordinary members of the culture, it is that which they know in common with other

members of the culture. As Rose suggests, members in society are 'lay historians' (*Idem*). This use of history has a great deal in common with the work of Schütz on common sense stocks of knowledge which are held by members of a culture. These may be thought of as reference points, what Schütz called 'systems of common relevance'. Rose draws attention to the cognate nature of this notion with the work of G. H. Mead. He suggests that the generalised other may 'illuminate the full cultural formation of ideas. Theories of the self can be used as guides for theories of the behavioural induction of culture' (Rose, 1962, p.175, n.1).

Therefore, unlike the ethnographic 'professional stranger' (Agar 1980), which seems to hold so much sway in many inquiries<sup>8</sup>, the ethno-inquirer should be a member of a culture, or a historian of it. The history of the culture can only be got at through observation of that which is taken to be known in common, and the ethno-inquirer is a participant observer in that culture (paraphrase of Rose, 1962, p.174).

The Ethno-Inquiries are then open to sociologists and others who accept the dictum contained within the humanistic coefficient. As Rose says:

*'Anyone can look around the world. Any scholar, whenever and in whatever way he likes, will proceed to study people. He need not call his work Ethno-Inquiries. And yet, when he wants, he can'*. (1992, p.8 original emphasis)

The Ethno-Inquiries are, then, not limited to sociology, anthropology or any of the other 'human sciences'; they may be carried out on a number of

occasions, for example Carlin (1993) has carried out Ethno-Inquiries on parenting classes within prisons; and Driessen (1997) has conducted Ethno-Inquiries on the interpretative practices of police officers on patrol. Rose cites two studies carried out using the Ethno-Inquiries: 'Campbell's study of *The Deal*' (Cited in Rose, 1992, p.18) and Sam Burns on the ways in which the world is made available within a community. Rose points out that:

*'Ethno-Inquiries is a term that does make for a pre-emptive concentration on people, on the world of people, as much as, or indeed sometimes rather than on diverse great things in that world-on civilization, society, culture, language, minds and behaviour, politics and economics, and still other great things well taken into account by the disciplines'*

(1992, p.7)

### **The Conduct of the Ethno-Inquiries**

Having given some idea of the lineage of the Ethno-Inquiries, and that which may be considered within their purview, we may continue to examine the manner in which Rose suggests that the Ethno-Inquiries should be conducted. It should be noted that the provenance of the Ethno-Inquiries and their conduct are intimately linked, each reflexively elaborating the other.

The prime concern of the Ethno-Inquiries is with society members. The world is known to people through their being in the world. This being in the world is not in the manner of phenomenology, but is cognate with it. People are in the world and they seek to describe their shared (social – being in society with others) experience of being

in the world through their use of natural language. Rose suggests that the world is composed of 'people and their things' (1992, p.3). The world, then is composed of people and things, and without the latter there would be no world. As Rose points out:

'What is there about the world to know?

The world is made up of people and of their things. There can be knowledge of people, then knowledge of things.

That's all there is to know.

Without things along with people there would be no world as it is known to people and as it is made into a place to live: there would be no place that is the world.

What are taken by people to be things – taken up as things – what things are found or are brought about by people, only those make up the world along with people'

(*idem*).

Rose discusses what he calls the 'glossing practices of people' (1992, p.1). He regards the comments that members make as being worthy of study since they 'make available the given sense of things' (*idem*). Further, Rose notes that 'all commentary makes possible the sensible study of people, of the sense that people themselves have been able to make of themselves and of things around them' (*idem*). Thus, the world, as members make sense of it, is available to us through attention to natural language. The world and members' sense of being in the world is available in and through natural language. Rose terms this the 'first gloss'. The 'second gloss' may be found within talk, that is, within talk

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The second gloss enables commentaries to be made on what people have said, and what they have had to say about the world, i.e. about people and things. From this comes the third gloss, the commentary on the second gloss. This commentary enables the world to be studied and allows those who take it up to study the world using the first two glosses, upon which it is contingent. Rose points out that 'this third gloss, this further commentary, takes up a world and the study of that world that, just to come to be and to be carried on, both depend on

the talk of people' (ibid., p.2). We shall have cause to consider this further below, in the discussion of the commentary and realization machines.

In his commentary on Rose's *Ethno-Inquiries* Hanson (1994) points out that:

*'a gloss is anything that can hold something known about things in the world. The prime example of a gloss is a word. Knowing the sense or meaning of a word allows a person to hold knowledge about whatever thing the word stands for that is out there in the world—whether material or non-material things'* (p.4 Original emphasis).

Hanson notes that such things as photographs may be glosses. In the case of scenes, he says that 'glossings are ways of making all things in the world known to one another' (*idem*, original emphasis). Further, Hanson suggests that:

*'Words are worldly things that hold thoughts. Glosses of things in the world are held in thoughts made up from words. When a thought is spoken or written down it is a real thing in the world'* (*Idem*, pp. 2-3).

Rose underlines this point in an earlier paper, noting that

*'people make things known to one another through talk. Talk and writing publicise things. Things that literally are expressly worldly are things that are there at least for people to talk about, that are there certainly in the talk'* (1982a, p.19).

Thus, a word is a part of the world in the same way that a motor car or a

person or a building is a thing in the world. Words are not placeholders for things in the world, they are things in the world themselves. In that words are worldly things, they are available to others in just the same way that those other items mentioned previously are available. Language, then, does not exist apart from the world, or as something that sits atop it. Words, language, or whatever manner we constitute the term we use for that which allows people to gloss, do not have perfect representations of the world within them: they are words as a part of the world. By that I mean that in the same way that we cannot obtain a perfect motor car or building, we cannot obtain a perfect word. *Words are for all practical purposes*, in this case they are employed for the practical purpose of describing the world to others. This being the case, we may argue that words as worldly objects are fundamentally different to the purpose of words as seen by, for example, Descartes<sup>9</sup>.

Each word is a thing: it is a tool<sup>10</sup>, something that we can use. It may well not be perfect but it is of use, of worldly utility as a part of its presence in the world. There is, to be sure, knowledge of things in the world in words, without knowledge they would be meaningless<sup>11</sup>. This knowledge is not perfect, it is knowledge for description of the world by members for other members, held in common with those other members. Hanson notes that we can include lies and fantasies within those things that are within the world. Thus language is far from the province of the angels that earlier thinkers, and those who subscribe to the correspondence theory

of knowledge would have words be<sup>12</sup>.

Rose introduces another term to describe the work that composes the Ethno-Inquiries within this paper, ethnonomy. He defines it thus:

‘ethnomer: *ethnos* + *-nomos*, people arranger. Ethnomy, the arrangement of people. People themselves are prime ethnomers, for it is they who make arrangements and who find arrangements among themselves and among things. Professional ethnomers have to do much of their work through reflection on the work of people making and finding arrangements of themselves and of things in the world.

The only world that ethnomers can attend to has to be made up of all and of everything that people have to do with. Things are there in the world insofar as and in the ways that people notice things or in any way have to do with them.

Anything is worldly that anyone has had to do with. (. . .) Things that are manifestly worldly have somehow been made public, have been done in public, done by a number of people together or shown to a number of people. The public things and the doing of them can be shown to ethnomers. Ethnomers can undertake their inquiries by gazing and waiting upon people publicly having to do with things. (1982a, p.19, original emphasis)<sup>13</sup>.

The work of Campbell and Burns may be cited as exemplars of the use of ethnonomy in inquiries into the world.

Campbell contrasts the manner in which ethnonomy should be carried out, and contrasts this with ethnology. She notes that ethnonomy seeks:

*‘to lay emphasis on the arrangement of people and most particularly on the making of arrangements (. . .)*

*Ethnos, the Greek word for people, and -nomos, drawn from *nemin*, to arrange, are combined in Ethnomy to refer literally to human arrangements. Much as an astronomer, a star-arranger, joins the task of finding order among things in the heavens, an ethnomer may search the world of people for whatever may be found arranged there. Then ethnomy may be treated . . . as a principal summarising and reflective effort in the Ethno-Inquiries. Careful work can be done in the examination of discovered arrangements without worry always over whether science is thus done.*

*Seek at least for adequate accounts of things. When things can be accounted for adequately - in accordance with strict canons - that is science. Then do the science and in the study of people call that work ethnology’. (Campbell 1984, pp. 5 and 376, quoted in Rose 1992, p.18, Original emphasis).*

The world and the words within it are publicly available, they are made available in and through talk. Following Wittgenstein, there can be no private language: language is a public matter. It is language which is essentially public, public in the most

essential or primitive way<sup>14</sup>. Language is in itself public *ab origine*; even the notion of mental predicates are public, ascriptions are made in and through natural, and publicly available language. Following Coulter's (1979a) work, we may suggest that this is what Rose intends by the comment 'things or treatment of things kept private or secret can't easily be known as worldly matters, though they are in the world with people'<sup>15</sup>(*idem*). Language is reflexive in that it makes the world available and is itself made available through the world.

Rose (personal communication 1994) noted that he was using the term ethno-ontology as equivalent with ethnonomy during the 1950's. This is also noted in *The Werald*, and an expanded treatment can be found within Rose's contribution to Washburne's collection (1962). I wish to discuss this simply to show how the Ethno-Inquiries are composed of a number of elements, each the product of reflection on the manner in which members produce and comment upon society and things, the ways in which they comment upon that which is of their own constitution. In doing this I hope to continue to illustrate the reflexive nature of the Ethno-Inquiries, and to indicate their congruence with a coherence theory of knowledge as constituted in accounting practices. In sum, my aim is to show the reflexive and coherence truth bases of what Rose has referred to as the speaking of the world and its hearing (paraphrase of Rose 1982a, p.22).

Ethnonomy replaced the term ethno-ontology, although there was still a concern with 'the knowledge and science of things whether done by scholars or by people everywhere'

(Rose 1992, p.23). Ethnonomy is central to the Ethno-Inquiries since it

*'names all enterprises, whether worldly or scholarly, given over to the study of ontological practices and achievements of people bringing the world and all its things about' (idem).*

Things in the world, including words, are practical achievements. Members work to create their worlds, they create their words also - these are both known-in-common taken-for-granted members' matters - but they are amenable to study. What we are dealing with here is what Rose refers to as realization, the making real of things. Realization is a process which cannot be carried out in a private language; things have, as was pointed out above, to be public, known in common. Rose recommends that we study the manner in which things are made real through participation in the realization process. To think, wherever we are, and whatever we may be engaged in there is a process of realization going on at that moment; this realization process is available for us to study within the Ethno-Inquiries.

Think of the simple kindergarten lesson, show and tell. Here a child may bring in an object, and talk about it<sup>16</sup>. That child is engaged in realization, the making of something in the world about that thing-in-the-world. This is a practice in which we are all engaged as a part of our being in the world. It is possible, then, to say that we are the producers of our own history, we produce things in the world, we produce 'actuality'.

This theme is taken up in the Ethno-Inquiries under the rubric of what



Rose refers to as 'actuality'.

*'It just happens that actuality is a limited fact, a fact confined to the world.*

*That limitation brings significance to any history of the world or of its parts – while it brings on trouble in considerations of things outside.*

*Actuality is a term essentially—in essence—holding for happenings taking place only within the world*

(...)

*All actual things are known to people for taking their time, at least a moment in coming to be. People themselves and their things are known to last over rather long courses of time in the world.*

*It is said then, that there is history, that people and things have histories of being there and of lasting there in the world.*

*In the world a thing is in history, has its history, both as it actually happens and as it is actually known to happen.*

*Knowledge of a thing is happening there in the world along with the happening of the thing.*

(...)

Knowledge is out there in the gloss of a thing.

*Then there are two great things to try to find out about a thing: what actually took place as the thing came to be - as people had to do with a thing - and what actually came to be known and said about a thing as it*

Find in history the actual gloss of a thing along with the actual thing itself.

*Try to find out how - exactly how - or even whether the gloss and the thing do indeed fit together actually.'*

(Rose 1992, pp. 82-83, original emphasis).

It is at this point that one becomes aware of what we may call a equivocation in Rose's work. There is a hint of a correspondence theory in his articulation of the possibility of checking out of glosses against that which they gloss. This would seem to suggest that there exists things in the world that are outside of the notion of wording, things that have inherent qualities or capacities against which one must judge the glosses. We can say that this is so if we are talking about a linguistic gloss, i.e. a *précis* or an account, but if we are talking of a thing - a worldly thing - it does not make sense to speak of it as if it had an existence outside of the language which describes - *glosses* - it. Indeed we may say that the gloss is the thing, and that without the gloss there is no thing since things cannot exist independently of glosses.

However, I do not think that this apparent slippage breaks down Rose's argument completely. It is exceedingly difficult to conceptualise things as having no thing-ness<sup>17</sup> within the correspondence theory, as we shall see, it is impossible. Yet I take it that Rose is using a coherence theory of knowledge, in which case his arguments about glasses hold true. Things and their glosses are an indivisible *gestalt* – if the world is linguistically constituted through the

*took its place in history.*

talk of members – without a gloss there is literally nothing since it cannot be constituted in the worded world<sup>18</sup>.

As Rose points out

*‘ . . . people can’t actually show one another what’s on their minds, they nonetheless audaciously do let one another know what they are thinking—really: people have found that they can talk together ‘ (1992, p.184).*

It would be curious indeed to assume that they communicated the *essences* of things, especially as they would have to express these essences in something other than language. In talk, glossing objects, things are turned into words (paraphrase of Rose, *idem.*), and these words communicate to others the objects, the words are things in the world. Therefore, it is correct to say ‘people sometimes say that they are at a loss for words. They really aren’t; the world is so heavily worded’ (Rose *op cit.* p. 25). In a worded world there can be no place for essences independent of glosses.

As noted above, this *lacuna* does not undermine all of Rose’s arguments regarding the Ethno-Inquiries, but it does require us to proceed with regard to the above *caveat*, and requires us to show how the other components of his *theoria* work to maintain his thesis. In that this is the case, it is perhaps opportune to examine the ways in which Rose regards the world as a ‘commentary machine’. From this we may hope to progress further with the explication of his arguments.

## The Commentary Machine

Rose talks about Sacks’ (1963) metaphor of the commentary machine. He says that we may think of exhibitions and demonstrations as commentary machines. They provide us with the exhibit, and may well give a label or some other thing which is not the object that tells us what that object is - ‘such a display putting together things shown and things told is a commentary machine’ (Rose 1992, p.189). I have referred above to the activity of show-and-tell, Rose suggests that this too is a commentary machine

*‘ a main thing made available to people is the commentary machine showing things to gaze upon and telling things to hear—and when it’s working well giving people pause for thought’. (Idem)*

We have already seen that a central component of the machine is the telling part, and that glosses are formulated in and through talk. Rose regards the primacy of talk as a ‘kingdom’ - ‘some might call it the kingdom of talk’ (1992, p190). Rose also accords this status to thought, although one must remember that when we talk about thought we are not referring to that which has been glossed using the term *mentalism*: rather we are referring to reflection, to thoughts about a worldly object which can be brought forth in language - in glosses. Thus the ‘kingdom of thought’ is perhaps better thought of as the kingdom of tellable, linguistically-constituted reflection.

The commentary machine is not something that requires special training

to appreciate. Within the natural attitude it is something that we hold in common: it is, after all, the basis for glosses. It refers to what Rose calls people's ways of doing things. The commentary machine highlights the concern of treating culture as 'peoples ways', culture as method or as procedure.

Rose succinctly summarises one of the central problems that has inspired this paper in saying that 'everyone succeeds in making some sense of the commentary machine—everyone except those seriously engaged in the study of people' (1992, p.191). To paraphrase Sacks, 'sociological describers' have found the commentary machine a source of recurrent trouble. Rose argues that this is because they have ignored the fact that people constitute both the speaking and moving parts. People themselves are the 'mechanism' of the commentary machine, **and** they are its speaking part. This is no surprise to those involved, on the inside, so to speak, but it may be seen as the impetus for the constructive sociology which exists today<sup>19</sup>.

The Ethno-Inquiries examines the ways in which people make the machine, the work that goes into bringing about things in the world. Rose describes other variants on the commentary machine, which constitute succinct sketches of other modes of sociological, philosophical and moral/political work. He posits a 'morality machine' which allows the talking part to tell just what the moving part should be doing, but does not. There are also a number of machines which Rose sees as yearning for the past, telling of present regrets or of future dangers (1992, p.193). He also

mentions a 'Cartesian machine with the talking part doubting what the moving part shows—and sometimes even doubting what it itself has just said' (*idem*).

However, the commentary machine is the world: more accurately, the world of members and their natural language *activity* of describing. Rose mentions that the commentary machine's 'components', people, can often reflect on their part in the activities of the machine. This self-reflective commentary machine is at the heart of our present inquiries, it is this machine that produces accounts, formulations, and glosses. It is not the province of the 'professional' sociologist to produce these for members. To do so suggests that members have some incapacity, be it constituted in their taking for granted that which is presented to them or in their predilections for some form of theorising<sup>20</sup>, which prevents their being able to produce such reflections.

Members have to take the commentary machine's activities on trust (Garfinkel 1962). The machine is taken by members to be just what it says it is, it is taken on trust - on each occasion of its use the machine has to be just what people have it be - if they cannot be gainsaid. We may here ask how this relates to the notion of multiple realities as proposed by Schütz. The wording of the world exists for everybody in common, the commentary machine works bring about the world for everyone conjointly. Thus, it is fair to say that Rose's work proposes a 'mechanism' for intersubjectivity within the natural attitude. The intersubjectivity that exists in the world is carried out in the

the machine has made - accounts, formulations, glosses and so on. The machine may well produce a different version, but this is a tellably different version, expressed in what members do and the descriptions members give of what they do. This activity is reflexive, accounts and actions elaborating each other. Rose's comment that 'members proceed to know the world largely as it somehow is divulged through the machine's showing and telling' (1992, p197) is an example of the ways in which the accounts of circumstances in and of the world are constituent parts of that which they describe. Indeed we may say that the commentary machine can be conceptualised - glossed - as *the essential reflexivity machine*<sup>21</sup>.

That the world is made available to members through the commentary machine, through talk is a central component of Rose's work. His 'Conversation with Harvey Sacks' (in Rose 1992, pp. 324-341) indicates the importance of the commentary machine. If we follow the line of argument in this conversation (although Sacks never appeared to give assent to Rose's comments, nor to disconfirm them. Rose, however, developed the notion of the commentary machine further after Sacks' death<sup>22</sup>) then we are led to the conclusion that the commentary machine is society. As we shall see, this does not mean society in the sense that sociologists use the term - although that in itself is something that I shall take up later in this paper - but an older use of the term which describes people's activities of communicating with each other, of being in society with each other. Rose notes

tellings that people make of that which *that word society*. *I've found a word that I can use, a number of words that you and I can use. The best word that I found is people*' (1992, p.329, original emphasis).

He admits that he has 'never understood' the use of the term society by sociologists. We may say that society is a word that sociologists have taken up from ordinary use, and which has other, older meanings that are less reificational than the current use. To talk of people and things as the world is intuitively appealing, there is a violence of abstraction in all the theoretical baggage that has become associated with the word society, something that seems to exist in a Hobbesian manner out with the activities of its components. Yet society is just the activities of its components, it is a gloss on the world, and one which does not find favour in the work of Edward Rose.

*'Let's go back to the conversation with Harvey Sacks.*

*I said before that I knew what the commentary machines is.*

*I said it's society and I got no reply.*

*Today, if we could carry on the conversation again, I would say "It's the world"*

*The world is the commentary machine.*

*The commentary machine is the whole world of people doing their thinking and talking and moving around together'*

(Rose 1992, p.334, original emphasis)

The world is the commentary machine, and the world is a worded thing. Rose

*'nowadays I try to avoid even using* says 'my task (...) is to listen to the world with some sensitivity and to see the world, to see what it's doing and showing' (*idem*). The show and tell exercise that I mentioned above is just what the world is doing, it is the commentary machine and it is the world. Things are in the world and there is talk about these worldly things; the talk itself is a worldly thing, this is what the world is. The showing and telling is the way that members produce accounts of things in the world, and render the world visible to each other - I do not mean simply that they allow others to view things, but that in itself is no simple task - rather that the accounts realise things for members.

Rose moves on to talk of the realization machine. This is again related to the work that Rose has carried out on the development of words and their use as worldly objects, which I shall discuss below. Here it is important, however, to stress that the word realization has meant to make things real (1992, p. 340). Things are realised in the talk of members about themselves and things. This is not like the magician pulling the rabbit out of the hat; things do not appear through some realizational *fiat* demanding special skill or sleight of hand. Realization is an activity that members routinely engage in within their interactions 'the world presents itself through whatever commentary it can muster' (*ibid.*, p.336). In the case of Rose's argument, this is done through the ways in which members word the world, the ways in which these words make the world intersubjectively available. As Rose says, 'the world isn't waiting around to be told what it is setting forth' (*idem*), it is continually

of members as a component of their being in the world. It is the task of the Ethno-Inquiries to examine this activity of realization, to explicate the realization machine.

As Watson points out in his prefatory remarks to *The Werald*

*'Over its whole course of time, the world has itself been the commentary machine, showing and telling about itself and in particular commenting upon the epistemic community that it itself has signally brought about'* (1992, p. xxvii)

The epistemic community that Watson speaks of involves all members of society. It is not some sect or group theorising about the world, it is the activity of members as practical theorists, which fit well with Garfinkel's (1967) idea of 'lay sociologists'<sup>23</sup>. Membership is central to the Ethno-Inquiries: in the title of the text which underpins the arguments herein, *The Werald*, we see that there is a notion of membership. The title is taken from early English **Wer** - pointing to human, to people and **ald** meaning age. Thus the book describes the world, the **Werald**, which is the age of people. Rose states that 'the world is all that is the case—for people' (1992, p.143)

I am put in mind of a sign that I have seen in a number of buildings that I have had cause to visit - *members only*. Rose mentions this briefly stating that 'the world is for members only. And it's for everybody' (*idem*). Much of sociological thought and explication has this sign embedded within it, it is purportedly about the world, but the majority of members cannot gain

being set forth in the practical activities access. If they do gain access, they may well find that that which they come to is alien to them, to their sense of things in the world. In Rose's work, membership is not extended to members, rather the situation that prevails in 'professional sociology' is reversed, it is the sociologists who find that there is a sign 'members only'. That includes sociologists, but theirs is another gloss on the world, and as we have seen there are numerous glosses with which we have to contend.

The Ethno-Inquiries have to deal with the way in which the world is worded, and the ways in which words are things in the world. Thus we may say that Rose advocates a mode of inquiry based in that which I have called essential reflexivity. He is concerned with the ways in which words and things mutually elaborate each other. Rose demonstrates this through a diachronic analysis of the development of the English language. He discusses words as they develop, and as they come to be used in the world to mean things other than those originally intended meanings - meanings *ab origine*. The language that we use is, dynamic and can be seen to be essentially reflexive - glossing things and being elaborated by those things which it glosses, but is situated contextually nevertheless.

### ***The English Record of a Natural Sociology as an Exemplar of Rose's Diachronic Inquiries.***

Constructive sociology often seems to aim at changing the world apparently in preference to understanding it. Rose prefaces some remarks on the Ethno-Inquiries with quotes from Marx's

*The German Ideology*, illustrating points of commonality between the two approaches:

The premises from which we begin are not arbitrary ones, not dogmas, but real premises from which abstraction can only be made in the imagination. They are the real individuals, their activity and the material and the *worldly* conditions under which they live

(...)

The nature of individuals thus depends on the material and *worldly* conditions determining their production.

(Marx, quoted in Rose 1982b, pp. 24-25. Original emphasis)

Rose stresses the worldly nature of inquiry, the grounding of inquiry in the world of members, not in the world of analysts. The divergence between the two approaches is in the division between explication and politicking. In the Ethno-Inquiries there is no need for what Coulter (1979a, p. 54) has called 'members mouthpieces'<sup>24</sup>; the world speaks for itself.

While it speaks to the foundational concerns of social inquiry, Rose's paper is, in my view, unjustly neglected<sup>25</sup>. A number of authors appear to have employed the analytic devices that Rose originated, but there is no credit given to Rose for his contribution. Much of the work in this vein is also deeply ironic, and I suspect that Rose would have no part of it.

Rose begins with the assertion that 'the conventional meanings of words are social facts' (1960, p.193). Following Durkheim, Rose treats

'social facts as things' in order to explain what Durkheim called 'social morphology', language use within a social context. Words have what we call a 'social life', and should not be seen as 'mere descriptors'.

Rose establishes an ontological continuity between the world and the wording of the world, arguing that this equivalence is achieved by assigning words 'the noteworthy property of existing outside the individual consciousness' (*ibid.*, p.193). Within the very language of which members have mastery is a 'body of social facts .. a registry of a vast array of collective representations of sorts of persons, of actions and of other social features that are indicated in the common meanings of English words' (*ibid.*, p.193). 'Notions of society and of persons in society are sociological comprehensions manifest to people themselves involved in society' (*ibid.*, p.194). Sociological language is, therefore, profoundly natural.

That language constitutes a natural sociology is central to Rose's project. To describe natural language as sociological 'depends upon the discovery (. . .) of ordered schemes of awareness of society' (*ibid.*, p194). By searching historical and etymological dictionaries for the earliest available natural language use of a term taken up as a sociological descriptor Rose builds a corpus of 'natural sociological meanings' (*ibid.*, pp. 194-195). He finds that 'ideas about society set forth as the meanings of words are plentiful, and many of them are old and durable' (*ibid.*, p194). The delineation of 'lay and professional' sociological uses of descriptors of the social 'is simply one way of illustrating the power in a

natural language for sociological description' (*ibid.*, p194).

In other words, Rose reclaims language from sociologist's 'professional' vocabularies. Sociologists have imported words from members' language, using them as their own without attending to the use in the everyday. Sociological discourse is shaped by, and trades on, the everyday *while* relativising it. A perverse science indeed.

Rose's point is this: with the growth of 'professional' sociology, the usage of 'lay' sociologists to describe the world and ways of being within it were adopted to describe things that were considered the province of 'professional' sociology. As D. R. Watson rightly points out, when sociology as a 'profession' appears, much of what it is about has already been achieved through the 'lay' sociologists use of natural language. Thinking has already been done for sociologists by members - sociologist's constructs are profoundly second order.

If I may be permitted to use a term that has a place in a different 'language game', Rose is concerned to show how concepts such as society, community, culture, structure and function, for example, may be *demystified* as being part of the life-world of what Garfinkel has called ordinary mortal society (1991, p.13).

When we place Rose's project in contrast to the work of Parsons, we can see how innovative it is.

Parsonian social theory was concerned to erect vast theoretical edifices around the study of society as a science. Commenting on *The Structure of Social Action*, Garfinkel gives some idea of the scale of theor-

ising that was involved. He argues that 'established sociology' had as a project the discovery of ordinary society, not in the 'concreteness of things', but as 'the achieved results of administering the policies and methodologies of formal, constructive analysis' (1991, p.13). Through these constructive methodologies, a description of society could be offered as 'objective', eternal knowledge apart from the affairs of everyday life-worlds. The 'respecification' of the life-world of members through methods and its subsequent transformation into a component of the analytical study of 'order' was fundamental to the enterprise of Parsonian sociological description. In the light of this juxtaposition, the radical nature of Rose's assertion can be seen. As can the risk that he took by drawing attention to the commonsense grounding of a professional sociology with scientific pretensions.

The sociology which Rose's project seeks to re-ground in the everyday is profoundly ironic. Sharrock and Watson summarise this well:

*'Professional sociology frequently conceives itself as teaching sociology to the members of society, recurrently maligning their ways of thought as excessively and misleadingly individualist, treating members of society as naive with respect to the fact that and the extent to which their affairs are socially organised'* (1993, p42).

Sharrock and Anderson (1983) point up the implicit contrast in sociological analysis between the 'world as seen' and the 'world as it really is'. The

latter is the project of much sociological 'investigation' (the term is itself telling). They juxtapose the understanding of the sociologist and that of the member: they argue that the former takes an external viewpoint that has the relation of an aerial photograph to a perspective of the same scene. Members are, to use Travers' (1992) phrase, presented as 'strangers to themselves'. That a member recognises their life-world in a sociological account is almost coincidental and certainly not a concern of the sociological describer.

To say that what the sociological describer is engaged in is also open to members is to disrupt the very fabric of this cosy irony. To elide the distinction between science and everyday life by stating that the terms in use as scientific descriptors are, in fact, the descriptive resources of members, is to begin to lay the ghost of specifically scientific sociological discourse. Rose notes that 'a natural sociology, however orderly, is, of course, not a science, especially since it can be filled with untested, unrestrained and unabandonable propositions about social objects. Perhaps such a sociology can be accepted as an approach to science because it is indeed propositional regarding social reality'. (1960, p.194, fn. 2).

The refreshing elegance and sheer clarity of Rose's analysis was stated at the outset of this paper. Ample illustration has thus far been provided to this point. Another example of this elegance may be found in Rose's description of society. Rose (personal communication 1993b) asks



'if society came without frills in a plain brown paper wrapper, what would you find when you opened the package? You'd find people, just plain people, some of them doing this, and others doing that. (...) In that plain brown wrapper you could find tied up together the *first two chapters of any sociology textbook, those two ubiquitous chapters on Society and Culture.*' (*ibid.* 1992, p.4. Original emphasis).

He further summarises the project of his 1960 paper saying that one must 'find out all you can about how thoughts get to be things out there in the world. That's something really great to try to do' (*ibid.* 1992, p.4).

Through 'diachronic and etymological' analysis (Sharrock and Watson 1993, p. 45) Rose demonstrates that the world as experienced by members is 'a worded entity'. What we share in common of the world is a feature of its being describable in language. Language, as Sharrock and Watson point out, alludes 'to persons, the objects they use and the settings they inhabit as ways of speaking, where those ways of speaking comprise not only referential work, but, by virtue of doing things, ways of bringing things about. The wording of the world advances the world of which it is part' (*ibid.*, p. 46).

Language, then, is a set of practices, and the study of the wording of the world is a study of practical constitutive action, the ways of people.

Rose finds within the use of words, the indexicality that Garfinkel refers to as the common sense of natural language use, pointing out that it is

'ordered schemes of awareness of society'. Put another way, contextuality can be treated as a resource not a problem. The historical dimension of Rose's paper may well be seen to account for the reflexive nature of the inquiry, each expression being elaborated by that situation which it elaborates.

Language is constitutive of and constituted in what Merleau-Ponty has called the 'hardness' of the world. Here we may find another distinctive element to Rose's analysis. As Rose points out, a great deal of talk is devoted to *doing realization*, i.e. realising the world as it occurs to us, literally making it real. Rose correctly states 'realization is production' he further states that 'realization is not a cognitive process. It's a worldly process' (1992, p.340). This again shows the way in which Rose's argument is a major foundation in the argument against mentalism and cognitivism.

It is out in that worded universe that we should be searching, as C. Wright Mills pointed out over half a century ago. Mills was concerned with 'vocabularies of motive' and their imputation by actors. Mills argued that motives were delimited in their use by members use of them in social settings, irreducibly so, 'imputation and avowal of motives by actors are social phenomena to be explained' (1940, p.904). Mills outlines a project similar to that of Rose, suggesting that

*'what is needed is to take all these terminologies of motive and locate them as vocabularies of motive in historical epochs and specified*

within the everyday that we can find

*content and character with historical epochs and societal structures'* (1940, p.913)

As Coulter points out 'the abandonment of the ironic attitude toward member's beliefs permits us now to begin the detailed investigation of these beliefs as constituent features of organised social conduct' (1979b, p.166). Further, the adoption of a non ironic programme of explication allows 'professional' sociologists to extend 'the analytic perspective afforded by this reorientation to the area of 'ordinary beliefs' in all their variety' (*idem*). If we argue that members' beliefs are profoundly worded, then there is a unity of purpose between the work of Rose and Coulter. Coulter and Rose while having a common purpose pursue their inquiry in very different ways (See Coulter 1991a and 1991b). Coulter further extends the possibilities of 'non-ironic' inquiry; stating that investigations of 'possible truth value' (1979b., p.165) can be replaced with inquiries that explicate and appreciate the order of the world as a worded entity.

To say that there is a distinction between the world and the word, then, is not only stipulative, but artefactual. Sociological description and the activities of members in describing and constituting their life-worlds are both profoundly worded acts, neither taking analytic precedence. As will be illustrated below, it is often the case that for both

*situations... Motives vary in*

the current scheme of enquiries.

I shall now turn to Rose's diachronic analysis of language.

Why trust natural language users to describe their world? Simply, because this is all we have. It is all we have without ironising. 'However trivial it may be in itself, any remark can be heard as taking up some thing of consequence to be treated seriously as a thing holding its place in the world. A casual remark can make a thing worth knowing about' (Rose 1992, p.16). Consider Whyte's remark in *Street Corner Society* : 'As I sat and listened, I heard the answers to questions that I would not even have had the sense to ask if I had been getting my information solely on an interviewing basis' (1943 [1973], p303).

This is illustrated in Rose's examples. 'Society' was first used in 1531 to mean companionship with ones fellows; by 1553, Shakespeare had used the term with reference to the state of living with association to others, the style of life adopted as a body of individuals for coexistence (paraphrased from Rose 1960, p.195, and Rose, personal communication, 1992). Thus, within twenty two years, a meaning which contemporary sociologists would recognise was available in the English language. I refer the reader to the comments of C. Wright Mills above in order to stress the importance of Rose's project.

More examples may be in order. The term 'structure' can be found as early as 1440. Rose finds that a 1637 use related to the institution of

situations the reverse is true outside later, the term was in use to describe 'the whole structure of his 'civitas' (1960, p.195). A number of other examples are worthy of comment. 'Interaction' is found first in 1832 and is already sociologically recognisable, being the action or influence of persons on one another (*ibid.*, p.196). 'Role is used in natural sociology as early as 1606 to indicate the part that a member plays in 'society or social life' (*ibid.*, p.195). 'Anomie' enters 'lay' sociological usage in 1591, the notion of 'social facts' predates Durkheim by over three hundred years (1545).

D. W. Ball uses Rose's work in his discussion of 'the problems of respectability'. Ball notes that

'dictionaries, as collections of words and their definitions, are compilations of *natural sociologies*, albeit originally non-professional conceptual categories and schemes, but eminently suitable and powerful, however, for sociological expression and, furthermore, forming the basis for by far the vast majority of concepts in current professional sociological usage. Thus, although respectability might be a newcomer as a sociological construct, it would hardly be novel in terms of its antecedents. (. . .) [M]ost of our intellectual baggage has been drawn from the pre-existent stock of natural sociologies found in dictionaries and in everyday conversations' (1970, p.330. My emphasis)

'Respectability' is just as amenable to such analysis through a natural

religion. Only twenty three years sociology as concepts such as 'class', 'anomie', 'status' and the like. 'Respectability', like all these other concepts, is a member's concept that is translated into the vocabulary of the sociologist. It may come to mean something other than intended in the original natural use, but it is nevertheless grounded in the natural use.

The vocabulary that sociologists (as inquirers into the world) use comes from the everyday but everyday language itself is used by members to denote things in the world which have clearly sociological meanings<sup>26</sup>. As Wittgenstein pointed out 'colloquial language is a part of the human organism, and not less complicated than it' (Quoted in Coulter 1979a, p.35). If one examines Rose's paper, terms in use commonly, if not unproblematic ally, today are accorded archaeological significance.

We may say that words are *repositories* of a diachronic array of senses which are connected by what, following Wittgenstein, we can call 'family resemblances'. The current use of any term is a repository of the evolved sense of any particular term<sup>27</sup>. In this fashion, terms exhibit great stabilities over time. Rose's notion of 'ideas with histories' (1962) is relevant here.

We should not consider this as being in any way a variant of 'componential analysis'. As J. R. E. Lee points out, componential analysis 'is forced to adopt a version of culture wherein the use of language and talk to do action is treated as a residual feature' (1991, p. 213). As we have seen Rose eschews such a cognitivist

perspective. The histories that Rose speaks of are not 'behind the skull' but profoundly social and practical accomplishments.

It is worthy of comment that another innovation of Rose's paper was the centrality of an archaeology of lay and sociological descriptors. It is notable that this concept predates Foucault's (1972) exercise by a number of years. It is not my intention to offer a critique of Foucault that is predicated on Rose's work. Rather I should note that Foucault appears to see the use of archaeology as a revelatory instrument. 'Exposing' prevailing forms of discourse and the power relations they embody suggests alternative constitutions and that exposition of the discursive formation can lead to change.

For Rose, of course, this is an anathema. Members make the world in and through their everyday practices of talking about it; the same is true of sociologists since they are members. There is no privileged access to the discursive formations of a society for any group or faction. Foucault's 'professional' analytic project of exposure, emancipation and demystification is an impossible 'move' in Rose's language game. That is not to say that Rose is complacently apolitical, rather we may see that he follows Garfinkel and Sacks' (1970) maxim of ethnomethodological indifference.

Beyond simply proposing archaeology as a matter of fact and a means of equating lay and professional sociological accounts, Rose uses a statistical survey of the development of word use in socio-

logical discourse, noting change, decline, increase and stability in the use of terms. While the mathematics is an ingredient of the paper that may be regarded as of its time, i.e. present in order that a pre-eminently theoretical paper may be published at a time of positivist orthodoxy, the conclusions that Rose reaches are nevertheless most interesting. He notes that a 'strong correlation seems to hold between the appearance of prominent persons involved in the changing events of English history and the introduction of new named ideas marking these events' (1960, p.199). The influence of Western literary canonical figures such as Shakespeare, Johnson, Milton and the like on the introduction of words to a wider community is demonstrably profound. Ultimately, however, once the portion of the language that may be regarded as describing the social was in existence, this remained in stable proportion to the rest of the language. As Rose points out 'not only has there been a general sociology for centuries as a stable portion of English awareness, but the proportions of its principal parts have remained about the same' (*ibid.*, p.201).

What does Rose conclude? Generally he finds that lay and professional sociologists have developed a discourse about being in the world in and through natural language. Changes found in an historical survey of such terms may be seen as constituting members' understandings of their form of experience of being in the world. This portion of language has remained in relatively constant proportion to the

whole. Ultimately it is concluded that the persistence of forms used for 'doing describing' of members' experience of being in the world may reflect a hitherto unexplicated figure in the semantics of English (paraphrase of Rose, *ibid.*, p.206). In line with those studies that followed it, Rose's investigation concludes that 'it seems proper to speak of a natural sociology' (*ibid.*, p.207), further 'the whole natural order of awareness as developed through such stable organisations as natural sociologies, remains, for great populations independent of linguistic or immediate experiential influence. Collective representations have their own reality and systems of reality' (*ibid.*, p.208). Natural language is an irreducibly *social* phenomenon.

### Conclusions

While I do not wish to suggest that the Ethno-Inquiries should be taken as an exemplar of inquiry into essential reflexivity as a topic. I show that it deploys *de facto* a conception of this and other forms of non-stipulative reflexivity. It is important in establishing a series of ways of looking at the world which eliminate the ironic dimension of social inquiry: inquiry into the world. There are problems with Rose's approach, as I have indicated, in the occasional slippage between correspondence and coherence theories of knowledge, yet it would be folly to dismiss his work because of this. The attention to people and their things as a part of a worded world with a history and a culture is central to any inquiry that takes members' accounts seriously.

D. R. Watson points out that

'the human sciences before Rose, had never come to terms in any thoroughgoing way with the simple fact that, for the social order to be *social*, it must perforce be a communicative order. A major corollary of this is that each and every feature of the social (as well as the natural and material) world is linguistically-constituted: every phenomenon in the world is a worded entity - resolutely, ineffably, irresistibly, *essentially* so. (1995, p1, original emphasis )

The 'phenomenological intactness' (Schwartz, 1977. p. 8) of the world is something that must be preserved in our inquiries, and it is preserved in the Ethno-Inquiries.

Essential reflexivity focuses our attention on members' practical purposes, that which members do in order to carry on their being in the world. We have spoken of trust in the production of matters of fact within the world, and it may be said that if we do not attempt to preserve this intactness we are guilty as investigators of that greatest breach of trust - **methodological irony**.

By way of a conclusion, I would like to quote from Rose's *The Worulde* which bears the subtitle 'The World Put Back':

The whole wise world and her own theorias gain their presence and their prominence by means and by virtue of yet another grace, the saving grace of the word, of the gloss, of that quintessence of the world.

With that grace of the word the  
search and inquiry after the  
world can be done.  
And the world's wisdom will be  
found  
(1993a, p.309).

### Acknowledgement

I would like to thank Dr Rod Watson of Manchester University and Andrew Carlin of University College Dublin for their patience and comments on the various versions of this paper. Andrew Carlin's peerless bibliographic work on Rose is gratefully acknowledged.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup>See Rose, E. L. (1997) *The Unattached Society*. Ethnographic Studies Vol.1, No.1.

<sup>2</sup>I should point out at the outset that this text is not an exhaustive treatment of Rose's work. It does not, for example, address *The Unattached Society* – Studies by Rose and others in Denver's 'skid row', nor the 'small languages' research (see Slack, 1996).

<sup>3</sup>It is not, however, my intention to suggest that the Ethno-Inquiries should be treated as the method for undertaking such studies. The Ethno-Inquiries are only one mode of inquiry which employs such basic principles, among numerous others. Indeed, following Rose, we may treat the Ethno-Inquiries as a generic term which encompasses ethnomethodology, conversation analysis, phenomenological sociology and the like, but which have been developed in a distinct manner by Rose and those who have followed him. However, the ethno-inquiries should not be regarded as an early or in some way deficient form of ethnomethodology – the two approaches have distinct

matter in that it is expressed in and

intellectual histories (see Carlin 1997 for discussion of this point).

<sup>4</sup>By this I do not intend to suggest any subscription to notions of a micro or macro sociology. Rose takes us beyond these terms, achieving what, following Dusnow (in Hill and Crittenden 1968, p.51) may be called a 'describably elegant' world.

<sup>5</sup> Before commencing with a quotation from this text, a note on the presentation of the original is in order. Rose has noted (in tape-recorded lectures at the University of Manchester) that he regards typography and the composition of words on a page as central to the argument which is set forth in those pages. Readers may wish to refer to the source material for illustration, which is more compelling than that which may be provided here.

<sup>6</sup> By this term Rose intends to draw attention to the held in common nature of accounts. That which is taken for granted in a conversation is validated in and through its taken for grantedness. This does not mean that we should ignore such things, to do so is logically impossible within the grammar of the Ethno-Inquiries: rather that their held in common nature as manifest in their unremarkableness-in-interaction is a pointer to their shared, hence social character.

<sup>7</sup> These terms will be explained in more detail below.

<sup>8</sup>We may include here ethnomethodology in that it suggests that we make things anthropologically strange - the Ethno-Inquiries suggest that investigators take the ethnographically familiar and seek to explicate it from the very basis of its familiarity and known-in-common nature.

<sup>9</sup>Descartes' phrase '*je pense donc je Suis*' is taken up by Rose within *The Werald* and expresses the profoundly social nature of experience. Rose transforms thinking therefore existing to a discourse on the collection of experience that is the self. One cannot know oneself except through experiences that one has had. Also, while one cannot reach into the experience of another self, one can know of that experience; it is not a private

<sup>13</sup> A title of one of Rose's public lectures

through language. This commonality of expressible experience forms for us ways of knowing of things in the world. If experience were private, then each would be a stranger to all others, and there would be a Babel. The tellability of experience is central to the Ethno-Inquiries.

<sup>10</sup>Roy Turner notes 'that all and any exchanges of utterances -defining an utterance for the moment as one speakers turn at talking - can in principle be regarded as 'doing things with words' (1974, p.214). Rose points out that ... 'it appears that cultural uniformities are revealed in historical records, particularly the established meanings of words. They stand as abundant "materials for a scientific inquiry" of culture, and it would seem that investigators need not wait to attend to the problems presented by their historical occurrence. *Indeed, since named ideas with histories take on the character of being countable stable units, the historical scientist of culture must inevitably take them into account.* In fact, I think that the most productive science of history will concentrate on these units. (1962, p.176).

<sup>11</sup>That is to say that a word might be a repository for natural histories of discursive practices - changes in use are, for Rose, meaningful matters.

<sup>12</sup>This may sound counter intuitive. However, consider the following: if a word is a part of the world, it is in the world together with that which it seeks to gloss. A complete description of the thing in the world would not be a word but a thing, the thing, in itself. Such verisimilitude is not required by Rose's work. Words work, not because they are waypoints on some imaginary trail to the perfect description, but because members take them as states of affairs that are descriptably so. Thus words in the world are descriptably so, and not perfectly so. They are, in short, worldly accounts of worldly things. Those sociological accounts of the world that seek to remedy the essentially reflexive relationship between the world and

that the author has on tape is indicative of the attitude of the Ethno-Inquiries - Rose speaks of 'waiting for the world to walk by'. The world presents itself to ethno-inquirers in this manner, and it is inquiry into no more than that, the world continuously presents itself to ethno-inquirers. Truly an 'ordinary, immortal society'!

<sup>14</sup>This is not meant in the way in which Chomsky (1971) uses the term. It should also be noted that when the term primitive is used, it is not intended as a pejorative term, rather as an indication of the basic, foundational nature of the phenomenon, something far from simple, but in itself a *sine qua non*.

<sup>15</sup>As Rose points out, mentalism is something to be avoided. The 'search for reality behind a skull' (1992, p.332) is to be avoided since 'we are searching for the reality out among us, out in the world (. . .) We expect to reach that sensible reality only as we and others make sense together' (*idem*).

<sup>16</sup>This account relies heavily, and is based on Rose's taped lecture 'Waiting for the World to Walk by' University of Manchester, November.

<sup>17</sup>I do not mean readers to regard this in the stead of nothingness: such would be a curious metaphysics. Rather I ask that readers bear in mind that glosses are things said about things in the world, not things themselves, but that things in and only in themselves cannot, if we take Rose at his word, exist without glosses.

<sup>18</sup>It would be something (although we cannot say that even) akin to a Wittgensteinian silence.

<sup>19</sup>In an earlier version of this sentence, I wrote that it was responsible for the greater part of constructive sociology, but on reflection, I cannot think of a sociology that does not have this as a central problematic. It is the missing centre from social theory.

<sup>20</sup>It is only in writing this that I see that modes of theorising are nothing less than what Wittgenstein called 'forms of life'. In describing the world the commentary machine describes forms of life, and we may say that the various modes of life.

accounts of it seek to stipulate a sociologically perfect world, a world so perfect that it excludes society members!

<sup>21</sup>I use the term 'essential reflexivity' in the ethnomethodological sense. Although we can also see the machine working in a self-reflective sense. However, unlike a number of articulations of self-reflection the use here is not stipulative: referring as it does to 'ordinary' as opposed to 'professional' activities. Indeed, it may be said that the machine ensures that this cannot be the case.

<sup>22</sup>See Rose (1992), p327.

<sup>23</sup>I refer readers to Rose's use of the term 'lay historians', above.

<sup>24</sup>I am grateful to Dr D. R. Watson for pointing out this felicitous formulation and its consequences to me.

<sup>25</sup>Ball (1970, p.330) supports this view.

<sup>26</sup>Which refer to forms of being in the world shared by persons in common.

<sup>27</sup>I am grateful to Dr D. R. Watson for this formulation.

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