AMBIGUITY IN THE WORKPLACE:
SOME ASPECTS OF THE NEGOTIATION AND STRUCTURATION OF ASYMMETRICAL RELATIONS

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is based on participant observation undertaken by the author as an operative in a manufacturing bakery. The problems of control and resistance observed during this period are analysed in terms of their importance in the constitution of the symbolic reality, or order, of the organization. This is offered as an alternative but complementary perspective to the traditional focus of labour process or social exchange theorists, and suggests a potentially fruitful new direction for organisational analysis.

The thesis falls into two parts: the first discusses methodological problems, "objectivity" and positivism in "reflexive" sociology, the nature of truth and the importance of community validation; the condition of "verstehen", and the relationships between hermeneutics, ordinary language philosophy, ethnomethodology and structuralism; and the development of post-structuralism, with the associated reconceptualisation of subject-object relationships, reading, and deconstruction. The methodological argument is that social life constitutes a form of text and can be approached as a "fiction" - that "method" or "playfulness" is best applied to developing openness and sensitivity to experience whilst developing a critical armoury - seeking to develop our "readings" of social life to their limit of sensitive scrutiny and penetrating enquiry.

The second part discusses the observational data more specifically in relation to the creation of and resistance to an organizational symbolic order. The concentration is on marginal data in areas where the symbolic order is emergent and analyses forms of data hitherto neglected in previous treatments. The concept of culture is explored through a critical examination of the consultancy process on a model of primitive sorcery as cultural adjustment; cultural ownership of criteria for organizational membership is examined through formal and informal induction processes; the capacity of humour to function as a non-real framework for resistance to organizational control is illustrated; and the problems of defining and interpreting acts of sabotage as material resistances rather than as having symbolic significance are discussed.

The final argument is that the processes of symbolization in organizational sense-making have been neglected in the past in favour of the processes of rationalization. Symbolization in preserving ambiguity furnishes grounds for the maintenance, negotiation of and resistance to the organizational order and it is suggested that this should provide a direction for the future development of post-contingency organization theory.

Publications

Some parts of this thesis have appeared, or are to appear, in other forms. The data analysed in Chapter Six was firsts presented in my M.Sc. dissertation 'Born Free?', submitted at Sheffield City Polytechnic to the Council for Academic Awards, June 1980. An earlier form of the present analysis of this data, is to be published in two articles: 'The Sorcerer's Apprentice: Establishing Student Researcher Credibility as Consultant' Personnel Review, Vol 12, No 4, 1983; and 'The Bloody Worm: The Production of a Consulting Report' Personnel Review, Vol 13, No 1, 1984. A shorter version of Chapter Eight entitled 'Jokers Wild: the Importance of Humour in the Maintenance of Organizational Culture' is to appear in Powell, Chris, and Paton, George eds. Humour in Society: Control and Resistance, London, MacMillan (1984 forthcoming).

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High Wycombe, December 1983.

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PREFACE - THE RESEARCH SETTING

The research which forms the background to this thesis was conducted during the period from June to September, 1980, at the Norton Site factory of E.L.S. Amalgamated Bakeries Ltd., a medium-sized manufacturer of cakes and confectionery. During this period, I worked as a high-grade machine operator in the Fruit Pie Department, covering day and night shifts, but I was occasionally required to work for short periods on other parts of this production line, and in other departments.

In this preface, I wish to briefly outline some of the characteristics of the research site and my connection with the company. In addition to the research period already mentioned, I had worked for the company on a full-time basis from July, 1977, to April, 1978, as a trained mixer of fruit and dough for Tiny Pies; and again from June, 1979 to September, 1979, for the same department. From September, 1978, to September, 1979, I attended Sheffield City Polytechnic, being registered as a student reading for the C.N.A.A. degree of M.Sc. in Organisation Development. It was as part of the requirements of the degree that I conducted a research project in the company during the period from November, 1979, to January, 1980. The project involved assisting the Personnel Department in a questionnaire and interview based investigation of absenteeism on the Norton Site, and culminated in the production of a Consulting Report. Some of the data obtained as part of this project is reassessed and re-analysed in Chapter Six. By the time the participant period of the Ph.D. research was over, I had a total of eighteen months experience of working on the shop-floor of the company and three months of assisting management, with a range of contacts across departments which included site senior management and the group directors of personnel, production and finance.

These additional periods of contact with the company have inevitably enriched and informed the research on which this thesis is primarily based and I include material obtained during these periods where appropriate. Similarly, my understanding of the 'industrial subculture' in its broadest sense has been enhanced by

periods of employment as taxi-driver, brewery worker, electrician's mate, painter and decorator, soft-drinks salesman, office clerk, printer's assistant, joiner's mate, builder's labourer, musician, gardener and teacher. Particularly prominent amongst these activities has been a period during which I worked as a dairy labourer, fork-lift truck driver, and roundsman at Cooper's Dairy, Slagthorpe, from June, 1974, to September, 1975, with additional shorter periods during 1973 and 1976. The establishment was a dairy factory, bottling and despatching milk and cream via two production lines and employed about 100 factory staff and 60 rounds staff. Some examples of data from this company appear in Chapter Two.

To conclude this preface, I would like to offer a brief description of the structure and activities of E.L.S. Amalgamated. The E.L.S. Amalgamated Group of Companies, originally established as a catering business, and a public company since the nineteenth century, began to manufacture cake in volume during the 1940's, primarily to service its own establishments. During this period, it began to increase its catering reputation. By the 1950's, packaged cake began to be produced for sale through retail outlets, and in 1969, E.L.S. Amalgamated Bakeries Ltd. was formed to integrate this activity with those of the new acquisitions of three small cake and confectionery companies.

The main production centres of the new company were at Digby House, in the South East, in the West Midlands and in Scotland. They had all been equipped in earlier years for a much lower volume of trade than was possible in the 1970's and the new company was handicapped by old-fashioned equipment, techniques, and layout. A new plant at Wellford in the East Midlands had been built in the 1960's for soft sponge specialisation, but this was of modest proportions. The company, encouraged by a high level of unemployment, extensive available government aid and excellent communications, decided to centralise the rest of its manufacturing capacity in one purpose-built 500,000 square feet factory on a 62-acre redevelopment site at Norton, near Slagthorpe, and not far from Wellford. Construction began in 1972, and the first plant was commissioned in 1975.

The building itself had severe shortcomings. Expensive litigation involved contractors who built faulty walkways, leaky roofs, and badly drained floors. Within the huge production hall, the size of six football pitches, constant maintenance and repair work was necessary for many years after commissioning.

Despite its flaws, the shell was flexible enough to be used for many forms of manufacture should it be necessary for the firm to change the basis of its operations. The technology was largely new, and included computer control of bulk delivery of raw materials from storage to production line. The general layout was of a central box subtending peripheral boxes (see fig. 1).

During the period of the research, there were ten production lines in operation, but there was physically room for more, with technical scope to change the main product on each line. All the ovens, the main part of each line, were similar, but the cooling systems were different and characteristic of each plant. Most of the mixing and packing machines were similar from plant to plant, with just the occasional speciality machine. The plants diversified over the factory floor though using common resources of storage and despatch, and sharing the special services of the Fat Processor, the Fondant Maker, the Creamery, and the Chocolate Room. The contemporary designations of the plants (varying from time to time if a new main product established itself were: Family Pie; Jam Tart; Tiny Pie; Sticky Bun; Flan and Cake; Brandenberg Cake; Toffee Slice; Sponge; Fancy Cakes and Tyrolean Roll.

Each plant consisted of a <u>mixing</u> stage (situated on the mezzanine floor above the plant), a "make" area directly below the mixing area to manufacture raw cake to be baked in the <u>ovens</u>; a <u>cooler</u> stage in which baked cake is stored and cooled in readiness for packing; on some plants, a side plant for additional preparation or finishing (e.g. icing) required on two-stage products, and a "<u>packing end</u>". Main machine operators were more highly paid and were invested with greater responsibility than others, and had to be trained and "passed out" and certificated before operating a machine unsupervised. The grading structure (there being a £3 pw difference between each grade) was the result of the alteration of

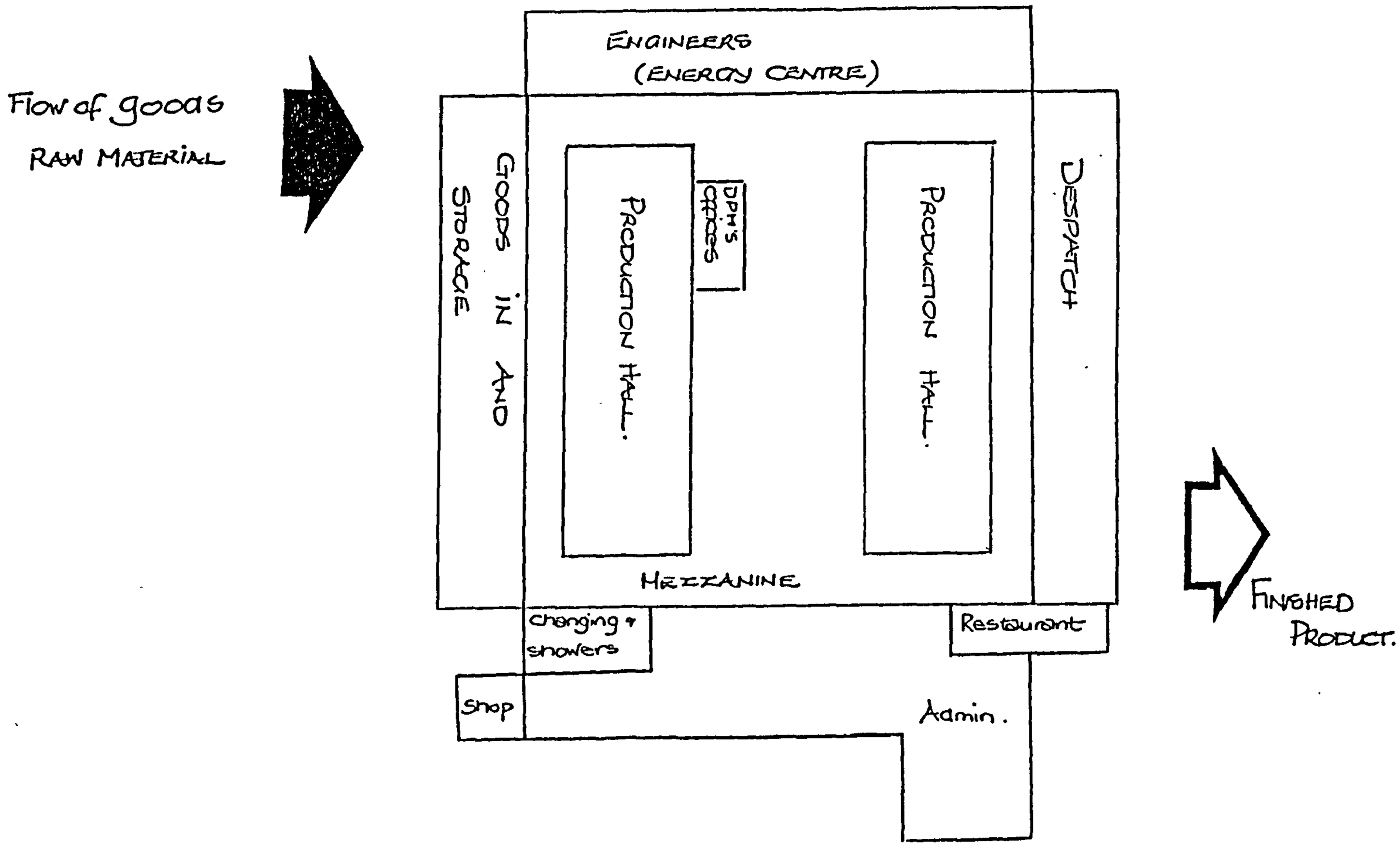


Figure I Layout of Norton Production Site

a previous system by outside consultants, and appeared thus:

A grade	(packers)
B grade	(most jobs on most plants, general grade)
D grade	(assistant operators)
E grade	(machine operators)
E+ grade	(key operators, relief operators)

The management structure at plant level was usually one packing supervisor (1 or 2 grade), one make and bake supervisor (usually 2) and one Senior Supervisor, responsible to the Departmental Production Manager. The four plants which usually ran a night-shift were presided over by one nightshift manager. The five D.P.M.s were responsible to one Production Manager, and two senior managers with project responsibility. Each Department, Production, Maintenance, Personnel, Finance and Administration had its own hierarchical pecularities and some even wielded sub-departments, (e.g. Personnel Services, Training), but basically the structures retained similarities.

The factory, although large for its nature, was medium-sized for a manufacturing industry, employing around 1,600 workers. It was however a significant employer in the locality, particularly as it employed about 40% females who found it difficult to obtain similar work elsewhere in the area. The work offered was subject to seasonal fluctuations, and many of the contracts entered into were of a temporary nature.

During 1979, E.L.S. Amalgamated Group was taken over by Consolidated Breweries, and after an initial period of tension and uncertainty, reorganisation and rationalisation began. This was largely done by internal means within E.L.S. Amalgamated, rather than through outside intervention from Consolidated, but visits from Consolidated Directors were frequent and caused consternation and concern amongst factory management over their performance and presentation. Rumours constantly circulated about the future, although many periodical bulletins and the analysis of the company accounts which was sent to all workers suggested that profitability

was up, turnover and absence were down, and recovery was on the way.

In the summer of 1980, E.L.S. Amalgamated site was still subject to uncertainty about its future. The uncertainties of the commissioning phase in the mid-seventies had been followed by the perplexities of the recession, and then takeover. The company appeared basically sound, but a question mark hung over the exact future of the site, and at the level of the shopfloor, job security and the uncertain future were constant topics of conversation. The contents of these conversations, as well as other stories, jokes, myths, maxims and cautionary tales, provide much of the data which is discussed and analysed in the second part of this thesis, alongside my accounting of specific events and actions. My focus in the analysis of these examples is on the symbolic dimensions of coping with ambiguity, uncertainty and insecurity; and on the symbolic manifestations of the struggle for and resistance to organisational control. At the time of the research, these concerns were, at a less abstract and theoretical level than than of my treatment of them here, part of the fabric of everyday life which formed my experience of E.L.S. Amalgamated Bakeries.

Introduction

Research rarely, if ever, occurs as a discrete project bounded at one end by the discovery of a problem and at the other by a set of conclusions. Before a problem can be identified, which sometimes, particularly in anthropological research, may be after the bulk of research activity has taken place, a number of questions, intuitions and hunches must be explored and followed through. This process may occur over a period of years before a recognizable formulation of a research issue emerges. The activity of research will itself provoke further questions and intuitions which cannot be fully articulated, and hence may remain unexplored for some time to come. The research process and its apparent results remain constantly subject to reanalysis and reformulation, both whilst in process and after the stage of achieving conclusions is reached.

In preparing a thesis such as this, whose form demands an introduction and conclusion, with identifiable beginnings, progressions and developments, and ends, the research experience is necessarily but unnaturally wrestled into a form which is substantially foreign to it, and hence could be misrepresented. However, despite the flexibility of "beginnings" and "conclusions" in the process itself, there are points where sufficient concerns develop with enough clarity and similarity in their formulation to constitute the enigmatic nexus that is called the "research problem". Similarly, there comes a point where certain directions of enquiry having been exhausted, and others having opened up, a natural hiatus appears. This is a suitable moment for summing-up and taking stock, and sometimes for offering "conclusions".

The research process of which this thesis is a part has been in progress for many years and will, I hope, continue for many years to come. The thesis is a part of a longer process; not a discrete part, but nevertheless one which seems to possess a natural unity. I begin, not at the beginning, for I could never trace the many beginnings which eventually informed the project, but at the point where some issues cohere with their greatest clarity. I conclude where the pursuit of the lines of enquiry prompted by the initial identification of the problematic issues seems to have led to a

natural caesura, where immediate progress is unlikely and examination of development up to this point is appropriate, if not absolutely conclusive.

The research "problem" in this case originated from a combination of concerns which I had developed as first of all, a student of literature, and secondly, a blue-collar worker in a number of industries. The first had given me an irritation with the deterministic and predominantly functionalist views of language which had been prominent in the writings of many socio-linguists. These views had been noticeably inadequate in explaining the "poetic" dimensions of language in its many forms, but most obviously in the poem itself. I felt that an application of literary critical techniques and sensitivities to the understanding of social utterances, and even social action itself, might well lead to better appreciation of the creativity and imagination with which social life was perpetually renewed and re-created. The second had given me an acute awareness of the powerlessness, often experienced by individuals within organisations, to formulate and define many of the issues which for them were problematic. This was refined through a subsequent period of postgraduate study and research for a master's degree, into a concern with 'ideology' in the Barthesian sense of the submerged and taken-for-granted aspects of control. My analysis of this issue I conceived as being a similar project to that of the Barthesian 'reader-of-myths', demystifying the industrial order with his critical analyses.

The research method which I found most appropriate, indeed, necessary, for this project, was that of participant observation, with myself as participant collecting and critically analysing data as it occurred in context. Part of this participant critical analysis necessarily included the making explicit of my own contextual awareness. Further explorations of other research and methodology revealed the surprisingly positivistic tendencies of much "interpretative sociology" and exposed a potential weakness in the ground of the Barthesian critic - that is, that there was no ground from which he could be said to "demystify" that could not itself be charged with being "ideological". The problems of defining "truth" and, by implication, ideology (which ultimately

proved to be a concept far too elusive to be of practical use) and of establishing the theoretical basis for an interpretative methodology inform the first part of this thesis.

In Chapter One, the focus is on the problems shared by the poet or critic, and the sociologist, of adopting a perspective on experience or social life. The problems of acquiring a range of perspectives, between 'objectivity' and 'subjectivity' are discussed, and the possibility of a multiple methodology entailing a constant shifting of perspectives is suggested. The implications of this for the status of any thesis as a persuasive account are considered, and Chapter Two begins with a consideration of two problematic examples which helped to inaugurate my initial research explorations. They are presented, however, not as 'confessional' data for the purpose of enabling the reader to discount the observer's bias, but as a phenomenology of the developing research problem and as such a fundamental component of the account. The second part of Chapter Two identifies the similarity of both apparently dissimilar problems in that they express the difficulty of establishing 'truth' and the significance of 'community' and 'common-sense' in this process. This is a development of the concerns already introduced in Chapter One in the consideration of the positivistic assumptions of much interpretative sociology.

The importance of community in establishing truth is reaffirmed in Chapter Three by consideration of the means by which truth is communally established through rule, and method itself. Positivistic underpinnings are seen to be apparent even in the writings of Garfinkel, who has explored the impact of community on individual interpretation perhaps with more rigour than any other researcher. In exploring Garfinkel's theoretical antecedents, however, the tradition of the hermeneutical thinkers whose primary concern has been with individual interpretation and understanding rather than the explanatory thrust of positivist thought exposes the importance of language in the process of the creation of truth. A divergence here appears: for Gadamer, language is inescapably relativistic and truth consists of a negotiated mingling of the horizons of individual prejudice, whilst Habermas feels that 'distorted' 'false' or 'ideological' communication can nevertheless

be criticized by resorting to the model of an ideal speech or communicative situation.

At this point, although the deliberations of Habermas and Gadamer have some obvious importance for methodology, and a critical methodology in particular, the depth of the examination which I pursue might seem to lead the reader far from the shop-floor and the specific research problem of managerial control. However, it is necessary for me to thoroughly advance and explicate my readings of the theorists who have influenced the development of my methodology for two reasons. The first is that many of these writers are subject both to intrinsic ambiguities in their writings and variations of interpretation in those readings of their work which are popularly available. I have attempted in my presentation and analysis to provide sufficient detail for the reader to discern my readings of the relevant areas of the work of writers such as Gadamer and Habermas, and to dispute and compare these readings with those of other commentators. I have attempted to make in this area some contribution to sociological theory. Most important, however, is that my analysis of these writers has been an essential part of the development and modification of both my theoretical and methodological positions, and as such has itself been an important and integral part of the research process. The importance of this analysis increases in Chapters Four and Five, where the influential theorists are perhaps both less generally familiar and yet more significant for the formulation of my research perspective. I have ultimately allowed the imperative for a thorough and precise representation of my theoretical ground greater weight than the alternate virtues of brevity and conciseness.

In Chapter Four the importance of language for Gadamer and Habermas, identified in Chapter Three, is taken up in a more exhaustive exploration of the nature of language itself. The problems encountered in this exploration of language are found to be precisely those problems which have already been discovered in the earlier explorations of sociological methodology and theory. These problems are those of idealism or essentialism versus materialism; absolutism versus relativism; problems of the constitution of subjectivity and objectivity; problems of the

creation and effects of ideology and myth; problems of 'privilege' in discourse or investigation and the problematic status of 'criticism' and a 'critical' perspective. The work of the linguists of the early twentieth century, Saussure and Jakobson, is examined particularly with regard to their development of a structuralist approach to linguistic analysis. The work of Levi-Strauss, which extends these principles from the purely linguistic level to the cultural, in analysing myth and symbolism, is discussed as an important development on the way to structuralist social analysis. The work of Levi-Strauss discussed here also prefigures some of the analysis of data in the second part of the thesis, particularly in the anthropological analysis of consultancy in Chapter Six, the structural analysis of induction discourses in Chapter Seven, and the use of the concepts of 'bricolage' and 'homology' throughout the later chapters to illustrate the development of symbolic resistance and cohesion.

Barthes is discussed in this Chapter as a pivotal figure between structuralism and post-structuralism. His early work, heavily influenced by Levi-Strauss, extends the latter's study of the universal patterns of myth to the creation of contemporary mythology. In doing so, the concept of myth as 'false consciousness', from which Levi-Strauss had dissociated himself, is reintroduced into the analysis. Myth is a type of speech in which connotations of meaning which are contingent and specific to particular social forms and groups become regarded as natural and incontestable, whilst their origins are simultaneously forgotten. Barthes attempted to break down the dichotomy of langue and parole observed by Saussure and Levi-Strauss in demonstrating how myth (as speech) could nevertheless formulate codes for the language. The project of his reader of myths was to demystify and reveal the formation of this code.

In realising the problematic ground on which his reader-of-myths stood, Barthes ultimately shifted his attention from the hypothetical code (the signified) underlying the speech-act(or discourse or text) to the surface of the speech-act (or discourse or text) itself as an interplay of signification (the play of signifiers). This is characteristic of a shift to post-

structuralism, where any id a of the absolute meaning of language is rejected in favour of a focus on language as part of the process of creating meaning. This is illustrated by an examination of the work of Derrida, Lacan, Kristeva and Foucault, in which the idea of fixed or unequivocal meaning of objective truth is thoroughly contested. As this form of analysis has developed the role of the author (and his intentions) and the reader or subject (with his interpretations) has been reconceptualised as a product of the text rather than an objective reality. The creation of a series of possible subject positions in induction discourses is analysed in Chapter Seven in this way. 'Deconstruction' as a practice is directed towards the ceaseless exploration and exploitation of the tendency within 'texts', discourses and utterances to create and recreate the author/subject and any number of preferred readings.

At the close of this Chapter, it is suggested that the post-structuralist mood has effected a shift from signified to signifier but has failed to break down the distinction altogether. A combination of post-structuralism and hermeneutics, particularly taking into account the importance of practical action in sustaining meaning might successfully reconceptualise this false dualism. A practical attempt to relate structuralist and hermeneutic analyses to material contextual considerations is made in Chapter Eight, in the analysis of humour and joking as 'safe' frameworks for the symbolic inversion of the social order which nevertheless retain some materially subversive capacity.

In Chapter Five, the forms of verbal analysis which have been examined in the context of utterances, discourses or texts are considered in terms of their relevance to the analysis of social action, which was briefly presented at the end of Chapter Four. The efforts of Paul Ricoeur to effect a combination of hermeneutics and structuralism by applying the model of the text to social action are examined in the light of the arguments of Thompson and Sperber, and are found to be inadequate both at the level of the text and the level of action. The extent to which these ideas may be revalued by a reconceptualization of the act of reading is discussed, but it is finally suggested that the absence of a

methodology which combines the virtues of hermeneutics and structuralism may not be a disadvantage if viewed from the perspective of the anti-methodologists Phillips and Feyerabend. Their concepts of 'play', 'counter-induction' and a 'pluralistic methodology' inform the approach taken to the data of the later chapters, as does the deconstructionist impulse to autocritique.

The autocritical process, in which the deconstructionist interrogation of the logocentric tendencies of thetext and the exposure of the means by which both author and subject are reproduced and privileged in texts and readings, is turned back upon his own writings by the deconstructionist and acknowledged and recommended to sociologists as part of a pluralistic methodology. In this thesis, I do not follow the impulse through to its fullest extent for two reasons. First, the demands placed upon writer and reader by this approach are great - it literally constitutes a new form of writing and reading, a project which is in itself a massive one and beyond the immediate scope of my analysis. My purpose here is to assess the implications of deconstruction and autocritique for social and organizational analysis, rather than to exemplify their application. Second, deconstruction has a place within a pluralistic methodology, but depends in part for its effect on the constructive interpretative and patterning influences of other approaches. That is to say, sensation, experience, and verbiage need to be rendered as data before they can be deconstructed, in the sense that post-structuralism is always dependent on a preceding structuralist moment for its existence.

The topics of the chapters which make up the second part of the thesis might seem to be quite discrete, their presence in the thesis gratuitous and the adoption of a pluralistic methodology a desperate attempt to render dissimilar and unconnected data into an apparently coherent whole. The connection between my methodology and the theoretical cohesion of the ensuing analysis is however, fundamental. The data which I collected was not produced in response to promptings, interviews, or questionnaires: it existed, in its 'wild' state, as an emergent sample of the symbolization process which creates the sense of 'reality' which organizational members have of their organizations. Organizations are not only

structural or technological realities, but they are symbolic realities. If we wish to explore the process of the creation of these symbolic realities, and the competing visions which arise, we can only do this by exposing ourselves to data in context. At this moment of exposure, hermeneutic theory offers vital insights into the processes by which individual utterances may be understood.

Nevertheless, in so doing we may come to understand individual phenomena in context, but their significance and interconnection may remain piecemeal. Structuralist analysis may help to discern relevant patternings within data, or may discern contours amongst peripheral items of information which were not previously considered to be data. This form of analysis certainly contributes in this way to the recognition of much of the data presented below. But the main connection is perhaps more simply grasped. If organizations are symbolic realities, then this suggests the existence of a symbolic order. That the symbolic order should be invariable or uncontested is unthinkable, especially in view of our discussions of hermeneutics and evocation in Part One. What should be interesting to the researcher then is the emergence and contestation of the symbolic order, which can be illuminatingly investigated through data collected in marginal areas, where symbolic control and order is being established, broken down or under threat, or is deliberately kept fluid. The common features of the elements examined in the later chapters is that they are all physically or morally marginal issues, where symbolic boundaries are being established and negotiated and the symbolic order is recreated.

There is a development in the thematic treatment of the chapters. Chapter Six focusses on consultancy, where the marginal and temporary status of the consultant as an ordinary member of the organization is constantly in process. The semiotic view of 'culture' is criticized here, the cognitive approach of Sperber being preferred, and the accommodations and adjustments made by the consultant as he reads the organizational culture, or cultures, and creates a performance are likened to the activities of the 'primitive' tribal sorcerer. Chapter Seven explores the establishment of a more permanent association with organizational

members, examining ways in which the 'cognitive map' of the organization might be acquired through formal and informal organizational induction processes. Structural analysis here reveals a perhaps surprising coherence in 'informal' accounting, tale-telling, and myth-making, as the creation of subject-positions in induction discourses is analysed and illustrated.

Chapter Eight considers the negotiation of 'moral' or 'internal' boundaries, between members and member groups within the organization. Issues of competence and control are seen to be defined, redefined and resisted within the 'non-real' framework of humour. Within humorous 'brackets' things can be said or done which question the 'serious' state of material affairs, allowing resistance without necessarily creating risk or threat. What is acceptable and accountable can be established and explored through humour, which can both allow resistance and accommodate control.

The movement of the analysis from the establishment of control to the negotiation of resistance develops into a consideration of some instances of sabotage in Chapter Nine, where resistance becomes overt and an act of defiance, breaking down the boundaries of customary relations. In considering specific examples in the light of other work in the field it is suggested that the definition of 'sabotage' in context is problematic, and that there are many dimensions to the act which defy definition either as a result of a deviant psychology or a political motivation. It is suggested that some acts which can be classed as sabotage in so far as they clash with an accepted or dominant system of meaning, are nevertheless understandable in terms of their relationships to other alternative, non-political but conceptual and symbolic systems of meaning, of which games and play are examples. In this context, the symbolic significance of 'waste', and marginal areas of activity such as 'canteen' and 'toilets' can be seen to be important in the sustenance and subversion of the symbolic order.

In the concluding Chapter, I review the thesis in the light, once again, of its implications for methodology. Those writers who have addressed the problem of resistance and control, and have adopted participant methods, have neglected much of their data in

approaching the problem from a social exchange perspective. This approach is similarly common to those theorists, many of them following Braverman, who have addressed the problem in terms of the labour process. In short, the problem is seen as one of asymmetrical social exchange.

In this thesis, I have attempted to explore the symbolic dimensions of control and resistance, stressing the importance of the symbolic negotiation of the social, moral and organizational order. In the concluding chapter, I also make some connections of my work to organization theory, and suggest some avenues and imperatives for development.

In utilizing structural analysis throughout the thesis, I have rendered intelligible some forms of naturally occurring, 'wild' or peripheral data which have typically been neglected by other sociologists researching the area. I have attempted, further, to outline their importance in the maintenance, reconstruction and recreation of organizational relations. In following the impulses of deconstruction, I have been, perhaps ironically, aware of the precariousness of any structural models, particularly those based on semiotics, and I have explained my constructions and interpretations in terms of Sperber's conception of the evocations of symbolism rather than the semiotic model of decoding. In so doing, I have indicated both the limitless possibilities for the paths of evocation, whilst addressing some of the structural conditions which favour certain paths over others. This work is, I feel, a beginning, but future directions to be taken in the field of organizational symbolism must rest on the relationships between structuralism and hermeneutics outlined in Part One, and must combine the fruitfulness of anthropological field studies of symbolism with the rigourous analysis of the dimensions of power and control at work, as explored in Part Two.

PART ONE: METHODOLOGICAL AND THEORETICAL ISSUES

Chapter One: On Perspectives

Introduction

In this chapter, I begin my methodological explorations with a consideration of the problems of the adoption of perspectives, of proximity and distance or of objectivity and self-interest. The problem is initially formulated in terms of the dilemma, not of the sociologist, but of the poet - a problem which is essentially the same but which has been explored through different paths of commitment.

The formulation of this problem as one of objectivity in the researcher, or the eradication of bias, has been a characteristic of positivist research. The effects of this approach have extended into areas where it is implicit and perhaps unrecognized, and these effects are examined in the work of 'reflexive sociologists' Gouldner, Dawe and Watson. The focal problem here is one of self-knowledge and declaration.

The problem of distance, of stepping outside one's data, is an alternative perspective on the same problem. The problem is recognised in the work of Silverman and Gellner, but is most interestingly observed in the comments of Sartre and Moore in their novels. The process of fictionalisation are here found to be similar to those by which the researcher interprets his data and produces his account.

This is observed through an analysis of the work of Jason Ditton, particularly with reference to his approach to data, theory, and the production of his accounts. The importance of language in creating accounts which are constitutive of the world rather than revelatory of its essences, and hence are inescapably persuasive versions of the world, is stressed by discussion of Silverman and Melville.

Finally, the chapter closes with a summary of the problems which bedevil the researcher in observing, handling and interpreting

data, and in producing an account. It is suggested that our research accounts, this thesis included, are inescapably of an order of fiction, and are persuasive versions of the world which is unknowable in any 'objective' sense. Perhaps the best appreciation of the nature of that social life which we seek to explore is to be obtained through an active shifting and exchange of perspectives, and the remainder of this thesis examines some of the implications of this idea in theory and by practical example.

Perspectives, Interest and Bias

> 'Up above the clear sky a solitary aeroplane moved, bright silver in the sunlight, a pale line of exhaust marking its unhurried course. The Bofors gunners on either side of us were running to their guns and soon opened a rapid, thumping fire, like a titanic workman hammering. The silver body of the aeroplane was surrounded by hundreds of little grey smudges, through which it sailed on serenely. From it there fell away, slowly and gracefully, an isolated shower of rain, a succession of glistening drops. I watched them descend a hundred feet before it occurred to me to consider their significance and forget their beauty.'(1)

The above is taken from the war-time diary of the poet and tank-commander, Keith Douglas. It is a short, mimetic piece, catching the exact order of Douglas' responses, which were instinctively aesthetic, those of the poet and painter that he was. We are up in the blue North African sky with Douglas, as his attention to the objects of his vision transports him closer to them. We feel the vibration of the guns, marvel at the sparkling "shower" which falls from the plane, and finally we return to earth with Douglas as he realises that he is being bombed.

Douglas exemplifies here a problem of perspectives which exists for any observer or engager with the everyday world - the problem of appearance and significance, the essential ambiguity of experience. A bombing raid may be a thing of beauty, but to see this alone would at the very least imperil the observer; but the perspective of the Bofors gunners, responding instantly as their exhaustive training demanded, so attends to significance and its imperatives that other potentialities are forgotten.

Douglas in his poetry explores the divergence of perspectives from their unity in the event. He finds deceptiveness, complexity and ambiguity in his experience, and his endeavour (and finally his achievement) is to allow these experiential qualities to be sustained in his poetry, without the domination of a single perspective. As sociologists, exploring the same resource as Douglas, we share his concerns: to let experience speak through us, to puzzle over its definition, to explore appearances and perspectives. However, the commitment of the sociologist has taken a different path to that of the poet.

Although as sociologists, or members of a social world, we are not unused to the idea of the difference between aesthetic and mundane perception, we are rarely given to the adoption of the aesthetic:

> 'This contrast, often emerging with startling suddenness, is like a momentary switching on of some new current, or the passing ray of a brighter light, illuminating the outlook upon perhaps the most ordinary and familiar objects - an impression which we experience sometimes in instants of direst extremity, when our practical interest snaps like a wire from sheer overtension, and we watch the consummation of some impending catastrophe with the marvelling unconcern of a mere spectator.'(2)

We must be traumatised into another mode of perception, when 'our practical interest snaps'. We step outside the taken-for-granted world of things which we designate and classify for-all-practical-purposes and, perhaps for the first time, respond to qualities of colour, texture, rhythm, position, movement, sound and composition. This stepping outside has a dual quality: both standing apart from everyday categories, and standing close to the phenomenon as given, as experienced. Looking at a phenomenon with this distanced disinterest, 'objectively', entails:

> 'permitting only such reactions on our part as emphasize the 'objective' features of the experience, and by interpreting even our 'subjective' affections not as modes of our being but rather as characteristics of the phenomenon.'(3)

We are not accustomed to switching into this mode, and so accomplish it infrequently. Douglas' concern is to move between perspectives with facility, to slip between the worlds of interest and disinterest, of the aesthetic and the mundane. His effort is located in the interstitial area where the everyday world is ambiguous. Through this duality of perspectives the world of ideas does not become synonymous with the aesthetic, nor the world of feelings with the mundane, but they are fully realised as inseparable. There is no 'knowledge with no point of view' - the world is known and expressed through ideas and feelings.

> 'As long as one clings to the positivist ideal of the absolute spectator, of knowledge with no point of view, then one's personal situation and responses can be seen only as a source of error.'(4)

If we accept for the purpose of argument that knowledge may be absolute, and it is the sociologists job to retrieve such knowledge, then it follows that as an instrument of its realisation he should be as free from defects as possible. Thus the subjectivity of the researcher should be eliminated as the source of bias, and the researcher should 'make his methods a litmus of the society under study'(5).

The idea that bias can be and should be eliminated rests upon the assumption that it is an appearance, and not a natural quality of the object of investigation(6). Bias 'results from the collection of evidence in such a way that an alternative answer to a research question is favoured'(7). It is a result of the engagement of the observer with the observed, and his response to that engagement, the selective filtering and procurement of 'evidence', and a confounder of objectivity.

> 'Therefore, within the context of positivist auspices, the concrete speaker is not an author; he is a one through whom the analytic author - nature - speaks. Nature speaks through the speaker.
>
> In positivism, the speaker is a vehicle of nature, his analytic status is that of a messenger. The inquirer is not

> an author; he passes the word but he does not author it. This is to say that the inquirer does not create the word, because he merely passes it on from its creator. He is not responsible for originating the word, he is responsible only for transmitting it.
>
> An inadequate inquirer, now a poor messenger, is one who gets it wrong, distorts it and so on.'(8)

It follows that any adequate social inquirer should therefore eliminate completely the effects of his personality from his research, and allow the evidence to speak through him. The means of controlling this intrusion is the general methodological theory, which by its very generality avoids any specific bias. 'Once joined to guides for technique...one has, in effect, done all he can to control bias'(9).

Is it then possible to eradicate bias by the studious and conscientious application of technique? Sadly, we have no guarantees that our enquirer will be made competent by the operation of these controls.

> 'To be sure, there is no guarantee that any given research undertaking actually will produce relevant, reliable, and unbiased information'; or, again, 'We cannot eliminate the effect of the observer in science; we can however, limit and measure this effect and this gain some control over the variables in the research'.(10)

Reflexive Sociology

If we cannot remove the researcher from his research by technical means, what recourse is left? How can we control his effect? One influential means has been suggested by Gouldner, with his notion of 'reflexive sociology'.

> 'Insofar as social reality is seen as contingent in part on the effort, the character, and the position of the knower, the search for knowledge about social worlds is also contingent upon the knower's **self-awareness.** To know others he cannot simply study **them,** but must also listen to and confront **himself...**'(11)

The values of the researcher cannot be eradicated from his work, and thus sociology can never be value-free.(12) But these values and the 'background assumptions' of the sociologist, his 'world hypotheses', 'domain assumptions' and 'postulations'(13) should, so the argument runs, be made explicit and brought into the foreground, to help the reader to evaluate the work and assess the implication of the theorist in his theories and the researcher in his researches. After all, if as Dawe argues, what we are presenting is 'representative experience', the circumstances of the particularity of the experience should be made explicit.

> 'The representative experience goes beyond the particular, localised, albeit intersubjective experience. It articulates the connection between the latter and the major currents of social and political concern, between the personal trouble and the public issue. Quite simply, to have any impact on social, political or any other form of public thought and action, the particular must stand for the general.'(14)

As laudable a pursuit as self-knowledge might be it nevertheless fails to improve the quality of our social knowledge. Firstly, the 'confessional' aspect would seem to fulfil the function of creating trust in the reader(15), in the same way as a man with a criminal conviction would be expected to declare it at a job interview. If a man is honest about his failings we might trust him, he may have reformed; if he avoids imparting the information, or he lies, his work may be considered invalid. But in the end we have to make the decision to trust him or not - we are unlikely to have recourse to his data, even if we had the time; just as we are not likely to check every job applicant for a prison record. His confessions may be bogus; they can at best be partial.

Secondly, it is usually admitted that any form of self-declaration can only be partial, as total self-knowledge is unattainable.(16) But this still assumes, despite an admission if not a demonstration of the author's incompetence, that he remains nevertheless in some degree competent to comment upon himself and his work. It would seem to be paradoxical that what is a situation of the ultimate subjectivity, i.e. the subject presenting the subject, should be

offered in the service of objectivity. The author's intentions may not be accessible to us as his readers, but neither is the instrumentality of authorship any guarantee of epistemological privilege.

> 'I went to the poets; tragic, dithyrambic, and all sorts...I took them some of the most elaborate passages in their own writings, and asked what was the meaning of them...Will you believe me?...there is hardly a person present who would not have talked better about their poetry than they did themselves. Then I knew that not by wisdom do poets write poetry, but by a sort of genius and inspiration.'(17)

Thirdly, the notion of 'reflexive' sociology as constituted here implicitly follows the positivist line in treating the observer as passive, and social life as an object, even though admitting technical inadequacy. Although 'bias exists in every study',(18) the methods of 'reflexive' sociology exhort us still in the positivistic vein not to behave as though it does. By declaring it, it ceases somehow to be a problem for those evaluating the work(19), and assumes evaluation to be possible, and, in facilitating it, by implication desirable.

Although the idea of reflexive sociology is, in realising a researcher's theoretical antecedents, an advance on those of 'qualitative' methodology which suggest that a researcher can go naked into the research stripped of theoretical presuppositions(20), it is nevertheless presumptuous to suggest that he will have anything as elaborate as a 'world hypothesis'. It is more likely that a researcher, in common with most other mortals, will hold many such views some partial, others more complete, struggling and emerging and being realised from day to day. To present the realities of doubt and confusion which characterize the researcher's world would no doubt traumatise the reader's or evaluator's world.

What the researcher who seeks to control his interest is doing can be explained in terms of his orientation towards a community rather than towards an idea.

'In orienting to one's own interest as a resource for study one is failing to respond to the necessity of promoting some authoritative version of the world which is intelligible to a community; a biased researcher is assumed to be showing an inability to control his interests where the object(s) of such interests are matters external to the objects about which he claims to speak.

Thus within the positive project the charge of bias is really a charge that the inquirer is showing lack of reflexivity because he is deflected from respecting community and this deflection is created by forces over which he has no intellectual control, i.e., by will. Bias is then inadequate inquiry in the following sense: it is to fail out of ignorance (of one's unnecessarily private auspices), to be a theoretic member of the scientific community of agreement. It is to base a public claim upon the private. It is not to possess the private (attitudes, biography), but to transliterate the private into the public without knowing it.'(21)

A study such as Watson's (22) can be seen in just such terms - in demonstrating awareness of interest and of reflexivity, it demonstrates respect for community and establishes its right to membership of that community and to be viewed as valid research. In declaring his 'personality', Watson becomes anonymous, and his research demonstrates and reaffirms the notion of community, of authority, and of social life as an object.

A further development of reflexive sociology can be found, more fruitfully, in Paul Willis' concept of <u>self-reflexivity</u>(23). Willis perceives the criticisms of implicit positivism, but locates his interest in 'the relationship between subjective/cultural systems'(24). The focus of reflexivity is in the area of surprise, of strange or unaccountable behaviour, of obscurity, or of failure to communicate. It is when the world of subject and researcher diverge, rather than when they converge, that the possibility for discovery is greatest.

'It is here, in this interlocking of human meanings, of cultural codes and of forms that there is the possibility of 'being surprised'. And in terms of the generation of 'new' knowledge, we know what it is precisely **not** because we have shared it - the usual notion of empathy - but because we have

not shared it. It is here that the classical canons are overturned. It is time to ask and explore, to discover the differences between subjective positions, between cultural forms. It is time to initiate actions or to break expectations in order to probe different angles in different lights. Of course, this is a time of maximum disturbance to researchers, whose own meanings are being thoroughly contested. It is precisely at this point that the researcher must assume an unrestrained and hazardous **self-reflexivity.** And it is the turning away from a full commitment, at this point, which finally limits the methods of traditional sociology.'(25)

The researcher interrogates his own world as well as that of the subjects and generates new insights by investigating interruptions.(26) His research is neither self nor subject orientated, but is concerned with the dialectics of the relationship, the interstitial area, the exchange of perspectives.

Distance and Everyday Life

The researcher then, moves between his world of emotions and ideas and the subject's world of emotions and ideas. Tradition has it that the researcher's world will be dominated by the idea, and professionally one would expect it to be so. But it cannot be divorced from the subject's world. As Gellner argues, theoretical development must cohabit with action and investigation, and the 'way to proceed' in social enquiry should consist of a confluence of 'the attempt to formulate the criteria of knowledge and the sustained investigation of our social situation'.(27)

Similarly, Silverman suggests that we must investigate and enquire both within and without the situation in order to appreciate both members' understandings (empathy) and their wider implications for human knowledge.

> 'The concern, however, must be to **understand** members' ordering of experience in order to **step outside it** so as to understand the human processes through which activities are assigned meanings.'(28)

The researcher can thus be seen to be developing awareness by

movement between perspectives, manipulating distance. But there are practical problems associated with the maintenance of variable positions and deciding when it is appropriate to observe, to retreat, or to be deeply involved with the experience. And this has implications for the methodology of research.

> 'That's what I must avoid: I mustn't put strangeness in where there's nothing. I think that is the danger of keeping a diary: you exaggerate everything, you are on the look-out, and you continually stretch the truth'.(29)

When studying everyday life, a substantial amount of which the researcher has in common with the subject, it is easy to be almost too vigilant, to regard that which is not strange as strange. That which is not strange to the researcher might be strange to the subjects, and that which is anomalous to the subjects might not seem worthy of the researcher's attention. Thus as Willis suggests points of divergence are important (30) and both researcher's and subject's common-sense assumptions, their taken-for-granteds, should be pursued by the interruption and interrogation of the everyday situation(31). But the researcher may still in doing this be satisfying, unwittingly, his own need for something to write about, and 'making the news'. The issues may become distorted and out of proportion purely by the fact of observing, investigating, and noting them down. It is not unusual to find an anomaly when it is sought, and this form of generation of incongruity may result in an inability to understand the very thing which is addressed. Everyday life may become the everyday life of my fieldnotes.

Brian Moore, the novelist, provided a further point in a television interview:

> 'At the end of one of my novels, a man who has become a novelist attends his mother's funeral. He finds himself looking at the expressions of the mourners, the gestures of the priest, the gravediggers shivering in the cold impatient to finish the job, and he realises he has forgotten that he is there for the funeral of his own mother.'(32)

The researcher can become the same as the novelist. As we develop

as professionals, the more we are likely to lose the capacity to become involved in the experience, and through that to understand it. The more we observe everyday life, the easier it is to distance ourselves from it, and perhaps explain it, but the harder it becomes to understand it. Cohen and Taylor offer the idea that our daily fantasies, or 'escape attempts', are crucial factors which enable us to get through the day, and can help us to understand deviance or deviant behaviour.(33) These fantasies will remain inaccessible if we are locked into a professionalised distance. Schutz is discussed by Bauman in the context of professionalised thinking:

> 'Again, like in Heidegger, it is suggested that there is only one kind of understanding, applicable to both ordinary members of society and to their specialised and trained students; both cases of 'making sense' can be described in identical terms...The superiority of sociologists over interpretive procedures operated by the ordinary members of society may consist only in their operating the same procedure consciously and in a methodical way.'(34)

The 'conscious' and 'methodical' application of the procedures may nevertheless be so different from the common-sense application of them that it constitutes a different perspective.

> 'The world of everyday life is taken for granted by our common-sense thinking and thus receives the accent of reality as long as our practical experiences prove the unity and congruity of this world as valid. Even more, this reality seems to us to be the natural one, and we are not ready to abandon our attitude toward it without having experienced a specific shock which compels us to break through the limits of these 'finite' provinces of meaning and to shift the accent of reality to another one.'(35)

The problem that the researcher might face is that the perspective once gained might be so hard won that it becomes as constricting as is common-sense. The only solution would seem to be a constant shifting of perspectives, or the adoption of multiple perspectives, in order to avoid confinement to any one of them. The problem is not entirely alien to the subjects the researcher may study, as they, within the bounds of non-professional common-sense, must

constantly decide how close to get to a situation, or how to maintain their distance. Their solutions may ultimately provide the researcher with his own.

Ditton, Data and Accounts

Jason Ditton, in his study of 'fiddling' amongst bread salesmen, makes a similar point:

> 'Observation, then, is not something restricted to sociologists. The sense, of course, in which some ordinary actions share this reflexive dimension legitimates the sociological variety. Sociological research, from this viewpoint, is more of an exaggeration of conventional social activities than something separately constructed and separately justified.'(36)

But there is, despite its elegance, something unreal about Ditton's conception of the researcher which does not quite connect to ordinary observation. He quotes Goffman:

> 'There is a sense, anyway, in which **all** observation breaks hidden rules stricturing interaction. The researcher is, as Goffman notes of the type 'conspicuously concerned to an improper degree with the way that the interaction, qua interaction, is proceeding, instead of becoming spontaneously involved in the official topic of conversation.'(37)

It is in this sense of involvement that Ditton is not quite convincing. He produces a convincing enough account, but although he coyly protests that he found difficulty in extricating himself from the research situation (38), and produces staggering quantifications of his data as if to affirm his authenticity (39), the feeling remains that although he has the detail and the apparent understanding, where is the engagement? Ditton seems to be always the researcher, never 'spontaneously involved' despite his sympathy and sensitivity to his subjects. His perspective is always that of the researcher.

There is a certain naivety about Ditton's attitude to his field-notes which combines with his apparently sophisticated appreciation of 'covert' participant observation and the use of skilful interview techniques like the 'false question'.(40)

Consider his presentation of 'personal covert participant-observation skills'.

> 'Nevertheless, I was able to develop personal covert participant-observation skills. Right from the start I found it impossible to keep everything that I wanted to remember in my head until the end of the working day (some of the shifts were over twelve hours long) and so had to take rough notes as I was going along. But I was stuck 'on the line', and had nowhere to retire to privately jot things down. Eventually, the wheeze of using innocently provided lavatory cubicles occured to me. Looking back, all my notes for that third summer were on Bronco toilet paper! Apart from the awkward tendency for pencilled notes to be self-erasing from hard toilet paper (sometimes before I could even get home), my frequent requests for 'time out' after interesting happenings or conversations in the bakehouse and the amount of time that I was spending in the lavatory began to get noticed. I had to pacify some genuinely concerned work-mates, give up totally undercover operations, and 'come out' as an observer - albeit in a limited way. I eventually began to scribble notes more openly, but still not in front of people when they were talking. When questioned about this, as I was occasionally, I coyly said that I was writing things down that occurred to me about 'my studies'.'(41)

The above encapsulates both the main means of recording data in social research, and that which has come to replace it. Research data and its interpretation are dependent on memory. Memory creates meaning and creates an account, for everything we experience is instantly past and instantly subject to recall. The richness of the experience is something we can only contain within ourselves, structured by memory. As Kosinski states: 'The remembered event becomes a fiction: a structure made to accommodate certain feelings.'(42) We cannot escape from memory, for we cannot experience and account for or give meaning to and interpret events simultaneously.

Ditton would appear to start with an appreciation of the centrality of memory, but bemoans its fallibility. It is here that we can

discern the implicit service of the 'positive project'.(43) What Ditton produces are a set of notes to aid his memory, but how soon do these notes acquire a life of their own and even totally dominate interaction? Soon, Ditton is scurrying to the toilet with such frequency as to mark himself out as incontinent and draw sufficient attention to himself as to bring out his declaration of himself as an observer. We can even detect a note of regret when he states that he was still unable to write notes in front of people while they were talking. What consequences might that action have had for social interaction, and how involved with his subjects could Ditton have been then? It would seem to be reasonable to expect that people would adjust their conversations and reassess their opinions if they were being noted down under their noses. But even if this were not the case, how naturally could Ditton have reacted and behaved when dominated by this need to observe? Or also when, even though not literally writing notes, he was imaginatively doing so, or preparing notes to be written shortly after? He would also have found it difficult to generate his own data for analysis as one of his own subjects, as his 'participant' status would have been only marginal.

The influence of Goffman on Ditton's work can be detected in his concern with interactive techniques, and with his concern with impression-management, which is characteristic of the former's work. Ditton plays the sociologist as con-man, albeit in a very gentle way, and notwithstanding his claims to the contrary. 'I didn't deceive the subjects',(44) he says, but they remain 'subjects', and are there for the sociologist to exploit for his data.

> 'But we cannot be above society or outside of it and part of it by means of a simple schizophrenic copulation or momentary improvisation. The whole point of Garfinkel's incongruity procedures is to show that the sense of possibility and its technique of impression management is false to the naive intersubjectivity which is the unarticulated structure of our everyday trust in and competence with social reality.'(45)

As Ditton self-consciously observes and takes his notes, he seems to become dependent on them. What is the consequence of his pencil

notes being self-erasing from hard toilet paper? Is the experience also erased? Surely this cannot be so, but the inference from Ditton is that it would. The notes seem to contain the experience, some form of 'objectivity' is embodied in them which is there to be analysed discreetly.

> 'Four hundred typed foolscap pages of despatch data lie unanalysed in my filing cabinet, although they have been thoroughly searched for any information pertinent to an analysis of the sales department.'(46)
>
> 'In December 1973 I returned to Durham with a total of over 4560 hours of participant observation and thirty-four taped and typed interviews under my research belt.'(47)
>
> 'Although my original intention to analyse all this data still stood, it soon became apparent that I had too much information.'(48)
>
> 'Regrettably, involvement with the first questionnaire gobbled up the analysis time which I had planned to occur between periods of participant observation.'(49)

Ditton has become divorced from his data. That which was designed as an aid to the creative and recreative processes of memory, a personal message from the researcher to himself, has acquired the objective qualities of embodied experience.

Ditton does not at first seem to imply this at all. He tells us that his account is unavoidably impregnated with 'theory':

> 'Theory, like weather, is a zero sum concept: it cannot be more or less there, only more or less recognised and reordered. Naked experience is strictly unpresentable as it stands, it has to be theorised in order to be communicated.'(50)

The question, which Ditton fails to explore, is what constitutes 'naked experience'. Is it his 'data', which he then theorises in order to make it communicable? Is it his imaginative reconstruction of his 'data', which he then theorises in order to make it communicable? And does the ordering or theorising of data exist without the need to make it communicable, in the effort to understand or even in the selective perception of experience? I am

here arguing that 'experience' is something other than the data which represents it.

> 'What I have been suggesting here is that by describing events through particular terms and conventions of language, we have already experienced the events, i.e. rendered them as an intelligible move in some game (ordering, obeying, murdering) of which our language speaks. So our descriptions constitute events.'(51)

So our fieldnotes are already part of this theorising and ordering process. The conversations which we note are part of someone else's ordering process. Our memories, insofar as they are linguistic phenomena, are a similar example of description which 'constitutes' an event.

We seek to explore and understand our experiences through our descriptions of them in language, but in so doing we constitute them in language, and thus leave them in some way untouched. We can only write, with language **about** language:

> 'It is not that the world can only be grasped by language - so our accounts can be biased, distorted or mistaken - rather the world is already within our language.'(52)

Our experience will therefore always remain in a sense, beyond our grasp. Herman Melville's novel, Moby Dick, is a brilliant dramatic realisation of just this fact.

> 'The book itself dramatizes its own meaning. By the end we know everything about what men have thought and said and written about the whale, all the versions of it they have formulated, from the religious to the utilitarian. We have seen the whale mythologised and measured. But at the end we are left only with a book, not a whale. The only whale which Ishmael actually enters - i.e. whose inwardness is reached, is a dead one. But a dead whale is mere matter; its essential reality has departed. The whale is most real when it is actually plunging through the sea, and then it can not be appropriated, only appreciated, as Melville appreciates it in some of the most beautiful prose in American literature. It is an illusion to think we can ever 'catch' reality.

Ishmael survives because he learns that things are separate and other from what we call them. When Ahab wants to project his version of the whale onto the whole crew, Ishmael finally holds back, for he recognises the essential separateness of names and objects. He knows that man is bound to name the world, but he has a much looser and more flexible sense of how language relates to the world than anyone else. He does not strap himself tight to the whale as Ahab so literally and fatally does. He knows that there is a whale; and he knows that it is men who project meanings on to it. Call me Ishmael: call it Moby Dick. He knows that when we send out the lines and nets of language into the world, all we bring back is language.'(53)

What we produce then, are accounts of the world, and of our experience, which represent not 'the world' or 'our experience', but our way of looking at it, and are as such 'persuasive accounts'.(54)

What is misleading about Ditton's brilliantly persuasive account is that it fails to present itself as such, and appears to us as a brilliant analysis of 'data', which may have by implication the associations of the language - game of positivism, recalling Willis' criticisms of participant observation and 'qualitative methodology', and McHugh et al's critique of positivism:

> 'In its recognition of a **technical** inability to record all that is relevant - and in its yielding of this zone to another technique - positivism may actually preserve its deepest loyalty: to its object of inquiry truly as an 'object'. The duality and mutual exclusivity of the over-neatly opposed categories, 'qualitative' methods and 'quantitative' methods, suggest already that the 'object' is viewed in the same unitary and distanced way even if the **mode** is changed - now you measure it, now you feel it.'(55)
>
> 'In positivism, the speaker is a vehicle of nature...The inquirer is not an author; he passes the word but he does not author it.'(56)

In his recognition of an inability to produce 'pureethnography', (i.e. a naturalistic reproduction of research experience) without the intrusion of theory, (i.e. some attempt to analyse the processes of that experience) Ditton exemplifies Willis' recognition of the failure of technique:

'Perversely, this theoretical impossibility of producing pure ethnography legitimates the overt celebration of theory-impregnation. It is useless to pretend to produce pure ethnography: one might as well come clean and admit to producing a 'theorised ethnography'.(57)

The object remains an object, and we have an analysis of experience rather than an analysis of an account. Ditton virtually disappears as a self-conscious author and is replaced by theory, and although his claim is that his research was 'intuitive'(58), his data collection and analysis are dominated by a concern with method, which 'has pressed the sciences into its own service'.(59)

What then, of the account which I offer? If I accept that I am as a researcher, in some sense the author of my own experiences, and the author of an account of these experiences, I am still implying that I have **one** account of them. But my account will not only change through time, it will also exist as one of a number of accounts possible for me, which may shift and interchange. I may have a private account (e.g. memory) which differs from my public accounts in speech and again in writing. I may negotiate my account not only with regard to the limitations of the medium in which I am expressing it(60), but consciously or unconsciously with regard to the audience to which it may be directed, or the community from which it sprang.(61)

Further, I cannot be sure that my account will not produce other accounts in the form of various readings which it may inspire in its readers. In this sense it may act as a springboard for further accounts. My own reading (for I am sure to return to the work at a future date) will no doubt never be the same again as it is as I write. The text has, in a sense, got beyond my control.(62)

I return to a consideration of 'reading' in Chapter Five. At this point, however, I offer my account as an invitation to a participation in a reading which may well produce the reader's own 'text'. I therefore go further than Blum:

'In our conceptual explorations we are not stripping the

> events of the world down to their bare essences, rather we are using these events of the world to show our version of language and life.'(63)

This account is submitted as one possible version of my experiences of language and organizational life, emergent through time and the medium, and directed specifically towards an understanding of my research experiences as a participant observer. The following chapter is presented therefore not as a confessional, an attempt to declare bias so that it might be discounted, or an assumption of a capacity for self-analysis which might dispel fears of my unreliability as a research instrument. It is a phenomenology of the possible origins of my research interests, and an exploration of some of the ideas emergent with it. It is part of my account, not a prelude, background or foreground to it, and it is as subject to interpretation as is the rest of the account. The whole account, being based upon the same interpretive processes as is fiction, is therefore inescapably of an order of fiction. Kosinski, both a Professor of Sociology in his native Poland and a Professor of English in his adoptive home, the U.S.A., and an internationally famous novelist, gives an insight into the relative abstraction of sociology and fiction:

> 'First when I saw myself as a sociologist, as a social scientist, I assumed that I was already operating on a high level of abstraction. Indeed, equal to that of fiction, after all, a sociologist abstracts certain social forms into meaningful formulas which could be perceived by others in an act of self-recognition.'(64)

In reading this account, or any account, the reader will collaborate in this act of self-recognition. In creating this account, I have tried to be aware in my own work of the problems which beset us all as writers and sociologists. These are as I have tried to show, the dilemma of being both researcher and participant, analyst and data; the difficulty of being sensitive to a range of data; the dangers of being dominated by technique, of treating data as 'objective', and of the researcher becoming separated from the authorship of his data whilst failing to perceive such a separation in the authorship of his account.

Possibly the most significant problem is that with which this chapter began, of being able to adapt and move between differing perspectives:

> 'The sociological imagination, I remind you, in considerable part consists of the capacity to shift from one perspective to another, and in the process to build up an adequate view of a total society and its components. It is this imagination, of course, that sets off the social scientist from the mere technician.'(65)

Whether the view we build up from this shifting of perspectives will ever be 'adequate' in C. Wright Mill's terms is impossible to say. It should, however, enable the fictional implications of social inquiry to be appreciated. As Kosinski states of his autobiographical works:

> 'The whole journey could actually have taken place in the mind.'(66)

Had this account not taken place in the mind, it would not exist; should it not receive life by a creative reading, it will remain meaningless.

Chapter Two: Origins and Explorations

Introduction

The chapter is in two parts. The first part attempts to convey some aspects of the work situations which first raised the questions which ultimately led to the research upon which this account is based. It is a personal account, and a coloured account, it would not be denied; it raises questions and problems which are not immediately pursued, and are presented rather as a stimulus than a considered response. It is offered with the status of a phenomenology of the origins of the research, and as such may help the reader to trace the development of its concerns.

The second part of the chapter takes up the questions raised in the first part and further develops the consideration of the practical problems of research methods raised in the first part with regard to its theoretical implications. Some similarities between the problems raised are identified, and this is extended into an examination of the nature of 'truth' and 'truth-claims', and the significance of 'common sense' and 'community' in their resolution. The chapter concludes with a critical examination of some of the issues identified in Garfinkel's treatment of the 'documentary method'.

Part One

Portcullis

A fresh-faced literature graduate, crisply wrapped in the canons of F.R. Leavis and New Criticism(1), with a fierce and elitist fire burning deep in his belly, found himself reluctantly deposited in the sedimental strata of society. Unwillingly suspending his beliefs, he left his values at home with his record collection to spend his days loading empty milk-bottles in plastic cases onto a ceaseless conveyor belt. It was his first factory-belt job.

Life in the dairy was nasty, brutish, and interminable. The belt began where he stood, and stretched up to the unloading grab, the

huge steam washer, the circular filling bowl, the case loading grab, and disappeared into the darkness of the cold store, where unshaven molochs buzzed and clanked through the darkness on fork-lifts and tine-trucks(2). Above the pasteurisers worked their arcane mysteries; beyond, the cream and carton men performed their cryptic calcuations; beside, the dock cowboys deafened passers-by, tipping, thundering, cursing and hurling empty churns through the air. Huge articulated trailers were loaded alongside, and in the yard outside they waited with empties for him to unload. He would drag stacks of cases to the end of the belt, load them onto the belt, drag some more. Roundsmen would come in to be unloaded around the middle of the day, and in the afternoon there were usually trailers. One of the two, or sometimes three 'belt-men' would jump onto the back of the trailer and slide the cases down a plank to the 'belt loader' at the bottom. The whole unloading process was fast and tiring; the man on the waggon was fried by the heat of the lights and usually bending to avoid the roofing girders; while the man at the bottom was showered with water, grease, glass and sour milk. When the belt stopped it was a welcome relief.

The graduate began to piece together the fragments of information which bombarded him from all sides, and gradually came to know his workmates and their significance in the shop-floor culture of the dairy. Fat Ron Armitage, for example: the uncrowned king of the dairy, who always turned up to work drunk, and who always left the dairy at lunchtime to go for a pint. His afternoons would be spent in a small hut at the side of the railway behind the factory, talking, sleeping or 'carding'. He did work occasionally, but his threshold of endurance was low, and no-one ever bothered to try to get him to exceed it. It was rumoured that in the past (his association with the dairy was a long one) he had been involved in some of the great capers - the Human Hamper Chain and the Bacon Butty Blag(3) but there was no concrete evidence, and all that escaped from Ron's lips was a curse when questioned. His two associates, Cyrano Cyril and Grumbling Stan, who ran the returns checkpoint, were likewise senior members of the establishment and were more vocal than the sanguine and surly Ron, but even they did not know the full extent of his past activities.

The factory held many more: Cockney Kelly, the fast-talking chargehand who could persuade you to do anything before you realised you'd done it; Randy Ron Trueman, karate expert and sexual pervert, who incessantly regaled his workmates with tales of sexual prowess, practice and malpractice, and graphic descriptions of his collection of international sexual aids, whilst nevertheless working extremely diligently(4); the Mad Stubbs brothers, fork lift drivers and enemies, who worked out their aggression upon their inanimate charges; Daft Alan Dent, who would go home whenever he felt like it; Chattering Chalkie White, the nervous wreck; 'Flogger' Lawton, who'd sell you anything whether it was his or not, and his sidekick 'Glassback' (who both spent more timein court than at work); 'Boz-eyes' Bamford, the scourge of the tine-truck; and little Fat Freddie, whose days were enlivened by the occasional visits of his huge and hatchet like spouse in search of the rent money and en route to the bookie's.

Amongst this august company, the lowliest was Portcullis. Portcullis was a young, eighteenish lad called Philip. His proper surname was an unusual Greek one, which was easily but ruthlessly anglicised into 'Portcullis'. Thus he came to be known.

Philip was young, fit and a very hard if unsophisticated worker. He was most regularly assigned to 'B' belt, and most new entrants, including the graduate, met him within their first few days of arrival. Philip was most accessible - he would take great pains to demonstrate things and impart information. He would do it tonew recruits, to old hands, and generally behaved as though he, and not Fat Ron, had the authority of antiquity. At first meeting, he was very convincing.

He would tell you of the overtime which he clocked up. He would tell about his 'second' job with a demolition contractor. He would tell you of his Datsun car with its radio telephone; of his weekend flights to France; of his inherited wealth; of his huge motorcycles; of his 9'6" Dalsatian dog and his 13'6" stereo unit (offered with the confidence that the 6" provided with its apparent precision a ring of incontrovertible authenticity); of his time

in prison where he ruled the cells; his bevy of beautiful women; and his karate 'Gold' belt. On a good day you could mention any subject and he would come up with a preposterous claim about his possessions or his prowess.

The graduate would be forced to concede that he believed many of Philip's early claims. It was not until he was asked, over a game of cards in the canteen, what he thought of Philip, and received a cryptic and derisory snort when he assessed him as 'a nice lad, quite helpful' that he became aware of the necessity to add the caveat 'but I've not really talked to him much' lest he be thought naive. 'Tha' will', came the reply.

He formed his opinion of Philip gradually. He became aware of his occasionally bizarre methods, of the frequency with which he was baited and ribbed by the others, and of his increasingly tall stories. The final straw was when he came in to the canteen, during the break on evening shift, clutching a Chinese meal in a foil tray.

'Chicken curry and chips?' The question was rhetorical.

'No it's not, clever bugger.'

'What the fuck is it then?'

'It's a Japanese bird'. Mild uproar, nudges, winks and ribaldry.

'It's bloody chicken - let's see'. An oily hand grabbed a piece of what was demonstrably domestic pullet.

'Gerrof - that's very expensive'.

'What? 70p?'

'That cost me £2.50. It's not chicken'. (Mild uproar, omnes). 'It's...(a dignified sigh) 'it's ...similar (the word was torn from his soul) but it's a rare Japanese bird' (a slight quickening in pace then a pause) - 'it's called the Ogumbi bird' (the words tumbled out with relief - it had a name, it became real). 'They order it for <u>very</u> special customers. I ring 'em up - I don't <u>like</u> poxy chicken, I get this for the taste.'

'Well...(paroxysms of menials laughter having died away) 'if t'Golden Crown (every word was heavily emphasised) 'send all t'way to Japan for this slant eyed-sparrer for <u>very special</u> customers like Portcullis, on account of its unusual taste, it must be

something really special...'

A blackened hand swooped and made off with part of Philip's dinner. A forest of similar hands descended, covering him in gravy and reducing his meal to bones and peas. The end-of-break whistle sounded and they left him in the canteen.

'Fucking chicken' echoed derisively with the boots down the corridor. 'Fucking Portcullis'.(5)

The graduate came to the conclusion that Portcullis was an absurd (6) figure but he was troubled because he had not always found him so, and did not find him so on every occasion. He was in most respects a competent and certainly an energetic and hard worker. He was left alone if and when he obviously wanted to be left alone. He was often protected from the consequences of his most ridiculous claims, almost as though there was a limit to which he was allowed to humiliate himself, and he was if not exactly liked, viewed as an interesting and entertaining member of the community.

The information which pointed him to be the factory idiot and a congenital liar was not instantly available. His physical appearance did not mark him out from the rest; in a factory whose workforce resembled the supporting cast of 'Oliver!' he was almost to be positively distinguished by his apparent normality. His lies were usually modest, at least initially. He could well have owned a Datsun car with a radio telephone and have been left some money by a relative. It was when the car did 160 mph and three relatives died within a fortnight all bequeathing fortunes that his credibility came into question. How could the naive observer cope with Portcullis?

The graduate was concerned at this stage, with how to determine who to trust, and who to believe, within the factory(7). He had not considered the importance of Portcullises for qualitative sociology, for it was a discipline with which he was as yet unfamiliar. He did begin, however, to question his own intuitive judgements. He even began to wonder whether we were all Portcullises at times, both in our behaviour and our conversation. 'Maybe we all get treated like Portcullises,' he thought 'or maybe we're making him like that'(8). If there was the Portcullis in all

of us, what happened when one met a group of Portcullises, or people having Portcullis days or phases? Is there anything which induces this behaviour, or prevents it, or acts as a sign for it? Is Portcullis really a motiveless liar or is there a reason for his lying? But what troubled him most was that if there were no way of establishing who was reliable then how could he practically evaluate the 'social knowledge' which he was seeking to acquire? This concern was to feed into his later work.

Portcullis left the dairy, saying he was emigrating to Canada. Some weeks after, the graduate found him unloading a furniture lorry in the town centre. 'Hello, Philip,' he said, 'I thought you'd gone to Canada?'

'Er...yes...I did. I've just come back for a week, I'm going back on Saturday.' He looked at the furniture van as though it was unfamiliar. 'Me mother's new settee. I had to come back over 'cost I forgot to collect my holiday pay.'

Martin the Mixer-Man

The graduate spent some time at the dairy, eventually progressing to the dock, although having worked on every job in the establishment, including fork-lift driving, carton and cream making, and pasteurising. He left to return to his literary studies.

One of his concerns at this time was textual criticism(9). As a master's student of literature, questions of the authenticity of a text were often raised, and the question of how much error we might allow in a text before it becomes worthless, or a different text, was frequently voiced. The problem, of course, is that we can never know what is a definitive text - an author may even be doubtful and may have various readings or versions which change their order of preference over time. It is nevertheless our obligation to be rigorous in removing editor's or printer's errors, and similar mistakes when they can be recognised(10).

His thoughts returned at this time to Portcullis. How much of Portcullis-type lying, fantasy, or even error, whether from Portcullis himself or from others, would make the graduate's

impression or account of the dairy spurious or misleading? In what sense could such an account be called 'true' and how would this compare with the 'truth' of a text or the 'truth' of poetry? It seemed to him that social research was very much at the mercy of its subjects, and its 'truth' was thus a precarious and shabby affair, compared with the inalienable but inexplicable truths of literature. It was a feeling which he was to consider much further.

Completing his degree, he moved into a number of manual jobs, the most rewarding of which was at a large and modern confectionery factory. The work of the production line was to produce small fruit pies. Ingredients were assembled and mixed on a raised mezzanine floor at one end of the factory; dough and fruit were mixed separately and brought together when dropped into the pie-making machine on the floor below. The pies were passed through a huge oven, then through a cooler, and were packed from a long conveyor belt. The factory contained ten such production lines, side by side, but self-contained. On the mixing mezzanine, there was much more horizontal negotiation with other departments, and due to the necessity to operate a little in front of the production line, there were more opportunities to take breaks and indulge in conversations.

The graduate was moved from the line to the mezzanine as a replacement, and was eventually trained and given a job as a mixer-man. As such he worked side by side with Martin, an intelligent and articulate young man, who had been trained as a drama teacher but had never worked as one. Martin was a skilful and energetic worker; he worked long hours and was highly regarded, but he was addicted to conversation and argument and was constantly questioning the things around him. He questioned his orders, the life-plans of the girls on the line, the news in the papers, the canteen sausages. One day, as they walked along the mezzanine which bestrode the production line Martin waved his right arm towards the factory floor.

> 'Look at this, full production. Everything going like the clappers to produce WASTE. Crap. It's absurd. We want

> satisfying work, we need to feel there's some worth to our product not contempt. What do we make? What good does it do? It rots your teeth, makes you fat, gives you cancer and it's fucking expensive. We can't even afford it. What's the point in knocking yourself out, investing all this time and money and effort in shit?'(11)

If Martin's account had been given to his fellow-workers it would no doubt have found some support. But it would have done so only by virtue of its own persuasiveness, in providing the hearer with a means to realising the thoughts embodied in it, with some degree of self-recognition. It was uncommon and distinctive and yet not outrageous - but such accounts were rare. Martin was persuasive and gifted but generally regarded as eccentric in view of his perpetual questioning. The graduate felt there were two problems here.

The first was the reverse of the Portcullis problem - what status can be given to the account which is 'positively deviant', insightful but atypical?(12) Neither Martin's competence nor his integrity were in question, and his account was imaginative and pertinent. How much weight could or should be attached to such an account in making sense of or developing another account of a social situation? Whereas the literary critic would be prepared to view it in its own right, as pursuing its own atomistic truth, would this view be fruitful to a social researcher, whether lay or professional? Alongside this consideration was the second question of why Martin's account should stand out with such relief, and why it should be so uncommon.

It was in considering this question that the present research had its real origins. The graduate felt that for Martin's account to stand out as it did, then a contrary account must be articulated with great frequency and by largely implicit means. We were all, to some degree, being persuaded of its validity, or accepting its terms of reference, almost without awareness.

What the General Manager described as a situation of which 'we can be justifiably proud'(13) and Martin riposted 'we could be justifiably sick'(14) was not a clear-cut one. Possibly its most

significant aspect was its ambiguity, for it was that which enabled Martin and the Manager to maintain the distance between them, and yet still co-operate with each other. It was this ambiguity, and the way it was sustained, that the graduate decided he wanted to investigate.

After a further period of study, converting himself via another master's degree into a sociologist(15), and a practical consultancy-based project in the personnel department of the confectionery company over a six month period, he began his doctoral research by returning to the company in his original capacity as a low-grade worker. He worked this time on a different production line, working nights and days, and covered a whole range of jobs on the plant whilst also being trained as a high grade mixer operator. By the time his research had finished, he had spent eighteen months in total (over a three year period) working in the company in a manual capacity; and a further three months involvement in administering a questionnaire and interview attitude survey as part of a project on absenteeism on behalf of a joint union/management committee. He had worked on two plants on which had done every job, from packing to mixing to oven minding; he had worked on every plant for at least one shift; he had worked on all three shifts, including many double shifts; and he held certificates to operate three of the major mixing machines. It is upon observations made and notes taken during these periods that this account is based.

Chapter Two - Part Two

On the Creation of Truth

> 'Understanding is a problem in the world, and if it can be solved at all is to be solved in the world. People do solve it day by day. If their solutions fall somewhat short of the philosopher's ideal of purity and precision, so much the worse for philosophers - because understanding can be found only where it is. If absolute truth and true understanding can be found only in an imaginary prejudice - free, antiseptic world emancipated from its earthly commitments, there are no such thins as absolute truth and full understanding.'(16)

The problem of Portcullis and Martin is essentially the same one. In both cases, the difficulty is that of knowing what status to give to the data, account, or information provided by a member of another social group, and is highlighted in each case by their individual eccentricity. In Portcullis's case, the question is whether he is lying or not, and is often of a substantive nature; with Martin, the question is largely how much significance to place on his version of the way of life of the factory. Both questions are important to the lay member getting to know the situation, or the academic attempting to research it.

When these questions were raised in a seminar discussion(17), it was suggested that in fact Portcullis did not pose any problem at all, because we <u>can</u> know what is true over substantive areas. It was suggested that verification of Portcullis' possession of a car can take place, although that of his sexual prowess could not (in the normal way of things). One might reasonably add to this that Portcullis' inner feelings, his personal relationships and other qualitative, ephemeral issues are equally incapable of verification, whilst the size of his shoes <u>is</u> verifiable.

Let us examine how we might verify Portcullis' possession of a car. As lay members, we might assume that sufficient verification is afforded by seeing him, possibly with some degree of regularity, get into a car, drive it, turn up to work in it, and even produce the registration document with his name in it. But there are many variants of this procedure, and not all may be verified at once.

Portcullis may be using his father's car, one which he uses but which is registered in his father's name. In this case either one of them could 'own' the vehicle; his father could 'possess' it as registered keeper or Portcullis could 'possess' it as main user. Portcullis, in different circumstances, might be owner and registered keeper; but he might not feel that the car was 'his'. In these circumstances, his family or parents may have such calls on the car, and invest it with such meaning of their own that he feels it merely represents a set of obligations rather than an expression of his individuality.

The concept of 'possession', of what it means to say 'this is Portcullis's car' is flexible. Before we can make a decision on whether Portcullis has a car or not we must decide what we mean by this; if we are setting out to verify a claim by Portcullis we must check out what he means by his claims. We can then test out observable data with either our criteria, Portcullis criteria, or an agreed negotiated version of the two.

The problems of doing this are numerous. There are so many substantive issues which may require verification that there simply would not be enough time to investigate them all. Our concern, being practical both as researchers and laymen, is not to tear Portcullis to pieces and examine each of his many claims but to understand him in context. This would be impossible if we followed him around town, checked his driving documents, and lurked outside his garage. We would be likely to intimidate him beyond tolerable limits. Therefore we operate on a form of shorthand: common sense tells us that if Portcullis gets into a car we can assume it is his until we need to prove otherwise, or alternative information (eg Portcullis being arrested) is presented.

But no matter what we decide are to be our criteria of verification, no matter how detailed our conception of what constitutes possession in this case, we are nevertheless determining what is true or what is false according to our own agreed means. We have not said (nor do we intend to say) anything about the absolute condition of the 'relationship-called-possession', nor have we examined the absolute qualities of 'that-

which-we-call-a-car'. We are not talking about 'possession' or 'cars' in any absolute sense - we are talking about what we call 'possession' or 'cars' established by a process of shared agreement.

> 'Shared agreement' refers to various social methods for accomplishing the member's recognition that something was said-according-to-a-rule and not the demonstrable matching of substantive matters...'(18)

In other words, if Portcullis said 'That is my car' whilst getting into it and driving it off (or having previously been seen to do so), we are likely to believe him; if he said it whilst pointing to a police patrol car we would be unlikely to accept it. We have established rules by which we may measure truth; we have said nothing about an absolute truth which might exist beyond our negotiations and agreements.

Our observations and verifications depend also on our senses. We may think we see Portcullis driving a car but we are mistaken; we may mishear his original claim. Our procedures, which may or may not be 'scientific', for checking on our senses by comparing our impressions to those of others by documentation, or instrumentation, do not remove the dependence on the senses for their ultimate interpretation, notwithstanding any faults in the instruments themselves(19).

We do not make our observations in a vacuum, and they depend to a large extent, on the theory or theories which pre-suppose them (or the paradigms which govern our practices and mediate our perceptions). We will see that which we either expect to see or are able to see until somehow we are able to make a 'gestalt' switch and see things differently(20), or develop a new theory which enables us to see them in its modifying light.

In a simple everyday example used by Kuhn, when we stagger to the kettle at six a.m. and mutter through our stubble that 'the gas won't light', we are observing something that was impossible before the mid-eighteenth century, for the concept of 'gas' did not

exist(21). We now have the theory to know that of gases, some ignite; and the opportunity to complain when those expected to do so, violate the paradigm.

We are never in a position to say that something is 'true' absolutely; that all humanity is not, ultimately, the victim of a huge delusion, a massive hypnosis, a totally disabling inability to perceive certain fundamental absolutes. So we have our own truths, our practical everyday truths, our 'that-which-we-agree-to-stand-as-truth' in the absence of an absolute truth.

Thusthe problem of verifying Portcullis' sexual prowess without morally compromising ourselves is not a difference of kind over verifying his possession of a car, but of accessibility of data. If we could observe him we might be able to assess his performance by length of stay, variety of positions, frequency of orgasms or amount of ejaculation but there are some areas (e.g. the mystery of the orgasm) which we will never adequately plumb. But the 'internal' psychological data about the orgasm held by Portcullis' partner is no different in kind to the 'internal' data he holds about his car. If we rule that out of order in our criteria of possession, we may similarly rule orgasmic data out of order in our assessment of sexual prowess. What we create is a form of shorthand in each case - certain easily verifiable substantive features are accepted as being indicators of those less easily verified. Thus Portcullis driving a car may be sufficient for all practical purposes to constitute ownership or possession. The easily verifiable size of his shoes might well be taken to indicate his sexual accomplishment (mediated via the assumption that size of shoes is equivalent to size of 'equipment' which is indicative of ability to provide satisfaction which is in turn the criterion of prowess).

The problem is not one of kind, as I have said, but of common accessibility, by any means, scientific or otherwise. To divide substantive and 'psychological' data is to commit what Ryle calls a 'Category-Mistake'.

'A foreigner visiting Oxford or Cambridge for the first time is shown a number of colleges, libraries, playing fields, museums, scientific departments and administrative offices. He then asks, 'But where is the University?' I have seen where the members of the colleges live, where the Registrar works, where the scientists experiment and the rest. But I have not yet seen the University in which reside and work the members of your University'. It has to be explained to him that the University is not another collateral institution, some ulterior counterpart to the colleges, laboratories, and offices which he has seen. The University is just the way in which all that he has already seen is organised. When they are seen and when their co-ordination is understood, the University has been seen. His mistake lay in his innocent assumption that it was correct to speak of ChristChurch, the Bodleian Library, the Ashmolean Museum and the University, to speak, that is, as if the 'University' stood for an extra member of the class of which these other units are members. He was mistakenly allocating the University to the same category as that to which the other institutions belong.(22)

Forms of data in our example correspond to the colleges; truth to the University. In other words, truth is not separate from everyday life, it is the substance of the way in which it is organised, it is the very quality which is negotiated and established by our everyday lives. We cannot therefore say it is possible to verify substantive data and not possible to verify psychological data; for we are doing so perpetually. Our problem is one of the relative difficulty of the negotiation of 'what-will-count-as-truth'.

The dualism of substance and experience has traditionally been subsumed under the correspondence or coherence theories of truth.

'Correspondence theory asserts that a proposition is true if there is an object corresponding to the proposition, and it is this position that embraces positivism. A coherence theory asserts that a proposition is true if it is consistent with experience.'(23)

Correspondence theories take four forms - truth is a Copy, an Image, a Reflex or a Test. Truth as a copy suggests that statements are true if they copy or picture some object in the real world. However, we find difficulty in finding objects in the world which correspond to conditionals like 'if', and 'perhaps', or 'Hello' and 'Goodbye'. Much of our speech is about the nonmaterial

world, and the copy theory fails to account for this. It may work in a simple instance of naming and pointing, when I point to a table and say 'it's a table'. But this does not picture a table - it refers to it. Copy theory would only allow us to represent things, not to talk about them. As Silverman observes, the real 'sense of my utterance will reside not in my intentions (e.g. as a statement) but in the practices through which others come to recognise its sense (e.g. as a joke)'.(24)

Silverman goes on to emphasise that the recognition of a truth-claim resides not in its copying of reality, but in whether it is taken to represent some aspect of reality, or a real relationship, 'in the context in which it is uttered, by the community to whom it is addressed.'(25) The table does not become a table until recognised and spoken about as a table.

The copy theory of truth thus has serious inadequacies. The Image Theory (words are concepts because they are associated with mental images) and Reflex Theory (words are the names of properties that exist in the world) have similar flaws - the first theory fails to account for concepts that cannot be visualised ('function' and 'virtue' are McHugh's examples(25)); the second fails on two counts. Firstly, it cannot cope with relational or comparative statements; if properties like 'yellow' are universal, it is not possible to account for 'yellower' conditions. Secondly, a statement is said to refer both to general types of situations, which conventionally <u>may</u> occur, and to actual history in which these situations do or do not occur. Truth occurs in the correlation between these two, given that the situation is a 'standard' one and not anomalous. Words may not have any necessary connection to objects, but they must correlate with actuality under standard conditions. We are given no guide to the determination of 'standard' conditions, and in determining them it would seem that the choice is between a regressive series of 'standard conditions for the determination of standard conditions etc' or the object world of copy theory(27).

Possibly the most widely influential of the four theories has been

Test Theory, which states that true ideas are those we can verify, or at least cannot refute after all reasonable efforts. As Silverman observes, this really implies that true statements are recognised not in terms of any correspondence to reality, but in their correct application of method. The truth of a statement resides in its ability to be recognised by a community as in accord with warranted methods for establishing truth, but this implication is not explicit in the theory(28).

Coherence theories of truth attempt to move from a world primarily determined by objects, to one which is primarily mental. A concept (e.g. yellow) arises as the result of the mind comparing 'yellow' as it occurs in various guises until the concept exists in the mind. It is created in the mind, not out in the object world. The concepts are the universals, not, as in reflex theory, the properties. The problem with this view is that if the concepts are entirely mental, what is it which the mind compares in order to generate the concept? Further, if concepts are entirely mental, and not object-centred how can they be shared socially? Do we have to perpetually rediscover properties anew as individuals? Where correspondence theory proposes a world of material objects, coherence theory proposes one of private minds; both neglect the social context of truth.

> 'That truth might reside in some thing, universally and eternally there for the discovery, is to formulate an insoluble problem. We must accept that there are no adequate grounds for establishing criteria of truth except the grounds that are employed to grant or concede it - truth is conceivable only as a socially organised upshot of contingent courses of linguistic, conceptual and social courses of behaviour. The truth of a statement is not independent of the conditions of its utterance, and so to study truth is to study the ways in which truth can be methodically conferred.'(29)

The ways in which the man-in-the-street establishes truth and the sociologist establishes truth are both fundamentally the same - the difference is that sociologists operate 'consciously and in a methodical way'(30). Heidegger, Schutz and Garfinkel are all agreed that there is only one form of understanding, that of common sense, and science is merely a specialised form of common sense.

Therefore the questions which we raised about Portcullis and how to establish the truth of his statements would depend on the common sense assumptions which were brought to bear on the situation, and upon our conscious explication of them as sociologists.

Common Sense

Let us look further at the concept of common sense. Almost everything we say and do assumes that others will understand it, or will be able to render it meaningful.

> 'Meaning is not a quality of certain lived experiences emerging distinctively in the stream of consciousness...it is rather the result of my explication of past lived experiences which are grasped reflectively from an actual now and from an actually valid reference schema...'(31)

The very fact that we do speak or address our utterances to an audience demonstrates that we expect to be understood, and by implication that we share the same reference schema. Insofar as this is so, that we do have mutual access to 'meaning', then it will remain unexplicated. The understanding will remain tacit, unspoken, because it would be stating the obvious, what-everyone-knows. Our speech contains a demonstration of the way we live, an affirmation of community, but as it remains implicit we must break the flow of everyday communication, to 'interrupt' it, to reveal its assumptions and its workings(32).

> 'The world as world is only revealed to me when things go wrong.'(33)

To take an example from the classroom, I may go into a class one day and say to them 'I am starting to teach you sociology'. In making this statement I am assuming that we share an understanding of two key operations: what it means 'to start' and what it means 'to teach'(34). Because I assume this, I 'gloss' over these words, and treat them as being unproblematic. My language reflects a 'form of life' in which 'starting' and 'teaching' are meaningful, and when my pupils demonstrate understanding, we both participate

in this 'form of life', because we both know what it entails, we know 'how to go on'(35).

This confirmatory experience is not confined to language, but may be accomplished by action alone.

> 'Consider a transaction in which A gives B one penny in payment for something received (in the form of goods or services). At t=-1 second, A prepares to give B one penny, because that is 'the done thing' in this situation. B has given A something, A knows that he must pay for that, money is legal tender, one penny is the going rate. At t=zero, A gives B one penny. At t=+1 second, A has given B one penny, one penny is confirmed as the going rate, money is confirmed as legal tender. The payment for something is confirmed'.(36)

These assumptions are necessary to simplify the task of exchange, to make the structuring of everyday life run smoothly, as are the assumptions I make with my students, and both enable us to focus our attention on 'more important' things. But in neither the transaction nor the teaching, are we expressing the only way of doing things, although it is our habit not to consider alternatives while things are running smoothly.

In our classroom example, when I use the expression 'to start', I imply that we share a form of life which consists of discrete, finitely bounded experiences; a linear notion of time; identifiable phases of activity, beginnings and ends; and that these experiences and activities can be initiated unilaterally. There may be circumstances under which we disagree as to my performative actualization of the idea or in which our conceptions do not coincide. You may think that I don't 'start' quickly enough, or that I haven't 'got started', or that I have missed the point entirely, but despite our disagreements and discrepancies we maintain this core of shared meaning, a shared knowledge of the concept of starting. When I consider starting, I may find that there are some features which I consider essential or common to all instances of starting, others (for example, a verbal preamble, or a clearing of the throat) more peripheral. My audience will have similar conceptions. What we represent in our speech are the areas in which these overlap and are shared. Diagrammatically, this is

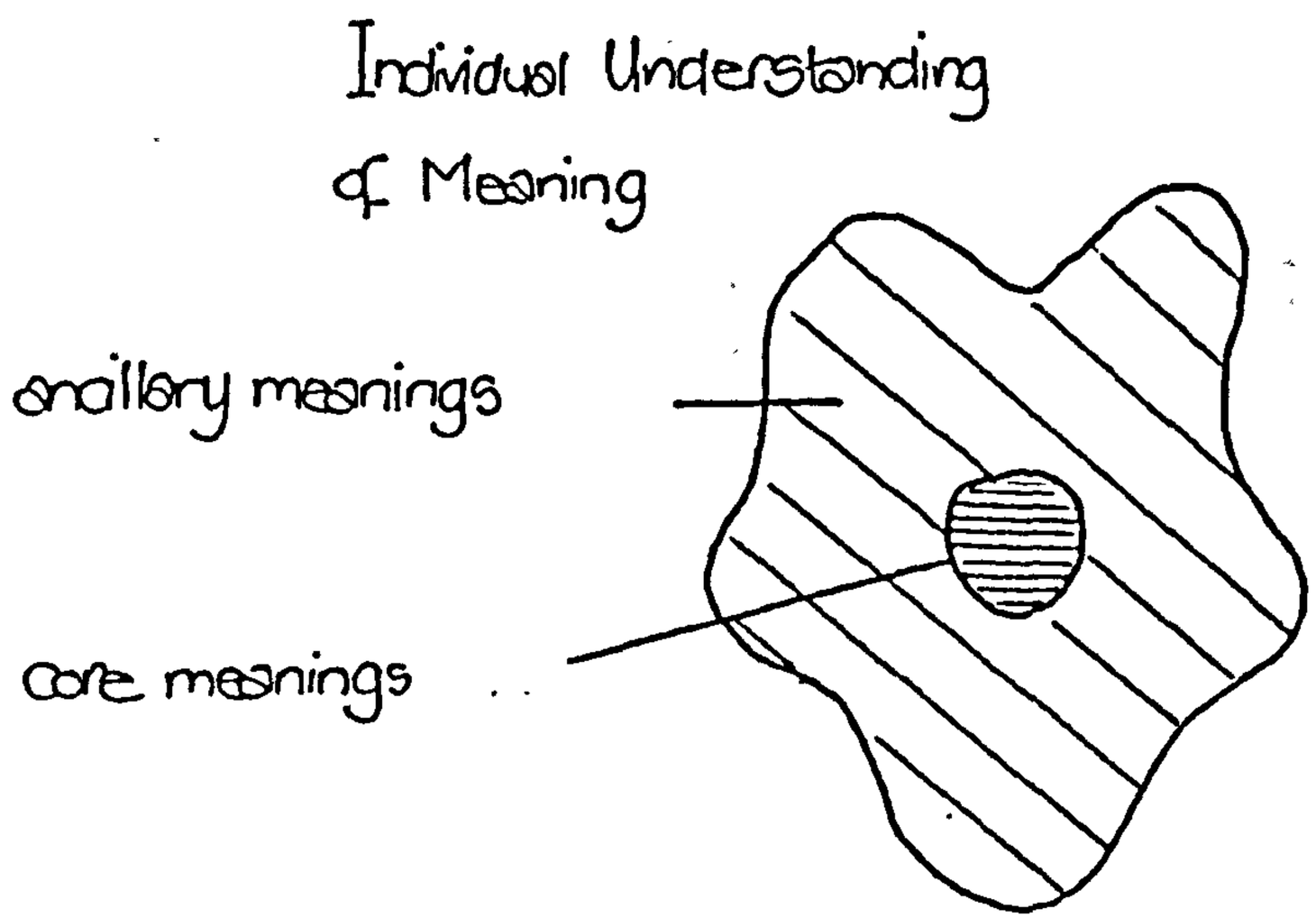
shown in Figure 2(37).

Similarly with the idea expressed by the verb 'to teach'. We may disagree on whether it is done best by distance learning, directed reading, teaching machine, action learning, lecture or experiential learning, but in constituting it we propose: a relationship of teacher-pupil; a commodity (knowledge) which is transferable; that 'teaching' can be turned off and on; the possibility of separate lessons or parts of a subject; an educational system which validates 'teaching' and in the verb being transitive, the idea of separate distinguishable subjects. These last options are reinforced by the whole sentence structure and this is strengthened by the context of the utterance - were it uttered by a traffic-warden to a motorist one might expect confusion and/or the necessity for a radically different interpretation. There is also an implication of inevitability - the learning is not conditional. It may be more or less successful, but it <u>will</u> take place, we expect it to.

But what if our form of life did not have these concepts? What if, like the Hopi Indians, we viewed time as circular, as the visit of the same man every day, rather than as passing away irretrievably? Or if we were on a continuum whereby activities were resumed, more or less, and not begun or ended? If 'knowledge' in this case may be shared or emphasised, but not transferred, or were incapable of being viewed as an object at all? If there was no such concept as teaching but only continuous learning, which was perpetual and timeless, and neither I, nor anyone else had the authority to presume to facilitate or take part in a process of personal growth or development? Then my statement would be impossible; it would be very difficult for me even to conceive of it.

Garfinkel and the Documentary Method

Garfinkel's ethnomethodology consists of various attempts to reveal those procedures by which 'members' of society make sense of their everyday lives and to expose their common sense assumptions. His incongruity procedures are exemplified in an experiment which demonstrates that statements are not simply accepted or rejected if



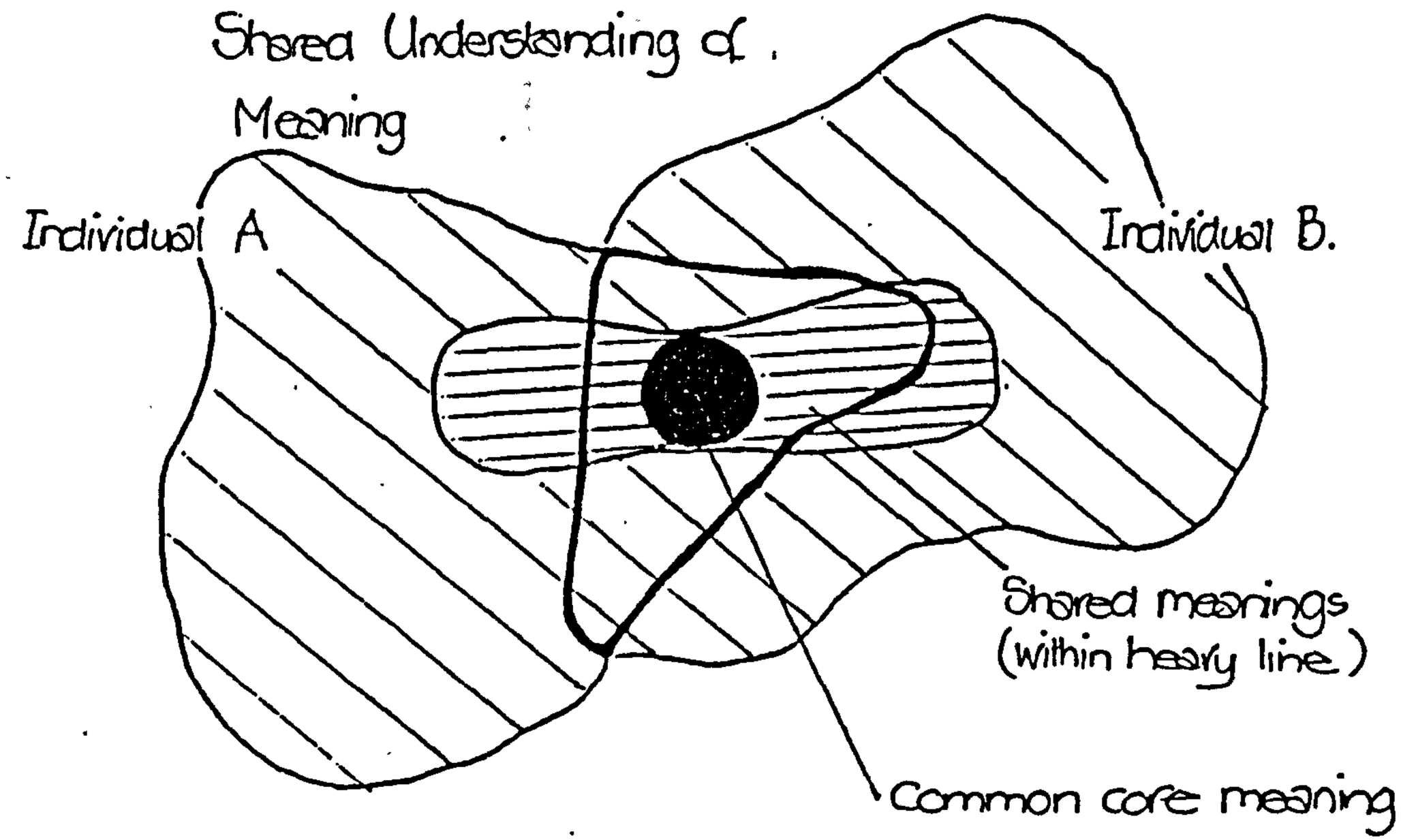


Figure 2. Some dimensions of shared understanding

they correspond to a mutual 'form-of-life', but that they are seen in terms of this 'form of life' and are actively elaborated by members in order to affirm it(38).

Garfinkel asked students to volunteer for counselling about their personal problems. Each student provided the counsellor with background information on their problem and then asked a question or series of questions, that could be answered 'yes' or 'no' by the counsellor. The counsellor and student were separated by a screen, so their communication was restricted to the verbal, and the student recorded responses to each reply into a tape recorder. A sample exchange went as follows:

> SUBJECT: Ok,this is the situation that I am presented with. I happen to be of the Jewish faith and I have been dating a Gentile girl now for about two months. My dad is not directly opposed to this situation, but I feel at the same time that he is not exactly pleased with it. Mother feels that as long as Dad is not directly opposed to this situation that I should go ahead and continue dating until he makes some direct statement to the contrary. My reason for feeling why he is not too pleased with this is that he has never said don't date her, but at the same time he will come up with digs and sayings that make me feel very ill at ease about dating the girl. My question is, do you feel under the present circumstances that I should continue or stop dating this girl? Let me put that in a positive way. Do you feel that I should continue dating this girl?
>
> EXPERIMENTER: My answer is no.
>
> SUBJECT: No. Well, that is kind of interesting. I kinda feel that there is really no great animosity between Dad and I but, well, perhaps he feels that greater dislike will grow out of this. I suppose or maybe it is easier for an outsider to see certain things that I am blind to at this moment.
>
> I would like to ask my second question now.
>
> EXPERIMENTER: Okay.
>
> SUBJECT: Do you feel that I should have a further discussion with Dad about this situation or not? Should I have further discussions with Dad over this subject about dating the Gentile girl?
>
> EXPERIMENTER: My answer is yes.
>
> SUBJECT: Well I feel that is reasonable but I really don't know what to say to him. I mean he seems to be not really too

understanding. In other words he seems to be afraid really to discuss the situation. I mean at least it appears that way to me so far. But I guess if it is worthwhile to me, if I really want to continue to date her that I will go on and have this discussion with Dad. I really don't know what to say because I mean I am dating her. I am not in love with her or anything but I really never know what is going to come out. I guess we should have a discussion based on what the future possibilities might be and how he would feel about that. He may not be too strongly opposed now because we are only dating, but perhaps he sees future complications that he would really like to get off his chest at the moment. I am ready for my third question now.

If after having my conversation with Dad and he says to continue dating her, but at the same time he gives me an impression that he is really not, he really does not want me to date her, but he is only doing it because he wants to be a good Dad, should under these conditions, should I still date the girl?

EXPERIMENTER: My answer is yes.

SUBJECT: Well I am actually surprised at the answer. I expected a no answer on that. Perhaps this is because you are not quite aware of my dad and his reactions and he seems to be the type of person that is sensitive and therefore he is very careful in the way that he will handle things. Even though he might have said go ahead and date her I perhaps would feel guilty in knowing that he really did not want me to continue to date her. Though I don't know that it would actually help the situation any.(39)

The subject was asked to make overall comments at the end of the session. These comments in the above case included observations that the answers were 'aware of the situation as we moved along', were 'helpful', 'made a lot of sense', 'had a lot of meaning to me', and that the counsellor 'was completely aware of the situation at hand'.

The counsellor, or experimenter, was in fact replying with random 'yes' or 'no' responses. His responses were not made to the questions, but this did not prevent the subjects from finding them meaningful. In his analysis of the ways in which the subjects rendered these responses meaningful, Garfinkel makes a number of points which are relevant to our consideration of 'common sense'.

The first point is that 'the subjects heard the experimenter's answers as answers to the questions'(40). The point being made is

that this was not the case, but the subjects responded not to the answers, but to the symbolic 'definition of the situation' as counselling. This is part of the naive intersubjectivity of everyday life, that we will accept symbolic definitions as real until we have good reason to believe otherwise. We will interpret responses as being in accord with this definition, and will elaborate and confirm this definition, until an anomaly which proves unaccountable appears. Of course, the longer the definition is accepted, the deeper our commitment to it and the harder it is for the existence of an anomaly to be recognised. So it is possible for us to be misled by a confidence trickster, or by a Portcullis, if the information that he is a liar does not fall in with our original definition of the situation, and/or we are not given extremes of incongruity in his evidence. Possibly the crucial factor in Portcullis' case was that he went to those extremes of incongruity; but nevertheless was given the benefit of others' efforts to restore the original definition of him being normal and honest wherever the possibility was allowable.

The second point derives from the first, in that the 'Yes' or 'No' responses were not seen as such, but as 'advice'. Simple content will be invested with significances. This is what sustains human communication, in that it is the way in which a social relationship is created. Life is not digestible as a series of random events, but is constructed into an exchange of and participation in ways of seeing things. Thus almost any term used in conversation - 'teach', 'sociology', 'love' for example - transcends its literal meaning.

The third point Garfinkel makes is that

> 'Over the course of the exchange the assumption seemed to operate that there was an answer to be obtained, and that if the answer was not obvious, that its meaning could be determined by active search, one part of which involved asking another question to find out what the advisor had in mind.'(41)

The interaction is endowed with a purpose, to 'search' for an

'answer', and the outcome is posited in the definition of the situation. This 'theme' of the interaction is sustained

> 'by the actor's capacity to continue to interpret the responses of the other as relevant to that meaning - regardless of whether it really is.'(42)

Thus the interaction is maintained by perceptions and impressions which are imported into the situation to retain its continuity.

Garfinkel's next point is that 'the identical utterance was capable of answering several different questions simultaneously'(43). What Garfinkel makes of this, that yes/no answers were taken to be answers to questions which could not be answered by a simple yes or no, is that common sense social interaction is not logical in itself, but it is a response to rational concerns (e.g. seeking support for a position already assumed). Garfinkel distinguishes between scientific rationality and common sense rationality, suggesting that the former would irretrievably interrupt the latter, and this is upheld by his own procedures. However, I would suggest that Garfinkel's own 'scientific' rationality disrupts community because it is so constituted to do so, and that this is not part of the nature of science itself but a consequence of his methods.

Garfinkel's next point is a development of the previous one and is crucial to his differentiation between science and common sense. What Garfinkel says is this:

> 'More subjects entertained the possibility of a trick than tested this possibility. All suspicious subjects were reluctant to act under the belief that there was a trick involved. Suspicions were reduced if the adviser's answers made 'good sense'. Suspicions were least likely to continue if the answers accorded with the subject's previous thought about the matter and with his preferred decisions.'(44)

Although we might not be consistent or logical in ourselves, and might realise that inconsistency and illogicality are features of our interactions, we are not likely to pursue lines of enquiry

which would reveal such inconsistency if it can be avoided. Garfinkel's principle is one of the avoidance of tests, in that subjects have a commitment to their own creations (their interpretation of the situation) and will not test the situation out for what it is as long as their definition seems to make sense or can be made to seem to make sense. The world which is 'taken for granted' consists of procedures, possibilities and rules which are not normally tested, and the longer that these rules survive the less likely they are to be tested.

> 'Indeed, the more important the rule, the greater is the likelihood that knowledge is based on avoided tests.'(45)

This, Garfinkel submits is the crucial difference between scientific rationality and common sense rationality. Common sense rationality has the purpose of sustaining social life, scientific rationality has the purpose of testing its bases. Common sense accepts that things are as they appear, science is neutral or sceptical to this idea. We may accept that our teacher is an expert, but this is social rationality, not scientific. Indeed, Garfinkel believes that a scientific stance towards the social world would, by its pursuit of doubt and neutrality, disrupt society and its organization, and result in anomie and collapse. Garfinkel does not assert the superiority of one form over the other, as Popper might say of science, and his own work is offered not as a means of assessing the merits of interpretative procedures with any meliorisation in mind, but merely as a dispassionate examination. Science for Garfinkel is disinterested pursuing doubt; common sense takes the world for granted, pursuing affirmation.

Garfinkel concludes his examination with some further observations on how responses are ordered.

The first of these is that 'pattern' is conceived and sought for in the responses. The responses were not discrete, or contradictory but were part of a pattern which fitted together. The sense of pattern is pre-established and is brought into the situation - the

character of the response itself is not sufficient to establish it, and if pattern cannot be established then further responses will be sought in an attempt to broaden the perspective. Once the pattern is established, responses will be used to 'document' the pattern and give it actuality.

Garfinkel also makes a point about 'projection', in that answers are seen as answers to the 'question' that the questioner had in mind, even if they are not so, and even if this 'question' was not explicit in the stated question. The implications of this point are profound, and the problem of interpretation of questions, responses and accounts is heavily underlined. Garfinkel emphasises the importance of knowledge of the backgrounds of the members who make utterances for the understanding of those utterances.

He continues with the observation that:

> 'Subjects make specific reference to various social structures in deciding the sensible and warranted character of the adviser's advice.'(46)

The advice was tested against the adviser's knowledge of 'normatively valued social structures' which the subject accepted as conditions that his decisions, with respect to his own sensible grasp of his circumstances and the 'good' character of his adviser's advice, had to satisfy'.(47)

The process of interpretation therefore is the working out of institutional directives, of rules and imperatives, which the individuals are attempting to clarify or define, or to validate. They attempt to establish their valued institutions within their conversations with others. Their rules or methods for determining truth will seek their own validation in interaction. This could be one reason why Garfinkel's disruptive institution of science results in a methodology of incongruity which disrupts society.

Garfinkel's final review of his 'findings' is interesting and presents us with a paradox which he fails to resolve.

'Through the work of documenting, i.e. by searching for and determining pattern, by treating the adviser's answers as motivated by the intended sense of the question, by waiting for later answers to clarify the sense of previous ones, by finding answers to unasked questions - the perceivedly normal values of what was being advised, were established, tested, reviewed, retained, restored, in a word, managed. It is misleading, therefore, to think of the documentary method as a procedure whereby propositions are accorded membership to a scientific corpus. Rather the documentary method developed the advice so as to be continually 'membership'ing' it.'(48)

The paradox is that while Garfinkel clings to a belief in a neutral, descriptive 'naturalistic' science, he also affirms that thereis no possibility of a description free from presuppositions. His model of the ideal scientist would appear to be similar to the falsificationist mode of Popper, of a scientist who actively seeks the refutation of his own theories and assumptions.

'...if you can design some experimental test which you think might refute my assertion, I shall gladly, and to the best of my powers, help you to refute it'.(49)

A comment on this is offered by Polanyi:

'...science is supposed to be dispassionate. There is indeed an idealisation of this current today, which deems the scientist not only indifferent to the outcome of his surmises, but actually seeking their refutation. This is not only contrary to experience, but logically inconceivable. The surmises of a working scientist are born of the imagination seeking discovery. Such effort risks defeat but never seeks it; it is in fact his craving for success, that makes the scientist take the risk of 'failure''.(50)

The scientists' failures or successes in turn must be validated by his community of fellow scientists for science is just as much a social activity as any other. A scientist is just as concerned to maintain his membership of the scientific community as is the lay member of a lay community, and uses similar methods. To take the example of the acceptance of the authority of the teacher as being non-scientific, as Garfinkel suggests:

'The acceptance of scientific statements by laymen is based on authority, and this is true to nearly the same extent for scientists using results from branches of science other than their own. Scientists must rely heavily for their facts on the authority of fellow scientists'.(51)

Polanyi goes on to say:

"This authority is enforced in an even more personal manner in the control exercised by scientists over the channels through which contributions are submitted to all other scientists. Only offerings that are deemed sufficiently plausible are accepted for publication in scientific journals, and what is rejected will be ignored by science'.(52)

This suggestion is supported by the study of the reasons, submitted by referees to journals, for the rejection of scientific articles conducted by Blum et al(53). The authors, in citing the referees' letters to the editor, and their rejection letters to the authors of the articles, demonstrate the lack of any consistently applied criteria in assessing the material which is rejected.

'It is then misleading to say that authors accept rejections, for they do not treat rejections as 'proofs'. A rejection is not an action with which one agrees, but rather it is an action which one understands. Authors accept rejections by understanding them, and the analytic character of rejection is provided for by showing how it is organised as an intelligible expression of the community to which both referee and author profess membership. Again, rejections are not descriptions, explanations or proofs, but methods of making reference to the authority of community.'(54)

The scientist then, is only human. In pursuit of his anti-social ends, he must nevertheless observe the conventions which bind together his own community. The notions of evaluation, truth, and bias are only possible within the auspices of a 'community'. They are consensual notions rather than abstract and absolute notions, and can exist simultaneously in as many forms as there are communities to constitute them.

To return to the problems with which we began: how do we assess, evaluate, determine the truth of, the accounts of Portcullis and

Martin? We can only do this with reference to the criteria of our community: the dairy, the bakery, the department of the college, our supervisors and examiners. We are, however, simultaneously members of different communities and subject to multiple realities(55): as scientists and laymen we are the battleground for competing visions, competing characterisations of truth, competing practical interests. It is the measure of our social skill that we apply the appropriate 'truth' to the appropriate context; to apply 'scientific' criteria in a social or lay situation, as Garfinkel observes, makes the latter impossible to sustain. To apply lay criteria or the criteria of good-fellowship to our seminars would soon destroy our academic reputations.

But to keep them separately partitioned is a misrepresentation of reality. As sociologists we must pursue all the perspectives open to us; we must penetrate the methods of our participant and scientific communities; we must seek to understand all the 'truths' which confront us in their fullness.

> 'So you are saying that human agreement decides what is true and what is false? It is what human beings <u>say</u> that is true and false; and they agree in the <u>language</u> they use. That is not agreement in opinions but in form of life.'(56)

The ways in which we might explore and come to understand 'forms of life' are discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter Three: Some Forms of Understanding

Introduction

In this chapter, the importance of agreement and community in establishing 'truth' is taken up in an examination of the means by which communities resolve truth-claims, namely method and rule. The work of Phillips, particularly in his criticism of Winch, is examined and those positivistic tendencies identified in Chapter One as underpinning much interpretative sociology are identified even in the work of Garfinkel. This is not the case however, with some of Garfinkel's theoretical antecedents, the thinkers of the hermeneutic tradition.

The development of hermeneutic thought is outlined through the early psychologism of Dilthey, who emphasised the distinction between erklaren and verstehen as respectively appropriate methods ofthe natural and social sciences, and developed the idea of the 'hermeneutic circle'. Gadamer's development of Dilthey's thought is critically explicated, with its reformulation of the hermeneutic circle, the idea of a 'prejudice', and the notions of meaning and objectivity. For Gadamer, truth is an inescapably relativistic creation mediated primarily through language, beyond which there is no critical standpoint.

Apel and Habermas criticise Gadamer, although emphasising the importance of language, for failing to identify the material conditions which shape its developments. In the latter part of this chapter Habermas' criticisms of Gadamer, and his own use of the idea of 'truth' and 'true consensus' in his theory of systematically distorted communication, are critically examined. The merits and limitations, and the considerable similarities in the work of both are discussed. Although the final position is unresolved, Gadamer seeing no escape from the linguisticality of existence whilst Habermas sees existence as meaningless without the possibility of such an escape, the emphasis which both place on the importance of language in establishing truth is acknowledged as crucial. A more detailed exploration of the nature of language is then taken up in the following chapter.

Method and Rule

We have seen that 'truth' for scientists as much as laymen is established by reference to the criteria determined by their particular community. In producing observations and accounts, these will be directed towards a particular audience, with the purpose of generating agreement, thereby confirming the author as a member of that community from which his audience springs. The persuasiveness of such an account, that is the extent to which it generates such agreement, is determined not by its content but by the way in which its content is produced, its observation of the community's standards of methodical procedure(1).

> 'There can be no sociological knowledge without community, and there can be no community without method...No method, no community; no community, no science.'(2)

As Phillips points out(3), sociologists and laymen frequently ask the same questions about the world, including "How do you know?" but they differ in the form of answer which they accept. The layman might accept a biographical answer, i.e. one couched in terms of his life experience: "it happened to me", "my neighbours do it", "I read it in the paper", "my dad says", would be examples. The sociologist demands a logical answer, i.e. one which presents the grounds of the assertion in terms of evidence, justification and proof(4). The former methods of course leave us no means of testing the truth of the answer, or contesting it other than contradiction, seeking to prove that it didn't happen, your neighbours don't do it, you didn't read it, or your dad didn't say so. It is not usually possible for this to be achieved, largely due to the personal nature of the data. There is no agreed means of establishing truth and avoiding conflict or of mediating between contrary accounts. Hence the interminable nature of saloon-bar arguments(5).

But sociologists, and members of a scientific community cannot sustain their community without some agreed means of deciding what constitutes evidence, and how it can be justified or proved. Thus the individual sociologist must speak in these terms in order to

generate agreement, or even to be heard. Truth is dependent for its existence on community, for it can only exist within a 'form of life'. Method is important for evaluating work, for excluding and protecting the community from fakes and tricksters(6).

> 'In science, as in democracy, there is always a need for some rules by which the worst tendencies of others will be checked and balanced. By placing a heavy emphasis on correct method, all members of a scientific community are assured a kind of collective protection: madmen, charlatans, fakers, and sophists are hopefully excluded from the ranks.'(7)

The importance of method has, Phillips argues, united sociologists such as Comte, Durkheim, Parsons and Garfinkel in their apparent diversity. At the heart of their investigations, the slumbering strains of positivism prompt the common belief that 'by observation, classification of data, and testing, social phenomena can be made to yield laws like those found in the natural sciences.'(8) Their versions of method may differ, but they unite in believing that it enables the discovery of laws and the power to predict events.

Such a belief in method (although it may not always be perceived at its level of commonality - Garfinkel and the ethnomethodologists are not regarded as unproblematic in their membership of the sociological community) tends to affirm that the right method will yield correct results for the genius and the mediocre alike, simply by its application, and tends to 'minimize or eliminate individual idiosyncrasies and pecularities'(9). Melville Dalton, himself a former engineer, has addressed the problem of individuality in science by examining the opinions of eminent individual scientists on 'scientific method'(10). Dalton quotes widely from various eminent sources, including Nobel prize winning physicists:

> 'There is no scientific method as such...The most vital feature of the scientist's procedure has merely been to do his utmost with his mind no holds barred...The so-called scientific method is merely a special case of the method of intelligence, and any apparently unique characteristics are to be explained by the nature of the subject matter rather than ascribed to the nature of the method itself.'(P.W. Bridgman)(11).

and

> 'My own pet notion is that in the world of human thought, and in physical science particularly, the most important and most fruitful concepts are those for which it is impossible to attach a well-defined meaning'. (H.A. Kramers)(12)

Dalton also quotes equally eminent mathematicians:

> 'As far as the laws of mathematics refer to reality, they are not certain; and as far as they are certain, they do not refer to reality'.(Einstein)(13)

and:

> 'When you have satisfied yourself that the theorem is true, then you start proving it.'(G. Polya)(14)

And he also cites the former chemist, Polanyi:

> 'The scientist's procedure is of course methodical. But his methods are but the maxims of an art which he applies in his own original way to the problem of his own choice.'(15)

It is Polanyi here who significantly develops our discussion. The evidence of the others would seem to suggest that real discoveries are made without regard to method, in realms of ambiguity (Kramers) and uncertainty (Einstein) where the exercise of the individual intelligence is the only means of arriving at them. This does not give us much help in deciding where 'methods' come from, but Polanyi in suggesting that they are 'maxims' does. As 'maxims', methods could be generated from the practical actions of successful scientists, as common practices distilled and made axiomatic in order to both account for discoveries, affirm the possibility of future discoveries, and confirm them as communally validated. Thus we do not have a notion of method as a set of rules and procedures which is made explicit and deliberately followed in order to make a discovery, but one in which they are instead created and invoked by members in order to account for and to make sense of, individual discoveries, and discovery itself as an activity.

'The notion of action in accord with a rule is not a matter of

compliance or non-compliance per se but of the various ways in which persons satisfy themselves and others concerning what is or is not 'reasonable' compliance in particular situations. Reference to rules might then be seen as a common-sense method of accounting for, or making available for talk the orderly features of everyday activities, thereby making out these activities in some fashion.'(16)

Science as an orderly activity is not given a priori, but can be seen to be orderly by the application of the concept of a 'rule', and in the seeing of scientific behaviour as more or less in accordance with that rule. Scientists and sociologists may or may not follow common rules about their investigations, but their activities can be rendered accountable as science or sociology by invoking the concept of a rule to characterise their common procedures. Polanyi is quoted by Dalton in giving such an example:

'When Einstein discovered rationality in nature, unaided by any observation that had not been available for at least fifty years before, our positivistic textbooks covered up the scandal by an appropriately embellished account of his discovery.'(17)

Blum et al go further in demonstrating that scientific standards are so ambiguous that it becomes possible for their ultimate arbiters, the referees of scientific journals, to provide simultaneously references for acceptance and rejection, the final decision depending on the intentions of the editor(18). Rules are invoked to render an action accountable, rather than to dominate and structure it from its genesis. With a similar but not identical interpretation, Kenneth Leiter summarises the ethnomethodological understanding of a 'rule':

'Rules norms and motives enter ethnomethodological enquiry as methods for describing and observing the orderly and factual features of behaviour and everyday scenes. Seen this way, the theoretical status of these elements of sociological explanation undergoes a change. They are no longer formal and informal elements of a social structure that push and pull people into patterned behaviour. Instead, they are tools societal members choose to create a sense of social structure. Instead of being followed or complied with, they are used as sense-making aids to report and observe other people's behaviour. In other words, while the sociologist uses norms, rules and typical motives to make sense of people's behaviour,

members of society use them in the same manner.'(19)

What Leiter does not say, and this is a characteristic failing of ethnomethodology in general, is that sociologists also use norms, rules and typical motives to make sense of their own and other sociologists behaviour. This lack of a self-reflexive capacity is not uncommon in social thinkers who, like Garfinkel, were partly influenced by Wittgenstein and concentrate their investigations on the linguistic practices of their 'subjects'. Garfinkel himself, in his concern to develop a practical programme for social investigation, often leaves the philosophical bases of his work unelucidated or unexplored, which may partly account for the unresolved tension between interpretations and objectivity in his work(20). However, a position which is in many ways identical to that of Garfinkel is more thoroughly explicated by Winch, and illustrates some of the common inadequacies in their conceptions of rule.(21)

Winch

Winch attempts to distinguish between social and natural science, and as part of his distinction he asserts that whereas natural scientists need only attend to the rules governing their own investigative procedures, social scientists must also attend to the rules governing the procedures of those who are being studied. It is the rules governing human activity upon which Winch concentrates his attention, in terms of the rules of the studied. Although he is aware that scientists have their own rules, and that they notice facts, make observations and draw conclusions only in terms of these shared rules, he relegates them to a position of little importance(22). As Phillips observes:

> 'What Winch apparently fails to see in his consideration of the scientific rules directing the interaction between scientists is that it is these rules - and these rules alone - which are involved in the settling of truth - and knowledge - claims in science. In fact, he generally fails to recognise that scientific truth and knowlede are fully the products of scientific communities.'(23)

Winch emphasises (and in so doing criticises the tendency towards quantification in social science) that the terms of a sociological explanation must be familiar to the subjects of that investigation. He further stresses that the investigator must take account fully of the subjectively intended sense of the behaviour, and that it is not for the investigator to determine the correctness of an explanation by reference to external meanings and interpretations. It is for the subjects to determine such correctness, and this necessitates 'better' interpretation on the part of the investigator. Phillips again criticises this assumption:

> 'The problem with Winch's line of reasoning is that it fails to recognise that it is one or other scientific community and not the individual investigator or the subjects of enquiry - which is the final arbiter as regards the correctness of scientific explanations.'(24)

The interpretations and intentions of the subjects could therefore only figure in determining the status of an explanation if they were included in the rules for evaluation of the sociological/ scientific community which warrants the explanation. Then, of course, the community would have to decide what constitutes adequate familiarisation with these subjectively intended meanings, and determine procedures for checking them with the subjects.

Winch's neglect of the rules of scientific communities whilst concentrating on the rules of lay communities is paralleled in the work of Garfinkel. In both, it is a consequence of their conception of science as essentially positivistic: that is the community being investigated is an object of enquiry, which should be allowed to speak through an essentially neutral observer whose neutrality is preserved by a concern with correct method. Although both are concerned with interpretive procedures, their underlying assumptions seem to exempt the investigator from being part of his data, and from implication in these procedures. Phillips observes that the scientific view which places heavy emphasis on method

> 'creates a clear separation between theory and practice between scientific truths and the opinions that guide our action.'(25)

Not surprisingly, therefore, we find Garfinkel stating in a footnote on the attitudes of daily life and scientific theorising:

> 'To avoid misunderstanding I want to stress that the concern here is with the attitude of scientific theorising. The attitude that informs the activities of actual scientific inquiry is another matter entirely.'(26)

It is not another matter entirely, but the heart of the matter. Garfinkel consistently fails to acknowledge this, but in his attempts to achieve understanding of his subjects own interpretations, he is nevertheless the methodological heir of a philosophical tradition which in Gadamer and Habermas, achieves some realisation of the effect of the interpreter and the importance of his own investigative community on any piece of research.

Hermeneutics

> 'One of the most important contributions of hermeneutical thought is the destruction of the objectivistic pretension of the historico-hermeneutical sciences, among which a language-interpretative sociology might be counted. By seeing the scientist and the object of his research as linked by a context of tradition, hermeneutical thought discovers in the process of mediation (that is the interpretative explication of historically evolving forms of life) the practical life-interests which, as such, cannot be discarded and are operative in the scientist's initial insight.'(27)

Hermeneutics, according to Bleicher 'can loosely be defined as the theory or philosophy of the interpretation of meaning'.(28) Bleicher identifies three strands of hermeneutics: 'hermeneutical theory', 'hermeneutic philosophy' and 'critical hermeneutics'. The first, characterised by Dilthey and Betti, is concerned with developing a general theory of interpretation for the 'human sciences', and in concentrating on 're-thinking', and 're-experiencing' an individual's speech writing or other expression, seeks to gain insights into how we build another's meaning into our understanding of the world. There is a concern to find a scientific basis for the objective investigation of this meaning.

The second, characterised by Gadamer, rejects methodology in search of objectivity, and seeks explication of meaning in terms of its temporality and historicity: its traditions, contexts, and the presuppositions which govern its interpretation. The focus is more heavily on language and the achieving of agreement about the world we have in common rather than the retrieval of objectively determined 'correct' meaning. The third attacks the first two for their concentration on language rather than on the conditions which shape language, specifically those of work and domination. The work of Apel and Habermas attempts to examine the conditions in which Gadamer's consensus is reached, and by comparing this to an ideal state of undistorted communication to achieve 'objectivity' in Betti's sense and become 'critical' in its understanding of social life. All three strands have in common:

> 'The realization that human expressions contain a meaningful component, which has to be recognized as such by a subject and transposed into his own system of values and meanings (which) has given rise to the 'problem of hermeneutics': how this process is possible and how to render accounts of subjectively intended meaning objective in the face of the fact that they are mediated by the researcher's own subjectivity.'(29)

Hermeneutical thinkers begin, as does Garfinkel, by observing the difference between 'natural' and 'human' science. Bauman observes that natural phenomena are different from human beings not because they cannot think and feel, (this we cannot know) but because we do not ascribe thoughts and feelings to them in our interpretation of them(30). We do not seek to explain their behaviour in terms of emotions, thoughts, and motives, because as men who have emotions thoughts and motives we are willing to ascribe these only to other men. Even if 'things' did have emotions, thoughts and motives, and communicated them, we would have no faculty for understanding them, and even less common ground on which to assess their veracity.

We ask of human behaviour questions which we do not ask of the behaviour of things, because we make different suppositions about humans. We assume that other humans, being like us, will have an 'inner' reality structured in the same way as our own, in terms of purposes, motives, expressive capacity, emotionality, thought

processes, reflectiveness and capacity to react and respond to others. We make sense of other human behaviour by 'understanding' it, by 'extrapolating the method we use to account for our own action on to our accounts of the behaviour of other objects whom we recognise as human'.(31) Alternatively, we make sense of the behaviour of inanimate or non-human objects by reference to cause and effect, to general laws and conditions, and to external 'explanation'. Here we have the divergence of '<u>verstehen</u>' (understanding) and '<u>erklaren</u>' (causal explanation) as modes of apprehension.

Dilthey

Dilthey distinguishes the 'Geisteswissenschaften' from the natural sciencesby our obligation to endow humans with mental activity. These human sciences are 'all founded in lived experience (erlebnis), in the expressions of these experiences, and in the understanding of these expressions'.(32) In his early work, Dilthey saw the process of understanding as one of indwelling, an empathic penetration of the individual's mental processes, or a reconstruction of them. This does not mean either establishing causal regularities in their behaviour in this recreation, or in actually exploring and revealing what is going on in their minds. It is, rather, a process of 'putting oneself in their shoes'(33), of ascribing our own knowledge of our 'lived experience' to their actions.

This attempt at psychological understanding poses two main problems. The first is that our inferences about others thoughts and motivations are extremely difficult to verify and that there seems to be no way of deciding between conflicting accounts. In this sense, it is suggested that psychological 'verstehen' should be complemented by some other procedure, some form of establishing causation, or causal regularities of behaviour. Secondly, even when focussing on an individual personality, understanding requires some knowledge of background events, including situations which influenced the individual and situations in which the individual was himself influential.(34) Knowledge of an individual alone is

scarcely sufficient.

As a result of the incompleteness of this form of 'verstehen', combined with the desire of Dilthey and, later, Weber(35) to establish that the 'Geisteswissenschaften' are capable of producing results with some objective validity, it came to be regarded as merely a preparatory method, an activity setting the scene for the proper establishment of objectivity by 'erklaren'. Such a view is put forward by Abel:

> 'The operation of verstehen does two things: it reieves us of a sense of apprehension in connection with behaviour that is unfamiliar or unexpected and it is a source of 'hunches', which help us in the formulation of hypotheses.'(36)

Abel, and many other critics of 'verstehen', (37) seem to be dominated by the idea which derives from the early Dilthey, that 'verstehen' is achieved when 'the behaviour in question can be designated as part of an understandable sequence of emotions', and which Weber called erklarendes (explanatory) verstehen.(38) Abel states in his discussion of the point, that the fact that farmers postpone intended marriages when faced with crop failure is not accepted because we understand the connection between the two (i.e. why they do it), but because we have established through reliable methods that there is a high correlation between the two (i.e. they do it invariably). But Weber also mentioned aktuelles (direct) verstehen, which concerns understanding the meaning of a given act (i.e. what they are doing). The correlation between marriage rates and crop production might be acceptable even though we did not understand why it occurred, but unless we had some means of telling what counts as marriage, failure, crop production, or high correlation, then the correlation would be meaningless. Weber's demand for 'adequacy in respect to meaning'(39) of these constructs does make 'verstehen' more than a mere methodology. Although Weber did not emphasise this himself, 'verstehen' is the basis of the interpretation of social life, 'the very ontological condition of human life in society as such'.(40) This is a distinct development of Dilthey's ideas, and is shared by both Husserl (and through him via Schutz to Garfinkel) and Gadamer.(41)

Dilthey, in exploring the main directions for 'verstehen', distinguished 'life expressions'(42) which included institutions, language, and all cultural phenomena which reflected the inner life, the 'erlebnis', of their creators. The study of these social creations was to provide the crucial link between individual inspiration and 'objective mind', the shared and 'permanently fixed expressions'(43) which formed the basis of community.

> 'A sentence can be understood because of the agreement in a speech community about the meanings of words, inflections and syntactic organisation...it is always an agreed order which establishes the relation between a life expression and its mental content.'(44)

For Dilthey words are to sentences as individual actions, expressions of experiences, propositions and accounts are to the general cultural milieu in which they exist. He suggests that social phenomena of different kinds should be treated as texts and analysed in detail to discover their essential meaning and significance. The model of the literary analyst was more appropriate to social investigation than that of the natural scientist, although the basic rules of hermeneutics could nevertheless be determined. Elsewhere in this study, I will argue that this is still an appropriate model for social investigation, though requiring a modified view of the literary analyst and of the process of reading.

From this position, Dilthey developed the idea of the 'hermeneutic circle'. The parts of society cannot be understood without reference to the whole, and vice versa. It follows from this that the interpreter must have some knowledge of the whole culture, and must come to it with some presuppositions, for interpretation to be possible. The process of interpretation consists of a perpetual series of provisional assumptions, which are constantly being checked against complex situations and revised in accordance with them(45). Interpretation cannot start from absolute zero:

> 'Interpretation would be impossible if the life-experessions were totally alien. It would be unnecessaryif there were nothing strange about them. It therefore lies between these

two extremes.'(46)

Dilthey seems to suggest the existence of an object language from which we derive a meta-language, interpretative expressions, and by building up the one from the other and constantly comparing and revising our assumptions we come to an understanding of each. The 'hermeneutic circle' is the method by which this understanding is achieved.

Gadamer

For Dilthey, hermeneutics is empathic, a process of reliving, of re-enactment (in his early work having a psychological emphasis); of re-constructing meaning and re-creating the author's intentions (in the case of a text - paramount for both him and Betti) and a method which would guarantee objectivity. Neither Dilthey nor Betti escapes entirely from the objectification of the Other - the relationship of interpreter and interpreted is permanently one of subject-object, rather than subject-subject(47).

Under the influence of Husserl and Heidegger, Gadamer developed hermeneutics in a significant direction. Bleicher characterises this development as 'hermeneutic philosophy':

> '(Betti's) work represents the most sophisticated exposition of the theory of hermeneutics, i.e. the methodology of the interpretation of objective mind. Hermeneutic philosophy, in relation to this approach, can be characterized by reference to its fundamental theme: the interpretation of Dasein. The concern now shifts from objective interpreation to a transcendental analysis which, through the interpretation of Dasein, examines the existential constitution of possible understanding from the standpoint of actual existence. This mode of existence cannot be illuminated through methodical and intersubjective endeavours, but only comes to light in the act of self-understanding.
>
> The difference between this view and (Betti's) emphasis on self-knowledge rests mainly in the fact that with him it could never be more than a desirable outcome of objective interpretation; now it refers to the event in which the individual realizes his debt to tradition and responsibility for the future: it is no longer the result of knowing something that has congealed into an object but it indicates a new way of being.

Hermeneutics for Gadamer is no longer a subjective attempt to re-enact the experiences of others in order to achieve their 'meaning'; it is a historical process which involves the mediation of different frames of reference, the exchange of 'forms of life' which give texts and actions meaning. The interpreter has his prejudices, and pre-notions not simply as an individual, spontaneously, but as a historical being in a tradition, a participant in culture, as does the interpreted.

> 'Perhaps the notion which best crystallises the idea of history, the nature of knowledge, the conception of culture and tradition, and the role of the sociologist or historian inGadamer's thought is that of the wirkungsgeschichtliche Bewusstsein. Literally, this is the 'effect-historical consciousness'; it refers to the consciousness of the historian or sociologist and contains in the single complex predicate all the essential elements of hermeneutic theory outlined in the preceding paragraphs. The interpreter must recognise both his subject's and his own place in history, in the tradition of real events, and must comprehend the relationship and fusion of the two standpoints in his work.'(49)

As Gadamer himself writes:

> 'Understanding is not to be thought of so much as an action of one's subjectivity, but as the placing of oneself within a tradition, in which past and present are constantly fused.'(50)

This fusion of past and present Gadamer discusses in terms of horizons, but horizons which constantly merge and which do not exist or limit in the way that might be expected.

> 'the interpreter's own horizon is determining, but even that is not as a particular standpoint which one holds or enforces, but more like an opinion and a possibility, which one brings into play and puts at stake, and which contributes to appropriating truthfully what is said in the text.(51)
>
> 'There is no horizon of the present for itself, any more than there are historical horizons which one has to acquire. Rather, Verstehen is always the process of the merging of such horizons, supposedly existing for themselves.'(52)

Understanding is historical, as is the 'truth' which understanding seeks to attain. This 'truth' is now outside the bounds of science: it is the truth of art, of society, of history, of culture. Verstehen does not generate material for assessment by scientific means, nor does it guarantee objectivity in this sense: it seeks a truth which is not discoverable by science. Although not denying science's claim to truth within its own area, for the social and cultural sciences however, 'the scientific search for an historical object-in-itself is misconceived for there <u>is</u> no such object.'(53)

The attainment of truth is more of a dialectical process of question and enquiry, or a dialogue between two subjects which may lead them to a third plane of meaning(54), than a simple testing of one set of assumptions in the pursuit of an original intention. Gadamer's 'hermeneutic circle' is different from Dilthey's:

> 'The circular procedure works as follows: we approach our material with certain prejudices, or anticipations, originating in our own historicity. At the same time, we must retain a certain 'openness' to our object (whether this be a text or anything else). This receptiveness to the 'otherness' of the material, allowing it to speak for itself, creates a balance (or a dialectic) between prejudice and openness. By **controlling** our anticipations, we are enabled to **revise** them, since our openness to the subject-matter allows distorting prejudices to be discovered. 'Verstehen of what is there consists in the working out of a...projection (Vorentwurf), which is certainly constantly revised by what results from further penetration into the meaning'. A new definition of objectivity is thus arrived at - namely, the verification a prejudice finds in its working out.'(55)

Prejudices are the necessary conditions of experience, and cannot be abandoned even where they are precarious and extensive modification is anticipated. The process of projection and modification, performed with the crucial quality of openness, allows the attainment of some kind of objectivity. The method is not restricted to historical investigations but to any area in which there is no single continuous tradition as a definitive characteristic.(56)

Gadamer, however, sees the hermeneutic circle as more than a

method. It is the 'ontological process of human discourse in operation, in which, through the medium of language, 'life mediates life.'(57) Language is central because 'all our world experience, especially the hermeneutic experience, develops out of the centre of language.'(58) Thus the dialogical model of discourse is not a method confined to the social sciences, but a universal mode of philosophy, the means not simply of understanding language, but of the very forms of life which give it meaning, and the things which are accomplished through it. It aso offers an answer to the problem left unsolved by Wittgenstein: that of movement between language-games and forms of life. In this sense, Gadamer starts where Wittgenstein left off.

Gadamer's view of language is not unambiguous. Language is not a system of signs and representations of things, words 'standing for' objects, but an expression of the human mode of being in the world. He seems to echo Wittgenstein's theme of the limits of language being the limits of the world.

> 'the linguistic analysis of our experience of the world is prior, as contrasted with everything that is recognized and addressed as beings. The fundamental relation of language and world does not, then, mean that the world becomes the object of language. Rather, the object of knowledge and of statements is already enclosed within the world horizon of language. The linguistic nature of the human experience of the world does not include making the world into an object.'(59)

Whatever is contained within language, it would appear, does not necessarily relate to the world itself: what we call things or what we say about them should not be mistaken for the things themselves. Gadamer may be hinting at a transcendental world of essences, a Platonic world, but he also seems to be saying that even if such a world existed we could not gain access to it:

> 'We cannot see a linguistic world from above in this way; there is no point of view outside the experience of the world in language from which it could itself become an object.'(60)

The linguistic nature of hermeneutic interpretation for Gadamer, is

always speculative, always balanced in a dialectical relationship with what remains unsaid, and dependent on the word of the interpreter, not of the text - it is a new creation.

> 'The appropriation of textual meaning, consequently, has to be regarded not so much as a duplicative effort but as a genuine creation itself; each appropriation is different and equally valid. From here Gadamer can go on to suggest that to understand literature is not a referring back to past events, but a participating here and now in what is being said, the sharing of a message, the disclosure of a world.'(61)

Gadamer has turned the hermeneutic search for the author's intention on its head. Interpretation is now creative, and pursues a completely different kind of objectivity within thebounds of language. As a method it is less defined but now it is the universal condition of human discourse, pursuing 'truth' in a completely different manner to that of science. Whether it is a method, is merely a method, or is more than a method is still unresolved.

Gadamer, it would seem, has extended our discussion of method by giving an essential and positive role to prejudice and historicity; by redefining 'truth' and 'objectivity' in such a way as to distinguish them clearly from the positivistic conceptions of these terms; by distinguishing that which is methodical in hermeneutics from the pursuit of absolute objective meaning by predetermined methods; by placing crucial emphasis on 'openness' (see our discussion of perspectives in Chapter One); and by emphasising the centrality and limiting nature of language in the mediation of forms of life and establishment of 'truth'.

Unfortunately, Gadamer seems to stop too soon:

> 'One gets the impression, from Wahrheit und Methode, of an independently existing language (or languages) by courtesy of which the human being is permitted limited access to the real world. Without denying the linguistic relativity of experience, I am arguing that to stop at this point explains nothing about the true constitution of consciousness, for language is not an independently existing, unalterable and primary entity. We must go beyond language, and other 'ideal' factors, to the material basis of existence, and to the social

relations underlying it.'(62)

Wolff's criticism here is pertinent. Language is important, and is vital in understanding, discussion, questioning and accounting. But the forms of life which are mediated by language are affected by other things, and we experience them through other means than language (that a 'language' may be other than verbal is here to be understood). Thus before making a further and more detailed study of the importance of language in the investigation of the social world in the next chapter, it is necessary to place Gadamer's linguistic-hermeneutic approach in context with its critics, notably Apel and Habermas, who place more emphasis on the material nature of existence.

Critical Hermeneutics: Apel

'Critical hermeneutics', as exemplified by Apel and Habermas, arises from the failure of Gadamer's hermeneutics to question the truth content of the object.(63) Betti, in search of a means to transcend 'tradition', or the language-game, and achieve this, reverted to a pre-Heideggerian position of an ahistorical object tied to its original conditions of inception and intended meaning; for Apel and Habermas, the historicality of the object is where they begin. They are not:

> 'starting from the hypostatization of a 'subject' or 'consciousness' as the metaphysical guarantor of the intersubjective validity of knowledge, but from the presupposition that we are - because of the fact that no one can follow a rule alone or only once (Wittgenstein) - destined **a priori** to intersubjective communication and understanding ...In this sense, a hermeneutically transformed transcendental philosophy starts from the **a priori**: of an actual communicative community which is, for us, practically identical with the human species or society.'(64)

Conversely, Apel characterises science, insofar as it is positivistically grounded, as pursuing the 'methodological solipsism' which amounts to:

> 'the tacit assumption that **objective** knowledge should be

possible without **intersubjective** understanding by communication being presupposed.'(65)

The knowledge-claims of these two forms of investigation are thus founded upon seemingly irreconciliable programmes. The empirical-analytic sciences seek to:

'grasp reality with regard to technical control that, under specified conditions, is possible everywhere and at all times'

while the hermeneutic sciences, as exemplified by Gadamer, seek to:

'grasp interpretations of reality with regard to possible intersubjectivity of action-orienting mutual understanding specific to a given hermeneutic starting point.'(66)

Both forms lay claim to universality: arising from different knowledge-constitutive interests they pursue characteristic goals of nomological explanation and hermeneutical understanding and each fails to realise the grounding interest of the other. The aim of critical hermeneutics is to develop the critical impulse of Gadamer's mediatory dialogue to the truly dialectical mediation of causal explanation and subjective interpretation:

'I think that this methodological pattern of **dialectically mediating communicative understanding by causal explanation** is, in fact, the model for a philosophical understanding of all those types of **critical social science** which have their relation to the practice of life, not in the realm of social engineering, but in provoking public self-reflection and in emancipation of men as subjects.'(67)

This 'emancipatory' understanding frees men from the domination of subjective or objective modes of apprehension, and the partiality implicit therein. Some possibility is thus provided for a ground to be taken outside of tradition, which Gadamer held to be impossible.

Habermas

Habermas agrees with Gadamer on a number of issues: the contextual

nature of understanding, the effect of history, the engagement and prejudice of social analysts, the need for a hermeneutic interpretation of action, and the importance of interpretation for self-understanding.(68) They agree that truth isconsensual, the result of a process of coming to an agreement. But it is in their attitude to this process that they differ significantly. Habermas rejects Gadamer's view of truth because of its lack of a critical possibility:

> 'Any attempt to suggest that this (certainly contingent) consensus is false consciousness is meaningless since we cannot transcend the discussion in which we are engaged. From this Gadamer deduces the ontological priority of linguistic tradition before all possible critique: at any given time we can thus carry on critique only of individual traditions, inasmuch as we ourselves belong to the comprehensive tradition - context of a language.'(69)

Simply recognising that interpretation of meaning rests upon an exchange and revision of prejudices does not guarantee that this exchange will produce 'truth', or 'true consensus': it is the conditions under which the exchange takes place that guarantee this, for as Habermas states:

> 'every consensus, in which the understanding of meaning terminates, stands fundamentally under suspicion of being pseudo-communicatively induced...the prejudgmental structure of the understanding of meaning does not guarantee identification of an achieved consensus with a true one.'(70)

Language, which for Gadamer is the limit of criticism:

> 'is also a medium for domination and social power: it serves to legitimate relations of organized force. In so far as the legitimations do not articulate the power relations whose institutionalization they make possible, in so far as these relations manifest themselves in the legitimations, language is also ideological.'(71)

It is, for Habermas, the aim of self-reflection to reveal the formative processes underlying language, and by comparing these with the conditions of an <u>ideal speech situation</u>, to become critical and thus emancipatory.

Truth becomes possible therefore, not by virtue of its existence in dialogue, but by virtue of the ideal of truth, the idea of a true consensus which is the goal of every rational discourse.

> 'The idea of truth, which is measured against the idea of a true consensus, implies the idea of a true existence - or, we could say, it includes the idea of **Mundigkeit** (being-of-age). Only the formal anticipation of the idealized dialogue, as a form of life to be realised, guarantees the ultimate, counter-factual agreement that already unites us and which allows us to criticize any factual agreement, if it is a false one, as such.'(72)

The conditions of pure dialogue, where the 'possibility of argumentative corroboration of a truth claim'(73) is not affected by conditions outside the structure of the dialogue (systematically distorted communication) are attained where there is consensus attained solely through the rational examination of arguments; where understanding of the other participants is full and mutual; and where the right of the other to participate as a full and equal partner is mutually acknowledged and achieved.

> 'Discourse can be understood as that form of communication that is removed from contexts of experience and action and whose structure assures us: that the bracketed validity claims of assertions, recommendations, or warnings are the exclusive object of discussion; that participants, themes and contributions are not restricted except with reference to the goal of testing the validity claims in question; that no force except that of the better argument is exercised; and that, as a result, all motives except that of the cooperative search for truth are excluded.'(74)

The rules of achieving truth through pure dialogue are not identical with the rules of achieving consensus. The 'ideal speech situation' does not exist, and is not to be practically realised in interaction, but is to serve as a model for dialogue which enables its criticism. The idea of an 'objective' understanding in this way makes the criticism of the conditions of actual consensual understanding possible, and serves in the same way that Popper conceives of the 'negative capacity' of science. For Popper, science could never absolutely determine truth, but could only

develop standards of procedure which would lead to the convincing refutation of that which was false:

> 'By this method of elimination, we may hit upon a true theory. But in no way can the method establish its truth, even if it is true; for the number of possibly true theories remains infinite, at any time and after any number of crucial tests...the actually proposed theories will, of course, be finite in number; and it may well happen that we refute all of them and cannot think of a new one.
>
> On the other hand among the theories actually proposed there may be more than one which is not refuted at a time so that we may not know which of these we ought to prefer.'(75)

Similarly, Habermas' model of the ideal speech situation and the ideal of true consensus are not models to be practically realised, but ways of criticising actuality, identifying conditions of domination, inequality and asymmetry which distort communication and produce false consensus.

It should be stressed that 'objective understanding' and 'true consensus' are not synonymous. 'Objective understanding' could not be achieved through discourse unless the conditions for achieving 'true consensus' were present; but the achievement of 'true consensus' does not guarantee 'objective understanding' (or absolute truth), only its possibility.

Ultimately, the common ground between Gadamer and Habermas is extensive. Gadamer states that we cannot arrive at truth unless via consensus; Habermas is similarly unable to escape the limitations of consensus, but nevertheless is able to become critical of the mode of its achievement. This however, leads to criticism that Habermas does not adequately demonstrate how ideology can be criticised when the critic himself cannot escape the charge of himself being ideological.

The existence of the problem underlines the universality of hermeneutics which Gadamer perceived, whilst emphasising even more the danger in the uncritical acceptance of tradition. Because Habermas may never be able to escape his own charges does not disqualify him from making them, but rather strengthens his

approach in that his critical method may be turned upon him with his full acknowledgement. The problem of the social scientist/critic is most neatly encapsulated in Giddens's term the 'double hermeneutic'(76). The interpreter interprets the subjects meanings, or interpretations, whilst also having his own meanings and interpretations; simultaneously, the subject interprets those of the interpreter, as well as self-reflexively examining those of his own. The way to more closely approximate to 'truth' in our interpretations is through exchange of perspectives, mutual criticism, and critical reflexivity. Thus, although the charge of ideology may be inescapable, to acknowledge it and explore it is a step further in the direction of the critical achievement of 'true consensus' than is its denial or avoidance.

Habermas, then, adds to Gadamer's work by introducing the critical impulse with the goal of emancipation. But his work is not without its own inadequacies and in fact is strongest where he is closest to Gadamer. Although this treatment of his work has been selective, it is nevertheless important to comment on some of the main criticisms of it.

Firstly, truth for Habermas seems to be dominated by the idea of a truth which is attained through rational discourse, and the achievement of rational-discursive will. Gadamer, although he is limited by language in a way in which Habermas is not, nevertheless has greater scope, possibly because of his conviction of the universality of hermeneutics. Thus the truth of 'verstehen' for Gadamer is the truth of art and of culture in a way which Habermas neglects. The 'range of orientations we can and do take towards nature - contemplative, playful, poetic, mimetic, communicative'(77) have no cognitive status for Habermas, dominated as he is by the two knowledge-constitutive interests of work and interaction (or sometimes the third, strategic interaction). The pursuit of absolute truth through rational discourse is only <u>one</u> way in which it might be pursued; and in the search for sociological understanding of man's place in society the truths of poetry, art, music, experience, sensation, or any one of the infinite number of ways we have of exploring our world, should not be neglected.

Second, Habermas characterises natural science along lines which are far too positivistic. Although he correctly describes social science as fusing the nomological and hermeneutic, he neglects to perceive the hermeneutic element in natural science, making a straightforward separation between 'empirical-analytic' and 'hermeneutic' sciences. The work of Kuhn, and Dalton quoted earlier, has contributed to the erosion of this distinction, and to the collapse of the 'erklaren/verstehen' dichotomy in practice, although it may still retain some analytical value. Explanatory procedures form an important part of everyday interpretation and interaction just as interpretative procedures or 'frames of meaning' are indispensable to rendering a scientific theory intelligible(78).

Third, Habermas seems to follow Winch (who he criticises) insofar as he places an emphasis on the purposes for which acts were undertaken in the interpretation of their meaning. This tendency may be one reason for his concentration on the model of discourse with the pursuit of truth the implicit intention of the participants, to the consequent neglect of less 'purposeful' means of enlightenment.

Fourth, Habermas makes too much of the distinction between 'work' and 'interaction', the former deriving from 'interest in technical control' whilst the latter derives from 'interest in understanding'. The two may follow 'rationally reconstructible patterns which are logically independent of one another'(79) but in practical terms, and for the purpose of real social analysis they are inseparable. This divergence of analysis and practice is also apparent in the lack of specification of <u>how</u> the ideal model of dialogue is to be applied to <u>actual</u> dialogue, and underpins the empirical analytic/hermeneutic distinction and the rejection of Gadamer's claim for the universality of hermeneutics.

Finally, it should be observed that there are other dimensions of Habermas' thought which have not been covered here which exhibit similar practical weaknesses. His writing on the theory of

communicative competence neglects the context of actual communication; his use of psychoanalysis as a model for the social sciences in exemplifying the mediation of interpretation and explanation neglects the considerable differences between an encounter of two individuals and an encounter with social groups, institutions or structures(80); and it is not clear throughout how the process of reflection will, at any level, produce emancipation. In fact, the very issues which Habermas seeks initially to address, of power, of domination and of inequality are ultimately elusive.

> '...the domination of some groups of men over others as founded in asymmetry of material interest slips away. It is replaced by the idea of domination as equivalent to distorted communication. Power enters into interaction only as filtered through the ideological slanting of the conditions of communication, not as fundamental to the relations between actors whereby interaction is constituted as an ongoing activity.'(81)

Habermas' depth-hermeneutics, which would reveal the deep structures of the patterns of communication, ultimately fails in its object. The problems of unequal resources, of imbalance of interest and of power as a quality of interaction itself are unexplored because of his preoccupation with communication, and this leads to the fallacious implication that reflection at this level will somehow prove to be emancipatory without specifying how it might be so. Knowledge or realisation that barriers to communication exist, and even the specification of their nature might be attained by reflection; but this is not enough to remove those barriers without changing the structures of domination which sustain them. Knowing that one is a slave does not give one the power to be free, although it may be a necessary first step in that direction.

Conclusion

We began the discussion of this chapter by suggesting that the establishing of truth criteria is a community activity for scientists as much as for laymen. It is the methods that communities have for determining these criteria which secure them as communities and protect them from deviants. The notion of a

method as a prescription for action which will produce 'correct' results is not altogether accurate, as 'method' approximates more to a series of maxims, generated from previous successful experiences, but available to be applied in an original way. The idea of a 'rule' (very much associated with 'method') emerges not as a prescription for action but as a way of rendering activities as orderly, as a tool used by members of society for rendering society accountable rather than discrete elements which condition members' behaviour.

The ethnomethodological examination of members' use of rules, exemplified in the work of Garfinkel and the philosophy of Winch, concentrates on members' application of rules to the detriment of sociologists' application of them, and treats the subjects of social investigation positivistically as 'objects', in the process separating the notions of scientific theory and scientific practice.

An attempt to link the scientist and the object of his research as both subjects in interpretative communities, and the meeting and mediation of such communities, has been an important contribution of hermeneutics to sociological thought. Beginning with problems of the interpretation of meaning, Dilthey explores and develops the distinction between explanation (erklaren) and understanding (verstehen) and constitutes verstehen as a process of reliving or re-enacting to gain access to the author's (subject's) original meaning, and thus attaining some form of objectivity. Gadamer rejects much of Dilthey's pursuit of objectivity by stressing the importance of prejudice and tradition, the historicality of interpretation and thus of achieving truth as a community agreement through language. He develops the idea of the 'hermeneutic circle' (originated by Dilthey) as the process of putting prejudices and temporarily formed ideas at risk in communication, truth being the verification they receive in their working-out. Thus 'verstehen', or understanding, is not a method for generating material which 'erklaren' methods will explain, but is the universal mode of human existence and discourse.

Habermas finds Gadamer's claim for the universality of hermeneutics

as much of a misrepresentation as are the claims of positivism, and attempts to reconcile interpretation and objectivity by a depth-hermeneutics which would move beyond the linguistic focus of Dilthey and Gadamer to reveal the conditions which shape and distort language, those of work and domination. Ultimately, Habermas' attempts to be systematic in his revelation of these underlying conditions through distortions in communication succeed only in identifying them as distortions in communication.

The attempts made by Gadamer to stress the importance of interpretation as actively recreating meaning, with truth as entirely historical, and those of Habermas to stress the importance of a model of the ideal and ahistorical conditions for truth in order to make truth as consensual agreement possible seem at times to be irreconciliable. Habermas emphasises pattern and structure where Gadamer affirms only the linguistic moment. Gadamer sees no escape from the linguisticality of experience, where Habermas sees existence as meaningless without the possibility of this escape. Both however, rightly regard language as crucial to establishing truth:

> 'Thought is dependent upon the ground of language insofar as language is not merely a system of signs for the purpose of communication and transmission of information. Where there is real language, the thing to be designated is not known prior to the act of designation. Rather within our language relationship to the world, that which is spoken of is itself first articulated through language's constitutive structuring of our being in the world. Speaking remains tied to the language as a whole, the hermeneutic virtuality of discourse which surpasses at any moment that which has been said. It is precisely in this respect that speaking always transcends the linguistically constituted realm within which we find ourselves.'(82)

Gadamer, as I read him, sees language more as a part of the process of establishing truth which could include modes of perception of other forms of sensuous human activity such as art and music, whereas Habermas is dominated by the idea of discursive truth-attainment. In the next chapter, I will attempt to explore the importance and limitations of language in its relation to truth, and the characteristics of a mode of analysis which has been seen

as the polar opposite of hermeneutics, but which has been more recently its willing bedfellow in reducing the distance between objectivity and subjectivity: that of structuralism.

Chapter Four: From Language to Text

Introduction

In the previous chapter, some of the problematic dimensions of 'truth' and 'interpretation' as approached through hermeneutics were identified. Both Gadamer and Habermas, placing their emphasis on 'understanding' rather than explanation, recognise the crucial importance of language in determining interpretations and establishing truth-claims, as an active constituent of the 'real-world' rather than simply as a medium for its objective transmission.

In this chapter, the problems already encountered in the discussion of social methodology and theory will be further examined through exploration of the constitutive effects of language. These problems are those of idealism or essentialism versus materialism; of the constitution of subjectivity and objectivity; of the creation and effects of ideology and myth; of 'privilege' in discourse or investigation and of the status of 'criticism'.

These problems are approached initially through the work of the linguists of the early twentieth century, notably Saussure and Jakobson, which is of crucial importance in defining the problematics and creating the vocabulary and analytical models which subsequently inform the development of 'structuralist' thought. Levi-Strauss' adapts and extends this early linguistic work to the level of culture, analysing the development of myth and the processes of symbolism. This is an important step on the way to developing structuralist social, and organizational, analysis and this work provides a model for some of the analysis of empirical material in the later chapters. Chapter Six draws on Levi-Strauss work on accounts and sorcery in analysing the consultancy process; Chapter Seven structurally analyses formal and informal induction discourses; and the concepts of 'bricolage' and 'homology' as expounded by Levi-Strauss inform the development of the later arguments on symbolic resistance and cohesion.

The movement from the primarily semiotic model of analysis of

structuralism to the deconstructionist model of post-structuralism is illustrated through the work of Roland Barthes. Barthes' early work extends Levi-Strauss' attention to the universal patterns of myth to the creation of contemporary mythology, in so doing reincorporating the ideological dimension of myth as 'false-consciousness'. For Barthes, myth is a type of speech in which connotations and meanings which are contingent and specific to particular social forms and groups become regarded as natural and incontestable, whilst their origins are simultaneously forgotten. He attempts to break down the dichotomy of langue and parole observed by Saussure and Levi-Strauss in demonstrating how myth (as speech or parole) is nevertheless influential in formulating codes for the language. The project of the Barthesian 'reader of myths' was to demystify and reveal this code, with some affinity with Habermas' critical stance.

In ultimately realising that his critical reader stood on problematic ground, Barthes shifted his attention from the hypothetical code (the signified) underlying the speech-act, discourse or text to the surface of this speech-act, discourse or text as an interplay of signification (the play of signifiers). This is characteristic of a shift to post-structuralism, where the idea of the absolute meaning of language is rejected in favour of a focus on language as part of the process of creating meaning. The work of Derrida, Lacan, Kristeva and Foucault illustrates the nature and extent of this constant contestation of the establishment of unequivocal meaning or objective truth. Their analyses have contributed to the reconceptualisation of the role of the author (and his intentions) and the reader or subject (with his interpretations) as a product of the text rather than an objective reality. The creation of a series of possible subject positions offered in induction discourses is analysed in this way in Chapter Seven. 'Deconstruction' as a practice is directed towards the ceaseless exploration and exploitation of the tendencies within 'texts', discourses and utterances to create and recreate the author/subject and any number of preferred readings.

At the close of this chapter, it is suggested that the post-structuralist mood has effected a shift from signified to signifier

but has failed to break down the distinction altogether. A combination of post-structuralism and hermeneutics, particularly taking into account the importance of practical action in sustaining meaning, it is suggested, might well provide a means to reconceptualise this false dualism. Some attempts to do this, and their implications for social and organizational analysis, are then explored in Chapter Five.

Language, Interpretation and Interruption

The importance of language for the constitution of social life has been recognised, as we have seen, by Gadamer and Habermas. The connection between language and social life is one which it is essential for any social researcher to clarify, for the constitution and status of his researches ultimately depend upon it. As Kristeva expresses it:

> 'What semiotics has discovered is that the law governing or, if one prefers, the major constraint affecting any social practice lies in the fact that it signifies: i.e. that it is articulated like a language.'(1)

Language can be viewed either as one of a number of means of human communication,alongside which other sign-systems (non-verbal, architectural, musical, pictorial, etc) are taken to be non-linguistic, or else our concept of language must be broadened to include such systems. The twentieth century project, particularly in the study of semiotics,has sought to broaden the concept of language in just this way. The problems which are encountered in the study of language in this sense are precisely those which lie at the heart of sociological theory and methodology: problems of idealism or essentialism versus materialism; the constitution of subjectivity and objectivity; problems of ideology and myth; problems of 'privilege' in discourse or investigation and the possibility of 'criticism' or the adoption of a critical stance.

One of the problems bedevilling the study of language and social life is that of the closure of material signs, the ossification of words into closed structures. At the base of this problem is the

Augustinian model of language(2), the ostensive definition of words, of material signs

> 'as dependent for their sense upon reference to an external, immaterial, reality - including those cases where this reality is given the name of a material form. Thus, by long tradition, words derive their meaning from the 'things' to which they refer from the more recent sociological viewpoint, speech is but the expression of relationships between speakers, conceived of as 'social facts'. In each case, language is made the slave of an extra-linguistic master, either 'natural' or 'social' in character.'(3)

The traditional view assumes that:

> 'man's relationships with nature or society are unaffected by the language in which they are formulated.'(4)

That language is both natural and social is ignored: it is placed outside those relations and only acts as a 'transparent' window upon them.

The 'modernist' view, as characterised by Silverman and Torode, seeks to reverse this relation, and

> 'to assert the primacy of language to understanding and the essentially internal character of social processes.'(5)

It derives from the hermeneutic tradition of Dilthey and Gadamer and encompasses the philosophers of 'everyday life' like Schutz and Winch and the ethnomethodologists like Garfinkel, Sacks and Cicourel. Language is a reality sui generis constituting the sense that speakers and hearers have of their worlds. However, the interplay of the 'natural' and the 'social' in words is seen as being closed, and in seeking to explicate the principles of this closure:

> 'it makes language once again the slave of an extra-linguistic master.'(6)

Language is in this case 'opaque', in a world of its own.

An often-quoted criticism of Levi-Strauss' structuralism is that it constitutes 'Kantianism without the transcendental subject.'(7) The structures and procedures which Levi-Strauss depicts as constraining the development of language, and social and cultural practice, may not derive from an absolute reality, but are nevertheless a priori and determining. Similarly, Silverman and Torode state that the 'modernist' approach has merely cited the a priori constructs presupposed in understanding in different areas.

> 'Saussure, Heidegger and the early Wittgenstein choose language; ethnomethodology favours interpretative procedures; Husserl votes for 'consciousness' and Schutz for the 'natural attitude'. Usage is elected by Austin and the later Wittgenstein, while Levi-Strauss, Chomsky and recently Cicourel(1973) put their money on 'Mind'.'(8)

The various 'extra-linguistic masters' so adopted (generally conceived of as a 'Grammar') are examined and 'interrupted' by Silverman and Torode. They contrast the traditional method of 'interpretation', which treats language as the appearance of an extra-linguistic reality, which is still present in modernism, and 'interruption', which is the attempt to reveal the interplay between 'appearance' and 'reality' within language itself. The first treats language as neutral, but can only formulate its 'extra-linguistic reality' within language. It is thus imposing its own language on the language which it interprets rather than revealing 'reality'. Silverman and Torode suggest that language as appearance necessarily refers to a reality other than itself, but it does this by referring to other language. Plurality is an inseparable feature of language, and it is the play between languages or ways of speaking and writing, which the practice of 'interruption' seeks to focus upon. Rather than impose a language of its own, it seeks to provoke tendencies already there;

> 'to enter critically into existing linguistic configurations and to re-open the closed structures into which they have ossified.'(9)

This practice of 'interruption' is an important one for the social researcher. However, it is formulated from both Silverman and Torode's critique of 'modernism' and their critique of others like Barthes and Derrida who themselves were critical of 'modernism'. It is necessary therefore to examine the major ideas of 'modernist', 'structuralist', and/or 'post-structuralist' theorists in order to place the practice of interruption and move towards a possible mode of social analysis.

Saussure

Saussure inherited the traditional, ostensive definition of words which refer to things, with fixed meanings, and in the realignment of ways of looking at language which his work occasioned, he prefigured much of modern structuralism, and some of modern ethnomethodology. His work, common with his contemporaries, Durkheim and Weber, reveals an awareness of the problems of the conflict between the determining properties of structure and the agency of the individual, or the 'systems' and 'action' dichotomy. In common with them, he ultimately settles for an 'idealist' or 'essentialist' position, the pressures of establishing a new discipline perhaps leading him to eschew its most radical, materialist implications.

Saussure(10) distinguished between the old 'substantive' view of language in favour of a 'relational' one. He argued that language should be studied not only in terms of its individual parts and diachronically (i.e. how those parts change through time, an example of which would be etymology) but in terms of the relations between those parts synchronically (as they exist at any one isolated moment). He thus emphasised the structural properties of language distinct from its historical dimensions, insisting that:

> 'language as a total system is complete at every moment, no matter what happens to have been altered in it a moment before.'(11)

Saussure distinguishes two dimensions of language, langue and parole. He uses a number of parallel dualisms to represent the

distinction between the two: social v. individual; necessary v. contingent; form v. content; system v. event. Langue roughly approximates to 'language' the abstract system, whereas parole is the individual speech act, the individual utterances of 'speech'. Saussure illustrates this by the analogy of the rules of chess and the games played by people in the real world. The rules exist beyond each game, yet they only acquire actuality in the relationships between the pieces in individual games. Langue determines parole, but has no manifestation outside parole. At this point Saussure turned towards langue as the dominant feature - had he turned to parole he might have explored some of the implications of usage examined by Wittgenstein, Austin, Chomsky and others.

Langue is not disconnected from parole. Rather it is the silent underpinning of parole, in a similar way to which Chomsky's competence underpins performance, a deep structure which is:

> 'both a social product of the faculty of speech and a collection of necessary social conventions that have been adapted by a social body to permit individuals to exercise that faculty.'(12)

It is not a set of labels for pre-existing entities, but a means of rendering the world intelligible by differentiating between concepts. The creativity, or at least, the possibility for the creativity of language in constructing the world is allowed for in the important but not always clear principle of the arbitrary nature of the sign.

For Saussure, language is a sign system, consisting of conjunctions between signifiers (sound-images or written shapes) and signifieds (the concepts). The separation is analytic - the signifier 'dog' in English is inseparably linked with the concept 'dog'. This creates the illusion of the transparency of language

> 'as if dog is a label for something which exists unproblematically in some ultimate and incontestable way.'(13)

Saussure contested this and in so doing replaced the 'thing' with the 'signified'. His failure to consistently distinguish between the 'thing', the 'reality', and the concept of it has led to confusion amongst both his supporters and his critics. He points out that the arbitrary nature of the sign is demonstrated by the occurrence of different words across different languages, and the example of 'ox' in English and 'boeuf' in French is provided. Benveniste criticises the suggestion by pointing out that

> 'he was referring in spite of himself to the same reality. Here then is the thing, expressly excluded at first from the definition of the sign, now cr3eeping into it by a detour.'(14)

Saussure's second argument, that sounds have no physical or necessary connection with the objects which they designate, leads him similarly to forget the objects and concentrate on the 'signifiers' and 'signifieds'. In viewing the signifier/signified relation as arbitrary, he tended to elide the 'signified' and the object 'signified'.

But this is not the whole story. Saussure's contribution, although tending to banish the object, drew attention to the way in which the object-world is carved up by language:

> 'If words stood for pre-existing concepts, they would all have exact equivalents in meaning from one language to the next: but this is not so.'(15)

He gives as an example the French 'mouton' which in English becomes 'mutton', the meat and 'sheep', the animal. Culler offers the French 'fleuve' (flowing into the sea) and 'riviere' (flowing into another 'riviere' or 'fleuve') while English distinguishes between 'river' and 'stream' only by size. Hjelmslev compares the colour spectrum of English with that of Welsh, where 'glas' (blue) includes elements of green and grey, and 'llwyd' (brown) also includes elements of grey.(16) Qualities, relationships and concepts are similarly flexible. They are demarcated by words, defined by the difference by which the sign-system relates them to each other. Signs achieve for their meaning

'not through their intrinsic value but through their relative position.'(17)

As Culler emphasises:

> 'The fact that the relation between the signifier and signified is arbitrary means, then, that since there are no fixed universal concepts or fixed universal signifiers, the signified itself is arbitrary, and so is the signifier. We then must ask as Saussure does, what defines a signifier, or a signified, and the answer leads us to a very important principle: both signifier and signified are purely relational or differential entities. Because they are arbitrary, they are relational.'(18)

Thus each language has a distinctive set of signifiers, and a distinctive set of signifieds: the one dividing up sound in an arbitrary way, the other dividing up the world in an arbitrary way, both existing in an arbitrary relationship.

Saussure emphasises that both signifier and signified are not fixed and are subject to change, but their relationship is conventional. That is to say, language is a 'social fact' and signs are created according to conventional practice. Langue is not, however, an intended product of the activity of individual language speakers. Thus, as Giddens points out, what Saussure is arguing boils down to the fact that the relation between signifier and object world is conventional.(19) The fruitfulness of Saussure's analysis has been that it has highlighted the possibility of this conventional relationship becoming viewed as natural, and has laid the foundations for the study of ideology by subsequent authors amongst whom Barthes is most prominent.

It is perhaps unfortunate, or possibly a condition of its success, that much of Saussure's work is ambiguous or unclear. The status of the signified as 'idea', 'mental concept', 'mental image', and its relation to the real world is obscure.(20) The emphasis on difference in characterising language suppresses a process of interpretation in the sign. Saussure's own widely quoted example is cited by Giddens:

> 'We say that the 'same' Geneva-to-Paris train leaves Geneva every day at 8.25 p.m., even if from one day to another the engine, coaches and personnel are different. What gives the train its identity, Saussure argued, is the way in which it is differentiated from other trains: its time of departure, route etc. Similarly in language, the identity of linguistic units, whether these be vocalisations or written terms, depends upon the differences or oppositions that separate them from one another, not upon their intrinsic content.'(21)

The train would remain the same one, even if it were late, for the distinguishing characteristics which mark it out are those which distinguish it from the 10.25 Geneva-to-Paris Express, or the 8.40 Geneva-to-Dijon local etc.(22) But as Giddens points out:

> 'The identity of the Geneva-to-Paris train cannot be specified independently of the context in which the phrase is used, and this context is not the system of differences themselves, such as Saussure mentions, but factors relating to their use in practice. Saussure implicitly assumes the practical standpoint of the traveller, or timetabling official, in giving the identity of the train; hence the 'same' train may consist of quite distinct engines and carriages on two separate occasions. But these do not count as instances of the 'same' train for a railway repair engineer, or a train-spotter.'(23)

The practical consciousness of the individual actor is generally neglected by Saussure. Similarly, although allowing that change does occur in langue, he remains unable to relate its systematic, non-contingent and social character to the specific contingent and individual character of parole. There is no theory of the competent language user, of how rules are used in practice, and how 'rule-governed creativity' might be employed to reproduce language and the system itself. In the absence of such a theory, the possibility of conceiving a dialectical relationship between the system and the individual act which does not simply reproduce the system but recreates it is impossible. The separation of synchronic analysis from the diachronic in Saussure leads to an inadequate conception of the nature of the system, and throws into question the very possiblity of this form of separation, even when confined to analysis alone.

Jakobson

Roman Jakobson, as a linguist, follows a similar project to Saussure in attempting to formulate a general linguistic theory, but one of his main concerns is to account for the 'poetic' function of language. In so doing he builds on Saussure's concept of the syntagmatic and associative planes of linguistic performance, and his model of the communicative act, to focus attention on 'parole' and to redefine meaning as a process rather than a property. Jakobson's work exerted a crucial influence on Levi-Strauss, and provides the basic models for much later structuralist analysis, particularly in its sophistication of the concept of meaning. As such, his work deserves extended treatment for itself, rather than through its various assimilations and interpretations. Although Jakobson's main field of attention is that of poetry, as he points out, the poetic function is common to all language. On the one hand, it

> 'cannot be productively studied out of touch with the general problems of language, and, on the other hand, the scrutiny of language requires a thorough consideration of its poetic function. Any attempt to reduce the sphere of poetic function to poetry or to confine poetry to poetic function would be a delusive oversimplification. Poetic function is not the sole function of verbal art but only its dominant determining function, whereas in all other verbal activities it acts as a necessary subsidiary constituent. This function by promoting the palpability of signs deepens the fundamental dichotomy of signs and objects. Hence, when dealing with poetic function, linguistics cannot limit itself to the field of poetry.'(24)

Saussure identified two planes of linguistic performance, the vertical or associative plane, whereby one word or term is related to all other terms in the language, and from which it is selected; and the horizontal or syntagmatic plane whereby it is related to the terms with which it is combined, usually in a single utterance, successively. The planes represent the synchronic and diachronic oppositions of language, and the synchronic, associative relations are sometimes called paradigmatic relations.

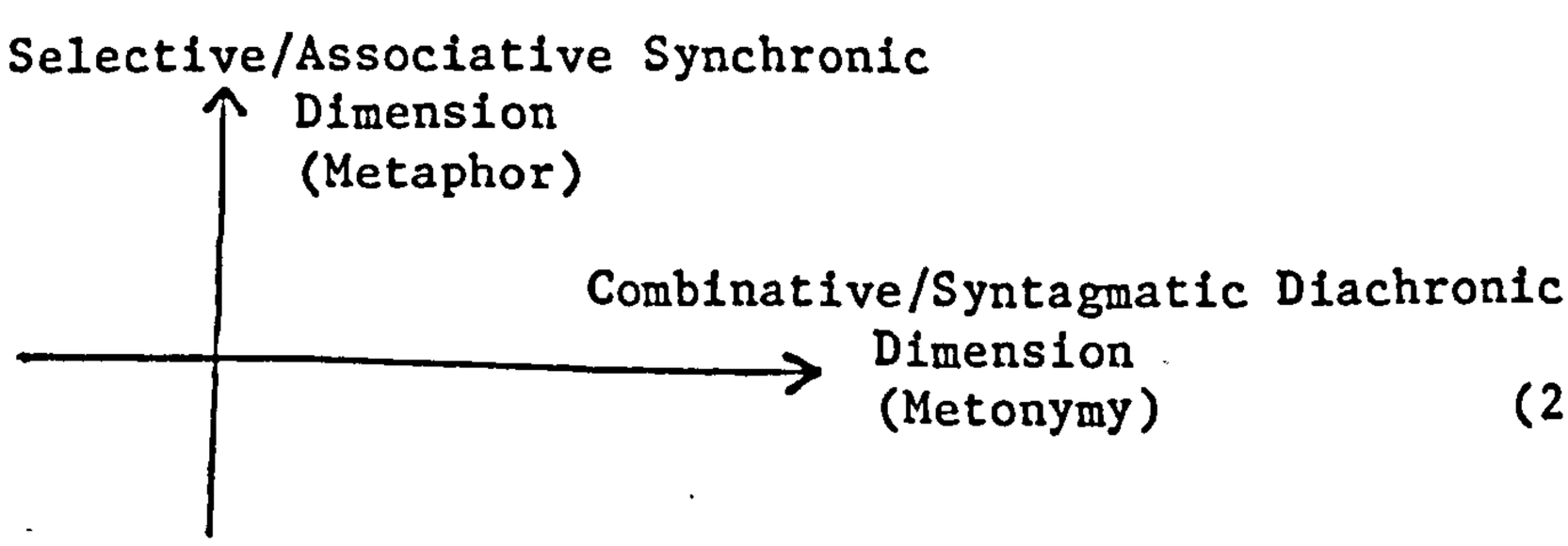
> 'Syntagmatic relations define combinatory possibilities, the relations between elements which might combine in a sequence.

Paradigmatic relations are the oppositions between elements which can replace one another.'(25)

Jakobson relates the two planes to their characteristic rhetorical figures of metaphor (paradigmatic) and metonymy (syntagmatic), both being terms of 'equivalence'. Both use a different entity in an expression and propose it to have the same status as the one which forms the main subject of the expression. In the metaphor, 'he wolfed his dinner', the prandial practices of the wolf are proposed as being similar to those of the diner, related broadly by the analogy drawn. In the metonymy, 'The cheeseburger is waiting for his bill', the equivalence is based on the proposed association of 'adjacency' or 'contiguity' between the meal and the diner. The relationship is sequential, requiring a conceptual sidestep between the two adjacent terms. Broadly speaking,

'Metaphor is principally a way of conceiving of one thing in terms of another, and its primary function is understanding. Metonymy, on the other hand, has primarily a referential function, that is, it allows us to use one entity to stand for another.'(26)

Jakobson, as a result of his study of aphasia (loss or impairment of the ability to understand and use speech) identified two forms of disorder ('similarity disorder' and 'contiguity disorder') which were mutually exclusive, each representing an inability to use either metaphorical or metonymic figures.(27) This led him to propose the two modes as oppositions, as fundamentally distinct as shown here:



(28)

Jakobson suggests that the poetic function of language draws on both dimensions to promote equivalence: and thence to create understanding.

'The selection is produced on the basis of equivalence, similarity and dissimilarity, synonymity and antonymity, while the combination, the build up of the sequence, is based on contiguity. The poetic function projects the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection into the axis of combination.'(29)

In order to appreciate Jakobson's conception of the poetic function, we must turn to his representation of the act of communication. Jakobson's model basically follows that of Saussure(30), in that it contains an addresser, addressee, and message. The message requires a contact between the two, oral, visual, electronic, or by whatever means. It must be formulated in terms of a code, which could be speech, numbers, writing, etc, and must refer to a context of which both addresser and addressee share some understanding. This can be represented

```
                    context
                    message
addresser-------------------------------------addressee
                    contact
                    code                                (31)
```

The crucial point of Jakobson's analysis is that 'meaning' does not depend on the message alone. Nor is it to be seen as simply distorted by the other factors, placed in a container, damaged in transit, and unpacked at the receiving end. It is created, and resides in, the total act of communication.

Jakobson illustrates this in a number of ways. Every language contains words which can be given no precise meaning in themselves and which are totally sensitive to their context, and can change dramatically. Jakobson calls these 'shifters', such as 'I', 'you', 'me', and so on, and they illustrate in depending for their meaning totally on the message which contains them, the extent to which all language is context-sensitive. A further example Jakobson gives is of an experiment:

'A former actor of Stanislavsky's Moscow Theatre told me how at his audition he was asked by the famous director to make forty different messages from the phrase segodnja vecerom,

'this evening', by diversifying its expressive tint. He made a list of some forty emotional situations, then emitted the given phrase; in accordance with each of these situations, which his audience had to recognize only from the changes in the sound shape of the same two words. For our research work...this actor was asked to repeat Stanislavsky's test. He wrote down some fifty situations framing the same elliptic sentence and made of it fifty corresponding messages for a tape record. Most of the messages were correctly and circumstantially decoded by Moscovite listeners.'(32)

Jakobson further proposes that, just as in the foregoing example, the various elements of communication are never in balance. That is to say, the message is always orientated towards one or other of the constituents of the act itself, and this orientation represents its function. Again, diagrammatically these functions appear:

	referential	
emotive	poetic	conative
	phatic	
	metalingual	

(33)

The emotive function, as exemplified by the actor's experiment, would draw attention to the addresser's emotional state. The conative function 'buttonholes' the addressee, and tells him what reaction is expected: 'Look!' 'Pay attention!', 'I say' are examples. The referential function orientates itself to conveying contextual information in an objective way, e.g. "At the third stroke it will be 4.29 precisely.' The phatic function inclines towards establishing or maintaining contact, priming the conversational pump with asides about the weather. The metalingual orientates towards the code, often checking that the same one is in use 'Nudge, nudge, wink, wink, say no more, know what I mean?' And finally the poetic or aesthetic function is orientated to the message itself, its qualities treated for their own sake.

This structural view of language emphasises the importance of the totality of the communicative act for the creation of meaning, which is always to some extent poetic and self-conscious, drawing attention to its own nature rather than referring to some reality beyond. This view breaks down or disrupts any natural or transparent connection between signifier and signified, and draws

attention, particularly in its examination of 'shifters'(34) to the way in which language constitutes its own subject.

Language is not seen by Jakobson as a container of a message, but as self-generating, self-regulating, reflexive, and needing no reference beyond itself. It is never complete, always being, at least in part, subject to its poetic function in which

> 'similarity imposed on contiguity imparts to poetry its thoroughgoing symbolic, multiplex, polysemantic essence... where similarity is superimposed upon contiguity any metonymy is slightly metaphorical and any metaphor has a metonymical tint.
>
> Ambiguity is an intrinsic, inalienable character of any self-focussed message...not only the message but also its addresser and addressee become ambiguous.'(35)

Form and content in language are now no longer clearly separate. The one creates and recreates the other. Language is a 'structure':

> 'embracing both form and content, and establishing a much more complex relationship between them...structure is not form, some kind of vessel into which content is poured, but rather an organised functioning system built up of interrelated elements.'(36)

The concept of structure in this sense is not confined to language alone. The linguists Sapir(37) and Whorf(38) stressed that the shape or pattern of a culture was structured in the same way as that culture's language.

> 'Language is a guide to 'social reality'...Human beings do not live in the objective world alone, nor alone in the world of social activity as ordinarily understood, but are very much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression for their society...We see and hearand otherwise experience very largely as we do because the language habits of our community predispose certain choices of interpretation.'(39)

Dorothy Lee offers an illustration from the analysis of the Wintu Indian language:

'Recurring through all this is the attitude of humility and respect toward reality, toward nature and society. I cannot find an adequate Engish term to apply to a habit of thought so alien to our culture. We are aggressive toward reality. We say, this is bread; we do not say, as the Wintu, I call this bread, or taste or see it to be bread. The Wintu never says starkly, this is; if he speaks of reality, that is not within his own restricting experience, he does not affirm it, he only implies it. If he speaks of his experience he does not express it as categorically true.'(40)

In his linguistic work, Sapir observed that languages operate by means of a structuring principle, whereby phonetic differences in the sounds of linguistic units only become meaningful in relation to the phonemic structure (points in the pattern) of the language. For example, in English we recognise the difference between the sound of /t/ and the sound of /k/, as in tin and kin; this recognition enables a different meaning to be given to each. We do not, however, recognise the different sound of /c/ in coal, and /c/ in call, although it would be obvious to a 'foreign' speaker of the language.(41) There is thus a difference between the phonetic level of sound and the phonemic level of selective significance. The phonemic principle could be said to be the structuring principle of language.

Levi-Strauss

The implications of Sapir's work within language were not extended to the cultural level by him, but were taken up alongside inferences from Durkheim, Jakobson and Troubetskoy by Levi-Strauss.(42) Levi-Strauss offers a definition of structure which he states is applicable to 'any kind of social studies', and indeed 'belongs to the methodology of science in general'. A 'structure' is a 'model meeting with several requirements':

'First the structure exhibits the characteristics of a system. It is made up of several elements, none of which can undergo a change without effecting changes in all the other elements. Second, for any given model there should be a possibility of ordering a series of transformations resulting in a group of models of the same type.

Third, the above properties make it possible to predict how

the model will react if one or more of its elements are submitted to certain modifications.

Finally, the model should be constituted so as to make immediately intelligible all the observed facts.'(43)

The overall project of Levi-Strauss was to identify the element which was analogous to the linguistic phoneme in other cultural systems. His work on kinship systems led him to observe:

'like phonemes, kinship terms are elements of meaning: like phonemes, they acquire meaning only if they are integrated into systems.'(44)

The cuisine of a society may be analysed into 'gustemes', related to structures which combine and oppose elements along the syntagmatic and paradigmatic planes of Saussure and Jakobson. Similarly, and most importantly for our purposes, myths may be analysed into 'mythemes' (the smallest unit of meaning for the myth-structure, although consisting of groupings of phonemes and morphemes from the language-structure). Levi-Strauss aims to connect a subject and a function in a minimal formulation of one sentence in order to discover these mythemes. Thus, in his example of the Oedipus myth, 'Oedipus marries his mother, Jocasta' becomes one such mytheme.(45) Having isolated all the mythemes, they are then grouped in vertical homologies, which includes, in our example: (1) Antigone buries her brother, Polynices, despite prohibition and (2) Cadmos seeks his sister Europa, ravished by Zeus. Each homologous column is then interpreted, and our column signifies 'overrating of blood relations'. The relations between the columns are examined and produce, in the Oedipus myth the proportion:

'the overrating of blood relations is to the underrating of blood relations as the attempt to escape autochthony is to the impossibility to succeed in it.'(46)

This is shown by Figure 3.

The myth therefore stands as a logical tool to enable a culture which holds the belief that mankind is autochthonous (or self-

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Figure 3: Levi-Strauss' decoding of the Oedipus myth.

procreating) to find a satisfactory transition between this theory and the knowledge that humans are actually born from the union of man and woman. The explanation is unimportant - what is significant is the way in which this procedure demonstrates Troubetzkoy's fourfold operation, Saussure's preference for synchronic (homologous) relations over diachronic, and Jakobson's mediated binary oppositions. Further Levi-Strauss follows the linguists in preference to Saussure in rarely employing the 'sign', but concentrating on the level of the signifier/signified. Mythemes are similar to phonemes in resulting from a play of binary or ternary oppositions, but their constituent elements are already 'full of signification at the level of the language'. This leads Levi-Strauss to suggest that these mythemes operate on the level of metalanguage, above that of their ordinary language meaning, as 'elements of a supersignification that can only come from their union'.(47) The mythemes, therefore, are 'purely differential and contentless signs'. Only through structural analysis do they come to signify, and myth is thus almost pure form.

> 'Myth is language, functioning on an especially high level where meaning succeeds practically at 'taking off' from the linguistic ground on which it keeps on rolling.'(48)

Myth operates on the level of

> 'those unconscious categories of thought which underpin and formulate our total view of the world.'(49)

Myth enables reality to be 'made up' and oppositions to be resolved, as we go along and equate experience and our theoretical presuppositions. Levi-Strauss claims that 'savage' thought is quite as rigorous as 'scientific' thought, but is a different sort of logic. This different sort of logic Levi-Strauss calls bricolage. The term bricolage:

> '...refers to the means by which the non-literate, non-technical mind of so-called 'primitive' man responds to the world around him. The process involves a 'science of the concrete' (as opposed to our 'civilised' science of the 'abstract') which far from lacking logic, in fact carefully

and precisely orders, classifies, and arranges into structures the minutiae of the physical world in all their profusion by means of a 'logic' which is not our own. The structures, 'improvised' or made up (these are rough translations of the process of bricoler) as ad hoc responses to an environment, then serve to establish homologies and analogies between the ordering of nature and that of society, and so satisfactorily 'explain' the world and make it able to be lived in.'(50)

This capacity for homologically based analogical thought, Levi-Strauss felt was lost to civilised man with the advent of writing, and indeed some of the most telling criticism of his work has been Derrida's exposure of his nostalgic preference for speech above writing, a phonocentric longing for a lost 'golden age'.(51) But it has been argued that this form of thought has not been entirely forgotten by modern man.(52)

Here I want to prefigure the argument of the later chapters. The theoretical diversions it has been necessary to take in these early chapters in order to adequately prepare the ground for the later analysis seem to have led us far from the shopfloor and indeed into the jungle. I can only say that sociological theory is complex and often contradictory, and exists in a context of misunderstanding, confusion and assumptions (common-sense and otherwise) with varying degrees of explication. I feel it necessary to clear the ground before proceeding further by quite fully explicating my interpretations of the theories and debates which have informed my theorising, and this I will continue to do. However, at this point an interesting extension of Levi-Strauss' concepts of homology and bricolage into the field of subcultural studies, and on which the second part of this thesis draws, is deserving mention.

Hebdige(53) examines the significance of style in the creation of the meaning of subculture, particularly in 'spectacular' subculture such as punks, rastafarians, and teddy boys in 'pop' culture. Homology, Hebdige says, following Willis(54), describes:

'the symbolic fit between the values and lifestyles of a group, its subjective experience and the musical forms it uses to express or reinforce its focal concerns...contrary to the

popular myth which presents subcultures as lawless forms, the internal structure of any particular subculture is characterized by an extreme orderliness: each part is organically related to other parts and it is through the fit between them that the subcultural member makes sense of the world.'

Hebdige cites hippie culture, but possibly a better example would be that of the Hells Angels - outwardly aggressive and lawless to the stereotype, but inwardly observing rank, rules and procedures strictly. Subcultural members radically adapt, subvert and extend prominent social forms of discourse in bricolage:

'Together object and meaning constitute a sign, and, within any one culture, such signs are assembled, repeatedly, into characteristic forms of discourse. However, when the bricoleur relocates the significant object in a different position within that discourse, using the same overall repertoire of signs, or when that object is placed within a different total ensemble, a new discourse is constituted, a new message conveyed.'(56)

The teddy boys' transformation of the fashionable early 50's Edwardian revival style of dress; the mods' appropriation of the business suit, the Crombie overcoat and the motor-scooter; the punks' revaluation of the school uniform, were all transformations of what were in one culture icons of respectability. Through 'perturbation and deformation' meaning was reorganized.(57)

Although the process of bricolage usually made chosen objects 'reflect, express and resonate...aspects of group life', with considerable consistency, they need not, and in the punk culture at least, they did not become iconic.

'If we were to write an epitaph for the punk subculture, we could do no better than repeat Poly Styrene's famous dictum, 'Oh Bondage, Up Yours!' or somewhat less concisely: the forbidden is permitted, but by the same token, nothing, not even these forbidden signifiers (bondage, safety pins, chains, hair-dye etc) is sacred and fixed.'(58)

As Hebdige points out, there is no 'key' to punk style. Despite the existence of homology, attempts to be too literal in ascribing meanings to objects utilised by the culture tend to founder. Some

signifiers (eg. the swastika) were exploited simply because of their potential for deceit, for empty effect. Yet it could be argued that by this bricolage, with its resistance to ossification and incorporation, the homology that identified the subculture was established. Levi-Strauss in this way can be seen both to have over-estimated the impact of writing on the civilised mind, and to have contributed considerably to contemporary cultural studies by his identification of the processes of the 'savage' mind.

Barthes

Levi-Strauss adopted the Saussurean model of langue and parole, modified as code and message. His attention turned towards the code, to the structures which might generate and make sense of parole, to the universal patterns rather than the individual instances of myth. This tendency considerably influenced the early work of Roland Barthes, who extended the study of myth to the mythology of contemporary culture, incorporating a critical perspective on myth as 'false consciousness' from which Levi-Strauss had dissassociated himself.

'Myth is a type of speech,' Barthes informs us,(59)

> 'Mythical speech is made of a material which has already been worked on so as to make it suitable for communication: it is because all the materials of myth (whether pictorial or written) presuppose a signifying consciousness, that one can reason about them while discounting their substance.'(60)

Barthes seeks to examine the 'normally hidden set of rules, codes and conventions through which meanings particular to specific social groups (i.e. those in power) are rendered universal and 'given' for the whole of society.' In doing so he defines myth as a second-order semiological system, by which the 'sign' of a first order semiological system becomes the signifier of another system. The first system operates on a plane of denotation - the signifier combines with the signified concept to 'denote' the sign (at the level of 'meaning'). The sign of the first system (language) then becomes the signifier (or form) of the second system (metalanguage)

which combines with a second concept to connote a final term of signification. This is shown in Figure 4.(61)

It is the fact that language is never closed enough in terms of meaning that allows myth to take hold. 'There always remains,' Barthes observes, 'around the final meaning a halo of virtualities where other meanings are floating: the meaning can almost always be interpreted.'(62)

Myth has two main properties: one is that what are expressions or connotations of definite social forms become presented as natural, inevitable and incontestable; the second is that it forgets or hides the conditions of its production:

> 'Myth does not deny things, on the contrary, its function is to talk about them; simply, it purifies them, it makes them innocent, it gives them a natural and eternal justification, it gives them a clarity which is not that of an explanation but that of a statement of fact. If I state the fact of French imperiality without explaining it, I am very near to finding that it is natural and goes without saying: I am reassured. In passing from history to nature, myth acts economically: it abolishes the complexity of human acts, it gives them the simplicity of essences, it does away with all dialectics, with any going back beyond what is immediately visible, it organises a world which is without contradictions because it is without depth, a world wide open and wallowing in the evident, it establishes a blissful clarity: things appear to mean something by themselves.'(63)

In identifying myth as the level of ideology, or false-consciousness, Barthes does not intend to accord false privilege to the level of denotation. Every case of denotation carries with it some of the overlapping meanings of previous connotations; it can never truly be the first sense of meaning. As Barthes amplifies it in a later work:

> 'Denotation is not the first sense but it pretends to be (our italics). Under this illusion, in the end, it is nothing but the last of connotation (where the reading is at the same time grounded and enclosed), the superior myth, thanks to which the text pretends to return to the nature of language...'(64)

This is supported by Baudrillard:

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Figure 4 Barthes' depiction of Signification

'Far from being the objective term to which connotation is opposed as the ideological term, denotation is thus, because it naturalizes the process, the more ideological term...'(65)

There were some problems consequent upon Barthes' theorising, which he acknowledged. Could not metalanguage be applied to metalanguage to reveal the mythologising of the supposed reader-of-myths? On what ground did the critical mythologist stand? Barthes problems remained unanswered in his early work, and ultimately he fell back upon the irony

'What I claim is to live to the full the contradiction of my time, which may well make sarcasm the condition of truth.'(66)

Barthes had attempted to overcome the Saussurean dichotomy of langue and parole, in demonstrating how myth as a type of speech could nevertheless formulate codes for the language. Nevertheless, the project of his reader-of-myths was to specify the code which underpinned speech, an 'essentially redunctionist programme of demystification.'(67) Further, this focus was still on the signified atthe expense of considering the text as a play of signifiers. As a result, Barthes' analyses left no room for the reader in the connotation of the image. His reader of myths 'closed' the text rather than demonstrating its productivity - we were in a sense being told what we already knew. He was aware of this, and in his later work, influenced at a respectful distance by Derrida, Lacan and Foucault, he conceives of structuralism as a much more open-ended activity.

The debate on myth and ideology has by no means ended, and there may still be room for a Barthesian reader-of-myths, with a redefined status. In the area of management and worker subcultural studies, where little empirical work has been performed on ideology, there is perhaps still space for a catalysing demythologist who might pave the way for more sophisticated analyses on post-structuralist lines. The production and reinforcement of particular world views which tend to become dominant, inevitable and 'right' is of particular interest in this

area of study. The role of the mythologist need not be extinct, but it does require reconceptualisation as the example of the work of the Centre for Contemporary Studies exemplifies. One influence on the work of the Centre has been Gramsci, who employs the concept of 'hegemony'. This is the process, or a combination of processes, whereby one fundamental social group, having achieved direction over the economic nexus, is able to expand this into social, political and cultural leadership. During the passage of this tendency into the superstructure,

> 'previously germinated ideologies become 'party', come into confrontation and conflict, until one of them or at least a combination of them tends to prevail, to gain the upper hand, to propagate itself throughout society - bringing about not only a unison of economic and political aims, but also intellectual and moral unity, posing all the questions around which the struggle rages, not on a corporate but on a 'universal' plane, and thus creating the hegemony of a fundamental group over a series of subordinate groups.'(68)

This hegemony is always a temporary mastery over a particular field of struggle. It is not universal or given, and has to be reproduced and sustained. Forces at any given moment may be favourable or unfavourable to the tendency, and particular outcomes depend on the balance of these forces. Thus forms can never be permanently normalized, and are always open to the deconstruction or demystification of a 'reader' like Barthes. As Hebdige further points out:

> 'Moreover commodities can be symbolically 'repossessed' in everyday life, and endowed with implicitly oppositional meanings, by the very groups who originally produced them...The struggle between different discourses, different definitions and meanings within ideology is therefore always, at the same time, a struggle within signification: a struggle for possessionof the sign which extends to even the most mundane areas of everyday life.'(69)

In this sense, investigations of workplace subcultures can be viewed as an examination of the 'struggle for possession of the sign'. This will be further explored in the later chapters.

Barthes, in his earlier work, used theory as a hypothetical method

of description. This was based on the assumptions of theory being dissociable from practice, the explanatory status of the model, and the role of the critic (mythologist) to provide description, commentary or representation. The problematic status of the 'critic' led Barthes to a 'post-structuralist' position: in realising the status of criticism of the text his focus shifted from the 'model' behind the 'text' to the signifying surface of the text being criticised. This also led to a move away from the already constituted product implied by the model, to the idea of the 'productivity of the text' in the interaction of text and reader and the production of a multiplicity of signifying effects. The model of communication as a closed system transmitting 'meaning', and the attempt to fix a unified theory of structural relations were both as a consequence brought into question. As Young observes:

> 'Post-structuralism...involves a shift from meaning to staging, or from the signified to the signifier.'(70)

It should be stressed that 'post-structuralism' by no means defines a homogeneity of intellectual positions. Nevertheless, Derrida, Lacan, Foucault and others have developed their criticisms of structuralism in response to similar problems.

Derrida

Derrida effected the movement from structure to language itself from an initial criticism of Saussure.(71) Saussure's theory of the sign, Derrida argues, is self-contradictory because, despite his principle of the arbitrary nature of the sign, he remains firmly attached to a 'logocentric' tradition which presupposes the a priori, fixed meaning of concepts. It is founded on the idea of language as speech, which is the speech of self-conscious rational minds. Thus speech is privileged over writing (phonocentrism) and thought provides the transcendental meaning of concepts articulated by speech (logocentrism). Behind writing is speech, behind speech thought, the transcendental signified. Derrida, in a lengthy analysis, points out that writing affects speech, and if writing is to speech as signifier is to signified, then the signifier can be

constitutive of the signifed. He extends the implications of Saussure's own term of difference, constituting his own term 'differance':

> 'The sign must always involve the silent play of 'spacing' - the absence of everything from which it is differentiated. At the same time, the sign cannot literally represent that which it signifies, produce the signified as present, precisely because a sign for something must imply thatthing's absence (just as a copy must be different from an original in order to be a copy, or a repetition can never be an exact repetition, otherwise it would be the thing itself). Representation never re-presents, but always defers the presence of the signified. The sign, therefore, always differs and defers, a curious double movement that Derrida calls 'differance'.'(72)

The sign differs from other signs and defers the 'presence' of the signified, which never arrives. Thus literal meaning is impossible, and 'meaning' is rather dependent on the text in which it occurs and the 'traces' of meaning left by the appearance of the signifier in other discourses and texts.

> 'Meaning is no longer a function of the difference between fixed signifieds. It is never fixed outside any textual location or spoken utterance and is always in relation to other textual locations in which the signifier has appeared on other occasions. Every articulation of a signifier bears within it the trace of its previous articulations. There is no fixed transcendental signified, since the meaning of concepts is constantly referred, via the network of traces, to their articulations in other discourses: fixed meaning is constantly deferred.'(73)

Derrida places his emphasis on the signifier and on the process of writing - writing not being simply the placing of inscriptions on a page but being the spacing inherent in the play of differences and traces past and present that is differance. The tradition of truth, unequivocal meaning and presence can be 'deconstructed' to reveal the paradoxes and limitless 'play' of writing.

> 'In the multiplicity of writing, everything is to be disentangled, nothing deciphered; the structure can be followed, 'run' (like the thread of a stocking) at every point and at every level, but there is nothing beneath: the space of writing is to be ranged over, not pierced; writing ceaselessly posits meaning ceaselessly to evaporate it,

carrying out a systematic exemption of meaning.'(74)

Thus writing could be said to be the 'disappearance of natural presence'. The 'author' as the seat of 'author-ity' of meaning no longer exists, for to assign a text such an author would be to close down its meaning. Similarly, the 'subject' of the text, the 'speaking subject' sometimes implied or sometimes inscribed, the 'I' or the immediate source of the text, is nothing more than a particular textual movement, within a space where multiple voices enter into 'mutual relations of dialogue, parody, contestation'.(75) The text is a site of productivity:

> 'The text is plural. Which is not simply to say that it has several meanings but that it accomplishes the very plural of meaning: an irreducible (and not merely an acceptable) plural. The text is not a co-existence of meanings but a passage, an overcrossing; thus it answers not to an interpretation, even a liberal one, but to an explosion, a dissemination. The plural of the text depends, that is, not on the ambiguity of its contents but on what might be called the **stereographic plurality** of its weave of signifiers (etymologically, the text is a tissue, a woven fabric).(76)

This plurality is sometimes termed 'intertextuality'. It marks the move from the conception of the text as a 'structure of signifieds' to one of a 'galaxy of signifiers'.(77) The dichotomy of subjectivity and objectively similarly breaks down. Expressed differently,

> 'In rationalist discourse the fixed concepts, which precede any actual speech act, have to be articulated via the conscious intention of the individual speaking subject and the speech community at large. In abandoning the notion of transcendental fixed signifieds and focusing on traces of meaning within written texts, Derrida opens the way for a reconceptualization of the written subject, not as the intending originator of speech acts but as an effect of the structure of language.

This moves us away from the confines of the text alone and into language, which has clearer implications for social analysis. Having '<u>decentred</u>' the subject to an effect of language with Derrida, we might usefully now consider Lacan's attempt at a

general theory of the constitution of the speaking subject in language.

Lacan

Lacan's psychoanalytic theory of language is based on a particular reading of Freud. Freud's model of the unconscious, not as the seat of the drives but as the ground of their representations as ideas, is at the base of Lacan's reading. The ideas in the unconscious become available to consciousness via the primary processes (condensation, displacement, representation and secondary revision). Thus in the interpretation of dreams the manifest content is linked to the unconscious latent content by the primary processes. The most important of the processes...

> 'are condensation and displacement, and in Lacan's reading of Freud, they become the very mechanisms of language itself. Through condensation one idea comes to represent a number of chains of meaning in the unconscious. Displacement is the mechanism whereby an originally unimportant idea is invested with the energy which is due to another drive-motivated idea.'(79)

This 'cathected' idea can be traced back to the original idea by free association which can reveal linking chains of meaning. Language is thus the key to unconscious thought, and for Lacan 'the unconscious is structured like a language'. In viewing the unconscious as a site of thought and meaning, Lacan stands alongside Derrida as a critic of those forms of thought which privilege the rational, unified, intentional consciousness as the source of meaning.

For Lacan, the unconscious itself is formed through the organization of the drives at the resolution of the Oedipus Complex, which consists of establishing a gender-specific relation to the laws of human culture which determine how the sexual drive should be satisfied. The position of power and control, is identified as being the position of the Other, although it is not actually occupied by anyone (rather being a structuring principle). It is the desire to control the laws of human culture which is the structuring principle of language.

On the resolution of the Oedipus Complex, language as a total structure is acquired, as the individual assumes his/her place within the symbolic order. In acquiring language, the individual acquires a position from which to speak, and acquires subjectivity. Through language and signification the individual seeks to occupy the position of the Other, from which laws and meaning come. The desire can never be satisfied, for it would entail becoming the Other. However, it does have the effect of constantly deferring meaning through chains of signifiers which are never fixed once and for all, as this fixing could only come from the source of meaning and control, the position of the Other.(80)

In terms of psychosexual development, the acquisition of language begins during what Lacan terms the 'mirror stage'. At this stage the infant, still fragmented and unco-ordinated, identifies with a mirror image of a complete unified body. Identification with another physical form gives the child an imaginary experience of what it must be like to be in full control of itself. The child as yet is unable to distinguish between this form and itself, and it is thus based on misrecognition. This remains important when the subject has fully entered into language - the subject can identify him/herself with the 'Other' - that is to say, with the source of meaning - as if meaning came from him/her, in misrecognition. This has been seen by Althusser(81), amongst others, as

> 'the basis of the identification by the subject with a particular ideological position, through what is termed the 'interpellation' of the subject in ideology'.(82)

It is eventually through language that the imaginary 'I' is transformed into a conscious, thinking and speaking subject, through incorporation into the structures of communication. It can distinguish between self and others, and can apparently impart knowledge through speech. But Lacan is at pains to emphasise, this capacity is dependent upon the laws of language and society, and subjectivity is a dependent function of these laws, and is constantly in process, being reconstituted and modified through language use. As the subject can never become the Other, there can

be no fixed meaning, and language is thus a chain of '<u>floating signifiers</u>, meaning lying in the relations between them (in the symbolic order certain of these are privileged, as nodal points around which the drives become attached and prevent an indefinite elision of meaning). Interpretation in Lacan's psychoanalysis, consists of tracing the chain of signifiers back through language into the unconscious, to the 'irreducible signifier'.

> 'Consequently, it is false to say, as has been said, that interpretation is open to all meanings under the pretext that it is a question only of the connection of a signifier to a signifier, and consequently of an uncontrollable connection. Interpretation is not open to any meaning. This would be to concede to those who rise up against the character of uncertainty in analytic interpretation that, in effect, all interpretations are possible, which is patently absurd... Interpretation is not open to all mearnings. It is not just any interpretation. It is a significant interpretation, one that must not be missed. This does not mean that it is not this signification that is essential to the advent of the subject. What is essential is that he should see beyond this signification, to what signifier- to what irreducible, traumatic, non-meaning - he is, as a subject, subjected.'(83)

Kristeva

Lacan's general theory, as is Levi-Strauss's, is predominantly patriarchal, with women only existing in a negative relationship to the Other. Lacan's work has been modified by Julia Kristeva in order to encompass a materialist, feminist position. This focus of her work is worth further consideration but for our purposes here must remain unexplored. Kristeva is concerned that the 'speaking subject' in Lacan is not connected to 'the contemporary mutations of subject and society'.(84) She develops a notion of 'signifiance', <u>signifying practice</u>, which covers both rational (predominantly masculine) language and semiotic language (the repressed, marginal, poetic, feminine, 'unconscious'). Kristeva opposes Lacan in insisting that the organisation of the drives depends on 'historically specific familial and wider social relations.'(85) This can be challenged by semiotic language as the subject in language is not constituted and fixed once and for all, but is differentially reconstituted every time an individual speaks. As a function of language the individual is a 'potential

site for revolution'(86), and this can be achieved through the productivity of the text, whereby it redistributes the categories of the language in which it is situated and intersects with other texts and utterances as an intertextuality.(87)

Kristeva's attempt to develop the psychoanalytic approach of Lacan, which in common with the semiological approach outlined earlier, offers general theory rather than historical specificity, has not yet been taken into the area of specific cultural practices and institutions. The constitution of knowledge, particularly through misrecognition via Althusser, has been interrogated but the specific construction of subjcts within discourses and ideologies in social practices has not been explored from this perspective.(88) However, an approach to this problem has been made by Michel Foucault.

Foucault

Foucault sees his task, or the task of a discourse analyst, as effecting the movement away from the treatment of 'discourses as groups of signs (signifying elements referring to contents or representations)' towards viewing them as 'practicesthat systematically form the objects of which they speak.'(89) He criticises the 'formalist' approach of early Barthes, Saussure, Derrida and Lacan, in which formal concepts and general theories can be used to determine past and future uses of the language system in speech acts, preferring to focus on the historical specificity of the individual act and its contemporary-historical determinations. He also criticises interpretation, where the approach is dominated by the belief that language conceals something which the interpreter must discover, often a characteristic of formalist theories and subjected to further extensive critique by Silverman and Torode.

Foucault approaches his task differently. His concern is to discover the level at which, at a given historical moment, there exists a marked connection or difference between individual linguistic elements or statements. He wishes 'to articulate the

rules and procedures which determine the different forms of our knowledge':(90) how distinct fields of objects are defined (e.g. 'madness', 'illness', 'criminality'), how repertoires of concepts are determined, how 'truth' is established, how what can and cannot be said is delimited, and how a definite set of possible subject positions is produced. 'Subjectivity' in Foucault's definition is a result of specific historical positioning within discursive practices, the conditions in which they appear and their relation to the body of language which constitutes a discourse: it is an empty place or places, a number of functions which can be occupied by a variety of individuals at different times. The break with the subject/author as origin, and even with the Lacanian concept of the subject 'speaking as an individual', is marked.

Foucault's attention is drawn to the analysis of the relation between knowledge and power. Power is not to be viewed as external to a discourse, 'in the primary existence of a central point in a unique source of sovereignty from which secondary and descendant forms would emanate',(91) which appears to correspond to Lacan's Other. Power is rather implicit in the constitution of discourse, in the type of relations of force which operate there, 'to distribute and hierarchise the various discursive subject positions within a field of unequal relations'.(92) Power is not held or exercised: it is a condition. It is a condition which accomplishes the exclusion of that which is not suitable as knowledge from knowledge, but Foucault is unwilling to define this as constituting ideology:

> 'The notion of ideology appears to me to be difficult to make use of, for three reasons. The first is that, like it or not, it always stands in virtual opposition to something else which is supposed to count as truth. Now I believe that the problem does not consist in drawing the line between that in a discourse which falls under the category of scientificity or truth, and that which comes under some other category, but in seeing historically how effects of truth are produced within discourses which in themselves are neither true nor false. The second drawback is that the concept of ideology refers, I think necessarily, to something of the order of a subject. Thirdly, ideology stands in a secondary position relative to something which functions as its infrastructure, as its material, economic determinant etc. For these three reasons, I think that this is a notion that cannot be used without circumspection.'(93)

Foucault, then contributes to our consideration by stressing the importance of specific historical forms and subjectivities, which may be a product of the rules of formation in operation at any time, but are not determined by any general theory of language and subjectivity as has been suggested by some of the other commentators we have studied. He directs our attention, once again, to the field of power relations, knowledge formation, and/or ideology, defining them situationally in terms of their historical occurrence within particular systems of meaning (or, in a possible alternative formulation as 'essentially contested concepts').(94) He further continues the deconstruction of the subject as the origin of meaning which we have observed in Lacan and Derrida whilst changing their emphases.

Two problems occur for cultural studies. The first is that it is not clear how the field of a discourse is delimited, and that Foucault himself often accepts traditional definitions of the boundaries of such fields as, for example 'medicine', which may be failing to realize their problematic status. The possibility that there may be fields where a number of discourses intersect, and where boundaries fluctuate in the manner of Pecheux's interdiscourse in the subject, remains unexplored. The second problem relates to Gramsci's formulation of hegemony, in that Foucault's 'discourse' implies passive and yielding subjects and although he states that resistance accompanies power, he fails to demonstrate it. The constant flux and struggle of power and resistance, the struggle for possession of the sign, and the revolutionary potential of language for Kristeva, remains in the background.

Conclusion

Finally, a summary of and some criticisms and observations on the importance of structuralist and post-structuralist thought. Saussure began the break with the ostensive definition of language, focussing on language as a system of relations, as a way of carving up the world. He focussed on langue, the structure, and the

signified, the underlying concept. Jakobson followed Saussure's model of communication, but in identifying the various interacting codes he redefined meaning far more clearly as a process. The implications of this for the erosion of the signifier/signified distinction were not immediately realised.

Levi-Strauss extended much of Jakobson's linguistic model into the field of culture, but focussed like Saussure on langue and the signified, neglecting issues of usage and subjectivity. In his analysis of myth he powerfully demonstrated the importance of 'homology' and 'bricolage' in the operation of non-rationalistic logic, concepts which still have importance for the analysis of civilised subcultures.

Barthes follows Saussure and Levi-Strauss in his analyses of myth, but incorporates a critical stance in seeking to explicate the hidden conventions by which meanings specific to social groups become naturalised and universal. Barthes' early dependence on Saussure affected his ability to conceptualise the position of the mythologist, whom he conceded might be prey to his own mythologizing. In his later work he collapses the distinction he observed earlier between theory and practice, turning his attention from the model behind the text or myth to the conditions of its staging, from the signified to the signifier.

Derrida influenced this move by Barthes by his criticism of presence, of the a priori fixed meaning of concepts, extending Saussure's difference in a temporal dimension as differance. Meaning is no longer fixed but consists of traces of past and present significations. 'Truth' and 'unequivocal meaning' can be disrupted and deconstructed to reveal the 'play' at work within language, within the text. The author as the site of meaning is removed in favour of the text with a multiplicity of meanings, creating the author/subject as an effect of language.

Lacan pursues the creation of the subject into the unconscious, which he says is structured like a language, linked through a chain of signifiers. The speaking subject is formed in language through the desire to control, a will to power over the seat of human

cultural laws, and through identification with the Other, who is imagined to occupy this seat. Meaning for Lacan is never fixed but falls under the flow of chains of signifiers, leading to the irreducible signified in the unconscious. Both Lacan with the unconscious and Derrida with writing attempt to place the unsaid, unarticulated portion of human knowledge but both lack a concept of practical consciousness, where that which is not articulated is that which is done.

Kristeva attempts to introduce this dimension of signifying practice, by which the speaking subject is created constantly in process, rather than the virtual once and for all creation in Lacan's general theory. The subject is created by the productivity of the text in specific historical contexts. Foucault similarly seeks to analyse the historically specific discursive practices which constitute the subject, but not as an individual subject in connection with a general psychoanalytic theoryof the unconscious but as a position or range of positions which may be taken up by a number of individuals. The consideration of the subject as the product of the text leads him to the study of the formation of knowledge and power relations, which has something in common with Barthes' concern with ideology. For both of them, however, the problems raised by the consideration of over-determination contradiction and resistance remain under-explored.

In general, the move from signified to signifier in structuralism has not been taken far enough, in that it has not broken down the distinction altogether. The langue/parole distinction has been eroded, but a fully worked theory of how practical usage affects form has not been developed. The dualism of subject/object hs been in some way overcome, but perhaps at the expense of a stress on the objective, rather than of its reconceptualisation as a duality.(95)

The decentring of the knowing subject, and the conceptualisation of texts no longer being the embodiment of authorial intentions has clear advantages for the study of cultural forms in which the consequences of actions frequently escape actors' ability to account for them. But the importance of reflexivity and interpretative work which reproduces social practice should not be

neglected. The practical dimension of how meaning is upheld, constituted and resisted remains enigmatic for much structuralist and post-structuralist theory.(96) Readings may be produced by texts, but simultaneously with the 'death of the author' the reader becomes important even whilst the text's productivity is recognised. This conceptualisation of the text needs to be reconnected to hermeneutics and a philosophy of practical action, if it is to have any value for social and organizational analysis. In the next chapter, I will examine this further in the light of attempts by Paul Ricoeur to use the text as a model of social action.

Finally, the implication for a connection of structuralism and hermeneutics is visible in the deconstructive impulse in Derrida, Barthes and Foucault. The latter turn to the method of autocritique whereby the writer constantly interrupts and interrogates his own text as he produces it, shifting and undercutting his own position, ceaselessly critical of his self and his productions and denying his authority over meaning or interpretation. This chapter began with a consideration of 'interruption' as a procedure in the work of Silverman and Torode. This again I will discuss further in the following chapter, in the context of social action.

Chapter Five: Reading the Social Text

Introduction

In this chapter, the attempt of Paul Ricoeur to effect a combination of hermeneutics and structuralism will be examined, particularly in relation to his advocacy of the model of social action as a text. In the light of criticisms by Thompson, and indirectly by Sperber, it will be argued that although the model does offer some insights it is inadequate in its conceptualisations on both the level of the text and the level of social action. These weaknesses can be in some way redeemed by a re-evaluation of the act of reading, although what is left is far from being a methodology.

The absence of a methodology which adequately combines the virtues of both hermeneutics and structuralist approaches may not be a disadvantage when viewed from the perspective of the anti-methodologists Phillips and Feyerabend. Their concepts of 'play', 'counterinduction' and 'plural methodology' may potentially offer a means to combining hermeneutics and structuralism with a critical stance. This form of analysis is attempted in the later chapters, particularly Chapter Eight.

Finally, the main themes and unresolved questions of the previous chapters are re-presented. Although no model solutions are offered or speculated here, some significant directions of thought are identified, one of which is the deconstructionist impulse to autocritique. Autocritique is the process by which the deconstructionist interrogation of the logocentric tendencies of the text, the exposure of the means by which both author and subject are reproduced and privileged in texts and readings, is turned back by the deconstructionist author upon his own productions. The text is interrogated as it is produced, the author constantly shifting, undercutting and exposing his own position, presumptions and contradictions, critical of himself, his productions, and denying his authority over meaning or interpretation. This impulse may well aid the sociologist in stimulating the adoption of a variety of perspectives both towards

his researches and himself, reminding him of the precarious and fictional nature both of his researches and his accounts of those researches. This process in turn may reveal patterns and similarities in phenomena which were not recognised as constituting analysable data when viewed from other perspectives. This is demonstrated by the analyses in the chapters which follow.

Ricoeur and the Model of the Text

In a recent review, it was remarked that the work of Derrida, Foucault and Lacan:

> 'draws on themes and resources from both the structuralist and hermeneutic traditions in order to construct a critique of the constitutive subject 'which threatens to reduce the double hermeneutic to the status of a metaphysical relic.''(1)

As we have seen, those authors provide a devastating critique of the way in which subjectivity is constituted in the text and in discourse. Certainly, the model of hermeneutics as reclaiming an authorial intention, even in its amended forms, cannot withstand such criticism. But in social life we are presented with knowing, reflecting motivated and acting subjects who obstruct and cooperate in reflexive activity and the interpretative work necessary to repair, reproduce, remodel and sustain that social life. The 'double hermeneutic' is far more than a metaphysical relic here. The reviewer's comment would seem to be an exaggeration occasioned in the transfer of post-structuralist critiques from texts to social action; not that it does not produce insights to do so, but it should be attempted with circumspection.

Probably the most clearly stated attempt to combine the ideas of structuralism and hermeneutics and transfer the model of the text into the sphere of social action has been made by Paul Ricoeur, and it is worth our consideration in some detail.(2)

Ricoeur begins his paper by addressing two questions:

> '(1) To what extent may we consider the notion of text as a

good paradigm for the so-called object of the social sciences? (2) To what extent may we use the methodology of text-interpretation as a paradigm for interpretation in general in the field of the human sciences?'(3)

In considering the paradigm of the text, he introduces the concept of discourse, as a preliminary to distinguishing speaking from writing. 'Discourse', Ricoeur informs us, 'is language event or linguistic usage.'(4) It is analogous to 'parole', and 'performance'. It is dependent on the basic unit of the sentence rather than the sign, and has four main traits:

'One: it 'is always realised temporally and in a present whereas the system is virtual and outside of time.'
Two: it possesses a subject, referring back to its speaker.
Three: it 'is always about something. It refers to a world which it claims to describe, to express or represent. It is in discourse that the symbolic function of language is actualised.'
Four: it has an other, 'another person to whom it is addressed.'(5)

These four traits are actualized differently in spoken and written language, and Ricoeur goes on to explicate this.

First, discourse only exists temporally. In speech it has the character of a fleeting event, and gives rise to the problem of 'fixing' or 'inscribing' it. Writing inscribes

'Not the event of speaking, but the 'said' of speaking, where we understand by the 'said' of speaking that intentional exteriorization constitutive of the aim of discourse thanks to which the sagen - the saying - wants to become Aus-sage - the enunciation, the enunciated. In short, what we write, what we inscribe, is the noema of the speaking. It is the meaning of the speech event, not the event as event.'(6)

Ricoeur amplifies by appealing to the theory of the speech-act, which he adapts from Austin and Searle.

'The act of speaking, according to these authors, is constituted by a hierarchy of subordinate acts, which are distributed on three levels: (1) the level of the locutionary or propositional act, the act of saying; (2) the level of the illocutionary act or force, that which we do in saying; and

(3) the level of the perlocutionary act, that which we do by saying.'(7)

The first roughly corresponds to my saying 'Close the door'. The second arises from whether it is an instruction, a command, or an invitation to greater intimacy. The third level consists of the effect created by the saying, for example grudging compliance with the instruction, hasty and fearful compliance with the command, or a quickening of the heartbeat in pleasurable anticipation of the last alternative. Ricoeur emphasises that the meaning of the speech act consists of all three of these, although they are liable to inscription in decreasing order. This meaning incorporates the three:

> 'in the measure that these three aspects of the speech-act are codified, gathered into paradigms, and where, consequently, they can be identified and re-identified as having the same meaning.'(8)

Secondly, in terms of the four traits, spoken discourse refers to its subject with some immediacy. As Ricoeur puts it:

> 'The subjective intention of the speaking subject and the meaning of the discourse overlap each other in such a way that it is the same thing to understand what the speaker means and what his discourse means.'(9)

On the contrary, with written discourse the author's intention and the meaning of the text cease to coincide. 'What the text says now matters more than what the author meant to say' we are told, and its meaning...'has broken its moorings to the psychology of its author.'(10) Supporting gestures such as intonation, timing, mimicry, and gestures are no longer available as in speech - the meaning can only be 'rescued' by interpretation.

Thirdly, dialogue ultimately refers to the situation common to the interlocutors, referring to a particular world.

> 'This situation in a way surrounds the dialogue, and its landmarks can all be shown by a gesture, or by pointing a finger, or designated in an ostensive manner by the discourse

itself through the oblique reference of those other indicators which are the demonstratives, the adverbs of time and place, and the tense of the verb. In oral discourse, we are saying, reference is ostensive.'(11)

Writing however can have no world, for only man has a world; rather it opens up the 'symbolic dimensions of our being-in-the-world', those aspects of the world which transcend situational considerations. The text enlarges the situation to the world (which Ricoeur suggests is 'the referent of all literature...every text we have read, understood and loved').(12) The non-ostensive reference of the text opens up a new world, 'new dimensions of our being-in-the-world'. It establishes the relation of man to the world, rather than the alternative of 'an absurd game of errant signifiers'.

Fourthly, speech is addressed to 'an interlocutor equally present to the discourse situation', whereas writing is addressed to 'whoever knows how to read'.

> 'Instead of being addressed just to you, what is written is addressed to the audience that it creates itself...in escaping the momentary character of the event, the bounds lived by the author, and the narrowness of ostensive reference, discourse escapes the limits of being face to face. It no longer has a visible auditor. An unknown, invisible reader has become the unprivileged addressee of the discourse.'(13)

Ricoeur goes on to apply this model of the text to social action, but before taking his analysis further, some inadequacies of his account so far must be observed.

Ricoeur begins by adopting the langue/parole distinction in his concept of discourse. As we have already seen, this has posed problems for post-Saussurean structuralism, and the attempt to connect the two has been unsuccessful. Ricoeur in fact begins by opening up an unnecessary division which in his later theorizing he finds difficulty in bridging, although his concentration on 'discourse', or 'parole', is a change of emphasis. Throughout his analysis there runs the sense of 'presence' in Derrida's terminology, of 'langue' behind 'parole', of the principle giving

form to action. The hierarchy also seems to imply that 'language' gives rise to 'speech' which gives rise to 'writing', which inscribes it. Writing, as we know from Derrida, is more than the phonocentric inscription of speech. But Ricoeur has to identify some part of the speech-event which is inscribed by writing because of his model, and he comes up with the 'meaning' or 'noema' of the speaking. For him then, words, sentences and speech-acts have meanings. They incorporate the locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts into this codified paradigm which is 'meaning', but they can be identified as having 'meaning'.

Ricoeur concedes that he is giving the word 'meaning' 'a very large acceptation'.(14) But more than this he is using it in a flexible and extremely imprecise fashion which fails to disguise the weakness of his argument. Whatever grammatical qualities or common patterns of usage or usual effects speech events may have, they only have these as events, insofar as they are actualized by speakers, hearers and readers as members of communities and in specific contexts. They do not have 'meaning' until they are made to mean - any other suggestion, no matter how elegant, must be rejected.

If it were the same thing to understand 'what the speaker means and what his discourse means' then the world would be a very simple and transparent place to live. Much of the world's great literature, and some of its best sociology(15) have arisen from the appreciation of just this problem. What innocent, two dimensional beings Ricoeur's world offers us! We can also only accept his identification of the separation of the author and the text if we acknowledge the productivity of the text as implied in the work of Derrida, Barthes, Lacan, Kristeva and Foucault - that discursive subject-positions may be offered to the reader, and his range of options in reading may be limited, in some part, by the text.

Ricoeur's characterisation of spoken discourse as having only ostensive reference again raises questions as to the sort of conversations which are possible in his world. Speech has the ability to become timeless and placeless, although most of the time

it is involved with getting things done. Writing, especially bad writing, can be insular and specific and technical and can outlast our ability to understand it (I am thinking of works like medieval alchemist's instruction books). What Ricoeur seems to be hinting at in establishing the relationship of the situation to the world is a quality of experience which speech can achieve; successful writing stays around longer and stimulates more readers to this quality of experience and hence becomes identified with it, but speech is not incapable of this, although the event is less likely to be recorded (and if it is, it usually becomes writing). I would also argue that even non-ostensive reference in some part requires ostensive grounding to be understood.

Finally, Ricoeur is aware that a text may offer optional positions for the reader to take up just as it may in part attempt to constitute a subject/author. The various discourses at play within it, and within the reader will combine to produce a reading. Certainly the constitution of the reader is not within the power of the text, but it should not be assumed that texts do not attempt this constitution or that it does not occur within them, or that it might not be successful. Ricoeur seems to have moved from a Diltheyan position, where meaning resides in authorial intention, but has located meaning, even if only partially, within the text in some disembodied fashion. This 'logocentrism' proves even more of a weakness when the model is applied to social action.

Ricoeur begins his application of the model of the text to meaningful action by considering how it may become 'fixed' in the manner of writing. He rests his argument on the basis of a reification of 'meaning' and suggests that the detachment of this 'meaning' from the event of the action itself can be accounted for in the structure of action, which is that of a locutionary act. Thompson argues that when Ricoeur speaks of an act having a propositional content, a notion which remains obscure, it is the sentences which describe the act, if anything, which have such content, and not the act itself.(16) Ricoeur's argument here, as Thompson observes, is 'little more than an over-extended analogy', and his arguments elsewhere in his treatment of the text could be similarly criticised. Thompson argues against Ricoeur 'that the

meaning of an action is closely linked to its description, such that the meaning may be specified in the manner in which the action is described'. Textual interpretation might usefully be invoked to analyse these descriptions and accounts, as they constitute texts, but as Ricoeur formulates it here it is unconvincing.

In considering the autonomization of action, Ricoeur informs us

> 'An action is a social phenomenon not only because it is done by several agents in such a way that the role of each of them cannot be distinguished from the role of the other, but also because our deeds escape us and have effects which we did not intend.'(17)

But he does not acknowledge that we can orientate our actions to our past actions and the past, present and anticipated future actions of others. We will do this in a stream of intentionality, both anticipating and being unaware of outcomes, inviting certain interpretations and eluding others. Both sociologists and laymen will interpret and describe our actions, as will we, and in this mutual describing, accounting and projecting and performing interpretative work the 'interdiscourse', the 'intertextuality' that might constitute the textuality of social action will be produced. To say that 'history is this quasi-thing on which human action leaves a 'trace', 'puts its mark' is to retreat from the fruitful implications of the text as a model for action into a nonsensical world of reifications.

The analogy becomes more strained when Ricoeur claims that 'just as a text is freed from the restrictions of ostensive reference, so too the importance of an action transcends its relevance to the original circumstances of its production.'(18) 'Importance' is equivalent to the non-ostensive; 'relevance' is equivalent to the ostensive. As Thompson again observes

> 'the force of this analogical argument is dependent upon the equivocal use of key expressions. For 'meaning' is not the same as 'importance', nor is 'reference' identical with 'relevance'; and so even if a clear sense could be given to the notions of importance and the relevance of an action, it would remain to be shown that the relation between these two

notions is the same as that between the meaning of a text and its reference. Moreover, whatever the merits of this analogy, it is implausible to suggest that the meaning of an action is independent of the circumstances in which it is performed.'(19)

As we have observed earlier, the meaning of an action is linked to its description, which in turn is affected by circumstances, institutional arrangements and structural conditions, and is subject thereby to reinterpretation. In his final point, Ricoeur contends that human action is 'an open work', 'in suspense', 'because it opens up new references and receives fresh relevance from them...human deeds are also waiting for fresh interpretations which decide their meaning.'(20)

Ricoeur would almost appear to be contradicting some of his earlier statements here, unless we emphasise interpretation in a different sense to 'reading'. Interpretation drags one of a number of possible meanings out from behind the text, 'reading' (in a post-structuralist sense) 'creates' the text. Ricoeur's thrust is that the meaning of an action is accessible to anybody, an interpretation by contemporaries having no particular privilege. If 'meaning' were absolute and abstracted this would be true and whatever the case contemporaries don't have the only word. But they do in a real sense exercise some privilege in their ability to make their definitions stick. Thompson points out that the 'privileged' position of contemporaries is precisely what gives rise to many of the sociologist's problems of methodology.

'...it is precisely because contemporaries do have a privileged position that there are methodological problems concerning the relation between the everyday descriptions of lay actors and the theoretical accounts of external observers, and concerning the relation between the latter accounts and the subsequent courses of action pursued by reflective and informed agents in the social world.'(21)

Thus, notwithstanding any inadequacies in Ricoeur's formulation of the text as a model itself, in its application to social action it suffers from further flaws, largely stemming from over-abstraction and strained analogy. However, as some of the foregoing criticisms have indicated, a modified idea of the text may relate more closely

to the analysis of action. Thus Ricoeur's further attempt 'to show the fruitfulness of this analogy of the text at the level of methodology' will be subjected to further 'constructive' criticism.

Ricoeur attempts to extend the paradigm of reading, as he sees it, into a solution for the 'paradox of the human sciences', which is the opposition between 'explanation' (erklaren) and'understanding' (verstehen). He identifies two 'movements' in the dialectic of interpretation which are applicable to social analysis. The first movement, 'from understanding to explanation', comprises an attempt to guess the meaning of an action as a whole, and this guess is then the subject of a process of validation. The second, 'from explanation to understanding', consists of employing the explanatory methods of structural analysis to attain a depth interpretation.

Ricoeur's argument for the applicability of the 'guessing and validating' dialectic to the text itself is defensible, although his use of the term 'guessing' suffers, in a similar way to his early use of the term 'meaning', from some imprecision. As Cohen demonstrates, the <u>use</u> of the term 'guess' has a number of distinct designations, some implying a far greater degree of accuracy or calculation than might commonly be assumed.(22) However, this does not really prejudice his argument until the imprecision is carried over into his consideration of social action.

Ricoeur defends the model of the text on two counts. First, just as texts have 'specific plurivocity', so the meaning of an action may be construed in several ways. The problem here turns round the 'meaning' of an action; with Thompson, I agree that Ricoeur's statement is 'acceptable insofar as it means that an action may be variously described.'(23) Ricoeur does not move in the direction in which the model of the text might facilitate his analysis of these very accounts; instead, he relies on Anscombe's account of an action invoking a motive or want that presupposes a desirability characterisation.(24) This would seem to contradict the idea of the intentional autonomisation of action which Ricoeur has earlier put forward. Ricoeur's second argument is that just as varying

interpretations of a text may be discursively defended with varying success, so actions are imputed to agents and defended by refuting excuses. Again Ricoeur's support fails him; Hart emphasises that relevant excuses may include intentional and circumstantial (ostensive) considerations.(25) Ricoeur's argument includes some important points: that in accounting for actions we attempt to make them understandable for others and ourselves, and that it is possible to argue over these interpretations and to seek orachieve agreement. Although he points out that there is 'no last word' he fails to explore the processes by which agreement is achieved, and how points of view differ in equality and persistence, and often achieve 'the last word' in practice. Where textual analysis could lead Ricoeur into a study of ideology and power, he fails to pursue it.

The second movement,from explanation to understanding, is similarly defended on two levels. Ricoeur begins by arguing that structuralist analysis is applicable to social phenomena in so far as they possess a semiological character. He is aware of the advantages to be offered by a correlative analysis over the traditional causal models, but Ricoeur does not clearly specify how social phenomena could be said to be semiological. He argues that the symbolic function is no longer 'a mere effect' in social life but rather 'its very foundation'. He relies heavily on the work of Levi-Strauss, and in pointing out that structural analysis explains but does not interpret myth, in that it presupposes an interpretation on the level of narrative and meaning, he equates this latter to the ostensive reference of the text. Structural analysis reveals the non-ostensive reference, thedepth-semantics, 'the aporias of existence around which mythic thought gravitates.' Ricoeur in attempting to represent social life, or symbolic life, as semiological, is guilty of the same error as was made by Levi-Strauss. In presenting the symbolic function as a code, the significant fact that symbolism processes or renders understandable the very objects which escape codification in the normal way is ignored Symbols do not mean in the semiological sense; they are not part of a communicative system. The error of Levi-Strauss was not that he identified the features of a semiological system, but that he thought he did, and presented his work accordingly.

'To return to Levi-Strauss' image the symbolic mechanism is the bricoleur of the mind. It starts from the principle that waste-products of the conceptual industry deserve to be saved because something can always be made of them. But the symbolic mechanism does not try to decode the information it processes. It is precisely because this information has partly escaped the conceptual code, the most powerful of the codes available to humans, that it is, in the final analysis, submitted to it. It is therefore not a question of discovering the meaning of symbolic representations but, on the contrary, of inventing a relevance and a place in the memory for them despite the failure in this respect of the conceptual categories of meaning. A representation is symbolic precisely to the extent that it is not entirely explicable, that is to say, expressible by semantic means. Semiological views are therefore not merely inadequate; they hide, from the outset, the defining features of symbolism.'(26)

Ricoeur relies on Levi-Strauss for his structural model without exploring the later avenues of structuralist thought, particularly in the areas of power, ideology and distorted communication. Consequently he has little to say about this aspect of structuralist analysis. In his discussion of the referential dimension of action, he suggests that

'In the same way as linguistic games are forms of life, according to the famous aphorism of Wittgenstein, social structures are also attempts to cope with existential perplexities, human predicaments and deep-rooted conflicts. In this sense, these structures, too, have a referential dimension. They point toward the aporias of social existence, the same aporias around which mythical thought gravitates.'(27)

But in what way the social structures have a referential dimension is left unclear, unless some form of functionalist model is employed. The model of the text remains inadequately linked to social action.

Thompson and The Theory of Structuration

Thompson attempts to build some of Ricoeur's insights into an alternative methodology of depth interpretation which utilises the concepts of 'schematic generation' and 'social structuration':

'Institutions are characterised by a variety of schemata which define the parameters of permissible action. Such schemata are transmitted through trial and error, imitation and concerted inculcation, enabling the agent to negotiate the routine and novel circumstances of everyday life. Schemata become inscribed in the desires, inclinations attitudes and beliefs of the subject constituting that sphere of values which Ricoeur places at the roots of voluntary action... schemata generate action in a way which is not deterministic, establishing flexible boundaries for the negotiation of unanticipated situations; and one must not preclude the possibility that under certain circumstances subjects may reflect upon and transform such schemata in accordance with their collective interests.'(28)

Whilst acknowledging that meaning is neither exhausted nor determined by actors accounts of what they are doing, the idea of a generative schemata seems to be over-determined. Thompson relies on Bourdieu's conception of the habitus(29) to support his theory, but is led into similar difficulties as those in which Jenkins observes Bourdieu:

'...The habitus is the source of objective practices but is itself a set of 'subjective' generative principles, produced by the 'objective' structures which frame social life. In essence, it must be recognized that such a model constitutes no more than another form of determination in the last instance. What is more, as a deterministic model it relies on a simple base superstructure metaphor inasmuch as the 'objective structures' mediated through the habitus (culture) generate practice. It is correspondingly difficult to imagine a place in Bourdieu's thinking for his own emphasis upon the meaningful practice of social actors in their cultural context. One can only speculate as to the manner in which 'objective structures' are constituted or changed by, that practice. Objective structures are somehow given as 'cultural arbitraries' which the actions of social agents then reproduce.'(30)

As Sperber observes of symbolism, it is not a generative system, but an interpretative system(31); not a semiological system, but a cognitive one(32). He replaces the 'meaning' of the symbol with its 'evocation'; what may be culturally determined is an 'evocational field' but not the individual paths of evocation.(33) This contributes considerably to the understanding of the richness of symbolism, literature, and non-verbal symbolic fields like art,

music or even smells, and offers the concept of the 'landmark'(34) rather than the meaning. Thus a symbol, or a 'rule', may not generate specific actions or interpretations, but may function as a 'landmark', around which the individual can cognitively orientate the world. Although '...all humans learn to treat symbolically information that defies direct conceptual treatment'(35), this is barely formulated, or even acknowledged, in sociological literature. Sperber himself does not propose a theory, but attempts to define a framework: even as such it offers provocative insights.

Thompson's concept of social structuration involves the reconstruction of structural elements, identification of stages of social development, the grasping of limits to the exercise of power and ideology, and the dynamics of institutional persistence and collapse. This form of analysis, he suggests, may also facilitate an understanding of conditions of which the participants are unaware. Thompson here cites the work of Willis as an example:

> 'Willis argues that the 'lads' evasion of authority in the work-place may be interpreted as a 'cultural penetration' of the fact that labour-power is a variable resource in capitalist society, and he maintains that their failure to differentiate between various types of work is a penetration into the nature of general abstract labour.'(36)

However, Jenkins criticises Willis on the same groundsthat he criticises Bourdieu, in that 'they both over-estimate the degree to which the working-class colludes in its own domination'; 'too much emphasis is placed upon the conformity to a perceived state of affairs in which a similar or predictable future isimplicated'; and 'these contradictions and weaknesses in the work of Bourdieu (and Willis) are due, in my view, to their deterministic model of social reality and the practice of social agents.'(37) The reproduction of determinism then still adheres to Thompson's work despite his attempts to incorporate interpreting acting agents. As Jenkins observes of Thompson's mentor, Giddens, 'the theoretical attempt to 'have your cake and eat it' is not...defensible.'(38)

It has been suggested above that despite the criticism of the

various attempts to combine structuralism and hermeneutics, the activity is not a fruitless one. If the oppositions of langue/parole, and subject/object, can be overcome, as in the model of the productive text found in the post-structuralist writers, then the 'interpretative' model of 'meaning' ceases to dominate the text. The reader of the text increases in significance, as does the reader of the social situation if the analogy is extended to action. Actions are made to mean by those who account for and describe them - these accounts can be examined as 'texts' or as 'discourses' if not the actions themselves. Sperber's introduction of the concept of evocation as a function of symbolism can aid both the understanding of the non-verbal constituents of meaningful action, and those verbally symbolic ones. The deconstructionist readings which seek to reveal closure, contradiction and ideology could be also applied to some instances of symbolic evocation, as well as to their more usual verbal objects. The text as a model for social action then, would need to be fluid, productive, symbolic, creative and self-critical if criticisms and possibilities were to be actualised. When focussed on practical social investigation, such fluidity might well amount to a pluralistic methodology.

Feyerabend and pluralistic methodology

Feyerabend argues that a pluralistic methodology is essential for scientific investigation. Theory and practice, he argues, are not separable, and

> '...Creation of a thing, and creation plus full understanding of a correct idea of the thing, are very often parts of one and the same indivisible process and cannot be separated without bringing the process to a stop.'(39)

So social investigation should proceed on a basis of guesswork, trial and error, and loosely formed ideas which are worked out in the process. This may well involve developing a sensitivity to events which causes us to take existing forms of speech and beat them 'into new patterns in order to fit unforeseen situations.' Feyerabend therefore advises an anarchistic methodology, where no rules hold apart from the one: anything goes.

Feyerabend is not being frivolous. Established theories and practices tend to dominate and become ideological simply because they were there first. In order to avoid being trapped by old ideas we need to adopt as many methods as possible to get new insights to our subject. Feyerabend proposes counter-induction as one method, that is to introduce and elaborate hypotheses inconsistent with well-established facts.

> 'A scientist who wishes to maximize the empirical content of the views he holds and who wants to understand them as clearly as he possibly can must therefore introduce other views; that is, he must adopt a **pluralistic methodology.**'(40)

This immediately reminds us of Garfinkel's incongruity procedures; Goffman's examination of the abnormal; Willis's emphasis on the moments when researcher and subjects diverge; Imershein's emphasis on the importance of anomalous situations, and more recently Fineman's explorations on the meaning of work (amongst those no longer employed).(41) We may need to interrupt social life in order to reveal some assumptions; we will certainly need to be prepared to challenge and interrupt our flow of thought or theory about social life, to entertain paradox and contradiction.

Feyerabend expresses concern with methodologies which 'petrify into dogma by being, in the name of experience, completely removed from any conceivable criticism.'(42) He further stresses the importance of 'play' in developing new methods and theories, as an essential part of the creative process of scientific investigation.

Phillips and Play

Phillips takes up and expands on the idea of 'play'. Rather than as a form of interaction, which will be discussed in a later chapter, he conceives of it as not being rule-guided but

> 'viewed as an individual or private activity, engaged in for its own sake and not because of a concern with other persons.'(43)

Play need not be seen standing in contrast to the 'real', or the serious, as something inferior or as an escape.

> 'Perhaps a playful approach to sociological enquiry would allow us to confront our own experience, to pay attention to what we have seen, heard felt and wondered about, and to what we already know. By assuming a more playful stance, we can perhaps free ourselves from the dogmatism of method. Play, by freeing us from a heavy dependence on method, may enable us to confront the world without the scientific 'blinders' required for membership in the sociological community. Play may not only give free rein to imagination, intuition and creative urges, but may help us to see more clearly.'(44)

Play will hep us to see things anew, to experience things as if for the first time. It will enable us to look at the familiar as though unfamiliar, to open ourselves to experience, to adopt new perspectives. We are back to the problem of perspectives with which the first chapter began, and which is an abiding concern of the socioloist. During the chapters which followed I attempted to give some account of the experiences which initially aroused my interest as a researcher, and the problems of truth and verification to which they introduced me. I have attempted to sketch some of the theoretical and methodological explorations which have informed this account and have to some extent rendered my experiences understandable. I have not produced a theory or a methodology; I have tried to suggest some approaches to the 'text' which social life presents to us in the form of yet another 'text'. It is impossible to 'know' what social life 'means': we may just constitute it in another account which is open to reading and criticism and is as tentative as is social life itself. These accounts may be more or less sensitive and self-critical; I have suggested in this chapter some means by which sensitivity and self-criticism may be increased.

Autocritique and the Deconstructionist Impulse

The ultimate model for self-criticism would be the post-structuralist auto-critique. In my Master's thesis(45), I adopted a technique which, though at the time deriving more from Camus, Sartre and Norman Mailer, I have recently discovered had something

in common with Barthes.

> 'What Barthes in fact offers, by way of autobiography, is a sequence of deftly turned reflections on the experience of writing, the duplicities of language and the irreducibly textual nature of whatever they communicate. As one such playful alibi (or 'shifter' as Barthes would call it, borrowing the term from Roman Jakobson), he writes always in the narrative third person, addressing the various topics of his own obsessive interest with a kind of quizzical detachment. As the book's epigraph helpfully suggests, 'it should all be considered as if spoken by a character in a novel'.'(46)

My own method was to use the third person, but on every occasion to apostrophise myself in different ways, variously as The Graduate, the Voltigeur, the Consultant, the Panurgist, the Thaumaturge, The Eponymist, the Existentialist, the Jongleur, the Prosodist, the Disputant, The Apostate etc. The sense of separation both of author from text and text from action, undermining the 'authority' of the account appeared to be successful: in my subsequent reading I have recognised the stirrings of autocritique in this early attempt.

I have not chosen to adopt that form here, nor to attempt a properly deconstructionist autocritique. I have not adopted a fully autocritical stance because such a style, carried through to itsconclusions, would be too disruptive of the wider project of this thesis. The work of Derrida is notoriously whimsical and difficult to read despite its undoubted importance and other virtues: it demands great effort from the reader, and creates a new form of writing. Derrida's project is too broad for my purposes here: I am attempting to assess the implications of deconstruction for social and organisational theory and research, rather than to exemplify them. To adopt such a style effectively would require a long-term commitment, possibly a life-time's work. It could also be argued that post-structuralism necessarily presupposes structuralist analysis, in that data has to be rendered as such before the processes of its creation and analysis can be deconstructed. In the case of the empirical material which I analyse in the chapters to follow, it is structuralist analysis

which has emphasised some important characteristics and similarities between phenomena which have been hitherto regarded, if at all, as peripheral, rather than as marginal data, which is vitally important to the symbolic order.

This is not to say that deconstruction is irrelevant: rather it should be read as an implication throughout the thesis. This is one reason why I have chosen to explicate the influences on my understanding of authors whose works have produced variant and confusing readings, and inspired borrowings in others, in such detail.

Management theory, organisation theory, and social theory are inter-related and require explication with equal rigour. My purpose in these early chapters has not been to develop a general social theory but to relate existing social theories to my developing ideas and to what I did in terms of my method. This has illustrated the inadequacies of either separatist structuralist or hermeneutic analyses, or expeditious contingency approaches which apply hermeneutics to micro-sociology and structuralism to macro-sociology. The symbolic reality of social and organisational life demands a combination of approaches at either level, and in the following chapters I will explore the implications of this in the analysis of empirical data, finally offering some observations on the significance of this work for organisation theory.

Part Two: The Symbolic Margins of Control

Chapter Six : On Cultures and Consultancy

Introduction

In this chapter I will introduce the themes which will form part of the subsequent analysis of symbolic organizational life by first addressing the concept of organizational culture. The foundation for the discussion of the importance of marginal data, and symbolic boundaries, is laid in the identification of four features of 'culture', although the concept itself is acknowledged to be elusive. These are the recognition of cultural pluralities, where subcultures may compete and negotiate covertly or overtly to establish the'organizational structure'; the importance of rationality, to which subgroups appeal to legitimize and sustain their power to impress their definitions of the situation upon other subgroups; the importance of cultures as bodies of shared understandings or knowledge, where the symbolic system is recognised as a cognitive system rather than a communicative one on a semiotic model; and the significance of power in cultural determinations, with the importance of symbolic activity in sustaining and resisting control and hegemony. Following from these identifications, it is also argued that as systems of ideas are vulnerable at their margins (in that ideas outside the compass of such systems may occasion the complete restructuring of the system for their accommodation) then cultural and symbolic phenomena can be best examined by employing marginal data. The perspective adopted throughout this thesis emphasises such marginal data, and emphasises 'concrete' thought and symbolic appropriation.

In this chapter this examination of marginal data begins with a consideration of the consulting process, focussing on the two problems of gaining entry and producing a consultancy report. Issues of cultural threat, occasioned by the marginal status of the consultant, and its control, are examined; the consultant is viewed through the analogy of the sorcerer, with the consultancy process as an initiation rite, emphasising the importance of public opinion to successful consultancy.

The consultancy report is analysed as an account, which is constructed by the application of interpretative procedures which establish its persuasiveness and hence its success as a performance. The effectiveness of the consultant is finally seen in terms of his skill in making the appropriate adjustments and accommodations to the organizational culture, and in providing for their acceptable accounting. The process of cultural adjustment is then examined further in chapter seven.

On Cultures and Consultancy

"Culture" is a surprisingly elusive facet of organizational life. As a concept, the term has been well-used in sociology and anthropology, but in an organizational context its operation is by no means easy to describe.(1) Jaques, in The Changing Culture of a Factory, follows Parsons(2) in his conception of culture as being the factory's

> 'customary and traditional way of thinking and doing things, which is shared to a greater or lesser degree by all its members, and which new members must learn, and at least partially accept in order to be accepted into service in the firm. Culture in this sense covers a wide range of behaviour: the methods of production; job skills and technical knowledge; attitudes towards discipline and punishment; the customs and habits of managerial behaviour; the objectives of the concern; its way of doing business; the method of payment; the values placed upon different types of work; beliefs in democratic living and joint consultation and the less conscious conventions and taboos... . In short the making of relationships requires the taking up of roles within a social structure; the quality of these relationships is governed by the extent to which the individuals concerned have each absorbed the culture of the organization so as to be able to operate within the same general code'. (3)

"Culture" here seems to be both formal and informal, though predominantly formal, in consisting of behaviours, values, and norms, and ideas. There would seem also to be concealed within this the imperative of 'right', a by-product of Parsonian functionalism, a 'moral burden' which the concept culture carries.'(4)

'Culture' is what the prospective member should learn to be seen as responsible, competent and helping to maintain the quality of relationships which sustain the organization and hence society. There are a number of problems associated with this approach and those which have followed from it: one of these is the extent to which the organizational culture relates to the culture of the wider society, or a part of that society, and another is how this relates to various sub-groups of social or professional standing within the organizations. I will now attempt to outline these problems under the rubric of plurality; rationality; knowledge; and power.

Plurality

Once the concept of 'culture' is invoked as an analytical device, it is often tempting for the analyst to attempt to impose cultural conformity at whatever level of analysis he or she chooses, be it the level of Western Capitalism (as Braverman appears to do) or at the level of the culture of an organization. Even when subcultures within organizations are acknowledged, such as worker and management cultures, they are often viewed as unrealistically homogeneous and locked in a simplistic struggle for control. (5) This approach is represented by Braverman, who identifies workforce and management throughout the capitalist system of production as being categorically and behaviourally separate and irreconcilable, the workforce being perpetually recalcitrant in the face of management's attempts to control them.

> 'This ontology of the universal characteristics of labour has two significant consequences. Firstly it ignores the fact that the arenas of influence and control may be the school, the family, and other non-work social institutions, such that workers come to the factory gates prepared to contribute effort in terms of customary standards and even beyond the bounds of organisational rules and work specifications..... Secondly, by assuming a universal recalcitrance on the part of 'Labour' Braverman, paradoxically, is able to avoid consideration of specific trade union or shop-floor resistance to the process he describes.....Moreover, if one assumes a universal worker resistance to capitalist control, it obscures the essential variability of worker resistance; some changes are resisted more than others, some groups achieve a

'negotiated order', whilst some groups become a privileged elite'. (6)

It is in the exploration of these distinctions that our interest as sociologists should lie. Strauss et. al. in their study of a psychiatric institution discovered the 'negotiated order' which was established, disestablished and renewed by the 'congeries' of professional groups within the organisation. (7) They were also able to identify distinct cultural variations which encompassed both groups within occupations trained in different traditions and various 'non-professional' groups. The interpretation, evasion, establishment and invocation of rules was a key focus of negotiation, resulting from a combination of "an honest desire to get things accomplished, as they ought, properly, to get done" and a "wish to control the conditions of their work as much as possible".(8) Negotiation even extended to the patients, and comprised bargains and agreements both of a short-term, a patterned, and a periodic nature. Variables affecting such negotiations, and which Strauss suggests are operational in other situations, were the various professional 'ideologies' and their relationship to organisational operating procedures; the impact of professional fates and career paths of individuals; the importance of a professional audience outside the organization; the status of individual professions within the institution; the number and types of professional within the organisation; and the relative fluidity and stability of professional teams. (9)

Strauss's predominantly symbolic interactionist perspective introduces a number of complexities which must be taken into account if the concept of culture is to be used in organisations comprising a number of professional and non-professional groups. Management itself suffers from similar complexities and is not the homogeneous body that Braverman implies. As a nascent profession it has been a major activity of managers in recent years to establish ideologies

'...to demonstrate the importance of the managerial function- to establish the role of management within the differentiated enterprise, and to show that it is necessary as an

organizational function. Furthermore, once the abstract requirementfor management is established, managerial ideologies seek to stress the characteristics and rarity of the useful and efficient manager. Managers themselves, and their spokesmen, spend considerable time and effort seeking to establish the abstract need for management in the modern enterprise, and to justify the differential rewards which managers receive. This is usually by reference to individual achievement of rare skills and knowledge necessary for the execution of technologically based functions." (10)

A recent example of the divergence of managerial 'ideologies' is given by Smith and Wilkinson. (11) They identify an 'Old School' and a 'New School' of managers in Parkers Snacks, but even so they observe a number of individual managers displaying ambivalence, and an 'attenuated' struggle between the two parties. Transition to new management patterns proceeds "softly, softly" and

> 'each side over-estimates the power of the other. Thus the New School's "long haul" is the Old School's "inevitable slide" (12)

Just as any attempt to treat managerial culture within an organisation as unified can be problematic, Smith and Wilkinson are also able to point to another organisation Sherwoods Pies, with a vastly contrasting managerial culture. Ironically, this culture would on the surface appear to be homogeneous:

> 'Unlike Parkers, Sherwoods has few, if any, lines of 'political' division within management. There is no identifiable Old School and there is one homogeneous management approach." (13)

However, as such it is seen to be exceptional, "novel by British standards". Not only is this homogeneity exceptional but it also has a peculiar flavour "characteristic of totalitarian tendencies".(14) Managerial culture across organisations is as difficult to identify as is the corresponding extension of labour culture.

Turner's attempts to identify an "industrial sub-culture" are consequently faced with enormous difficulties. The characteristics of sub-groups, professions, "distinct normative patterns,

perceptions and values associated with departments, work groups and other social sub-divisions of the organisation" are consigned to the level of "micro-culture". (15) The industrial subculture itself "is not a monolithic entity which can be readily identified and closely delimited" but this does not help us to relate it to practical industrial life. Acknowledging problems and being vague about definitions does not remove these problems as Turner seems to hope.

What does seem to be the case is that there exists a situation of "cultural pluralities" within organisations, and that we should take care when using the concept to explore its definition in the situation in which it occurs. (16)

Rationality

Although we acknowledge cultural pluralities, it is clear that all cultural groups are not equal, and do not have equal power to impress their definitions on other groups. It is common for some groups to appeal to some criterion of rationality to defend their position, particularly if that group is a managerial one. Roy however points out, in his research study of piecework, that

> 'materials presented here seem to challenge the view held in some research circles that the 'human' problem of industry lies in faulty communication between an economically 'rational' or 'logical' management and 'nonrational' or 'nonlogical' work groups.'(17)

Managerial inadequacies were often overcome by workforce ingenuity.

> 'If managerial directives are not the guides to efficient action that they are claimed to be, then, perhaps, 'logics of efficiency' would be better designated as 'sentiments of efficiency'. When failure to 'explain' is additionally considered, perhaps bulletin-board pronouncements might be properly classified with the various exorcisms, conjurations, and miscellaneous esoteric monkey-business of our primitive contemporaries'. (18)

Roy later suggests that rationality consists of bringing

intellectual operations into continuous interplay with concrete experience; and that intellectual and emotional activity is a characteristic of all goal-directed behaviour. I will argue later that the 'science of the concrete' as discovered in operation in the savage mind still offers potential for the analysis of organisational culture.

Knowledge

Culture is usually conceived of as comprising 'sets of interrelated but sometimes dissimilar common-sense understandings'.(19) Cultural phenomena are very much bound up with the constitution, 'membership', transmission, practical interpretation and actualisation of this knowledge. As has been suggested in an earlier chapter, communities and subcultures will have customary means of deciding what is to count as knowledge, and how and in what circumstances this knowledge can be applied. Thus an important part of cultural investigation consists of examining the communicative aspects of culture, i.e. the transmission of knowledge of 'how-to-go-on', of how to achieve technical, linguistic and organisational political competence, by means of nests of propositions, maxims, stories, apocrypha, myths, rules, behaviour, conversations, graffiti, literature, architecture etc. The problem lies in the fact that communication becomes synonymous with culture. Recognising the importance of reflexive activity in rendering experience meaningful, culture is seen as a way of sharing separate 'reflective glances'.(20) This is done by:

> 'a commonly shared system of symbols, the meanings of which are understood on both sides with an approximation to agreement. Non-verbal conduct, as well as objects and language, is involved in such symbol systems.'(21)

This views symbols on a semiological model: they are a second-order connotative system constructed on a first order denotative system.(22) They are parts of a code which may or may not be comprehensive, and may even allow novel meanings to generate, but can be 'read' by the invocation of the correct code or meaning-system. Symbols stand for objects; they mean.(23)

We have already noted the post-structuralist criticism and erosion of the denotative-connotative system, and Sperber's criticism of the symbolic as a communicative system. As Sperber points out

> 'If symbols mean, what they mean is almost always banal. The existence of spirits and the luxuriance of symbols are more fascinating than their feeble messages about the weather.'(24)

If symbols can be reduced to such meanings, then they are a very wasteful method of communication. They may be regularly paired with commentaries, proper uses or other symbolic phenomena, and they <u>are</u> regularly interpreted. But the phenomena paired to symbols do not constitute interpretations of them, and it cannot be said that interpretations are always, or regularly paired to them in such a way as to constitute a relationship of message-code (symbol)-interpretation.

> 'The one single condition that would permit the consideration of symbolism as a code is not fulfilled: no list gives, no rule generates, a set of pairs (symbol, interpretation) such that each occurrence of a symbol finds in it its prefigured treatment.'(25)

Symbolism works well without anyone knowing, or ever having known, the 'key'. Symbolism is not an interpretative system but a cognitive one, which serves to organise an otherwise random environment around 'landmarks' which 'evoke' rather than 'mean'

> 'Symbolic thought is capable, precisely, of transforming noise into information; no code, by definition, would be able to do this...in contrast to what happens in a semiological decoding, it is not a question of interpreting symbolic phenomena by means of a context, but - quite the contrary - of interpreting the context by means of symbolic phenomena.'(26)

Thus there is no need to bemoan, as Turner does, that 'the industrial subculture is a relatively recent one, and even during the hundred years or so in which it has been forming it has been subject to, and is still subject to, considerable change, often of a radical nature.'(27) It is not in the establishment of stable rituals, although these are of interest, that symbolic thought is

most effective, but in the constant re-ordering of perplexing change and chaos.

Finally here, although we have suggested that broad cultural analyses of the type of Braverman are subject to severe shortcomings, it would be misleading to suggest that sub-cultural symbolic systems are self-contained and unrelated to the symbolic activity of the wider society. This connection has not been elaborated sufficiently, although the work of the Centre for Contemporary Studies does approach this relationship. Sahlins, however, suggests that Western 'civilised' man tends to suppress awareness of his own symbolic thought:

> 'In its reliance upon symbolic reason, however, our culture is not radically different from that elaborated by the 'savage mind'. We are just as logical, philosophical and meaningful as they are. And however unaware of it, we give to the qualitative logic of the concrete as decisive a place. Still we speak as if we had rid ourselves of constraining cultural conceptions, as if our culture were constructed out of the 'real' activities and experiences of individuals rationally bent upon their practical interests...Everything in capitalism conspires to conceal the symbolic ordering of the system...'(28)

The chapters which follow will attempt to explore this dimension.

Power

Cultural systems are not only systems of knowledge formation, but an expression, embodiment and result of power relations. The way power relations are sustained symbolically in a managerial culture has been examined by Golding, and various others have contributed to the examination of the workforce, particularly in terms of 'resistance'. What has perplexed writers is how members

> 'are aware of and virtually understand their situation of power/powerlessness and learn to cope with it through humour ...and through refuges and counter solidarities. This does not mean that they can escape, redefine etc, but that at the same moment they understand their situation, they also accommodate to it and preserve it knowingly.'(29)

The separation of manual and intellectual labour has been identified by Sohn-Rethel and is discussed by Golding in terms of its contribution to the defence of the 'right to manage', i.e. the principle that 'some manage - some work'.(30) As Littler and Salaman argue:

> '...once this conception of management has been accepted by workers they have, in effect, abdicated from any questioning of, or resistance to, many aspects of their domination. They have accepted the normality of their subordination. Resistance, when and if it occurs will be largely about details.'(31)

However, we have already discussed the concept of hegemony, and the phenomenon that no matter how advantaged any version of the world may be, it must always be subject to a struggle, even a struggle it is favoured to win. As Hebdige observes

> 'The meaning of subculture is then, always in dispute, and style is the area in which the opposing definitions clash with most dramatic force...objects are made to mean and mean again as style in subculture.'(32)

Objects or phenomena with prominent orthodox interpretations may thus be redesignated by subcultures in a form of <u>refusal</u>; in areas of ambiguity, struggle for 'possession of the signifier' may be blatant, subtle, or that ambiguity may be consciously, subconsciously and actively sustained by either or both parties to preserve order or normality. As Douglas suggests

> '...all margins are dangerous. If they are pulled this way and that the shape of fundamental experience is altered. <u>Any structure of ideas is vulnerable at its margins</u>.'(33)

The remainder of this thesis will examine areas of organisational activity which are marginal and/or ambiguous (e.g. involving entry, access, threat, mistakes, accident, failure) and which as such threaten to reorder the structure of ideas within competing subcultures unless symbolically defined, accounted for and accommodated. This will involve examination of induction, games and sabotage, and humour; the first such situation, that of

consultancy, demonstrates the most marginal and volatile of all these relationships.

Consultancy

In what follows, I present a reanalysis of some data which was originally acquired during the preparation of the M.Sc. dissertation which gave rise to the further research on which this thesis is based. I do this for a number of reasons: first, because the moment of gaining access to a culture is a particularly sensitive one for both the researcher and the host culture, and is thus appropriate for examination in seeking to reveal cultural assumptions; second, because in the capacity of consultant, with its attendant problems of establishing both grounds for entry, conditions for sustaining contact and a basis for intervention in the client system the process of cultural adjustment is a crucial one; and third, the marginality of the consultant/researcher is underlined even further by the dimension of studentship, or apprenticeship. This last point is important. It is one thing to establish credibility from a position of recognisable strength, as the majority of consultants and academics are able to do in terms of experience and qualifications, or publications: even where these are alien to the client's culture, the fact that someone, somewhere recognises them is a valuable support to such credibility. The dynamics of the situation change distinctly when the consultant is clearly labelled 'student', as one whose competence if not exactly in question, has nevertheless not been fully tested, and inhabits the indeterminate ground between the professional and the academic fully recognised by neither.

The data presented relates first to the initial entry and contracting phase of the relationship; second, to the production of the final consulting report. The perspective which was adopted in the original treatment of this data was very much that of symbolic interactionism, concentrating on the processes of managing the interpersonal relations between myself and managers and workmates, problems in the presentation of data, and difficulty in presenting some background information which was significant in my understanding of the situation. Here, the perspective follows

anthropological analysis more closely in considering the consultant/student's difficulties as being a result of his marginal status in two cultures, the organisational and academic; and as a result of reading the 'cultures' of the organisation, producing a report which would offer potential strategies but threaten neither. In doing this, I find the model of the 'sorcerer's apprentice' a useful analogy to illustrate the ritual and symbolic nature of much of what occurred.

In the light of the discussion of the earlier chapters, then such a rereading of my own earlier 'account' of my perceptions of some forms of social activity should pose no problems of either methodology or theory. As observer/participant, although in a position of 'privilege' over the reader, my 'account at the time' possesses no necessary analytical authority, although it is persuasive in its form. In producing such an account it is offered to the reader to re-create, de-construct, exploit, explore and 'play' both with and within. That I should return to my own account and perform the same operations upon it should be neither inconsistent, nor a means of avoiding further data collection or other additional work. I would argue indeed that researchers should produce major pieces of work by reanalysing their earlier work, for this is a more realistic representation of the research process than leaving early works either unrevised or imprisonedin their historical context. In doing this, I have conveyed more of the situation than just 'talk', either verbatim orreconstructed, and have presented my account in a literary fashion, including the emphasis of my own presence and reactions, and preliminary situational analyses as reflectively as possible. I present accounts, not 'objective' data, and I do not wish to pretend, deliberately or accidentally, that this is otherwise.

The problematic position of the social scientist who seeks to become involved with practical applications, has been noted by Cherns:

> 'Social Sciences can help managers, but not by solving problems for them, by selling packages to them, or conducting 'surveys' or finding 'facts' for them. That is not to say

> that none of these activities is of value, but each will yield at most short-term ad hoc results. What social scientists can most helpfully do is to provide managers with new ways of looking at their world. And to do this, social scientists themselves have to understand the managers' 'phenomenological' world - the world as it presents itself to managers, and the meaning to them of their lives, and the meaning to them of their lives and actions in their organisations.'(34)

Whilst concurring with Cherns that lasting success is unlikely to be achieved by 'flavour-of-the-month' packaging, his demand that social scientists/researchers should understand the life world of the manager are couched in such a way as to belie the fact that they lie at the heart of what is the basic problem of social investigation - that of understanding and interpreting the accounts and actions of others. As we have already noted, as the investigator seeks to interpret the actions of other human beings, so they in turn interpret his actions and interpretations. Each affects the other. The community and culture of the investigated manager affects his actions just as the community and culture of the researcher affects his actions in turn, and each interacts. It is not possble for the researcher to be neutral, and to understand the 'client culture' without in some way affecting it - it will respond to his presence.

On a more general level, the exchange between the cultures of social scientist and manager is not fluid. Gill illustrates the resistance of one to the other:

> 'The term 'social science research' has negative connotations for managers and, indeed, for many sections of our society. This was brought home to me, for example, when I was advised by an experienced industrial copy-writer, whose job was to produce marketing brochures for managerial customers, that both the words 'social scientist' and 'research' were better replaced if a favourable impact was desirable. When managers free associate with the term social science research they generally think of long time scales; esoteric, non-applicable, highly theoretical findings; and loss of control of data which may be threatening to the status quo and widely accepted managerial ideologies.'(35)

The issue of threat is a significant one here. Notwithstanding that researchers do to some extent orient their writing towards

their academic audience,(36) the managers who complain of difficulty with social science jargon are nevertheless at home with economic, marketing and financial languages. As Gill suggests:

> 'It might well be that accusations of jargon whilst partially true are simply one of a number of managerial defences which underline their basic concerns about social science research. One of those concerns...may well be that such research is potentially very threatening to core issues of managerial ideology and values in ways which financial, economic and marketing data are not...'(37)

The threat of financial or marketing data is entirely a product of its dominant or preferred mode of interpretation. It is not that the data in itself is any more or less threatening, but that the mode of analysis should be congruent with the values and norms of the dominant managerial culture, which in Western capitalist society is usually rational-technical, and empirical. The ways in which financial information is produced may be just as ideologically supportive or threatening as the way social investigation is conducted, but financial data requires human animation before it can have any effect.

> '...the effectiveness of any accounting procedure, be it in the context of planning, co-ordinating or controlling various complex and interrelated activities, ultimately depends on how it influences the behaviour of the people in the enterprise. The choice and operation of a particular accounting system is therefore an important aspect of the management style in that any system is based upon, and is justified by, a set of generalised beliefs and values about the right and wrong ways of organising people's activities.'(38)

There is some element of risk involved, in terms of both lack of control of outcomes and the risk of a 'prejudice' in Gadamer's terms being unconfirmed, in any research situation for all parties. If, as Garfinkel suggests, the characteristic attitude of scientific rationality is to disrupt everyday life, whilst that of common-sense rationality is to presrve it then the more scientific an investigator, and the more awkward questions he asks, then the more resistance he is likey to encounter as the more assumptions he is likely to challenge. One could expect the rationality of the managerial community therefore to be demonstrated in an

unwillingness to risk the exposure of values and possible contradictions, and to seek instead either a form of investigation which promised to provide data which was likely to be interpreted as supportive, or which left sufficient room for itself to be seen as invalid if it were to prove threatening. The key issue is therefore one of control, and of controlled risk, if there is to be any risk at all. Thus if we proceed on the assumption that any 'truth' which we are likely to establish depends largely on how it is worked out in our cross-cultural exchanges, then the controls exercised asymmetrically in the process of such a working out are of considerable interest, as is the preservation and maintenance of a dominant mode of interpretation.

CASE: Entry Problems

(It might be helfpul here to remind the reader of the background to the investigation.

The research project was conducted within a large food manufacturing establishment E.L.S. Amalgamated Bakeries where I had worked for a period as an operative prior to embarking on my course. After one academic year of the course, I returned to the company in order to carry out a period of participant observation on the shop-floor prior to developing a programme to investigate attitudes, morale, and motivation in the plant with a view to making recommendations on the reduction of the level of absenteeism there. This resulted from a series of meetings with the Personnel Director, General Manager, Plant General Manager and the Secretary of the Joint Shop Stewards' Committee. The participant period began in June).

During early September, glancing at my course notes in preparation for the investigation and interviewing to come, I noticed a quotation on the stages of the consulting process:

> '...although the above stages appear discrete on paper and for the purpose of explanation, in reality this is not so. For example, as soon as the first meeting takes place with the manager(s) the consultant will be collecting information; he might even be feeding back his perceptions of the manager even

though his main objective at this stage will be to gain entry. In a sense therefore the (above) stages work throughout the whole consultancy process, but the consultant will also be working through each stage in a micro sense each time he meets with someone new.'(39)

Saynor might have added 'or each time they forget you exist'. Although I nurtured a belief that my entry had been firmly established from the top down, I was shocked and dismayed to read a poorly produced notice headed 'When YOU are absent from work at strategic points around the factory. This dismay was increased by the photograph of smiling Ron, the materials supervisor, arm-in-arm with a crumpled-looking shop-steward, published in the house newspaper as part of the team investigating absence. Minutes of plant general meetings which had discussed the joint investigation of absence by the Personnel Department and the Union turned dismay into distress.

The notice, itself a poor example of image-management, followed its accusatory gambit with a list of dire consequences, delivered with stony insouciance. The notice had been framed by the joint committee of management and union representatives, but so pervasive was the house culture of apportioning blame to individuals that even the union had not noticed, or had not realised the implications of the tone of this mode of address. There followed a statement of arbitrary targets. 'Absence is 13%. We must reduce it to 8%. The notice concluded with the further ironic observation that the investigation was not punitive but was merely trying 'to help YOU to attend work.' It effectively raised levels of suspicion and confusion throughout the plant - but most unfortunately, it confused me.

What was to be the relation of my investigation to the Personnel Department's study? How could I maintain my own credibility with my respondents while the Personnel Department implicated me in their own confused attempts? They had begun on two small plants, Reception and Marzipan Cake. Was I, equivocally or otherwise, to be expected to work for them, for the manager of the department in which the investigation was to take place (which had not yet been specified) or to uneasily attempt to serve all interests or none?

It was to the end of clearing away some of these doubts that somewhat malcontent I arranged a meeting with the newly appointed Employee Relations Manager, Gordon. He was not present when I arrived, with a slight twitch as yet only noticeable to the trained and practised observer, to keep the appointment. Neither was the organiser of the department's own investigation.

One junior but loquacious member of the department managed to spare me a few minutes of the 'I don't really know what they're doing but I've got my own ideas about it' variety. He criticised a certain complement of the department for being too 'traditional', and in a continuation of the discussion in a subsequent and serendipitous lunchtime meeting in the local pub he waxed more expansive on the nature of their orientation towards discipline. He also confided that the reason for his eating in the pub at lunchtime was that he had been instructed to eat with the management in the restaurant and not with any other organisational members. The demarcation line in the restaurant was a noticeable irritant to lower status members. He had preferred to avoid involvement.

From another member of the department it was discovered that:

> 'This company is too sales-orientated. They're always giving them colour televisions and video recorders.'
>
> 'We're hoping you can give us some hard facts. Something scientific with a wide enough sample to generalise from.'
>
> 'I never employ people from Thargland no matter how good they are. The bus service is too dodgy.'

All of this was doubtless interesting data, as much about the speaker as his subject, but the fundamental questions remained unanswered. The appointment was rearranged, this time with the Personnel Manager.

It is often stressed that amongst the things to be sure of before a meeting of this sort are who will be there and why, and what the objectives are. It is not easy for the consultant to manipulate the proceedings if his credibility is not established, if he is not

aware of who is there for what, and if he is meeting the client on his own ground surrounded by all the symbols of his potency.

I was expecting a brief meeting with one man to answer a few simple questions - what I did not expect was that I would have to answer them myself.

The meeting took place in the Personnel Manager's office on the 'Golden Mile' of Senior Management offices - so called because of the distinctive colour of the carpet. I almost expected it to crunch like a pie-crust under my feet. The surroundings were not pliable to any outside influence, being invested with their own deep significances, and mysteries not easily plumbed. The heady atmosphere was also found to contain two unexpected bodies.

The Personnel Manager, Philip, was present, but so were the previously missing Employee Relations Manager, and one of the Personnel Officers, Jason. They seemed to have well-defined roles. The E.R.M. was to play the hard sceptic and also establish his credibility with the P.M. as he was very much the new boy; the P.O. was to be a little more human but nevertheless acute enough to impress the others; and the P.M. was free to roam the realms of metaphysics before gracefully swooping down to grasp the bones of a contract with one flash of his gleaming conceptual talons. The unwitting (and helpless) victim, I did not realise this until after the meeting had ended, and I had a chance to reflect on its progress, but I nevertheless felt myself swallowing hard.

'I take it you want to do some sort of Attitude Survey?' the P.M. intoned and the meeting never recovered its equilibrium. I found myself plunged into an explication of my course and its philosophy, and instead of appearing as a consultant attempting to serve a need of the company, I found myself a student with my own, desperate needs which the company was magnanimously prepared to satisfy.

'What do the Poly want you to do for this...this...sandwich course project?' came from one direction. As academic (or maybe as snob) I was totally unprepared for this sort of approach, with its

concomitant deflation of my influence and prestige, and the reduction of the project to the level of an exercise rather than an activity which I felt was crucial. The blood rushing to my ears also conspired to make me less than convincing.

'What exacty are you going to ask them?' offered the E.R.M., presumably trying to get things sharpened up around here and find something he could get his teeth into. I was beginning to feel as though I was helping them with their enquiries.

In the midst of this confusion, I thought that I detected a sufficiency of positivism in my interrogators to warrant an attempt to include some further observation as part of the self-contained replicable survey which had hitherto escaped both tongue and brain. I offered that I might go down onto the plant, observe the work from outside, talk to people, and then using this information I could construct and develop an instrument from which I could conduct the interviews. This was not the inspiration it seemed at the time.

'But how can you talk to them on the line? When they're working?' The E.R.M. 'Won't they all come up and talk together?' A side discussion of logistics, culminating in the admission of the Personnel Department that they did not know much about the workings of the factory floor. It was plainly observable that this was not what they wanted to hear themselves saying, and their eyes informed me that the discussion was at an end. The E.R.M. confirmed this orally.

'We really want something specific. We want to know the questions you'll ask. If you go away and sharpen it up a bit then we'll be able to give the D.P.M. something to get his teeth into.'

In order to satisfy the criteria of replicability and specificity, so that the pilot study might be of some use to the Personnel Department in preparing and furthering their own investigation, I decided to produce a detailed questionnaire to give some direct evidence, and some 'hard' data. It had already been agreed that if the investigation was carried out on the plant with which I was

most familiar, then acclimatisation time would be reduced. The E.R.M. had already seized the opportunity to express alarm at the length of time available for the project ('you'd have to get it done quickly if you worked for us'). It had also been established that pre-existing relationships would not be likely to jeopardise the project, and that the Department's own investigation would be suspended during the course of the project to avoid confusion between the two. One significant difference was that the department's investigation involved the supervisors in interviewing, which was likely to influence responses. A copy of the department's questionnaire would be made available, if one could be found.(41)

The problem which the investigation was set to tackle was absenteeism, and it was my experience that in the past the department's investigations had concentrated on absence (the symptom) as absence (the problem itself) and interventions had been largely disciplinary or regulatory in an attempt to curb or confine the symptoms of a problem which existed at greater depth within the organisation. The mandate was to examine relationships and morale, and the consulting problem was to find an instrument which would address this at sufficient depth to enable it to be presented in its relationship to other causes of absence and yet not appear too threatening to particular members of the organisation or the organisation as a whole to be of use.

Despite lack of sophistication in the application of quantitative methods, I managed to find an instrument which I felt would serve my purposes. Many hours were spent modifying the questionnaire to remove irrelevant sections, to modify the idioms of the questions, and to make it possible for the questionnaire to be answered with the interrogator in an interview of one hour. Sample schedules, answer forms, and interview times were worked out to cover a fortnight. A solid week's work later, exhausted but satisfied, I submitted a copy for the E.R.M's consideration.

It must be noted that I was not accustomed to such labours and was only partly convinced of their worth. I felt that they would satisfy the criteria which appeared to be demanded by the Personnel

Department, but felt also that my entry had not really been established at this point and that if these methods failed I was likely to be slung out on my ear. I was prepared to defend them up to a point, but I felt that I could not perform relevant work with an instrument which demanded more sophisticated quantitative skills. I was, in the last analysis, prepared to face the consequences.

The E.R.M. when faced with the questionnaire seemed to find it too monochrome, gazing unblinkingly under heavy brows. He failed to see the relevance of some of the questions to the causes of absence, and he also felt that he knew what some of the answers would be. He felt that these answers presented in quantity might be too threatening to be accepted, particularly by the D.P.M. He asked if I would be prepared to work from something less structured, with questions to be asked in certain areas rather than specific questions. 'It might forestall the possibility of them all getting their heads together,' he added.

Though surprised at the suggestion, it was difficult for me to conceal my joy. Through misty eyes I realised that here was the opportunity to conduct interviews which would allow the generation of data by the interviewees in quite a free and unstructured fashion. What I had previously seen as the E.R.M.'s rampant positivism was in fact no more than a desire to ensure that he knew what he was doing, and to keep me from getting lost in vagueness or ensnared in some sensitive area, I now thought. Although the E.R.M. felt that he knew what the workforce would say he now appeared interested and prepared to put it to the test. In their zeal to execute their internal supervisory function, to establish their power base and test out my credibility, and even to feel that they were helping the academic work along, the department had come over as too hostile and had unwittingly given a misleading impression of their readiness both to accept soft data and eject the student.

Although the questionnaire was not to be used, it had served the purpose of estabishing that as a Consultant I knew what I was doing

and relationships improved from this point. The abridged and semi-structured questionnaire was prepared, negotiated and finally accepted by the P.M., the D.P.M., the Union representative and supervision (although one or two people who should have been informed were left by the wayside). All the communication was being handled by the Personnel Department, and the project depended to a large extent on their credibility with production. Although the department in which the investigation was to be carried out should ideally have been the client, it was the Personnel Department who seemed to have assumed this role. There were three clients who would have to be served; the department management and supervision might be helped to understand the nature of their absence problem, the Personnel Department might be helped to put this in the context of their wider investigations without being given any contraband information; and there was a responsibility to the informants that their views should be accurately represented. These were for the most part inseparable, although the Personnel Department loomed most large. It was agreed that all parties should have a copy of the final report made available to them. One of the issues brought up by workers and management was the lack of communication between levels in the company. 'Everybody at every level thinks there's a communications cock-up' said the D.P.M. In spite of this, there was a marked tendency for members to assume knowledge of what other members thought or would think. The workforce were often branded as either hostile or ignorant. 'You're either one of us or one of them', the D.P.M. again, 'and I'm not happy about one of us asking questions like that of one of them'. Realising that my open mouth did not indicate impending speech he amplified, 'They'll get to thinking they can have anything they like if they just complain'. The particular issue was a question of the relationship between effort and reward. It was into this sort of atmosphere that the results of the interviews would be fed, and even the reproduction of some sensible and considered answers might be sufficient to occasion a re-alignment of some of the more extreme views.

Previous discussions of the consultancy process, including my own, have taken an interactionist viewpoint and have focussed on appropriate behaviours and processes, in a sequence or cycle of

activities.(42) In this discussion, I will adopt a different model.

Cleverley has indicated the relevance of some anthropological findings to the practice of management. Identifying consultants with sorcerers, Cleverley observes certain general characteristics.(43)

i) they possess 'wisdom' which they have usually acquired solely by learning.
ii) they operate as individuals with often a sceptical attitude towards orthodoxy, or orthodox religion (Cleverley also identifies accountants with the priesthood).
iii) they depend upon popular belief in their powers.
iv) they provide 'cures' which are always to some extent predictable and typical.
v) they perform three major functions: exorcism (finding causes and removing them); placating demons and external evil influences (internal morale building, public relations); and sooth-saying (forecasting, prescribing for the future).
vi) Failure is accounted for by failure on the part of the client to perform the rituals properly, or to interpret the advice correctly.

He concludes:

> 'In sum, the consultant is viewed as having acquired learning that gives him powers greater than ordinary mortals. He is summoned partly for the instrumental effect of his medicine but also for the cathartic satisfaction of emotional pressures, to reassure the manager that he is working in a proper manner. The worth of his actions is beyond empirical test. Where it isn't, failure is explained away as the responsibility of the manager charged to implement the recommendations. The thought that failure might be due to a flaw in the medicine itself is unacceptable.'(44)

Levi Strauss observes similarly that:

'...the efficacy of magic implies a belief in magic. The latter has three complementary aspects: first, the sorcerer's belief in the efficacy of his techniques; second, the patient's or victim's belief in the sorcerer's power; and finally, the faith and expectations of the group, which constantly act as a sort of gravitational field, in which the relationship between sorcerer and bewitched islocated and defined.'(45)

Our problem in translating this latter idea to the consultant is that it is not always easy to define the patient or client, as an organisation or organisational sub-group is infinitely more complex and problematic than an individual. Wherever the line is drawn around the client, the group or the public will be affected. It may be realistic, if logically questionable, to reify 'the organisation' as a whole as being the client to benefit, and the members of the organisation, or section of them, as being the public. In the foregoing example, the Personnel Department would form the public, observing the operations of the consultant on the ailing organisation. Their status as observers might also be reinforced by their own declaration that the real 'patient' was the work force, ailing of the sickness of absenteeism and needing to be 'helped' to come to work.

In any sorcerer's work he is also to some extent observed by his fellow sorcerers as part of the group, especially if he has yet to complete his apprenticeship. They will form part of his public, as would the Polytechnic supervisors in our example. As Mauss observes, although magicians operate separately, they nevertheless possess the attributes of a profession.

'It is one of the highest classed professions and probably one of the first to be so.'(46)

'Moreover, even when there is no formal grouping of magicians, we have in fact a professional class and this class has rules which are obeyed implicitly. We find that magicians usually - follow a set of rules, which is a corporate discipline. These rules sometimes consist of a search for moral virtues and ritual purity, sometimes of a certain solemnity in their comportment and also in other ways. The point is that they are professionals who deck themselves out with the trappings of a profession.'(47)

Levi Strauss notes that the real significance of the three complementary aspects of the efficacy of magic clusters around the two poles 'one formed by the intimate experience of the shaman and the other by group consensus.'(48) One would expect our apprentice consultant to move through difficult periods - testing times, examinations, skill assessments, problems in acquiring knowledge, tests of personal qualities and self doubt, and even evanescent experiences. (The course in our example was noted for such aspects, of which the example itself is one, and a high drop-out rate). Similarly Levi Strauss refers to 'Hardships and privations', and Benedict refers to the means by which the Plains Indians of North America sought to obtain the 'vision', which would bring them supernatural powers:

> 'They cut strips from the skin of their arms, they struck off fingers, they swung themselves from tall poles by straps inserted under the muscles of their shoulders. They went without food and water for extreme periods. They sought in every way to achieve an order of experience set apart from daily living.'(49)

But whatever it is which is so dearly bought, and which places the consultant in demand, simultaneously marks him as dangerous. It marks him as having access to a world 'set apart from living' as Husserl, or Garfinkel following him, might differentiate the 'scientific' and 'commonsense' attitudes. As such the consultant inhabits a marginal world as does the sorcerer - the manager who seeks a hold on the unknown may share something of the fear of the Plains Indian who 'values supernatural power not only because it is powerful, but because it is dangerous.'(50) Douglas's comment, quoted earlier, is worthy of reiteration:

> '...all margins are dangerous. If they are pulled this way and that the shape of fundamental experience is altered. Any structure of ideas is vulnerable at its margins.'(51)

Thus the sorcerer is dangerous because of his power which might overturn that which is already known and accepted; the consultant similarly holds the power to threaten the managerial ideology or the status quo. In both cases, this risk isminimised by the development of characteristic styles or schools of sorcery or

consultancy, each tending to produce a typical solution. Indeed the solution can in certain circumstances be chosen in advance by the client, and if this fails

> '...it is often possible to try another diviner or another method if you don't like the first one. A wholly unexpected answer is unknown.'(52)

So the danger is contained within limits. The danger is reaffirmed in the apprentice, however, who may not have mastered fully the control of his power, or have developed the correct style. He is still in the state of 'liminality' as Van Gennep expressed it, in the limbo between the state of ordinary man and sorcerer, yet properly neither.(53) Bailey's comments are apposite:

> 'People or objects or events which will not fit into a known category are likely to be regarded with fear, with contempt, or even with loathing: they are not likely to be overlooked. This quality of catching attention makes the unexpected action strategically advantageous: but it can also be perilous. Furthermore, the quality of being unexpected shades into another quality, that of being abominable. Thus it is not marginality alone which renders the half-breed or the transvestite or the calf with two heads monstrous; rather it is the fact that each culture picks out certain categories of the unexpected and marks them as <u>intrinsically</u> beyond comprehension: they are 'unnatural'. Anyone who attempts to understand or explain these unexpected combinations, let alone anyone who displays them, is likely to arouse immediate and unreasoning hostility.'(54)

The apprentice is to be feared because of his unpredictability but this is secondary to his real threat: that he will 'attempt to understand or explain' the 'categories of the unexpected' which the culture marks out as 'beyond comprehension' or 'unquestionable'. An example for our consultant might be 'management's right to manage'; it may surface in the explicit circumscription or suppression of areas of data-gathering or investigation. In our example, questions even indirectly related to the payment system were to be deleted and any comments received on the topic ignored. The competent consultant has ipso facto demonstrated his capacity to move from culture to culture without transgressing its rules and seeking to explicate its ambiguities, its meanings and

contradictions which must remain implicit for its continuation. The client may know that he will not say or do the wrong thing: with the apprentice this is never assured. Although the consultant does not usually become a full member of the client group he must demonstrate his capacity to do so (many successful consultants are head-hunted by clients as they 'know-how-to-go-on' within the culture or to interpret events within a compatible frame of reference. For the apprentice, this requirement is a double tension.(55)

Turning to our example we may interpret it in the light of the foregoing. The crucial issue is that of the Personnel Department as examining public rather than client/patient, and it seems that many 'clients' in consultancy situations do not see themselves as 'patients', as people with 'problems'. The most successful consultants may well be those who preserve the structure of ideas which reifies the organisation as 'patient'. Many of the problems I experienced at this stage stemmed not from a failure to contract or spot the client correctly, but from a failure to define the situation as the initiation ritual which it was. I was traumatised and stripped bare in the initial interview, left with little self-respect and confidence, and the area of possible work was fairly directed into the area of 'placating demons'. At the second interview, the performance, I trotted out some of my arcane mysteries which were sufficiently impressive to pass muster in terms of sorcery, but required modification in order to achieve congruence with the culture without transgressing any abominations. The logical content of this discussion, and the academic or rational work of any of its argument was irrelevant. My joy at the apparent change in direction of the methodology, and my assessment of it as a result of a misinterpretation on my own part was only partially true: methodological issues were tangential and symbolic. The behaviour of the E.R.M. and his colleagues was at all times consonant with their function as the sorcerer's public in his cultural initiation.

It may be noted at this point that I was sceptical as to the real efficacy of my own methods, but felt that they were the best of a series of suspect alternatives. Fearing that the E.R.M. might

espouse a favourite methodology 'more false, more mystifying and more dishonest'(56) than my own, I may have over-reacted. Which, as Levi Strauss points out in relating the story of the apprentice-sorcerer Quesalid, is the first step to the situation where, although otherwise successful

> 'He seems to have completely lost sight of the fallaciousness of the technique which he had so disparaged in the beginning.'(57)

The 'entry' phase may, when viewed anthropologically be seen as more than the psychological problem of the consultant establishing his credibility and image, or the social psychological one of the outsider adjusting to the strange group; as a cultural adjustment, on a wider symbolic rather than a process or interactionist level, on behalf of the organisation to manage threat and bestow the belief which the consultant, especially the student consultant, seeks.

> 'It is public opinion which makes the magician and creates the power he wields. Thanks to public opinion he knows everything and can do anything. If nature holds no secrets from him, if he draws his powers from the primary sources of light, from the sun, the planets, the rainbow or the depths of all water, it is pubic opinion which desires that he should.'(58)

The Consultancy Report

The consultant having obtained organizational acceptance and demonstrated his competence and his ability to proceed responsibly in a manner which does not threaten his host culture, will nevertheless have to work to sustain this belief in his ability. The greatest test to be faced is in the production of the major icon of consultancy, also often its sole end, the consulting report. It may be a document which simply purports to feedback data; it may prescribe specific remedies; it may make tentative recommendations; it may blame, punish, exhort, criticise or raise further questions; it may be brief and specific or vast and encompassing; it may do many of the foregoing or none. But it will always be an account, and an account produced with the purpose

of generating acceptance amongst a specific audience. As such, it creates a version of the organisation and constitutes it in such a way as to achieve priority over other versions. As we have already seen in a previous chapter

> '...the social world exists in-and-through the practices members employ to make it observable and reportable. In as plain and bold language as I can summon the social world as an object of ethnomethodological investigation consists, is identical with, is nothing more than, the practices members employ to make it observable and accountable.'(59)

In accounting for a social situation, or an organisational problem, the producer of the account will be rendering the situation meaningful to himself at the same time as to others. As he constitutes the event, he will be aware of the constitution as such, and the account as produced will be reflexive. That is to say, the account as it is produced will affect itself, both in what has already been said and what is to be said. It can call attention to the 'correct' or 'preferred' mode of its own interpretation: objective fact, opinion, reflected opinion of others, and so on. At the basic level, an account would be simply an individual's attempt to report an event. At a more complex level, as in a consultancy report,

> 'Theories and empirical descriptions of perception, language, nonverbal communication, reasoning, orany other aspect of accounting are accounts about accounts. Since they are accounts, whatever they say about accounts will apply to themselves as well.'(60)

So the consultancy report may be part account, part account of accounts, and possibly even account of accounts of accounts. But in doing its own accounting, its purpose will be to generate agreement, or acceptance. To view such a report as an 'objective' presentation of 'facts' is to totally fail to recognise its character as creative and constitutive of a version of the organisational world, as we would expect from our earlier discussions.

The account's persuasiveness, or the potential success of the consultancy report, partly depends on its interpretative properties. But there are many areas in which an interpretation might be difficult, risky, undesirable or impossible. There may be contradictions which it would be unwise to bring into the open, ambiguities which it would be naive to attempt to resolve. So the report must leave room for alternative interpretations, or 'seed' interpretations for the reader to bring to bloom or allow to wither. The production of a successful account in this context depends on the application of accounting practices which resemble those which Cicourel has observed being used discursively and conversationally to sustain a sense of social structure.(61)

Cicourel follows Chomsky(62) in employing the concepts of deep structure and surface structure in an attempt to explain how human beings 'manage to discern the correct behaviour in new situations, to choose the norms which apply, the rules which guide the game.'(63) The norms and rules Cicourel identifies as analogous to Chomsky's surface structure of grammar. The interpretative procedures by which the rules are discerned are analogous to Chomsky's deep structures - the linguistic universals acquired early in social life, with the acquisition of language. Cicourel is at pains to point out however that his interpretative procedures, though similar, are crucially different to Chomsky's deep structures. Interpretative procedures are not abstract, but are always practically situated. Familiarity with them relates to the area of 'competence' but links closely to 'performance' and they can be derived from 'behavioural manipulations of socially organised settings.'(64) Although the separation of levels of competence and performance is problematic, Cicourel does seem, here at least, to be attempting to find an area in which they converge. The concept of interpretative procedures is useful in analysing behaviour which has a cultural dimension, although we may not go so far as Cicourel in believing them to be completely trans-situational. Their cultural content, however, may vary: each culture has its own peculiar stock of knowledge but will draw on it in similar ways. It is the situated relevance of the stock of

knowledge which is accomplished through the use of interpretative procedures. As Cicourel puts it:

> 'The interpretative procedures prepare and sustain an environment of objects for inference and action vis-a-vis a culture bound world view and the written and 'known in common' surface rules.'(65)

Cicourel has identified these 'interpretative' rather than 'generative' procedures variously as four or six, but his more popular formulation (which includes the additional points under a slightly different rubric) is the four-point depiction.(66)

The first involves the application of Schutz's notion of reciprocity of perspectives, that if members were to change places, each would see what the other sees from his perspective.(67) The emphasis is on what is common rather than what is individual and divergent - personal differences are left aside. This is sustained by the assumption of normal form, that what is uttered by either party will be 'recognisable, intelligible and embedded within a body of tacit common knowledge.'(68) In other words, it will be related to 'what everyone knows', and will be meant to be understood. This is further reinforced by the et cetera principle, the practice of leaving intended meanings unstated, assuming that the recipient can fill them in for himself, or with the tacit understanding that later utterances will make them clear and dispel ambiguity. Finally, the property of indexicality is important in that meanings are regarded as situational, and 'descriptive vocabularies'(69) of who speaks, his biography, purpose and intent, the context and setting of the remarks, and the relationship between speaker and hearer govern the interpretation of such meaning.

As Cicourel summarises:

> 'The articulation of interpretative procedures and surface (normative) rules establish a basis for concerted interaction which we label the social structures.'(70)

These procedures will to a substantial degree be utilised to render

the consulting report intelligible in the culture to which it is submitted. Their importance derives from the following:

1) The report depends for its success on its persuasiveness, which is partly achieved through its reflexive properties of defining the situation through the process of rendering it accountable.
2) The report also depends on the degree to which the consultant correctly identifies the components of the stock of knowledge of the managerial culture, and the extent to which the report is congruent with them.
3) The report further depends on the consultant successfully exploiting the interpretative procedures of the readers of the report in order to produce the indexical properties which are required to sustain the meaning, or shades of meaning, which will guarantee its acceptability or success.

The report is an account, and both represents and constitutes a process of cultural adjustment and manipulation as such. The successful report will seek to relate to the 'deep structures' of the recipient culture (organisational or managerial) as represented by its interpretative procedures.

Nielsen(71) considers the issue indirectly by examining the problem of the inclusiveness of the consulting report. In two cases which he cites of a 'participative decision-making situation' the report is submitted to management who then decide what proportion of the report to release to the other (union or other staff) participants. The parts of the report which are released are those which conform, in both cases, to the managerial definition of the situation, their perception of the other participants, their reading of the environment and their projections for the future. Areas of the report which might broaden discussion into areas in which management had not already prepared a plan, in which managerial control might be challenged in any way, or in which the power to influence the decision might be usurped by those in opposition, were suppressed. Managerial justifications cited by Nielsen included comments which clearly demonstrate managerial perception

of and concern with the political power struggle:

> '...the full report would just provide ammunition for those union members whose only concern was to resist management efforts to control labour costs'(Case A)(72)

> 'The report...might be...used as ammunition by those politically motivated to challenge past management leadership.'(Case B)(73)

The 'right to manage' is here implicit and unquestionable; the 'political motivation' is on the other side.(74) Further to this, management's duty is to solve problems, and the choice of priority and focus, and even problem definition is unquestionably a managerial prerogative.

> '(issues that) Management did not want to discuss at this time because it could not solve all problems at once.'(Case A & B)(75)

Power is a possession which may be held, shared or relinquished, but none of these lightly.

> 'Management...did not want to open up areas in which it had not fully considered whether it should share decision-making.' (Case A & B)(76)

Crucially, information is not to be made available to anyone who has not been initiated into the 'correct' or 'managerial' way of interpreting it. Alternative interpretations must be based on misreadings, mistakes, or incorrect analysis by those in a state of methodological ignorance.

> '...many things that the union members would not understand and which would take too much time to educate them about.'(Case A)(77)

Nielsen's observations would seem to be representative, and certainly accord with the culture to which my own report was to be submitted. The difference between his examples and my own situation, and I suggest many others, was that my report was to be simultaneously submitted to all parties as part of the contract.

Thus the report had to embody all the managerial filters which were applied to Nielsen's reports after their production, before its submission. The imperative was that the culture should be read correctly before the report was produced.

I am not suggesting that this is not to some degree the case in other situations - on the contrary, reading the culture is essential for the consultant's success, as it had to be in Nielsen's case. The latitude which the consultant may have for widening discussion, expanding problem definition and challenging assumptions is always within limits, and these limits are much narrower when there is no formal screening procedure.

Case: Jack and Phil

Two managers on the plant on which my research was conducted in a large food factory, had different but intersecting responsibilities. Jack, the Department Production Manager, had responsibility for his production line on both night and day shifts, but normally worked days. Phil, a more senior manager who had previously held Jack's job, had responsibility for the night shift on all four lines which worked the shift.

Phil was a qualified baker, one of the few in the factory, and had just obtained a Business Studies degree part-time. He was preparing an honours project on absenteeism in the company, had obtained many statistics and was keen and willing to discuss all aspects of the functioning of the plant and the company. He was very conscious of the atmosphere on plant, and the advantages of working closely with his supervision. He stated his anxiety that the more he questioned the company attitudes and policies, the more he was risking as he moved up the organisation, and the more he began to question whether it was worth it. He expressed concern with issues of trust and co-operation, and his knowledge of the personal circumstances and problems of his employees was considerable. He was well-liked and respected by his workers, supervision, and the Personnel department.

Jack, on the other hand, was an engineer and tended to be stereotyped as rigid, dogmatic and mechanistic. He was taciturn, given to seeing issues in monochrome, often surly and sarcastic towards his workers and generally unwilling to discuss anything. He was not perceived as being competent by his workers - 'He's a worried man' one supervisor said. The Personnel Department felt he was a problem, and his superior manager was known to have a low opinion of him. He was normative in the extreme, stuck rigidly to his principles, and gave no priority to human relations issues. In the Plant General Meetings, which were a limited, representative, discussion platform, he was seen as perpetually ignoring issues or shelving them. 'Those meetings are only worthwhile insofar as they help me to run the plant', he said.

The approaches and attitudes of Jack and Phil were poles apart and demanded different styles of consultancy or researcher behaviour. This was difficult to express in the final report for a number of reasons. On a personal level it would treaten Jack, whether by direct condemnation or by praise of Phil, and it was not the purpose of the report to single out individual scapegoats, but rather to emphasise organisational issues. The evaluation of individuals was a responsibility that it would have been unwise for a consultant to assume in this case. What is more significant, however, is the relationship of Jack and Phil to the organisational culture. Jack, although young, represented a breed of manager which had dominated the baking industry and the firm for a number of years.(78) Recent developments in production techniques and organisational development had somewhat overtaken them, and although they still held the balance of power through middle and some senior management positions, they were becoming increasingly exposed in a number of areas, industrial relations being one. Top management, especially at director level, was putting pressure on them to move 'with the times' but their defence, led by the General Manager, was spirited and change was slow. The Personnel Department, and the more 'enlightened' managers like Phil, were also exerting pressure for change. The consulting report, in this situation of cultural conflict had to be angled so as to identify common ground, build on it and provide the evidence to suggest change subtly so as not to provoke any reaction. To attempt or

pretend to present even the bald 'facts' or to reflect 'raw data' in such a political situation as this, could have been inflammatory. Knowledge of and accounting for the organisation's cultural condition was thus essential to the production of the consulting report.

The importance of the report as a document directed at the dominant organisational culture is not to be understated. It should, however, be pointed out that this can and often does neglect crucial subcultural aspects which can have a direct bearing on the phenomena which the report investigates, and or the possible implications of its recommendations. The following examples are data which I was able to collect by virtue of participating in the shop-floor culture, which is an opportunity which few consultants either get or would desire. All of them illustrate major factors in the plant subculture all of which had a direct impact on absenteeism, which my investigation had as its focus. It was impossible to include any of them in the report.

Case: Joe Khan

(The production line of the pie plant was divided into two areas: 'make and bake' and 'packing'. Make and bake comprised a fruit and dough mixing area on a raised mezzanine; the Aston pie making machine; and the oven cooler and tray washer.

The packing end comprised a belt from which pies were packed manually into inners and a series of machines which boxed these inners. The end of the line had them manually loaded into crates for despatch. In both areas on each machine was one major operator and an equally qualified second operator for relief purposes. The Aston machine was the key machine on the plant, requiring a mixed staff of twelve, and was dominated by an Indian named Joe Khan (his real name being unpronouncable.))

At the beginning of the summer the packing end was supervised by Louisa, who was in her early thirties, married with two young children, regarded as ambitious and capable, but often unpleasant and ruthless. The make and bake end was supervised by Myrtle, in her late forties, with more supervisory experience, generally felt to be more of a worrier than Louisa, but on the whole better liked.

Each supervisor had her particular favourites and was in turn preferred by different subordinates. There was considerable rivalry between them which was mediated by the Senior Supervisor, Sam.

Sam was experienced, mid forties, and regarded as one of the most knowledgable, capable and likeable supervisors in the factory. However, in the first week of the summer he accepted a job on contract work in the Middle East, and as a result began to take a back seat. As the Senior Supervisor was particularly responsible for make and bake, although responsible for the whole plant, it was decided that Myrtle and Louisa should rotate jobs, and continue to do so until the Senior Supervisor to replace Sam was appointed. They both applied for the job.

The D.P.M., Jack, was low on credibility and ability to communicate with his staff. He tended to abrogate rather than delegate responsibility to his supervisors, and co-operated little with them, although both they and he had gaps in their knowledge of the running of the plant. Sam was able to cover this up and handle the plant smoothly for Jack. The afternoon shift supervisor knew the plant well and had a good relationship with the staff but was too junior to replace Sam, and not on sufficiently good terms with Jack.

The real knowledge and power was increasingly devolving on Joe. He had extensive knowledge of the working of the plant, but was known to be spiteful, devious, deceitful and to serve his own ends remorselessly. He had increasing influence on Louisa and Myrtle who had come to depend on him, and his technical ability was built up by them, and by Jack, to mythical proportions. There were other operators who were as good - but Joe always withheld some part of his knowledge so that no-one who worked <u>with</u> him ever knew as much as he did. Sam knew how to handle Joe, and how to cope with his machinations, but as his influence waned, Joe began more and more to use his own influence to get better jobs for those he wished to please male or female, and to persecute those whom he disliked. He fabricated, he twisted facts, he was at worst hated and at best tolerated by the workforce, but this he would never acknowledge.

He disliked Myrtle. One day whilst Myrtle was supervising the make and bake area the Aston began to turn out reject quality pies at an alarming and unprecedented rate. This continued so that over three days production was cut by half, the fault always being different and always solved only by an engineer. Subsequently Joe admitted to his confidantes that he had sabotaged the machine by various means - altering settings, fitting faulty pipes, hiding replacement parts, etc., and had obtained the collusion of the engineers in taking an excessive amount of time to fix the machine. He had managed this by telling them from his position as shop steward that the Union were in unofficial dispute over the authority of the operators on the line. In fact, he had done this in order to make Myrtle appear incompetent, and thus less likely to get the Senior Supervisor's job, which he wanted Louisa to have. He also wanted to underline his own competence and their dependence on him to Jack, who had a vague idea what was happening but did not dare to accuse him.

It was suspected that Jack had a preference for Louisa, but he was not the sort of man to let it show. Whether Joe's action influenced him or not is hard to say, but Louisa got the job. Joe's image of competence was reinforced, and Jack was even overheard telling an engineer 'Joe is a marvellous operator. I don't know what we'd do without him.'

In his position, Joe was in possession of all the technical knowledge the women needed, and with Jack interfering little on plant was able to arbitrate between them and effectively hold them to ransom. He did this with some restraint, however, and was also a good worker who worked extremely long hours. Those who saw through him, such as Andy the afternoon supervisor, felt powerless to change the situation.

> 'Joe is all baloney. He's a liar, he's sneaky and devious and he gets away with murder. But Jack and Louisa think he's marvellous - it's all folklore - he's a bastard.'

And even the nightshift manager, Phil:

'I've seen the little tricks Joe pulls and I've even caught him out. He's the biggest single cause of trouble on the plant. His morals are at variance with those you would expect from a normal human employee.'

There was more evidence than this alone. His private life invaded the workplace. He fell out with one girl worker at a disco and this culminated in her being moved to another job. The atmosphere on the Aston was often tense, his manner rude and abrasive, and he was ready to exploit the racial dimension if it suited him. After repeated arguments with him, people would often stay away from work or seek transfers.

Case: Supervisory Quality?

Amongst the workforce, but not generally amongst management, the supervisory qualities of Myrtle and Louisa were regarded as being poor. Myrtle was of a nervous disposition, and as the tension grew around the Senior Supervisor's job she became worse. Her style under pressure was a hybrid of abject pleading and mild hysteria.

Louisa, on the other hand, was superior, patronising and acid, and often outrageously tactless and authoritarian. One particular picture amongst many springs to mind, of her standing on the raised metal platform above the conveyor belts, towering four or five feet above those below and visible to the surrounding plants, bawling out in the loudest and most unpleasant manner a worker who she thought was leaving early. The spectacle was so embarrassing for everyone around that they tried to avert their gaze. The worker turned out to have a legitimate reason for doing what he was doing.

This predilection for shooting first and asking questions later was a disruptive influence. Adequate explanation of what a job did and should entail was not always offered, though rules and principles were readily evoked out of thin air or changed from day to day when the task was to apportion blame. Amidst the often conflicting demands placed upon them, workers became confused. Supervision would resort to the tried and tested remedy of blindly ordering

them about, causing many a needless hiatus in the process.

Contradiction and paradox were the general flavour of management, and nowhere were they more confused than over quality. The tendency to blame workers or people involved for any apparent inefficiency or drop in quality was characteristic. On one occasion, when the Aston was turning out substandard pies, the whole crew were sent down to the oven like naughty children to watch the horrid mutations come out of the oven, were reminded how much a pie cost, and told how much a week was lost by making seconds and not top quality pies. They were then informed that Jack would be 'taking a close look at the Aston'.

The implication that the people involved were not doing their jobs properly and the thinly veiled threat that heads would roll was neither unnoticed nor unresented. The fault was later diagnosed as mechanical and rectified with little fuss. The point had been made that there was insufficient concern with quality among the workforce, nevertheless, and it was not retracted.

The workers were often plunged into a moral dilemma over quality, and forced to view management exhortations with irony. Despite the tendency of the product to become the major symbol of the worker's alienation, the workforce frequently did show considerable concern for its quality. They would often fail to pack pies which they considered to be sub-standard. Once a pie was made, the policy according to supervision was 'pack as much as we can get away with', although quality control had other ideas. When confused about what to pack and what not to pack, and finding the criterion of whether they would like to purchase the goods themselves in such a condition of no help, caught between supervision and quality control, they resorted to the manager for arbitration.

'Who pays your wages?' said Jack. 'Me or quality?'

The significance of this and the other examples is that they are vital to an adequate understanding of the organisational culture, but would not be normally available to consultants or researchers as data. Joe Khan was so subtle in his machinations that it took

many weeks before they were even apparent. Even then, hard evidence would have been difficult to produce and establish. Even a consultant who had access to this data would have been unable to produce it as part of his report, as the evidence would have been tenuous and not so substantial as to cause a realignment of views in those managers not aware of the situation. There was even the possibility that Joe served the purposes of management in some way by preventing group cohesion developing and thus facilitating managerial control, and that to identify his behaviour would only have brought this into focus, to the consultant's chagrin.

The behaviour of the supervisors was not entirely their own choice, as they were put under extreme pressure and given little help by management. To expose what would have been an important contributor to absence behaviour amongst the workforce could have been unfair to the supervisors, who were likely to suffer scapegoating as a result of any such investigation, given the organisational climate. The problem of confidentiality and trust also intervened in this particular case - the people who had generously allowed me access to information should not have been singled out for castigation as a result. So even when in possession of the rarest of data, I was culturally and ethically constrained not to use it.

The quality issue was a similar case. The battle between production and quality was a political one which was not close to resolution, and involvement in it could well have led to the report being submerged under other issues. Without the opportunity to thoroughly explore these issues, to draw too much attention to this struggle might have created extensive problems, with little possibility for resolution. The political implications did not entirely force the quality question out of the final report, but its significance was deliberately understated.

Performance

The consulting report is, it has been suggested, an account produced as part of a process of cultural manipulation. The

existence of parts of a culture which will remain inaccessible or must be unacknowledged has been raised as a constraint on its production. A further constraint is that the report is not simply an account, but is part of, and the result of a performance. The performance is part of the process of cultural adjustment or manipulation, part of the long process of establishing credibility, and is the substance upon which the crucial judgement of 'value-for-money' will be based by the client. Levi Strauss quotes the story of Quesalid, who learned to become a shaman in order to expose the profession:

> 'Above all, he learned the ars magna of one of the Shamanistic Schools of the North West Coast: The shaman hides a little tuft of down in a corner of his mouth, and he throws it up, covered with blood, at the proper moment - after having bitten his tongue or made his gums bleed - and solemnly presents it to his patient and the onlookers as the pathological foreign body extracted as a result of his sucking and manipulations.'(79)

The consulting report is a result of a similar performance. Although it does not constitute the 'disease' itself, it identifies it and symbolises it, it makes its existence real and provides for its cure. The bloody worm similarly proves effective in so far as it symbolises the disease and is believed to be the disease by the patient, and public. In showing the disease, the Shaman has apparently cured it; the consultant's situation is slightly more complex but in identifying it and recommending action he has done virtually all that he could do to cure it. In both cases the performance has the same function, and in both its success depends on whether it is believed and believed in.

In the examples from E.L.S. Amalgamated we have evidence both of how much significant data would escape the consultant conducting an investigation and preparing a report by conventional methods, and of the cultural constraints which operate in a situation where, exceptionally, this data has been retrieved. In neither case could this data be employed. In my own situation at E.L.S. Amalgamated, I was constrained beyond my methodology by the demands of performance, and in creating the report I had to be mindful of the need to produce, not just any 'bloody worm', nor even a real

'bloody worm', but a believable 'bloody worm'.

Case: The Report's Fate

The report was written in December. A meeting with two of the senior Personnel Officers was held to discuss the document in January following. After a preliminary talking through the report, it did not appear to have raised too many anxieties amongst the Personnel Department, but it was not really expected to. The Personnel Department as a whole, though having their schismatics, had been attempting to move to a less disciplinarian approach than General and Production Management had been willing to accept. Much of their energy had been recently diverted into avoiding redundancies and a new wage settlement had been introduced which tightened discipline whilst increasing wages. 'It's not much tighter,' one of them said, 'we just keep changing the system every year 'cos it takes 'em six months to work out the angles'.

Further to this, he added that he considered that for disciplinary procedures to be necessary implied some failure in the way they were interpreted, and that if the atmosphere on the shop floor were to be improved in terms of supportive relationships he could see the procedures being used less. He added that it might be difficult to change the attitude and approach of some of the supervisors and managers, and that he had a pessimistic view of some of the endemic local attitudes towards work.

The gaining of commitment from the shop floor in order to forestall the interpretation of intended change as manipulative had been seen to be a problem by those in Personnel who had advocated change; they seemed to have been encouraged by the responses outlined in the report. Commitment by Senior Management was now the problem, and a meeting had been arranged for them to discuss this.

It seemed as though the Personnel Department had gained some of the support which they had been seeking from the report, along with some information 'which we certainly did not know'. When I enquired whether any of the 10 copies of the report had been seen by the Union or the respondents the reply was:

'Well...no I don't think they have...have they Barry? ...but we'll see to it. They certainly should see it. There's nothing in there that they shouldn't see.'

A chance meeting with a former colleague revealed that this had not been done by the end of February. On the 27th February a meeting with the Personnel Director revealed that he had not seen the report. He declared that he would obtain a copy, and would look into its being made available to the rest of the workforce.

On 20th April, a question was formally asked at the Plant General Meeting as to what had happened to the report. The reply from Jack the D.P.M. and noted hard liner:

'We want a little more time to read it.'

The response of management to the report was cordial. Constructive suggestions were made, ideas were taken up and discussed with me, and there were no grounds to believe that any individuals had been hurt, offended or criticised unfairly or that it was likely to prove a disruptive influence. The outward manifestations displayed by management were all of satisfaction. As long as the text remained unavailable for general scrutiny management had a monopoly on its interpretation, and such unlimited ambiguity could be exploited as either a symbolic representation of the great and good towards which they were striving or as a pernicious and irresponsible scapegoat. In either case, it would be exploited in order to emancipate management from some of the constraints under which they laboured.

As a symbol, rather than a text, the report was doubly effective. Management remained publicly uncensured, and their technical control undiminished. On the shop-floor, minor promotions and improvements in wages and conditions were credited as being a result of the influence of the report whose contents were unknown. The workers saw management as standing corrected by the 'expert', which reinforced their own view of management as being of questionable competence and motivations in certain areas of

activity but ultimately subject to reason. Thus whatever came their way in the form of change, especially positive change, was more readily accepted than it may otherwise have been, and the effectiveness of managerial control was to this extent increased. Customary relations remained generally undisturbed, with the report available to all parties symbolically as a form of accounting. Whatever omissions were made from the report were culturally determined, so they occurred in areas of abomination, the existence of which the members of the dominant managerial culture would never be able or willing to acknowledge. Thus the report could be thought successful by both sides.

It should also be observed as a general point that if all else fails, the consultant can preserve the credibility of his performance by including in the report some recommendations or conditions which the members of the organisation cannot or will not fulfil. He can then evade criticism and attacks on his competence when recommended organisational changes are unsuccessful by pointing out to them that it is in fact their fault for failing to follow the 'spell' correctly. The E.L.S. Amalgamated report did include something of this element.

No matter how sceptical one may be about consulting techniques or shamanistic rites, both procedures are relative to their competitors, and generate a commitment of their own. Quesalid again:

> 'Though he had few illusions about his own technique, he has now found one which is more false, more mystifying and more dishonest than his own. For at least he gives his clients something. He presents them with their sickness in a visible and tangible form, while his foreign colleagues show nothing at all and only claim to have captured the sickness. Moreover, Quesalid's method gets results, while the other is futile. Thus our hero grapples with a problem which perhaps has its parallel in the development of modern science. Two systems which we know to be inadequate present (with respect to each other) a differential validity, from both a logical and an empirical perspective. From which frame of reference shall we judge them? On the level of fact, where they merge, or on their own level, where they take on different values, both theoretically and empirically?'(80)

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have attempted to outline some of the significant aspects of organisational culture. The first I identified as the importance of recognising the existence of cultural pluralities, within organisations and subcultures who may compete and negotiate overtly and covertly in establishing the 'organisational structure' on both short and long time scales. The second I identified as the importance of rationality to which subgroups appeal to support their power to impress their definitions on other subgroups. The third I consider to be the importance of cultures as consisting of shared understandings, as creating bodies of knowledge. I emphasised here that although they are symbolic systems, this should not be confused with the semiotic model of the symbolic as merely a system of communication. Symbols are a cognitive, organising system, and civilised man is as active symbolically as 'savage' man. Finally, I stressed the importance of power in cultural determinations, and the need to consider the significance of the symbolic in sustaining and resisting, reclaiming and refusing hegemony. I also suggested that systems of ideas and meaning are vulnerable at their margins, as ideas outside the compass of such a structure may require its complete restructuring for their accommodation. Thus culture and symbolism can be examined by looking at marginal and ambiguous situations, and adopting a perspective which emphasises 'concrete' and 'symbolic' cognitive activity.

I attempted to pursue this course by looking at consultancy as a situation of such marginality, focussing in particular on the problems of gaining entry and producing a consultancy report. The first focussed on some of the dimensions of cultural threat and explored some examples of how this was controlled by case examples. The concept of the consultant as sorcerer, allied to the dimension of apprenticeship, was used to analyse the case as a form of initiation rite; further it was suggested that the content of consultancy, and to some extent the individual processes, may well be subordinate to the importance of public opinion in sustaining it as an activity.

The second focussed on the consulting report as an account, based on other accounts, which employs in its construction and interpretation a number of interpretative procedures. The consultant produces a report which depends on its success for its success on its persuasiveness which in turn depends on its effectiveness in defining the situation; its accuracy and consistency in identifying relevant components of the stock of knowledge of the recipient culture; and the competence of the consultant in exploiting the interpretative procedures of the recipients so as to produce the desired indexical features required for its success.

In necessarily demonstrating congruence with the deep structures of the dominant organisational culture, there will be many significant subcultural features left out, so such a report will never be comprehensive or complete. This recedes in importance when it is remembered that the report is part of a performance, whose significant properties are value-for-money and generation of agreement or belief.

I will continue this analysis in the next chapter with an examination of the dimensions of a potentially more permanent organisational attachment in an analysis of some of the forms and discourses of induction.

Chapter Seven: On Organisational Induction and its Discourses

Introduction

In this chapter the process of reading and learning an organisation's culture, observed of the consultant in the previous chapter, is examined in the case of those organisational entrants who are potentially to embark on a more permanent relationship with the organisation. The question of organisational control is now directed less towards minimising threat than towards the recreation of order. The discussion begins with an overview of previous literature on induction, which is criticised for its espousal of a semiotic model of culture as a communicative system. It is further suggested that insufficient attention has hitherto been paid to the constitution of culture, and the ways in which culture is presented in discourse. A model for the identification of possible subject-positions in induction discourses is developed and discussed, and these positions are then analysed from their formation in cautionary tales, accounts, induction discourses and myths collected at E.L.S. Amalgamated Bakeries.

A number of contradictions are revealed, and an application of the structural analysis of Levi-Strauss to the data reveals some significant homologies.

Finally, it is suggested that the acquisition of culture, or the accommodation of the individual to cultural forms and customary articulations, and the growth of resistance is far more complex and ambiguous than the existing literature suggests. The development of resistance will be taken up and further explored in Chapter Eight.

In this chapter, I will concentrate on a marginal state with which are often associated disorientation and confusion: that is organisational induction. The individuals who seek entry to a new organisation to some extent lack status, but certainly lack an effective history in organisational terms. The recriprocal effect of newcomer and organisation upon each other is unknown, lacks pattern, and speaks of reordering. As Douglas says of disorder,

'We recognise that it is destructive to existing patterns; also that it has potentiality. It symbolises both danger and power.'(1) The formal induction process represents an attempt, or series of attempts made on behalf of the organisation to create order from disorder, but not absolutely; rather to eliminate or reduce the danger, but release and harness some of the power, and to control the ways in which the potential will be realised.

Previous treatments of organisational induction have represented it as the process of orientating an individual towards the organisation and its culture. But as Louis observes there exists

> 'the need to understand the processes by which cultural knowledge is acquired. Although we saw that surprise may result when cultural assumptions from old settings are not supported in new settings, we have not yet traced how newcomers learn the ropes and come to appreciate the local culture of the new setting. One way to pursue the question is to examine how culture is manifested in organisational settings and from there to trace how cultural manifestations are transmitted. In work on the role of stories, myths, and symbols in organisational life, cultural manifestations are being studied by a growing number of researchers.'(2)

This recognises a significant omission from much of the literature, but nevertheless remains focussed on how the individual learns, and how he or she is socialised in terms of responses and reactions. In this chapter, I will be attempting not only to focus on this area, but to provide a theoretical framework for how the various discourses and rhetorics of organisational induction are constituted. In so doing, I will attempt to reintroduce considerations of power, ideology, resistance and ambiguity which fail to surface in the literature.

The chapter begins with a brief overview of some of the various perspectives on organisational induction, from psychological and sociological sources. The induction process itself will then be theorised in terms of the subject positions which are produced in its discourses and offered to the addressee. The rhetorics which feature in the constitution of these subject positions will be examined, as will be forms of accounts, and interpretative codes. Finally, the model in operation will be illustrated by empirical

material which demonstrates both the creation of the idealised acting-subject and the alternative positions realised by the addressee.

The 'Professionals'

There are a number of perspectives, some overlapping which have been adopted by writers who have concerned themselves with organisational induction. The first is the perspective of the 'professional' writers, aimed mainly at practising and aspiring personnel managers, which characteristically glosses over many of the problems and proceeds rather hastily to treatment and prescriptions for how best to deal with the induction 'crisis'. The problem is usually posed as being one of the employee's insecurity and lack of ease in the new environment; his/her lack of knowledge of relevant information, rules, regulations and benefits; and of making the newcomer feel at home. Induction is characterised by one writer as

> 'introduction to the organisation's purpose, policies and practices, seeking to establish the tight links between each individual, his work and his outside life in the community by explaining:
>
> 1. his place in the organisation,
> 2. the relationship between his work and the finished products,
> 3. the relationship of his firm to the industry and the world outside,
> 4. how he can put his point of view to management.'(3)

The problem is, in short, as one recent work has as its title, one of 'getting off to the right start'. Recommended are talks on the history of the organisation; films and tape slides on its activities; possibly a talk on the personalities of the firm and its organisation chart; a tour of the plant; details of welfare, discipline and grievance procedures; and a film or talk on safety.(4) It is sometimes stressed that directors, office and production workers should be involved, to aid the development of team spirit.(5)

As Marriott observes,'at this level much of the programme as outlined is in the nature of a public relations exercise seemingly designed to disseminate a unitary managerial ideology.'(6) Despite the newcomer's disorientation, management is not, as Torrington suggests, 'presented with a unique never to be repeated opportunity to influence him.'(7) Disorientation does not imply naivete; in equal measure it creates suspicion. Fox's writings also have enabled the critique of the unitary view to become well-rehearsed if not universally embraced.(8) Marriott further makes the point that such exercises are futile unless the representatives of the organisation intend to live up to the expectations they seek to create:

> 'Where a man is unlikely ever to see, let alone speak with a director or senior executive for the rest of his working career, the brief glimpse of one on his first day at work is likely to have less impact or relevance than the sight of a giraffe on a day trip to the zoo.'(9)

Expectations

Few of the professional writers develop their conceptualisation of induction beyond the paternalistic framework of settling in to the team. The question of expectations, whether unrealistic or simply unmet, is considered by those theorists who have been concerned with the unmistakable evidence of the failure of induction, that of turnover. This group subdivides into those amongst whom

> 'voluntary turnover among newcomers is attributed to unrealistic or inflated expectations that individuals bring as they enter organizations.'(10)

and those amongst whom

> 'turnover is attributed to differences between newcomers' expectations and early job experiences, called unmet expectations.'(11)

The first group attribute the unrealistic expectations to misleading recruitment practices as well as to individual cognitive processes. The commonly espoused remedy would seem to be the

adoption of greater realism in the description and preview of jobs in the pre-entry phase. The second group conceptualises unmet expectations as initial expectations or needs which are not unrealistic, but fail to be met in actual on-the-job experience. The key effect is that of the 'broken promise'. The remedy usually adopted here lies in the better management of the immediate post-entry phase, developing the psychological contract between supervisor and newcomer to match jobs and expectations.(12) However the possibility that unrealistic or unmet expectations may be an inevitable part of the entry process is not considered.

Louis considers the merits of both approaches:

> 'Fundamentally, both approaches to turnover are based on an assumption of rationality. It is assumed that newcomers are rational beings who enter unfamiliar organizational settings with preformed conscious expectations about their new jobs and organizations, which, if met, lead to satisfaction and, if unmet, lead to voluntary turnover...Since it is not yet clear that rational pre-entry expectations are the key feature in newcomers' experiences, we need to identify other elements in the entry experience, in addition to clarifying how turnover is being interpreted...how do newcomers cope with early job experiences? How do they come to understand, interpret, and respond in and to unfamiliar organizational settings?'(13)

Socialisation

These questions have remained unformulated by the psychologically-based turnover theorists, but have assumed some relevance for the sociologically-orientated socialisation theorists. This perspective has four main themes. The first is that of the 'characteristics of socialisation', which concentrates largely on providing a rich picture of the experience of entering a new organisational setting, and coming to appreciate the values, abilities, expected behaviours and social knowledge essential for taking up an organisational role. The characteristic disorientation and sensory overload has been described as 'reality shock'(14): at the moment of entry time and space become problematic and there is no way to achieve gradual exposure or to recognise cues. They remain this way until 'maps' of time and space can be constructed for the setting.(15)

The second theme concerns the stages of socialisation. The recruit begins whilst outside the organisation to indulge in anticipatory socialization, based on hearsay, friendly relations, aspirations etc. Once within the organisation, the encounter stage begins to shape the individual's orientation as differences in expectations and actuality are revealed, maps are developed and 'the ropes' are learned. Adaptation occurs, more as an achieved state than a stage, when the 'newcomer' becomes an 'insider'.

> 'Newcomers become insiders when and as they are given broad responsibilities and autonomy, entrusted with 'privileged' information, included in informal networks, encouraged to represent the organization, and sought out for advice and counsel by others.'(16)

Louis observes that little attention is paid by those who adopt this perspective to leaving old roles, unfreezing, or moving away and letting go as important factors in taking on new roles.(17)

Thethird theme focusses on the 'content of socialisation' in terms of role-related learning and cultural learning. Whilst the first is well documented and its necessity widely acknowledged(18), the second, as has been suggested is poorly recognised and even then is problematic. Louis in pointing this out falls prey to a semiotic definition of culture.

> 'In the semiotic view, culture consists, as Geertz has written, '...of socially established structures of meaning in terms of which people do such things as signal conspiracies and join them...' More particularly: it denotes an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about and attitudes towards life.'(19)

Whilst appreciating that this in recognising the importance of background assumptions and values in establishing and upholding meaning is a significant development, it should not be made at the cost of too rigid a codification of symbolism as the semiotic voyeurs of culture tend to promote. Louis mentions the need to

acquire appropriate definitions of the situation; interpretative schemes; and a situational map which is consonant with the maps which insiders carry in their heads. However she says, the processes by which these schemes are acquired have not been adequately explored.(20)

Schutz and the Stranger

Louis indicates that work on the phenomenology of the stranger, following Schutz(21), could provide a fertile starting point in efforts to understand these processes. Marriott, in a paper predating Louis by some six years, had already made a significant attempt to relate Schutz's work to that of personnel managers.(22)

Schutz informs us that

> 'The actor within the social world, experiences it primarily as a field of his actual and possible acts and only secondarily as an object of his thinking. In so far as he is interested in knowledge of his social world, he organizes this knowledge not in terms of a scientific system but in terms of relevance to his actions.'(23)

He thus singles out items of knowledge in terms of their relevance to his present and future actions. What he seeks is knowledge of the world, 'graduated' in terms of this relevance. His knowledge of the world is thus not homogeneous: it is incoherent (because the interests which determine it are not integrated into a coherent system); it is only partially clear (because he is not interested in the depth and clarity of his knowledge as long as it works for all practical purposes); and it is not at all free from contradictions (as it is determined and formed as a result of a number of different roles which may pose contradictory demands). As Marriott says

> 'This does not mean, however, that he is illogical, but it serves to demonstrate that the logic upon which he and all of us operate is not an objective reality but a system formed out of subjective attempts to objectify the world - his world.'(24)

The system of knowledge thus acquired with all its incoherence, inconsistency, and partial clarity takes on for individuals as individuals and as members of social groups, the appearance of sufficient coherence, clarity and consistency to give anybody a reasonable chance of being understood within their own social world. It provides recipes which act as a basis for action, on the one hand, and schemes for interpreting action on the other. It establishes 'thinking as usual'(25) which 'substitutes the self-explanatory for the questionable' and enables life to go on.

Marriott applies Schutz's thinking, and his later exposition of the responses of the stranger to a new group, to organisational induction practices. He criticises them for their failure to provide relevant, practical information; their attempts to overload the individual with information; the lack of a graduated policy of imparting knowledge; and a failure to involve members of the group in imparting this knowledge.

Marriott's approach is a significant contribution to the induction literature, intellectually and practically. The main problem is that it defines induction with regard to relevance to the employees needs (job-related and group-related) and essentiality for the employees legal welfare (establishing rights and duties). In rejecting the simplistic 'professional' approach to ideology, Marriott fails to acknowledge that more subtle processes might in fact be at work, and that the induction process might yet be not only a struggle on the part of the individual to achieve coherence, but also on the part of other groups and bodies to assert influence and establish control in terms of the definitions of the situation and interpretative schemes which he/she will adopt.

The fourth theme which can be identified in socialisation literature relates in part to Marriott's work in focussing on characteristics of socialisation practices. The main priority of those working in this area has been to study the effects of different ways of structuring the socialisation setting. Formal vs. informal, individual vs. collective, serial vs. disjunctive, sequential vs. variable, fixed vs. variable and investiture vs.

divesture were studied by Van Maanen and Schein(26), but their choice of these dimensions for study was given no theoretical basis. In fact, no theoretical framework has yet been proposed to guide or justify the choice of particular tactical dimensions of the structuring of socialisation, either in order to study or to apply.

Sense-Making

Louis herself attempts to suggest a perspective which will combine the psychological focus on expectations of the turnover theorists and the role and cultural insights of the socialisation theorists in developing a model of sense-making (see Figure 5).

Change represents publicly knowable aspects of the new situation differing from the old - which could include job title, salary, office accommodation, location etc. It comprises the 'objective' aspects of difference, as opposed to contrast, which is person-specific, and not knowable in advance. The gestalt effect of the emergence of 'figures' from a background corresponds to this experience and is party conditioned by past experience, especially 'letting-go' of old roles.(27) It is suggested that there may be a limit to the number of contrasts that an individual can attend to simultaneously. Surprise includes affective reactions to contrasts and changes, and the difference between anticipations and experiences. Anticipations may focus on the job, the organisation, or the self; they may be emergent, tacit or conscious, and may be under-met or over-met. The five forms of surprise which Louis identifies are:

i) when conscious expectations about the job are not fulfilled;
ii) when expectations (conscious and unconscious) about the self are unmet (e.g. inability to cope with responsibility or autonomy);
iii) when unconscious job expectations are unmet, or job features are unanticipated (eg. sharing facilities, lack of a view);
iv) when difficulties arise in accurately forecasting internal reactions to a particular new experience (e.g. long hours

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Figure 5 Sense making in organizational entry. (Louis.)

sapping creativity);

v) when cultural assumptions (as applied to previous settings) prove inappropriate.

> '...a newcomer assumes that he knows what the organization is about, assumes others in the setting have the same idea, and practically never bothers to check out these two assumptions. What occurs upon experience is that the neophyte receives a surprise of sorts...in which he discovers that significant others...do not share his assumptions. The newcomer must then reorient himself relative to others...through a cognitive revision of his previously taken-for-granted assumptions.'(28)

It should be noted that the newcomer may experience this as a profound change. He may be a pragmatist, as Schutz suggests, but he does not usually realise this. Thus the surprise may be more than simply finding that one situation does not compare with another, and creating a new situational definition; it may well be the discovery that one situation falls outside the boundaries of knowledge that had previously been regarded as absolute, and requires a fundamental revision to the system of knowledge, insofar as it exists. The reasons why such versions may be difficult to dislodge is more than simply force of habit and practical relevance, as Schutz suggests. Forces which have caused the preferment of various definitions of the situation and forms of accounting for the world, power structures and ideological positions will affect the way the individual constitutes and recognises knowledge. Thus the individual in the new situation may not even recognise information which is practically relevant to his immediate job or interactional needs, as his personal 'need' may be to sustain the version of the world and the way of interpreting it with which he has lived for so long.

Louis does not make this part of her otherwise laudable argument on sense-making. Normal situations, she argues, are coped with in a 'loosely preprogrammed, nonconscious way'(29) guided by cognitive scripts or schema. When the expected outcome provided for by the script does not occur 'cognitive consistency' is threatened and 'accounts' are introduced to explain or justify the discrepancy and restore equilibrium. Past experiences, others' interpretations, general personal characteristics, and cultural assumptions or

interpretative schemes contribute to the process of making sense and attributing meaning to anomalies and surprises. The importance of insiders who know what to expect, possess a background history of the setting, and are familiar with local interpretative schemes can be considerable in facilitating this process.

Ultimately, Louis, like Marriott, suggests a model for induction which emphasises relevance and the gradual provision of information, recognises the inevitability of surprise and involves organisational members in various ways in facilitating newcomers sense-making. Although a much more sophisticated view of the induction process is developed in both these writers than in the 'professional' literature, and much of the psychological and sociological literature, some fundamental questions are avoided. The transmission of culture is implicitly (in Marriott) or explicitly (in Louis) viewed on the semiotic model, as a communication of meaning or meaning-systems. Their focus is on the reception process and the adjustment of the individual to the host culture, rather than on the nature of culture itself. Where do 'cultures' and 'interpretative' schemes come from? Are they simply the product of rational pragmatism and habit? Do they have any material basis? How are they sustained in the face of alternatives? These are questions which do not occur in any of the above literature. Louis, referring to Van Maanen, comes close to posing one of these questions in observing that newcomers 'are usually unaware of <u>both</u> their need to understand context-specific meaning dictionaries, or interpretation schemes, and the fact that they are unfamiliar with them.'(30)

Discursive Subject-Positions

Disregarding the improbable concept of 'meaning dictionaries', this is still a curious situation for an individual who cares not for coherence, clarity nor contradiction but is dominated by the perspectives of practicality and relevance. Nor is 'sufficiency' the answer, as it would be banal to suggest that what is sufficient in one situation is likely to be insufficient in another. Individuals do question, examine, poeticise, philosophise,

rationalise, postulate, play and investigate as part of their everyday lives without being forced by circumstance to do it. Why then should they remain unaware that they need to understand new rules and new ways of making sense in new contexts? One possible further avenue of investigation would be to explore the further dimension of the 'moral burden' of the culture. That is to say, cultural forms and transmissions are not simply presented as pragmatic and practical means to successful accommodation within a group. They are presented and received in many ways as naturalised, the right or the natural or the best way to proceed. This is not simply a result of a lack of questioning by the individual, a cumulation of taken-for-granteds, but is consciously or unconsciously structured in such a way by the presenters as a response to the material conditions of existence. This presented perspective may be 'official' organisational culture; that of one of its 'professional' variants; that of an organised oppositional group; that of a negotiated and largely pragmatic culture; or that of a completely deviant culture. The number of symbolic and literal resistances and refusals, and the variety of organisational oppositional and accommodationalsubcultures would suggest that individuals would be well aware of the need to adjust between organisations, as they often find themselves involved in similar adjustments within them. To the extent that they do not, we must look for them to have naturalised one of the various presenting cultures to some extent, and to the extent that one such culture tends to be habitually naturalised and preferred it could be regarded as dominant-hegemonic. Our interest must then be in how such a culture comes to be dominant-hegemonic.

At this point I would like to develop a model of the possible subject-positions which may be offered to the newcomer in a variety of induction discourses. The newcomer will be bombarded by a number of discourses from a number of sources: from the organisation through official recruitment literature, from friends and acquaintances, from the recruitment officer, from supervisors, from managers, from colleagues, and even from the architecture of the establishment. These discourses will be discrete sets of statements, knowledges, and modes with a specific structure of knowing, but in any one utterance a number of discourses may

overlap. The structure of the discourse will derive from a set of relationships which have both discursive and extra-discursive forms and effects. The discursive effects will be to constitute:

i) the author (or speaker) of the discourse, as a position rather than a person.
ii) the reader (or hearer) of the discourse, similarly.
iii) the object of the discourse, i.e. what it does, what it seeks to establish, deny, justify, etc.
iv) the Other of the discourse i.e. the opposition, albeit silent, which makes the object (justification, negation, presentation) necessary. The potential alternative.
v) the Imaginary of the discourse, i.e. the image of the world which the discourse seeks to establish as unitary and natural (as its ideology). The discourse cannot attempt to legitimate or propagate its imaginary version of the world without recognising the Other, the alternative, the potential or actual opposition, which makes this exercise necessary.(31)

It should be remembered that authors and speakers only have limited control over connotation and the symbolic appropriation of their utterances. Thus although they seek to extend this control as far as possible, they can never escape the possibility that their justifications might be appropriated by the Other, the Opposition. In any discourse, we can picture the Imaginary grounding of the discourse from which the Author speaks, appearing to attempt to appropriate the Subject in the face of the opposition of the Other. Taking an example of an induction discourse we can identify the following hypothetical imaginary positions. The Organisation, officially through its literature, its films, tapes, slides and scripts, will attempt to present its history, its past and future in such a way as to establish a paradigmatic mode of interpretation for them.(32) It will attempt to define the situation, to pre-empt problems like discipline or safety by establishing a manner of their posing.(33) It will attempt to present this version as natural and logical, and legitimate, always subject to its own contradictions in denying oppositional legitimacy, yet recognising it by the necessity for its discourse. The presenter of the discourse may not position himself entirely within the authorial

position offered by the organisational text. He may choose to comment on the situation with the mediated perspective of the manager or professional who acts practically in the real world, and is able to view the organisational-imaginary with irony, technically and practically, eccentrically but from within. In many organisations the Other has a physical presence in the induction process, through its official recognition as Opposition in the Trade Union, Combine, or other Employee Association. In many cases, this Official Other is accommodated by the organisational-imaginary,and there may also be a Deviant Other implicit. In many cases, the subject-position of deviant other is clearly delineated and attacked by the official presentation (by lists of offences, penalties, condemnation of past offenders, warnings for the future etc and could comprise a range including thieves, drunks, saboteurs, political extremists and symbolic marxists). There is also room for an ironist position to be taken to the official opposition. This may be presented via senior employees or peers taking part in the process, or it may be left to the employee to simply remain sceptical. The employee may then assume, with a practical interest, a position which negotiates between the various other positions, all of which are available to him. The four positions will each characteristically link to a scheme of interpretation, a code, and will relate to the hypothetical codes which Hall suggests as modes of decoding televisual discourse, i.e. dominant-hegemonic, professional negotiated, and oppositional.(34) Diagrammatically this hypothetical situation could be represented as shown in Figure 6.

Textures of Meaning

Before looking at examples of each position in practice, it is useful to consider how they might be presented through rhetoric. Following Gowler and Legge rhetoric is narrowly defined here as

'the use of language to

(a) justify and legitimize actual or potential power and exchange relationships;

(b) eliminate actual or potential challenges to existing

power and exchange relationships,

and, at a deeper level,

(c) express those contradictions in power and exchange reltionships that cannot be openly admitted or, in many cases, resolved.'(35)

Gowler and Legge identify a reciprocal relationship between the linguistic determinants of categorisation and the social determinants of the process. Linguistically and socially meanings can be clear and differentiated (that is to say brought into the foreground of our knowledge and usually well understood) or unclear, inconsistent and undifferentiated (pushed into the background of knowledge and poorly understood).

> 'When the background of assumptions upholds what is verbally explicit, meanings come across loud and clear. Through these implicit channels of meaning, human society itself is achieved, clarity and speed of clue-leading ensured. In the elusive exchange between explicit and implicit meanings a perceived-to-be-regular universe establishes itself precariously, shifts, topples and sets itself up again.' (36)

The interaction of the social and the linguistic gives rise to four textures of meaning: contrast, synthesis, negation and abomination. The differentiated textures of contrast and negation represent digital communication, functioning by means of sharp distinctions in the former case, suppression or denial in the latter. Meaning is on/off, either/or. In the case of synthesis and abomination, analog communication is represented, by ambiguities which in the first case blur the boundaries of digital communication and secondly fill in the gaps which it leaves. Multiple meanings, ambiguous words, phrases and symbols are deliberately used to 'lubricate' communication, to bend, deflect and conflate meaning on a more/less dimension (see Figure 7).

Gowler and Legge identify three functions of rhetorics (any of which may stand alone):

i) Attributions made by leaders in conditions of extreme uncertainty (contrast, synthesis, shading into negation but

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Figure 7. The process of categorization and the double discrimination of meaning (Gowler and Legge).

mainly foreground)

ii) Cautionary tales used to socialise new personnel (contrast, synthesis, negation)

iii) Myths that permit the statement of 'what would be difficult to admit openly and yet what is patently clear to all and sundry that the ideal is not attainable.'(37)

Through culturally determined devices such as accounts, jokes and songs, the realisation of pressures and tensions is both achieved and contained. Through analysis of these accounts, jokes and songs, Gowler and Legge suggest that it is possible to comprehend the

> 'semantic structure of 'lived episodes', and thereby to construct a picture of how people mutually construct their interpretations and performances of everyday life.'(38)

The functioning of these rhetorics is therefore a significant factor in the creation of subject positions. It is worth adding here that synthesis, which provides the material for justifications plays a large part in the induction discourse, but in a slightly different manner to that normally presented as justification as in the work of Lyman and Scott on accounts.

> 'An account is a linguistic device employed whenever an action is subjected to valuative enquiry. Such devices are a crucial element in the social order since they prevent conflicts from arising by verbally bridging the gap betwen action and expectation. Moreover, accounts are 'situated' according to the statuses of the interactants, and are standardised within cultures so that certain accounts are terminologically stabilised and routinely expected when anactivity falls outside the domain of expectations.'(39)

Generally, induction discourse will follow the pattern of an 'explanation', which Lyman and Scott differentiate from an account. But as there is always the implication of the Other, and the opposition's valuative enquiry, the discourse will always in some part possess the quality of an account. Also, in its presentation, it will attempt to account for its history and its present, and to account for its existence, its necessity, which implies coping with its own contradictions. It will also be

concerned with setting the pattern and parameters for future occasions when accounts may be necessary. Lyman and Scott divide accounts into excuses (accidents, defeasibility, biological drives and scapegoating); and justifications (denial of injury, friction, condemnnation of the condemners, appeal to loyalties, sad tales, and self-fulfilment). Accounts may be avoided by mystification, referral or identity-switching; presented in a variety of styles (intimate, casual, consultative, formal or frozen); and, especially from the point of view of the Other, may not be honoured for reasons of illegitimacy or unreasonableness. Some of these dimensions will be drawn upon in the induction discourse, examples of which will now be presented.

The Organisational-Imaginary Position

The object of the discourse is to make the past and present of the organisation seem natural, and natural history. Thus much of the company promotional literature will use images which support this. A tape-slide programme prepared for the Granada Organisation, for new employees, went to great lengths to emphasise the natural development of the company, its growth over the years into what had always been its mission, to be a leader of the leisure industry. That its 'natural' growth had over the years involved it in some socially controversial issues i.e. the conversion of theatres to cinemas, then to bingo clubs and bowling alleys was allowed to pass unremarked. Similarly that the culmination of its natural growth had produced interests including T.V. transmission, sale and rental; book and music publishing; computing services; property owning, leasing and development; international insurance; motorway services, motels and fast food was not seen as a contradiction.

Associated natural images involving the human body (birth, maturity etc); action (fighting, sports, competition, movement); and possibly water (floating, storms) might be commonly invoked to support traditional unitary themes (one team, one leader, one body of interest, one rationality); to stress the need for aggression and dynamism in competition (although this dilutes to the

requirement for placidity and hard-work in the employee); and to blame the hostile environment (the recession, international trade) for anything that has gone or may go wrong.(40)

All new employees of E.L.S. Amalgamated were given a copy of the Staff Handbook, which began with an address from the General Manager. Part of this address is presented below with comments after each paragraph.

> 'I am delighted to have the opportunity to welcome you to E.L.S. Amalgamated and to this Factory. I hope that you will find working with us both interesting and rewarding.'

The manager begins with a statement of paternalism, welcoming the newcomer into the family. 'I'm sure we'll get along fine' might be an appropriate phrase in a different situation, although a similar emotional context. On the surface, a positive and encouraging opening.

There are some questions which could be raised. Why does the General Manager, who creates opportunities for others, find it remarkable that he has the opportunity to welcome newcomers into his factory? It is implied that the G.M. is so busy, and the world is so demanding, that these opportunities are rare, and are <u>beyond his control</u>. When they do arrive, they are such as to fill him, not with pleasure, but with <u>delight</u>. Thus there is a contradiction between the cosy paternalism of the welcome and its apparent rarity, which is all the more pointed by the fact that the opportunity <u>is</u> only symbolic, for the G.M.'s body is elsewhere at the time of induction, presumably struggling with the elements he can't control.

There is a second contradiction in the next sentence. He 'hopes' the newcomer will find the work 'interesting and rewarding'. A casual conversation with an insider, and certainly first-hand experience of the work, would confirm that although the place itself may not be without interest, virtually all the jobs and certainly all those a newcomer was likely to be given were poorly paid, physically taxing and plagued with boredom. The G.M. if not

exactly raising false expectations, is being unrealistic. But he has left an escape route, as he only hopes that this would be the case. If the newcomer doesn't find the work interesting and rewarding then his only recourse is to make his own adjustment to the situation - the organisation is committed to nothing more than hope, and material help is not offered. It is also worth noticing that there is a hint of team spirit and effort implied in the phrase 'working with us', despite the contradictory effect of the rest of the argument.

> 'We are justifiably proud of our company. As a manufacturer we have a high reputation established over many years of consistent attention to quality and efficiency. As an employer, we value our record of good relationships with those who work with us.'

The shift from the first person singular to the plural in the second sentence continues. Who is speaking? 'I' is now the head, the one voice of the 'us', the unitary team. 'We are justifiably proud'. Not only are we self-satisfied, but we are rightly so. And why are we rightly satisfied? Because we can justify our satisfaction. The G.M. goes on to assert the method by which comes truth and hence justice.

> 'Knowingness is the product of the method of being absolutey thorough; the attempt is...to furnish an image of completeness which can serve to celebrate the image of authority. Thus the penchant for detail, the breadth and depth...'(41)

Thus the reputation established 'over many years'; by 'consistent attention'. 'Efficiency' and 'quality' are presented not as imponderables; the linking of the two stresses the measurability, rationality, and quantitative properties of each. Quality, in turn, paradoxically transmits a 'moral burden' to 'efficiency'. Even in the difficult to measure area of relationships, the reputation is proved by the 'record' - implying that somewhere the documentation and figures exist to support what is being asserted wanting only the correct application of method to reveal them. The flavour of positivism, of rational-empiricism with its assertions of impartiality and objectivity thinly masking an act of faith in

the 'truth' of its 'findings' is strong in this paragraph. It is also the basis of many other justifications in industrial life, from the introduction of new technology to redundancy. In fact in these paragraphs we have been introduced to a world which is firstly demanding and out of control, a hostile environment with which we struggle; and secondly the place where truth is found, where diligent attention and scrutiny can provide the justificaton for our endeavours. We can clearly see the contradictions beneath the G.M.'s synthesis.

> 'We are the biggest manufacturer of packaged cake in the United Kingdom and have an important responsibility both to our customers in the trade and to our consumers, to ensure that the quality and the freshness of our products are the best possible.
>
> You have an important part to play in helping us to meet these responsibilities. We wish to give you every encouragement to play that part.'

As the previous paragraph reiterates the team message that people work with us not for us, this one takes up this theme and a variation on the positivist theme of the previous paragraph, that of breadth or number. 'We are the biggest'. There is also the associated image of growth, and evolution in the survival of the fittest. This is a form of accounting for history: if we are now biggest, we must be best, we were right all along, what we are doing is natural. The implied rectitude and satisfaction does, however, carry its burden: the 'important responsibility' to our customers. There is a circularity to this: as we are the biggest (i.e. we sell more) we have a greater responsibility to our customers. Why? In order to sell more and remain the biggest. Throughout these paragraphs the profit motive and the question of ownership and control has been so neatly skirted as to make it conspicuous by its absence. The introduction of the moral duty, which the newcomer will be 'encouraged' but not coerced to discharge is a further attempt to resolve contradictions.

In the context of the Bakery, the newcomer, or even the insider, could contribute little to maintaining quality and nothing to maintaining freshness - other than follow instructions in mixing

and setting machines and packing fast enough to keep the 'line' running. The creative limits of his or her role were heavily circumscribed, although as I demonstrate in Chapter Nine, quality and freshness could be negatively affected by acts of sabotage in excess of these limits. The ultimate message from the G.M. was therefore that the newcomer had a moral duty to follow instructions and work hard.

There is more of the address but the broad issues and the manner of their presentation have already been noted. It should be remarked that the arguments we have analysed are rarely uncovered during the induction process - they are taken up with varying levels of enthusiasm from acceptance to scepticism, but are rarely if ever exposed. It is not unreasonable to expect that they are, to some degree, effective. The ways in which this effectiveness is constituted are characteristically addressed from the following position.

The Managerial/Professional Position

This position might be taken up by the Personnel Officer handling the formal induction by passing comment on the Organisational-Imaginary position from a technical point of view. The basic implications of this are that the professional knows the shortcomings of the material he is working with, and knows all the practical loopholes and flaws in the organisational setting. For example, I was inducted by a Personnel Officer who remarked:

> 'I know you'll probably find there are jobs on a higher grade than you doing less work. I can only say that jobs are graded on responsibility as well as work. We all went into job evaluation with our own ideas, the union wanted some upgrades, we wanted some others, line management, the whole lot... everybody's views were balanced out...it couldn't suit everybody but a lot of work went into it and its as near to being fair as you'll get.'

This was quite a shock to many who thought that job evaluation was supposed to be 'objective' and were surprised to hear it openly acknowledged as 'horse-trading'. The P.O. was attempting to short-circuit criticism and further promote the Organisational-Imaginary,

but in this case his efforts prompted some unease. Later in the session, he made comnments on some of the disciplinary offences:

> Drinking: 'You can't come to work if you've been drinking because we'll know, and you'll be sent home.' (In fact, a high proportion of night staff drank in the pub next to the factory before shift, as did some day-shifters at lunchtime, and few were ever remarked upon. I myself worked more than one shift whilst drunk).
>
> Sleeping: 'All I can say is that if you can find a place where you can sleep in this factory, then tell me. I've looked all over and I can't find any.' (At least two places, sometimes three, were regularly possible, and two others occasionally).'

Despite the ultimate failure of professional omniscience in this case, at the time it was again taken at face value. However it is not the content which is important but the position assumed by the presenter. The newcomer is invited to accept the superiority of the mediated Organisational-Imaginary in professional terms as being inescapably effective <u>in practice</u>. He may also be invited, or may decide, to participate, in technical questions either regarding disciplinary matters, penalties or procedures, and other substantive issues or in terms of the presentation itself (criticising unrealistic films, poor acting, vague argument etc.). In either case, he may forego direct criticism of the Organisational-Imaginary in ideological terms, but participate in its mediation on a technical practical level, and thus in leaving its deep structure untouched, support it.

The Union/Employee Association Position

This is often known only by omission or by oblique reference in the formal presentation, but in some cases the official employee opposition may be given part of that presentation to itself. Across organisations a wide range of attitudes are possible, but usually there is some form of <u>organised</u> opposition, which may or may not be recognised by the organisation itself. This position then, is one in which the employee opposes but seeks to influence the processes of decision-making through formal channels, and often

in recognising this opposition the organisation is able to accommodate it as part of the Organisational-Imaginary by predetermining the language and channels of protest and so limiting its effect.(42)

The extent of the Union presentation (there were a number of Unions but on this occasion only one was involved) in our E.L.S. Amalgamated example consisted of a brief address by the Secretary of the Combined Shop Stewards Committee which began:

> 'I suppose he's (Personnel Officer) been telling you how great it is here, has he? You'll find out, you'll find out. If you come to this table one at a time, we'll give you your Union cards.'

Ironically, the Personnel Officer had not been telling us how great it was (he had been fixing the projector - see professional code) but the cryptic statement by the Shop Steward seemed to carry enormous authority. It was as though many of the audience had been groping for the opposition and had been unable to locate it until he spoke.

Any implied slight upon the Union by the organisation is often tempered by the consideration of the greater evil - that of the deviant opposition. This may be more or less organised in the case of political extremists, luddites or similar, or it may be purely a result of individual pathology. Whatever is the case, the consequences and penalties for deviant behaviour are spelled out clearly in the presentation. Some myth making is often indulged in by the presenter, in the form of tales with the message 'We always get our man'. These often involve particularly devious or nasty acts against one's fellows and may be of current importance. One case was the example of a worker who had borrowed his workmate's locker key to fetch some equipment, had taken an impression of his house key whilst in possession of the key-ring, had obtained a duplicate and had burgled his house a few days later. This example was made even more powerful by the fact that the worker, a nervous type, had been experiencing a number of personal difficulties, and the burglary precipitated an attack of alopoecia. He could thus be

seen as a living testimony to the perfidy of the deviant, and a constant reminder to the honest to be vigilant.

Some contradictions may be found in the overal presentation, which shifts its ground somewhat. Although in examples like the foregoing the newcomer is apostrophised as typically honest, needing only a reminder to be vigilant, the question is raised as to where the deviants come from. If they are deviant on induction, then it is likely that some of any body of newcomers are already or potentially deviant, which does little to develop the recruits confidence in the organisation or the procedure which has selected him alongside these deviants. The other implication is that deviance is a result of experiences after induction, which likewise subverts the organisation's stance. The myth itself expresses a contradiction in control: the organisation cannot 'always get its man' or there would be no need for the myth, and no deviance problem.

The length of time spent on delineating disciplinary offences and methods of safe working (which many newcomers regard as common-sense) is far greater than that required to justify its presentation as a 'reminder', or as necessary information. What can occur is that not only does the newcomer feel in some way classed as potentially unruly, insurgent, criminal or incompetent, by the suspicious organisation, but in circumscribing that position the organisation points it out and makes it available as a mode of response to organisational dissatisfaction. The newcomer is implicitly invited (though explicitly forbidden) to take up the subject-position of deviant. This is a disturbing side-effect of the discourse from the organisational <u>and</u> the organised oppositional perspective.

The Employee Position

The employee position typically corresponds to the managerial/professional position in standing in an ironic relationship to the organised opposition. This may begin for the newcomer simply in suspicion, possibly grounded in past experience, and may be supported by peer observations or attributions as to the

real motives of 'Union men':

> 'That Derek Ball's just after what he can get for himself. I've never seen him with a sweat on.'
>
> 'All John wants to do is get on in the Union. He's not interested in E.L.S. Amalgamated or the workers. He's read a bit of Lenin and that's it, we can go play with ourselves.'
>
> 'They'll call us out on strike any time they like. They don't lose. Union pays their wages.' (This was a commonly expressed view. It was totally without foundation).

However, the most commonly adopted variant of this position assumes an ironic perspective toward each of the other three positions, taking each on in part and negotiating between them. It is in the adoption of this position and its subsequent modification that undifferentiated meaning and ambiguity becomes even more important than we have already seen it to be, as various positions and codes compete against each other. As the newcomer learns the culture of the insider, he will develop into his own negotiated position in relation to the other positions. This is not to suggest that this position is entirely individual or entirely social: it is ultimately a combination of both. But it is in the area of learning the ropes, acquiring interpretative schemes in a largely informal manner that this position is developed.

On the Family Pie line at E.L.S. Amalgamated, the operators of the fruit and dough preparation and mixing machines were noticeably treated with greater respect and accorded greater prestige than other workers on their own plants, and operators on other plants. The evidence was, on the surface, small but significant. They always took longer meal-breaks than other lines (15 mins extra each break), they talked a great deal whilst working, their jobs carried a higher grade, and they were regularly seen in the toilets (where most of the smoking and 'twagging' occurred). Their supervisors would even speak respectfully to them when they found them in the toilets (others would get bawled out):

(The accounts which follow are reconstructed from memory and notes made at the first convenient moment after the event. Short quotes

are verbatim, but longer ones were usually reconstructed after the shift in which they occurred from notes made at break times during the shift. On these occasions, accounts were reconstructed around a core of verbatim notes and care was taken to preserve the overall structure of the account and its sense and impact in context.)

> Supervisor: 'No hurry, lads, when you've finished yer fags, I wondered if you could bag up that waste on No. 3 just before yer go...it'll only take about ten minutes...'
>
> Operators: 'Awright, Harry'.
>
> Supervisor: 'Thanks lads, no hurry...don't rush.'(A)

As a trainee operator, I was familiarised with how to conduct myself.

> 'If you want to know anything, ask one of us. The supervisors know fuck-all but they'll try to make you think they know it all. We didn't get where we are today without a fight, but we run the plant smoothly, take a lot of work off them, a lot, and we keep the waste levels down to the lowest in the factory. So we reckon we deserve that bit extra...and we get it.
>
> Always get your job done right...we rely on the fact that we're good at the job and we can get in front...so we'll go for a smoke or a kip. Always leave the job O.K. and always make sure somebody knows where you are, whether you've gone for a smoke, a kip, a walk, a shit, a fuck or stealing cake.
>
> Don't fuck the job up...it's a long way up these stairs but it's longer back down. Every so often they'll come up and start to put on you...you've got to take it a bit but if it gets too much we'll stick by you and support you.
>
> We had a new supervisor on one day from another plant. She started laying the law down straight away, started giving us warnings over break-times. Well, you know how dodgy that dough-machine is...how you can't follow the specificatons 'cos it's always trial and error...well big Pete took a day off and the rest of us decided not to co-operate and the fucking thing was a shambles...waste went up a thousand per cent. That reminded them they needed us...they came and apologised.

That Tam gets a bit big for his boots sometimes...him and Harry like to wait till the last half hour then give you loads of silly little fucking jobs to do...looks good for the day-shift...still if it keeps them off our backs the rest of the time...'(B)

Despite the smooth running, free-speaking relationship with the supervisors (who if they needed you would discreetly send someone to find you rather than have to confront you sleeping in the cooler or on the toilet) there were problems.

'Robin Smith (the manager)...he's just knocked off our usual overtime on days, you know, cleaning down. Well, I mean, we can see his point...its better for him to have low-grade cleaners on a twilight shift than top-grade operators on time and a half doing cleaning...but we'd been working it two or three days a week and he just knocked it off.

We was up in the office and I said, 'Robin, we've got used to the money, we've got families and everything. You can't just hit us like that.' And he says...'I can't, can't I? In this place I can do what I bloody well like!'

That's what we're up against right now. He does need us but he's got us on this one...for the moment. So if you're asked to work overtime, check with us first. You never know.'(C)

The contradiction between the apparently rational grounds for cutting overtme and the punitive and emotional way it was being handled were obviously well understood by the operators. Nevertheless, they were still able to 'blur the edges' of Robin's 'I can do what I bloody well like' and retain sufficient freedom and autonomy to enable them to survive much as they had done. But they were bitter, and vigilant, and by no means complacent.

Their sensitivity was revealed in a number of ways. On the night shift, one particular line in a different department only ran for two nights, and as it needed extra personnel to run it, and it was a hard night's work, the younger operators and students took it in rotation. The supervisor on that plant was not of the same material as the Family Pie supervisors. Eddie had just returned from a night's duty:

'I was sitting on the belt talking to Phillipsy (regular

operator on this line) and he says 'Ayup, gerroff belt he's coming'. Well, there weren't nowt to do so I says, 'Who's he?' He says, 'It's Dave Millington, he's No. 1 man on both these lines...Senior Supervisor. Don't let him see thee doing nowt.'

Well he came up and says to me, just like that 'Get some of those racks pulled up.' I were astounded. I says 'Who do you think you're talking to?' but he just said 'This is my line, and I'm the boss. I want some racks pulling up'. I said 'You've only to ask in a proper manner'.

(One of the operators hearing his tale said 'Did you tell him? Did you tell him you were a Family Pie man? They can't talk to Family Pie men like that').(D)

Despite their cohesiveness in the face of other groups, there was a sort of hierarchy within the operator culture. Every break time, a card school gambling for pennies (but nevertheless strictly against company rules) took place prominently situated on one of two regular tables in the canteen. Big Pete was the keeper of the cards and the centre of the school. On one occasion a newcomer sat in the chair diagonally opposite the cigarette machine:

'Pete: 'Hey, that's Big Andy's chair. He always sits there.'
Newcomer: 'He doesn't fucking own it does he?'
Pete: 'No, but you might show some respect.'
(The newcomer eventually moved over when Andy arrived).'(E)

The symbolic inversion of the card game from a proscribed activity on the company's list to the central social activity was mirrored in the demand for mutual respect and dignity to be displayed within the game, where little respect was given by the company supervisors and managers in everyday working life. A further symbolic inversion was noticed by Simon, a student, who discussed the almost legendary status bestowed on Danny, the dayshift doughman.

'I've worked with him a lot, but I could never find out what made him better than the others. I didn't think he was as good as Pete. Then I asked him. He's done more time for drunk and disorderly than anyone else in the factory.'(F)

Again the proscribed activity of drinking at work, and the anathema of being <u>disorderly</u>, were elevated to a position of high status within the group. The offence itself was a fairly social one, not

associated with grievous bodily harm for example, and fitted into a culture of 'working hard and playing hard'. This aspect of the culture was not to be overstated however: although any one of two or three of the operators might go on a three-day 'bender', there was one who seemed to be unable to control his drinking sprees and was treated with consideration rather than respect. His respect came, grudgingly, from his willingness, indeed eagerness, to fight anyone who annoyed him. He was a tiny man, and lost every fight heavily, but kept on coming back for more.

> 'I don't argue with that little bastard any more', said Bob, the ex-paratrooper. 'I'm sick of seeing his blood'.(G)

A further symbolic manifestation of resistance came in the form of the soft white peaked caps which were company issue and compulsory wearing. They were folded by the operators in a particular way to improve their style, and, against company rules, their name and designation was often added, as might be emblems such as sergeant's stripes. Company policy was that employees were at their disposal; such attempts to associate individuals and positions were an assertion of both individuality and competence in the face of an authority which would use them expediently.(H)

An example of the creation of a myth occurred whilst I was working on the dough machine. The company decided that on the night-shift, operators from one of the other plants should be trained to cover the pie-plant, which was seen by the pie operators as a threat to their position. One of the operators to be trained was Phillipsy, who was regarded as a boss's man although he was also a Shop Steward. He was also felt to be something of an incompetent, as tales of him wrecking various machines in a previous job had travelled with him to the Bakery.

As a normal hazard of the job, operators would expect to be struck on the head by small pieces of dough flung by other operators. This was not common on all plants, however. Phillipsy was being shown how to operate the Artofex machine, a fruit mixer about six feet high, when Pete threw a piece of dough at Andy, who was

instructing him. Phillipsy panicked, ducked, and stunned himself via a painful blow to the nose received from the machine's stationary mixing whisk. As he fell to the ground, hilarious laughter erupted and subsequently the tale was retold. The threat to the operators was exposed in its shallowness as the boss's man revealed his incompetence: frightened of a small piece of dough, not even aimed at him, he knocked himself out. The operators elevated position, and their image of their own competence, was thus reinforced.(J)

The reinforcement of competence, and the undermining of it in other 'managerial' groups or representatives of 'authority' or 'bureaucracy' is further discussed in the context of humour in the following chapter. The observation of shortcomings in those in superior hierarchical positions is assiduously pursued, and its ironic exposure constantly reaffirms the boundaries of subcultural membership. The passage of the tale of Phillipsy's nose into folklore served to affirm the subcultural understandings of the relative merits and competencies of operators, bosses, and bosses' men on the occasions of its retelling.

The acquisition of the workplace culture is thus a symbolic process, one of acquiring familiarity with symbolic landmarks which help to organise the world from situation to situation rather than one of learning implicit or explicit rules and procedures. A common problem in E.L.S. Amalgamated was that supervisors often attempted to invoke or make explicit supposedly implicit rules governing conduct in any situation which a 'competent' member should know. The effect of this argument was usually to create confusion - when supervisors were able to make rules explicit in one situation they were often forced to contradict themselves shortly afterwards. If there was a procedure by which such supervisory interventions in the culture were interpreted, it was 'Don't argue wth him/her when he/she's in that mood', which moved the attention from the 'rational' content of the message to its affective origins.

Structural Analysis

The accounts and incidents, the occasions of inversion and bricolage could be analysed on the model of Levi-Strauss's analysis of myth in order to reveal the homologies which underlie their surface structure (see Figure 8).

The above 'reading' of the cultural materials made available in the accounts seems to produce two axes of supervisory/managerial competence and incompetence, and operator competence/incompetence If we read the homologies vertically we are given a clear picture of the operator conception of the operator culture, and the managerial culture. Compare for example, the occasions on which managerial incompetence is demonstrated (either through caprice or will to control) with those on which operator incompetence is demonstrated (e.g. through ignorance, as part of a deliberate strategy, or because he is 'one of them' anyway). It is possible to detect some coherence in form of materials which might otherwise be regarded as individual statements only valid as representative of their author's affective state or as illustrative 'meat' for data obtained on more rigorous lines. As can be seen, they are on the contrary, both the very means by and the substance of which 'culture' is constructed.

Conclusion

This chapter began with an examination of existing literature on induction, which was classified as professional, turnover and socialisation theory. The work of Marriott on the application of the work of the phenomenologist Schutz to induction, and the work of Louis on Change, Contrast, Surprise and Sense-Making were discussed. Both writers emphasise the need for relevant information to be presented gradually; both however espouse a semiotic model of culture as a communicative system and concentrate on the individual as recipient.

It was suggested that insufficient attention has been paid to how culture is constituted, and how it is presented in discourse. A model for the identification of some possible subject-positions in induction discourses, (Organisational/Imaginary, Managerial/ Professional, Union/Employee Association and Employee) and their

ACCOUNT	SUPERVISOR SHOWS COMPETENCE, RESPECT, LENIENCY	SUPERVISOR/MANAGER SHOWS INCOMPETENCE LACK OF RESPECT, EXCEEDS AUTHORITY	OPERATOR SHOWS COMPETENCE RESPECT, AUTONOMY	OPERATOR SHOWS INCOMPETENCE NO RESPECT, SUBSERVIENCE
A	Supervisor shows respect			
B		1.Supervisor knows nothing	2.Operator is competent (in front)	3.Operator "fucks job up"
		4.New supervisor exceeds authority		5.Operators withdraw cooperation
	6.Supervisors apologize			
C		1.Manager stops overtime	2.Operator asks consideration for family	
		3.Manager asserts absolute authority		
D				1.Phillips warns of supervisor's approach
		2.Supervisor delivers order disrespectfully	3.Worker asks to be addressed in proper manner	
E		1.Rule:no gambling	2.Operators gamble	3.Newcomer sits in Andy's chair
			4.Operator calls for respect	
			5.Newcomer moves	
F/G		1.Rule:no drinking or fighting	2.Operators celebrate drinkers/fighters	
H		1.Rule:no altering hats;must be worn	2.Operators alter hats	
J		1.Company tries to train other operators		2.Phillips knocks himself out

Figure 8: Structural Analysis of Induction Discourses

associated codes (Dominant-Hegemonic, Professional, Oppositional Negotiated and Deviant Oppositional) was presented. Gowler and Legge's work on the analysis of Rhetoric (which articulates subject-positions) and Lyman and Scott's analysis of accounts were presented. The positions were then analysed from their formation in examples of induction discourses, accounts, cautionary tales and myths, revealing a number of contradictions and attempts to cope with them. Finally these accounts were analysed following the structural analysis of Levi-Strauss which clearly revealed homologies in the material which corresponded in form to the presented culture.

Finally, this brief analysis suggests that the acquisition of culture and the growth of resistance is far more complex and ambiguous than the extant literature suggests, and owes less to individual processes of sense-making than to the mutual creation and articulation of cultural forms. To suggest that more work should be done in this area, in view of the criticism of the grounds of the process and its contradictions might well improve to be naive. What is necessary is that organisation theorists and sociologists should take the work that does exist far more seriously than is at present the case.

Chapter Eight: Jokers Wild: the importance of humour in the maintenance of culture

Introduction

In the previous chapter it was suggested that much of that which constitutes the 'culture' of an organisation, or its cultural plurality, may be presented, established and transmitted by forms of accounting which have usually been regarded as ephemeral by social investigators. Amongst these 'wild' forms of data are jokes and humorous responses, and in this chapter I will argue that humour is particularly important for developing the negotiated codes which articulate subcultural forms, and in providing grounds for both accommodation and resistance to them.

The chapter begins by analysing some of the previous treatments of humour, and identifies some of the main themes: humour as a play framework, humour as exploration, humour as performing a boundary-function, humour as a coping device, and humour as a characteristic quality of social structure. The idea of the 'joke in the social structure' is explored in relation to joke forms, particularly the 'canned' and 'situational' jokes, and these are illustrated by the analysis of examples of jokes and humorous comments which were current at E.L.S. Amalgamated Bakeries at the time of my research.

Finally some comments are made about the nature of humour in general, and specifically in the context of its role in exposing and overturning the structure of domination in a non-real framework. The transposition of 'non-real' expositions into a real world framework is not impossible, and will depend on the material and interactional bases of social relations which surround the exposition. The practical accomplishment of everyday living must remain possible, as must sense-making and the symbolic ordering of context. Ambiguity is an important part of this process both in real-world bargaining and symbolic reordering - it is when individuals and parties lose their capacity for redefinition, when ambiguity is lost, that conflict and resistance disappears or emerges overtly.

Humour is a complex and paradoxical phenomenon which reflects many of the difficulties which are experienced by investigators in other areas of social life. Is it, for example, a device utilised by individuals for coping with uncertainty, exploring ambiguous situations, releasing tension or distancing unpleasantness? Or does it owe its genesis to social structures, and the contradictions and paradoxes within them? If so, does it subvert these social forms, support them or accommodate them? Does it depend on a social group for its definition as humour? These are some of the questions which I will address in the opening section. I will follow this with an analysis of two forms of humour which occurred in E.L.S. Amalgamated Bakeries: the standardised (or 'canned') joke and the situational (or 'spontaneous') joke. From this analysis it will be demonstrated that humour is complex and contradictory in its relationship to organisational cultures, but in the many functions it performs and symbolic alignments it makes possible, it is an essential and important part of organisational life.

There are special problems involved in investigating humour. We take it for granted, as a natural part of life, yet much of its effect is to question this sort of ossification in other forms of activity and life. It is quite easy to become solemn about humorous phenomena, and, in becoming self-conscious about something which is usually regarded as natural and spontaneous, to witness it evaporating before our eyes.

> 'Humor becomes such an integral part of the ongoing life process that recording its occurrence forces one to an unnatural degree of self-consciousness. The self-consciousness then operates to create a different mood, and humor has gone.
>
> It is impossible to be simply spontaneous and simply thoughtful at the same time. These two states are mutually exclusive.'(1)

Humour then demands the sort of 'playfulness' in the adoption of new perspectives that I have already argued is essential for the wider investigation of social phenomena. It also demands I feel, that the investigator, or 'reader', submit himself to the

'jouissance', the pleasure of the text, which Barthes recommends to us.(2) In its constant capacity to be ironic, reflexive and deconstructive of its own formative influences, humour as a style has many characteristics to be recommended to the researcher into social life.

The work which exists on humour ranges across a number of disciplines including philosophy, psychology, anthropology and, more recently sociology, without any individual discipline as yet having developed a substantial corpus of research. In the summary which follows, I want to emphasise points of convergence between individual writers and disciplines, rather than present either a comprehensive survey or a coherent programme for the sociological study of humour. The following account is necessarily selective, but represents the major and most relevant themes traversing the study of humour.

Humour as a 'play' framework

In making a film about otters, Bateson and Kee noticed two basic phenomena in connection with their play.

> '(1) Animals are playing.
> (2) Animals are engaged in an interactive sequence of which the unit actions are similar to, but not the same as, those of certain other behaviour sequences (fighting, sexual stimulation or copulation, nursing or feeding). In other words, an observer can generally recognize that the animals are playing (not fighting). What they are doing bears a resemblance to fighting, etc. It looks like fighting whereas it really isn't fighting. The assumption can then be made that play might be a metaphor for other, primary behavior.'(3)

Further to this, Bateson suggested that part of the process of play must include some metacommunication which indicated to the participants that the fighting was 'play', and was not in earnest.(4) Real action and playful action can be seen as being categorically distinct, though behaviourally identical. Considerable work has been done on the subject since Bateson, and Goffman summarises this work in detailing 'the rules to follow and the premises to sustain in order to transform serious, real action

into something playful.'(5) The rules themselves are unimportant here; what is important is Goffman's concept of the 'key', the 'set of conventions by which a given activity, one already meaningful in terms of some primary framework, is transformed into something patterned on this activity but seen by participants to be something quite else.'(6) In such a transformation 'a playful definition of the situation can utterly suppress the ordinary meanings of the world.'(7)

Fry identifies four key interrelationships between play and humour which carry the important 'non-literal' capacity of the former into the latter. The first of these is that both can be classed as different from other forms of life such as business, grief, or conflict. This indicates 'a particular context for humour and play - as a picture frame indicates a particular context for the art contained within.'(8) The second is the overlap of smiling and laughter as physiological accompaniments to both activities. However both Douglas (9) and Turner (10) emphasise that smiling and laughter need not accompany joking, nor all humourous activity, so this overlap should be treated with some circumspection. Fry's third overlap refers to the 'spontaneous-thoughtful' balance, as he identifies it, and as we have already observed in our discussion of perspectives. Fry points out that

> 'Both humour and play are particularly sensitive to any shift in the spontaneous-thoughtful equilibrium...Other matters, such as business or oratory, are more hardy, more resistive to such shifts of proportion. These more resistive items of behaviour usually present little challenge to one's balancing skill. This is not true of play and humour. They are delicate and demand much of the individual's skill. Play and humour are two activities in which the human organism receives practice in maintaining the equilibrium of spontaneity-thoughtfulness.'(11)

Fry's fourth point is that humour and play involve interpersonal relationships and that the interpersonal context of humorous occasions is important even in cases where jokes are told apparently without pertinence to these relationships and out of context. This context of interpersonal relations can, and will in a later discussion, be extended into a similar consideration of the importance of social structure.

Fry's work establishes that humour can be considered to be similar to play in constituting a non-literal framework in which 'real' activities can be redefined, and meanings offered which would not be possible in the normal course of everyday life. As Emerson observes,

> 'Normally a person is not held responsible for what he does in jest to the same degree that he would be for a serious gesture. Humor, as an aside from the main discourse, need not be taken into account in subsequent interaction. It need not become part of the history of the encounter, or be used for the continuous reassessment of the nature and worth of each participant, or be built into the meaning of subsequent acts. For the very reason that humor officially does not 'count', persons are induced to risk messages that might be unacceptable if stated seriously.'(12)

One final point should be noted. Although the individual activities of humour and play are removed from their normal, literal 'serious' context, this does not mean that humour and play themselves do not have 'serious' impact in the 'real world'. On the contrary, as classes of activity they are of considerable importance in sustaining and establishing non-humorous or non-playing activity.

Humour as exploration

The most obvious way in which humour might be exploited in its capacity to suspend the normal definitional criteria of everyday acts is in testing out interpretations in unfamiliar or uncertain situations.

> 'In a new or unfamiliar situation, joking may be used to 'test the atmosphere'. A person who is unsure of his position with regard to his colleagues or who is uncertain about how to start a new course of action is likely to resort to joking. For example, a new manager wishing to give an order may phrase it jokingly. Then if the order is rejected, he can try to behave as if he had not meant it to be taken seriously, he was 'only joking'. If the order is accepted, he can then issue future orders more directly. Sometimes, of course, he may feel unsure of taking this step, so that he continues to give orders in a joking fashion indefinitely.'(13)

Similarly, unpalatable or potentially unpalatable messages may be offered in joking form in order to soften their impact, or to avert resentment or conflict. Certainly, newcomers in organisations often protect themselves from failure or accusations of stupidity in this way. On the occasion of being told to 'clean up' or 'tidy up', what constitutes 'clean' or 'tidy' becomes problematic, and is often difficult for the person giving the command to express. The newcomer may even have problems in deciding how hard to 'rub' or 'sweep'. The 'joking mode' allows him to offer his work with the special status which humour affords without being condemned as incompetent. If the work is not sufficiently competent to be taken seriously, this can also be implied in the joking mode without traumatic confrontation. Emerson makes a number of observations about humour as a vehicle for the negotiation of such serious content.

> 'While it is understood that persons have some leeway in joking about topics which they could not introduce in serious discourse, the line between acceptable and unacceptable content is ambiguous. So it must be negotiated in each particular exchange. Anyone making a joke cannot be sure that the other will find his move acceptable and anyone listening to a joke may find he is offended.'(14)
>
> 'Most negotiations begin with ambiguous gestures in which each tests the response of the other before committing himself to a firm line of action. Once the transposer actually makes an overt bid for a transition, the joker is constrained to accept this bid. By drawing on the prior indications that the humor has serious intent the transposer precipitates a 'moment of truth' which the joker can counter only by repudiating his own line and thus risking that any future line he may offer will be discredited.'(15)

Thus the importance of the interactional situation is reaffirmed as the transition from humorous to serious is offered and accepted or resisted, the response having considerable implications for future interaction:

> 'When a person responds seriously to the topic of a joke, he immediately opens negotiations about how the original joke is to be defined and who is responsible for introducing the topic into the serious conversation. By making it ambiguous whether

he has understood that a joke was intended, the transposer leaves room for the joker later to make explicit that a joke was intended and thus partially to discount the serious discussion. After a few exchanges the joker may try in retrospect to restore the humorous definition to his remark.'(16)

Failure to have a gesture accepted as a joke may result from an underestimation of the listener's sensitivity to the topic, or from ambiguity. In the first case, little can be done to negotiate the situation, but in the second, retrospective definitions may be negotiated in which transpositions can be retracted. 'I was only joking after all' might be an appropriate response to a gesture which has run into difficulties as a serious one. Thus there is always possible failure, possible retrospective redefinition, and consequent risk in negotiating serious content.

'To have performed in retrospect the act one intended to perform, one may be obliged to enter the ensuing fray to insist that one's own definition of the act be accepted by others. Bargaining over retrospective definitions is most likely to occur when actions are relatively ambiguous and when at least one of the parties has something to gain by a favorable definition of past events. Even though the intended meaning seems clear at the time and the other person acknowledges that intended meaning, either party may subsequently move to redefine the act. Even without ambiguity, subsequent redefinition is possible because the present is more vivid than the past. With time, the implicit features of the exchange on which the validation rested slip from memory more readily than the overt act. Thus, a definition posed in the present can override memories from the past which seem to contradict it.'(17)

Humour's capacity to 'bracket' or suspend ordinary definitions of action is used to explore the dimensions of these definitions in cases where they are uncertain. Humour's ambiguity is used as a protective device until real-world ambiguity is resolved. However, as we have seen, this ambiguity involves risk, and any successes achieved in negotiating the status of an act are subject to retrospective redefinition.

Humour as Performing a Boundary-Function

Humour may not only exploit ambiguity, but it may effectively

resolve it for all practical purposes. Davies observes of ethnic jokes that,

> 'By making fun of peripheral and ambiguous groups they reduce ambiguity and clarify boundaries, or at least make ambiguity appear less threatening.'(18)

He points out that the boundaries of ethnic groups are both social and geographical (external) which define who is a member of the group and who is not. There are also moral boundaries (internal) which define acceptable, characteristic and competent behaviour.(19) His comments on ethnic groups could be applied to non-ethnic but cohesive groups with similar pertinence.

> '(Ethnic) jokes police these boundaries. They mock groups who are peripheral to the central or dominant group or who are seen by them as ambiguous. They ascribe to these groups traits which the grouptelling the jokes does not wish to recognize among its own members. It is not, however, a simple question of dividing the world up into virtues and vices with the good qualities reserved for one's own group an the bad ones ascribed to the outsiders. In complex modern societies each individual will experience a conflict of goals and of values and will need to steer his way carefully between the competing claims of legitimate alternatives, such as work and leisure. Under these circumstances, the stereotypes that underpin ethnic jokes tend to occur not singly but in pairs of opposites. Thus in most western industrial societies the most popular (ethnic) jokes are those about groups supposed to be stupid and (in opposition to this) jokes about groups supposed to be canny (i.e. crafty and stingy).(20)

The stupid-stingy/crafty opposition could be seen as having a 'deep structure' which corresponds to the undifferentiated-differentiated axis of Gowler and Legge's categories of meaning (as discussed in Chapter Seven).(21) That is to say, stupid acts are often either naive, or unselfconscious, and fail to differentiate between either the self and the world or between meanings and contrasts which are clear to the average member of the group. Crafty acts or stingy acts take such differentiation to extremes, digitally defining a world without license, ambiguity or 'lubrication' in meaning, and are extremely self-conscious in constructing social relations. A further comparison might be drawn with Lacan's work on the mirror-stage in the development of personality where the child has not

quite discovered how to differentiate between Self and Other leading to undifferentiated/stupid behaviour.(22) Crafty/stingy behaviour is orientated through Desire for the Other, for excessive order and for control. Thus ethnic jokes, reveal a fundamental social construction of oppositions which underpin much of joking in general, and humour itself.

Humour as a coping device

Davies concludes his discussion mentioned above by distinguishing three functions served by (ethnic) jokes:

> '(a) They reduce anxiety about the possibility of individual failure **vis a vis** large, impersonal and perplexing institutions due to one's failing to obtain a correct balance between conflicting norms and goals.
> (b) They provide guidance as to what the moral limits are, what the correct balance is and thus reduce anomie.
> (c) They provide a legitimation of the individual's situation in relation to both those who have failed and those who have been more successful whether in the market place or the bureaucracy, in war or in peace.'(23)

They are thus important in establishing orientations of individuals both in terms of self- and group-identity. Other writers have observed similar functions of humour. Turner notes that 'the general acceptance afforded to the joking mode may be used to release tension, or to ease an uncomfortable situation.'(24) Davies also observes its capacity for release for 'the powerless majority who can only express their frustration by telling jokes.'(25)

Fry cites a number of authors who see humour as, variously, simple emotional mitigation of failure; a means of redemption of unpleasant situations; a means of establishing harmony, and achieving redistribution and readjustment in the face of real human loss. These generally see humour as a means of coping with defeat.(26)

On perhaps a less conscious level, humour has also been seen as a reaction to a feeling of superiority or triumph over others.(27)

Fry even suggests that it may be a means of self protection by surrender, basing his conjecture on its capacity to provoke a freezing or defusing reaction in an aggressor in a similar manner to which vanquished animals may freeze an attacker in his tracks by offering their vulnerable throat to his jaws. He does elaborate his model however, relating it only to forms of humour which actually elicit smiles and laughter:

> 'Smiles and laughter should be thought of as having a much more complex role in peck order battles than that of simple surrender messages. They can be surrender messages, but they can also be recognized as announcements of victory, weapons of offense, weapons of defense, signals of avoidance of battle, signals of preparing attack. In brief, they take many roles in a peck order contest. Smiles and laughter <u>are</u> involved with communication during these contests.'(28)

Powell similarly to Davies, sees it having a capacity to set apart the behaviour of those 'not like us'. In its playful framework, it posits a world of equals and although significant, is importantly non-threatening.(29)

Cohen and Taylor see humour as a means of distancing the unpleasant parts of our daily lives from our 'real selves':

> 'If our marriage seems more predictable to us than ever, we may kick it away from ourselves with jokes and mockery. If work seems increasingly routinized then it can be regarded with less and less seriousness...'(30)

But it also serves as a means for accommodating us to those roles as individuals.

> 'Thefact that we can regard with amusement the conventions of university life and our own roles as (university lecturers) actually ensures that we remain with those conventions and those roles.'(31)

The demystification of social interaction here is not a preliminary to social change but a means of distancing the individual from his/her circumstances and allowing them to proceed with decreased commitment, emphasising other aspects of themselves or other

situated selves.

Humour as a characteristic quality of social structure

Douglas in approaching the joke relies on the ideas of Bergson and Freud.

> 'For both the essence of the joke is that something formal is attacked by something informal, something organised and controlled, by something vital, energetic, an upsurge of life for Bergson, of libido for Freud. The common denominator underlying both approaches is the joke seen as an attack on control.'(32)

For Douglas, all jokes have a subversive effect on a dominant structure of ideas. Controls which are exerted on behalf of hierarchies, or on behalf of values too precious and precarious to be exposed to challenge may be subverted in the joke form.

> 'Since its form consists of a victorious tilting of uncontrol against control, it is an image of the levelling of hierarchy, the triumph of intimacy over formality, of unofficial values over official ones. Our question is now much clearer. We must ask what are the social conditions for a joke to be both perceived and permitted. We could start to answer it by examining the literature of various joking situations. My hypothesis is that a joke is seen and allowed when it offers a symbolic pattern of a social pattern occurring at the same time. As I see it, all jokes are expressive of the social situations in which they occur. The one social condition necessary for a joke to be enjoyed is that the social group in which it is received should develop the formal characteristics of a 'told' joke: that is, a dominant pattern of relations is challenged by another. If there is no joke in the social structure, no other joking can appear.'(33)

We must, in our analysis, look for the social pattern underlying the symbolic problem: the joke in the social structure. The joke is a play on form, a challenge of one pattern of elements by another, an image of a relaxation of control in the conscious in favour of the unconscious, the uncontrolled triumphing:

> 'Needless to say, a successful subversion of one form by another completes or ends the joke, for it changes the balance of power. It is implicit in the Freudian model that the unconscious does not take over the control system. The wise

sayings of lunatics, talking animals, children and drunkards are funny because they are not in control; otherwise they would not be an image of the subconscious. The joke merely affords opportunity for realising that an accepted pattern has no necessity. Its excitement lies in the suggestion that any particular ordering of experience may be arbitrary and subjective. It is frivolous in that it produces no real alternative, only an exhilarating sense of freedom from form in general.'(34)

Similarly, Powell contends that humour tends to support or maintain existing power relationships or a dominant ideology; that it is limited in its power to redefine events by the power which 'author' and 'recipient' groups have to define jokes and establish 'preferred readings'; and that it simultaneously contains resistance as it expresses it.(35)

Golding offers an example in a case where a female employee was offered a job in another town, and management expected that her husband (who was employed elsewhere) would move with her:

'In communicating this simplification the management domination myth is threatened with 'exposure', because it contradicts an even more pervasive domination myth in 'western' societies, that of the sovereignty of the husband as 'primordial breadwinner' in the structure of the family. The seriousness of the suggestion that Sheila's husband should contemplate a job in Central Town and give up his present job to enable Sheila to move to Central District is confirmed in the 'taking seriously' of the engineers.

The management domination myth was in fact subsequently rescued from complete 'exposure' by the introduction of humour. The engineers enacted an 'action replay' in which the roles played were exaggerated and the issue was diffused in hilarity. Nevertheless, the episode became part of folk-lore and remained as a potential threat, which illustrates the need for continual reinforcement of myth.

Cohen in fact has suggested that continual attention is required in order to perpetuate such myths:

'All the intellect, skill, and cunning of the ideologist, the politician, the theologian, and the artist and all the techniques of colour, music, poetry and drama are needed to create, accomplish and perpetuate the myth of authority in the face of continually subversive processes of different sorts.''(36)

There may be two slight re-emphases possible here. The management

myth may have in fact been exposed symbolically, and its existence as one possible form of life rather than an absolute one may have been demonstrated within the humorous mode. The transposition to the serious world of real-life was not, it appears, attempted, possibly because the exposure was not deemed relevant or acceptable for all practical purposes by the actors. As Golding later observes, the abstraction and simplification process which creates myth is 'so necessary to make possible the problematic of accomplishing everyday life.'(37) Zijderveld notes ofcliche, a verbal form which similarly suppresses reflection that

> 'human beings can never dispose of cliches, we need them for our daily interactions and for the functioning of society at large, as much as we need the institutions.'(38)

Cohen's assertion that cunning, skill and intellect are required to perpetuate myth would therefore seem to be misleading. It is cunning and skill which are required to expose and destroy myth, because the process of myth creation is so closely tied to the necessities of everyday life that little effort is in fact needed to support it. The tools which are available for challenging myth and cliche are usually other myths and cliches which act as reinforcement, as there is little need for the creation of anything else for the purpose of sustaining social action. Myth in being constantly sustained does not have to be re-created; its forms become so habitual that only a slight effort is needed to reconstitute them.

That is not to say that myth is not challenged or that humour does not challenge it with sufficient invention. It is often the case that the material relations underlying the social structure about which we symbolically joke make the potential cost of negotiating a transposition from the humorous to the real too great to contemplate. This is not the same as saying that the challenge of humour is not 'real', but suggests that its framing is different.

Joke Forms

Before I go on to discuss examples, I would like to discuss the

particular generic forms of joke which my examples illlustrate. Douglas distinguishes between the 'standardised' joke, set in a standard context which organises the whole joke within its verbal form, and the 'situational' joke which organises the situational context into joke form.(39) Fry introduces a slight difference in terminology and a third term:

> 'Canned jokes are defined as those which are presented with little obvious relationship to the ongoing human interaction. Situation jokes are indicated as those which are spontaneous and have, to a major extent, their origin in the ongoing interpersonal (or intra-personal) process. The practical joke category is defined as that made up of jokes which are both presented and spontaneous - in that the joker consciously contrives his joke, but must depend on the unfolding of an interpersonal (or intrapersonal) process for the presentation of his joke.'(40)

Practical jokes also differ in that they do not present themselves as jokes. They play with an ambiguous or apparently unproblematic situation, or one which seems unproblematic to the person or group at whom the joke is directed by reason of their inability (natural or cultivated) to perceive it in any alternative way. There is no announcement of the play frame until the situation has reached a perplexing or potentially disastrous level in the 'real' frame. This 'differance', the delaying of the arrival of the Other, is different to that observed in canned or situational jokes as in these the arrival is recognised to be delayed as part of the form and pleasure of the joke. In the practical joke, only the joker on jokers expect this, and to a great extent control it, by virtue of their ironic perspective vis a vis the joked upon. Having said this, Fry's point that practical jokes depend on spontaneous action no matter how well they are contrived seems to identify a crucial element of their pleasure.

Bergson suggests that humour consists of the exposure of the unnatural rigidity of certain human acts:

> 'According to Bergson the essence of man is spontaneity and freedom: laughter asserts this by erupting whenever a man behaves in a rigid way, like an automaton no longer under intelligent control. 'Humour consists in perceiving something

mechanical encrusted on something living'.'(41)

One might also see this as over-differentiation in another framework. The practical joke, and many others, support this to some extent. When a person behaves according to a predicted pattern and misinterprets in a characteristic way the content of the 'practical joke', in a way which is necessary to complete it; when the rejection of the possibility of spontaneity for mechanical predictability is exposed, then the 'joke' is successful. But as Douglas observes, this is not true of all jokes, and both includes too much and imports a moral judgement which is not characteristic of the subtler forms of humour which refrain from the establishment of such preferences.

Freud offers an alternative perspective:

> '...the essence of wit is neatly to span gulfs between different ideas. The pleasure of a joke lies in a kind of economy. At all times we are expending energy in monitoring our subconscious so as to ensure that our conscious perceptions come through a filtering control. The joke, because it breaks down the control, gives the monitoring system a holiday. Or, as Freud puts it, since monitoring costs effort, there is a saving in psychic expenditure. For a moment the unconscious is allowed to bubble up without restraint, hence the sense of enjoyment and freedom.'(42)

The emphasis in Freud then, is not on the predicted pattern which the 'joked upon' in the practical joke follows, but in the fact that the pattern is followed spontaneously. This economically and powerfully presents an alternative perspective by reason of the failure of the accepted pattern without the necessity of the pursuit of the logical processes and arguments which might otherwise be necessary to construct this alternative.(43) This 'bridging' of alternative ideas is also considered by Fry to be an essential part of the 'situation joke':

> 'It is as if we all lead many different lives at the same time, all on different levels of abstraction one from the other, and all interrelated comments on each other.
>
> A situation (or 'portion of one's life') becomes a situation joke when, through the operation of a punch line, those

various levels are jumbled in such a manner that the rules for conceiving reality are changed...Further, it is in the interrelationship of these many levels of abstraction involved in the 'portion of life' which becomes a situation joke - it is in the interrelationship of these levels that the joke can be seen as a comment on itself. The portion of life which is the joke comments upon the joke which is the portion of life. As with the practical joke, both are the same, and each is different.'(44)

This paradoxical relationship is more easily perceived in the context of the 'situation joke' than in the 'canned' or 'standardised' joke. Fry observes that 'canned' jokes are often 'situation' jokes of yesterday, but I think that this underestimates the extent to which apocrypha, for example, are idealised and modified to perfect oppositions and to reproduce a verbal format. However, he is correct to dispute that the canned joke is ever tightly sealed within such a form, as Douglas has appeared to suggest:

'The canned joke is like a fish out of water. If, however, another look is taken, we can see that this fish carries his water with him. In sharing a canned joke, joker and audience are engaged, on one level, in participating in a portion of their 'ongoing lives'. The sharing of that joke constitutes the 'life process' of the time being. And, from this standpoint is understood the emphasis in the canned joke definition placed on the word 'obvious' ('little obvious relationship'). Discontinuous though the canned joke may seem, as regards the ongoing life process, the canned joke constitutes, in fact, a particular portion of the life process. (Furthermore, those higher-level aspects of a canned joke - the implicit themes that accompany, in the participants' brains, the canned joke - receive varying degrees of emphasis depending on the implicit themes that were active in the brain during the preceding moments. In other words, association is influenced by experience - both internal and external). Again, is introduced the multilevel concept. The 'ongoing life process' that is a canned joke is accompanied by many implicit themes on many different levels of abstraction. And, through the essential interrelatedness of the whole structure, the canned joke is, in one sense, itself and, in another sense, is comment on itself.

This realization of a joke as being both (1) a portion of the ongoing life process, and (2) a joke - this realization makes necessary a slight alteration in the usual way of thinking of the uniqueness and genuineness of the various particles of the world.'(45)

The canned joke is therefore a part of the 'ongoing life process'. We might take it further and emphasise the importance of social structures as part of this process, in the sense in which Douglas emphasises the relationship of the 'joke' in the verbal form to the 'joke' in the social structure. It is the often unconscious appreciation of the 'joke' in the structure which makes it possible for jokes to be recognised as such. In many cases where standardised jokes do not appear in content to be relevant to the social interaction of which they are part, they will strike implicit chords, invoke shared experiences, and relate to underlying oppositions contradictions and relationships which are part of wider structures which inform the interaction.

Canned Jokes

At this point, let me turn to two examples of the 'standardised' joke as heard at E.L.S. Amalgamated to illustrate the discussion.

The first 'joke' was originally brought to work by one of the students in a rag magazine, in the form of a cartoon, but it was subsequently retold in verbal form. The original cartoon presented two workmen, one apparently a bricklayer laying a path, and the other his labourer. The bricklayer, kneeling beside his work, was gesturing with one arm to the labourer standing beside a pile of paving-stones.

<u>Bricklayer</u>: 'Slab!'
<u>Labourer</u>: 'Who do you think you are...Wittgenstein?'(46)

The economy of this joke is such that any 'thoughtful' attempt at explanation might do violence to its richness. However, the joke seems to follow the pattern of a natural and common interchange between workmen. The first gives a command which is curt, impolite, and offends the labourer, who may be seen as slacking or lazy, or simply waiting for instructions. The labourer responds by apparently reminding his colleague that he does not have the authority to address him in such a fashion (possibly with the usual implication that no-one does). But then the interchange turns and becomes a joke by introducing a completely unexpected dimension to

the response when the labourer says: '...Wittgenstein'.

The joke exists on a number of levels. Firstly, its economy is such that it is effective through differing in one word only from the expected pattern of a normalinteraction. Secondly, it is surprising that not only should the labourer be familiar with Wittgenstein but that he should imply this of his partner also. Thirdly,the implication of officiousness is made ironically by reference to a context of which officiousness was not a part (i.e. the 'message' of the joke becomes, from this perspective, 'Surely you must be speaking as a linguistic philosopher playing a language-game of ostensive reference unless you wish to appear officious?) This is, of course, offered reflexively, with recognition of its ambiguity. Fourth, this in turn makes possible the introduction of the dimensions of interaction and power into the original example given by Wittgenstein. Not only is the slightly unrealistic quality of the language-game implied (as is also implied by Wittgenstein) but the importance of relationships of power and authority in establishing the language-game in order to achieve practical accomplishments is suggested (an importance which is not emphasised by Wittgenstein). Where forms of linguistic interaction such as Wittgenstein depicts do occur, they tend to exist as a result of the practical demands of the job for speed, accuracy, delicacy or concentration. Thus they occur in some, but not all, instances in hospital operating theatres and garages dealing in mechanical repairs. They are, however, 'bracketed off' from normal interaction by virtue of some comment, action or overture by the participants as being a distinct and crucial 'phase' of operations. Another example is of a group of painters and labourers working with a limited number of tools - not knowing to whom his request should be addressed, the painter desiring the screwdriver would merely shout 'screwdriver' repeatedly until one was brought or an excuse provided. That the painters were reflexively aware of the bracketing of this procedure from normal interaction, its abnormality, was illustrated bytheir occasional inclusion of requests for the 'vegetable rack' or the 'bath brush'. A further layer of irony was created on the rare occasions when the useless item was produced.

Fifth, the richness of connotation available in the signifier 'Slab' is emphasised by the adoption, or offered adoption of a most unlikely reading - usual readings and usual forms are disrupted, and alternative formulations become possible. 'Slab' for both the joker and Wittgenstein becomes ambiguous, is prised free from referential meanings and dominant connotations. Sixth, the joke is multiply incongruous. Jokes about philosophers are rare, as philosophy is a serious matter. Philosophers who write about bricklaying are rare, as is Wittgenstein's direct style of writing. That bricklaying and philosophy are linked in the work of a philosopher, and then reversed and linked in the work of a bricklayer constitutes the incongruity which contributes to the joke.

This analysis however takes no account of how the joke was received and understood. Of the students who heard it, some were able to respond in some part to some of the characteristics suggested above, although often simply connecting the name of Wittgenstein with the fact that they were hearing a joke produced a response. Few knew much, if anything, about Wittgenstein's work. What cemented the joke for them was its appositeness to <u>their situation</u>. The position of the erudite labourer being curtly ordered around, was comparable in many ways to their own ironic position as highly intelligent, skilled and educated people being forced to work at menial jobs and being subject to orders from people who were less qualified and intelligent than themselves (which is not to say that they found it unacceptable). Many of the permanent operatives in the factory were graduates who might have been otherwise unemployed, and they saw similar parallels in their own situation. Even uneducated operatives, and particularly machine operatives, were able to identify with the social situation of the joke as being apposite to their situation with what they felt to be rude and incompetent supervision. Their conviction of their own superior competence made identification with the 'philosophical labourer' possible. Davies remarks in the context of Iron-Curtain jokes about bureaucrats:

'In such circumstances the ever-presentmodern industrial

anxiety about stupidity and failure is alleviated by projecting these qualities on to those who have obtained bureaucratic power and political success. The jokes undermine the legitimacy of the elite members' success by ascribing to them the quality of stupidity, the hall-mark of failure in a rational social order.'(48)

We can detect a similar process here. As the joke became current, and was told, retold and explained, officious supervisors and even other workers were referred to as 'fucking Wittgenstein' by people who had not, and would never have, the slightest idea of what Wittgenstein meant by a language-game but were nevertheless able to respond to those aspects of the joke which represented the joke-in-the-social situation, accomplished its reversal, and offered some temporary symbolic escape from orthodox control.

The second joke example is slightly more dramatic. I have altered slightly the verbal form in which I first heard and have since told the joke in order to translate it into its present prose format but to preserve its impact.

The Welder

A small boy, seven or eight years old, was playing near a garage when he saw two mechanics begin welding a car. He watched and drew closer, fascinated by the blue and red sparks, the dark goggles and the huge cylinders of oxygen and acetylene. At length,the welders put down their equipment and broke for lunch. The boy watched them disappear into a nearby pub and crept inside the garage.

He put on the large goggles and the industrial gloves and picked up the lance. Just as he approached the car, he heard a voice.

'Hello, there' said the voice.

He turned to see a man in scruffy brown overcoat. He thought he might be in trouble but the man was smiling.

'Do you like sweeties?' said the man.

'Ye-es' replied the boy, innocently.

'Do you like'...there was a pause 'playing with willies?'

'Oh' said the boy, unsure, 'I don't know'.

'Well' the man seemed breathless, 'do you like playing with bottoms?'

The boy was relieved as he realised the man's mistake.

'I'm not a real welder, you know,' he said.

This joke, when told verbally, is a superb example of the 'canned' joke affecting the interactional situation. It seems to walk such a thin line between the acceptable and the unacceptable, toying with ideas which threaten to transform it into an obscene or sick joke. The first of these 'threats' is that some disaster may befall the boy, leading to a sick joke; the second, at a number of levels, is that the joke may become an obscene one about masturbation, buggery, or the taboo topic of child molestation. The audience cannot see how the joke will turn out, and often are at the point of stopping the teller, anxious that the joke might embarrass them both. The only potential ending which they can see, and which they both come to expect and hope for, is that the joke will become a shaggy dog story.

In the end, they are wrong. The direction changes with wonderful economy: the joke is about welders, as has been evident all along and is the one perspective which the audience characteristically fails to adopt. The joke, interactionally is on them, and they are surprised and relieved to find it so. The joke did not overstep the limits of decency after all, and this adds to its power in that part of the joke is at the expense of the audience and they are happy for it to be so.

But when the joke is told within the industrial subculture, allowing that it can be identified, but especially as it was told at E.L.S. Amalgamated, there is a social structural joke which makes it even more satisfying.

At E.L.S. Amalgamated, as in many industrial organisations, welding was a subdivision of engineering. If it were felt necessary, connections could be traced back through the traditional disciplines of the smithy to establish an association between those who work with metal and magic; in this case, the 'mystique' of

welders and engineers could be accounted for by their material circumstances. They possessed better pay structures and rates; contractual overtime which could not easily be stopped; better facilities; better unions; visible transferable skills; often more spare time and more autonomy, and more prestige. There was also a feeling that 'fitters' had something the others had not: charisma, mystique, or simply luck, but the myth was that 'fitters get all the crack'. If it was going, it went to the 'fitters', 'it' usually being one or more of the women who socialised with the factory workers in the pub next door. There was definitely substance to the myth, as I was able to research on numerous occasions.

The 'joke' consisted in the reversal of the social image of the 'fitters' as smooth he-men with enormous heterosexual charisma into that of the scruffy-coated pervert with his interest in masturbation, sodomy and small boys. That this ascription came from the mouth of an innocent, and effectively neutral, observer heightened the humour and economy of such a reversal. It was, for a moment, nice to 'get one back' over the 'fitters': for some time after the joke was current, references to 'welders' and 'welding' would raise a satisfied smile amongst the other workers.

The 'canned' or 'standardised' joke then owes much of its impact to its exploitation of the circumstances of interaction and social structure surrounding the context of its telling. The situational joke draws more directly upon this context, which is prominently part of the joke, as might be expected. At the deeper levels of structure, the oppositions and reversals which are the foundations for humour would seem to be similar for both types of joke.

In the following example, I will present a situation about which humorous material was generated and jokes created. Some of the comments on the incident which I will include as part of the verbal data which follows the scenario are not in themselves humorous, but are included as revealing interesting dimensions of the context of humorous creation.

Situational Jokes - Fred's Finger

Fred D. was a seasoned operator of one of the large fruit-pie machines at E.L.S. Amalgamated Bakeries. Each machine required three people to operate it, and the plant as a whole comprised two adjacent production lines making individual and family-size pies, each served by two machines making @8,000 and @4,500 pies per hour respectively. The operator was expected to keep his machine running, liaise with the fruit and dough mixers upstairs, supervise the other two people who worked on the machine, and train any newcomers. Fred had been doing this with distinction for some years.

On one particular shift, one mixing of fruit was proving difficult for the fruit depositing mechanism to handle. Instead of dropping measured portions of fruit into the moulded pie bases before lidding, it was clogging up and depositing unevenly, thus producing reject pies and extra work. In attempting to clear an obstruction, Fred, against all he knew to be good practice, inserted his hand into the unguarded mouth of the depositor and lost the tip of his middle finger. Fred collapsed, and it was a short time before it was realised what had happened and the machine was finally turned off. By the time the machine was stopped and Fred was treated, no-one could tell where his finger-end was, and approximately 4,000 pies, being suspected, were thrown away.

The incident stimulated much discussion and comment. Most of this was heard in a period from six weeks after the accident, when it was still a source of conversation or illustration, although it hd lost some of its original currency. Informants were varied, but most of them began by saying things like:

i) 'Don't let Fred hear this but...
'Don't ever tell Fred anybody said this...'
'He's not here now but when he comes back don't let him find out or he would be upset'.

Another comment was

ii) 'I can't remember 'em all now, but when it happened there were loads of jokes about it. It sounds terrible, dun't it, but tha'd hear a new 'un every break. I wish I could remember 'em.'

Other comments:

iii) 'God knows why he did it, it was stupid. He knew that as well as anybody. He knew that machine inside out. He knew it better than t'fitters.'
'I don't know why I did it. Just stupid I suppose.' (Fred himself).

iv) 'You don't put your hand into a machine to steal fruit. You do it to make the job run and get product out, which is what they're after. I know it wasn't safe, and he might have gone t'wrong way about it but why penalise a bloke for having t'firm's interests at heart and sacrificing his bloody finger for it?'
'They'll not give him a warning, but he won't get any compensation unless he tries to prove negligence, like with the depositor being unguarded and that, although it doesn't really need one. But if he tries that, they'll fucking shit on him.'

v) 'I was down by t'oven with my waste truck and there's Harry M (Supervisor) throwing 4,000 pies away 'cos they couldn't find Fred's finger and he didn't want to stop production. 'Nay, Harry,' I said, 'there's no need to empty t'whole oven, and chuck all this lot. Have you looked for it?'
'It'll do him fuck-all good now,' he says 'they can't put it back on again.'
'Gerry H (Supervisor) were great when he heard about Fred. 'Fetch quality,' he says 'and get me a deviation recipe for Meat and Apple.'
'They were going to get some 'finger-hunter' stickers made and pack them 4,000 pies' (promotion boxes usually bore a sticker marked 'Bargain Hunter').

vi) Operator 1: 'Fred's walking straight into a warning when he comes back'.
Operator 2: 'How's tha' meean?'

'Well, they found his finger tha' knows'.

'Did they?'

'Ay, but Health Inspector says his fingernail were dirty.'

(Pause)

'Fuck off'. (Reluctant laughter). 'That's disgusting'. (More laughter).

vii) Group of operators discussing one of their number, in his presence, with some banter.

'He doesn't give a bugger. He doesn't care what fruit he mixes. One minute its like rock and t'next it's like piss. It was him did Fred, you know, if he hadn't stuck a load of porridge down t'hoile Fred wouldn't have stuck his hand up depositor and would still have his finger.'

(In this attempt at hyperbole the speaker has found himself saying something more than he intended. There is laughter but it is uneasy and dies quickly. It is rescued by the operator attacked).

'If I had my way, I'd chop you all to fucking bits!' (Chases others towards canteen).

We have already noted, in the previous chapter, some of the dominant concerns of the operator culture in the Family Pie department at E.L.S. Amalgamated. The operators had a strong sense of identity and autonomy, and a sense of their own competence as against that of their supervisors. They felt that in a real sense they were responsible for running the plant smoothly, but that any privileges which they held depended on sticking together as a group and supporting each other where possible. 'It took us a long time to get where we are, and to learn how to work together' was said by one operator 'and we've had to fight for what we've got - that's why they respect us'. The operator group were accorded respect, but supervision and management had to be reminded of the strength of the group periodically and posed a constant threat to their status and autonomy. The struggle for control was a real one in this area.

Machine Operators worked on the floor below mixing operators and were closer to the production process. They were dominated by the

process to a greater extent and were more easily controlled, coerced or treated disrespectfully by supervisors. They were thus afforded slightly lower status than 'mixer-men', having slightly less freedom. The problem of autonomy was a key one on the plant and was emphasised by the aphorism.

'It's a long way up them stairs, but it's longer back down'.

That is to say, it was difficult to become a mixer-man, but once demoted (through incompetence) it was even harder to regain status. Key ideas on the plant were competence, solidarity, autonomy and untouchability. This latter referred to the need for operators to cover all contingencies when exercising their autonomy, taking unauthorised breaks etc., to make sure that the supervisors 'couldn't touch them'.

Dangers to the operator culture could be seen in displays of incompetence, lack of community, separation or isolation of individuals or unwarranted increase in direction from outside. Operators constantly monitored these tendencies to forestall divisive interventions.

The disaster which befell Fred was potentially threatening in a substantive way as a demonstration of incompetence. However it was also important symbolically to the operator culture.

> 'Each culture has its own special risks and problems. To which particular body margins its beliefs attribute power depends on what situation the body is mirroring...To understand body pollution we should try to argue back from the known dangers of society to the known selection of bodily themes and try to recognise what appositeness is there.'(49)

The concept of 'untouchability' was violated by Fred's action. Not only had the supervisors 'got something on him' but he had been physically and symbolically touched by the production process. There was little product-identification in the job itself, the operator having no investment of himself in the pies. The symbolic implication was that just as the production process would consume those who got too close to it, as Fred did, the control process

would similarly consume the status and autonomy of those operators who failed to effectively resist it. In addition, the physical property which was a symbol of competence, the hand, had been mutilated, and Fred carried this symbolic reminder with him constantly.

A recurrent problem for the operators was boundary management, as we would expect from the work of Douglas and Davies. Not only were there the external problems of maintaining a clear idea of group membership, but there were moral problems in maintaining cohesion via correct action, making the group morally distinct from management. Fred's accident posed problems by transgressing the moral boundary of competence, but also by physically and symbolically crossing the boundary between self and production. Fred had failed to maintain his distance, his perspective, and his individuality as a member of the operating group: in his zeal to boost production he had then physically become part of the process.

The first set of comments (i) came from a sensitivity to Fred's likely feelings should he hear the comments which were to follow, but also attempted to frame those comments as humorous, if unkind. However, they underline Fred's marginal status: they preface the humorous attempts to retrospectively account for Fred's action and to redeem it where possible. Fred is singled out from the community in humour in order to negotiate his reincorporation; the comments are necessary to prevent this singling out being transposed into reality and prejudicing his actual reincorporation. Not only is the concern to save stigmatising Fred, but it is also to lighten the threat from management, the seriousness of the accident, and to make it possible to go on.

In section (ii) the proliferation of jokes suggests that the problem was important. Douglas defines the 'sick joke' as a sophisticated form of humour which

> 'plays with the reversal of the values of social life: the hearer is uncertain which is the man and which the machine, who is the good and who the bad, or where is the legitimate pattern of control.'(50)

Bergson would see the incorporation of Fred into the mechanical process as providing a basis for humour anyway: the 'sick'-ness is produced partly by an insensitivity to Fred's feelings which is in part excused by the preambles offered by the jokers. The joke form in the social structure does, as Douglas again suggests, appear to call 'imperatively for an explicit joke to express it'.(51) We have already been left in confusion as to the physical boundary between man and machine; the sick joke exploits this ambiguity by resisting potential attempts to redefine those parallel moral boundaries, as the social power structure is such that they might be morally if not physically redefined by management to the workers and operator's disadvantage. Fred is distanced from the main body of operators symbolically in humour to confine the area of moral negotiation and preserve the main structure of ideas: ambiguity is encouraged so that his status may be redefined at a more advantageous time.

In section(iii) we have examples of how difficult it was for operators to explicitly account for the accident in 'real' conversation, even for Fred himself. All that were offered were cliches, that it was an isolated instance, a momentary aberration. It was as such no reflection on Fred's overall competence, and did not call for any further unpleasant introspection. The cliche admirably fulfilled the function of providing an account, without that account contributing to understanding the meaning of the act.(52)

Quotes insection (iv) were frequent and attempt to anticipatethe rationality of the situation through management eyes. The feared 'hard-line' never came, and the incident was not used as a lever by management. There was nevertheless a heightened sense of the ongoing paradox of the work situation - the demands of production often drove workers to work unsafely, but line management accepted no responsibility for this and was always potentially liable to penalise the worker formally. In some cases, workers could be verbally warned to work safely in future but the demands of production were not modified, and so compliance was impossible. The workers were accountable both for their own safety and for

production, and were required to resolve or accommodate an impossible contradiction not of their own making.

In section (v) the explicit humorous content is directed towards supervisors, whose incompetence is stressed in terms of their excessive stingy-craftiness or over-differentiation. It might in other circumstances be interpreted as stupidity, but I wish here to preserve the separation of the concepts which Davies initiated. Not only does Harry M.'s over-differentiation lead to an oversimplified conception of the production process but it also reveals an ideological assumption that workers do not talk in the interests of the firm or the job, but from a narrow perspective of their own individual interests and those of their fellows.

Another observation made by Douglas could be relevant here.

> '...the Bemba have such good confidence in their technique of purification from adultery that...though they believe adultery has lethal dangers they give reign to their short-term desires.'
>
> 'Easy purification enables people to defy with impunity the hard realities of their social system.'(53)

For Harry M. it did not matter that the pressures of production and its associated difficulties had caused or contributed to accident and injury - it was more important that by waste of <u>sacrificial proportions</u> he could exorcise the pollution, <u>keep production going</u>, and avoid facing up to any unpleasant reflections. In a similar way the jokes directed at Gerry H. underline the realities of purification and differentiation (stingy/craftiness) by humorous hyperbole, and favour the more 'sensible' and 'competent' perspective of the operator group.

Section (vi) gives the most common of the 'sick jokes'. In addition to that which has already been observed on the preservation of moral ambiguity and the distancing of Fred until his marginal status could be reassesssed, this joke plays further on the conflicting pressures of production, preferred standards of personal hygiene and competence, and the demands of bureaucracy. Sabotage is not to be treated lightly - the ironic reversal of the

joke points up the 'real' fact that Fred's over-zealous pursuit of production goals has led to his committing the worst possible crime in infringement of them.

A further dimension which enriches the interpretation of the joke lies in the idea of the pie itself. Hair and fingernails have in many cultures had magical significance, being known to continue growing after death. They are both of the body and not of the body, often being felt to contain the essence or spirit of the owner when he/she is absent, and hence their incorporation in many magical charms and spells.(54) The presence of a finger in a product to be ingested by others carries a sinister implication which goes beyond the concerns simply of hygiene and humanitarianism. The idea of Jack Horner eagerly sticking in his thumb in anticipation of the delight of another plum and being sorely dismayed to find the pie was baked by Sweeney Todd is available for symbolic evocation by the joke, in parallel to the pleasant surprise/unpleasant dismay pattern which is followed by its form.

In the final situation (vii) the transposition of humour into the serious happens without the transposer realising that he is doing it, and the situation is subsequently rescued by the target of the joke redefining it as humour.

The 'joking relationship', where one partner grossly insults the other(55) is a common one. In this case, the divergence of the demands of the job and of community is underlined by the joker in his unwitting illustration of divergent job-images.

The 'image' of Fred's job was of constant movement and flow. The machine should run when all was going well, adjustments should be small, the process should be controlled, contained and economical, expressible in units of product or numbers. He was a 'finger on the button' man when all was running well. His finger was an important symbol, indicating precision and control.

The mixer men's characteristic image was one of bulk not units.

When the hoppers were full, the job could run, the man was not needed. Production was in bulk, intermittently, and bulk and stasis were important images. Activity was infrequent but intense rather than constant and peripheral. These images of the total pattern of work were not always compatible and mixing operators in seeking to achieve bulk, which symbolised a job well done, might neglect to ensure that the consistency of their product was transferable to the small units and flowing production which symbolised a job well done for machine operators. The realisation that operators did often work against each other, released by the joke, left the participants in an uneasy frame of mind for some time after.

Another operator, Phil, commented on the attitude of many of the workforce to weakness exhibited by other members, especially the way in which lower-status members (who were more threatened by management than were operators) rounded upon its manifestation 'like vultures'. 'Never show weakness' he said. 'I only hope nothing ever happens to me. If I lost a leg, they'd laugh for a week then follow me up to't canteen doing Long John Silver voices.'

Poor Harold

One of the stimuli for Phil's comment was the sudden death of Harold, in his early 40's, who had operated the chocolate machine in a separate room at the back of the factory. One comment made in the canteen when it was heard that he had died of a stroke whilst on the toilet was:

'He died as he lived - boots on, trousers down.'

Phil now saw the whole thing as being in ironic bad taste. He was also able to allow that a sort of comforting familiarity with death and the trauma of it all both underlined and facilitated coping with the precariousness of our own situation. This was even further remarked by the fact that only Harold knew how to operate the chocolate room, and it took management a very sticky month to discover how, even with the aid of outside engineers, due to the variability of the process and the alterations and adjustments

which had to be made in practice. This posthumous virtuous display of competence made Harold legendary, but by its remarkable and singular nature underlined the dispensability of everyone else, and their need to underscore their competence by establishing group cohesion. The joking in these circumstances was simultaneously an avoidance of the explicit realisation of this situation,and a response to it, attempting a humorous reversal to borrow or seal in some of Harold's strength and competence into the remaining community. A number of oppositions also work in the case of Harold to add to the economy of the dualism 'boots on, trousers down'. Harold led a solitary working life, and suffered a similarly solitary death. Where sex and enjoyment encroaches on the working day it tends to be snatched, postponed, or quick and functional, and hence inconsequential as an experience. Death in this way acquires some of this comforting inconsequentiality, with a touch of rough familiarity about its squalor. There is irony in the 'rest room' becoming the room of a more permanent rest, where even the most private of places was subject to the final intrusion. The parallels in colour and consistency between chocolate and ordure, and their associations with life and death, creativity and waste have been suggested to me by Bob Grafton-Small, whose thoughts run on such things and who spends much of his time in a suitably similar environment. There is also the symbolic dimension of marginality, determining the status of the toilet and waste areas, where organisational control is weak and worker autonomy strong, which is further underlined by the ultimate cessation of control. This dimension is discussed further in the next chapters. Finally, as the defecation of certain prophets is felt to be sacred by their followers, we are given the sense that Harold's simple act has produced something of far greater worth than its material composition.

Summary

A number of points on the nature and importance of humour in culture have been made and illustrated in this chapter.

i) Humour is a part of the natural life process and as such it is <u>commonly taken for granted</u>, or not recognised as having

serious import, especially by social investigators.

ii) This is heightened by the fact that humour is a framework for 'non-real' or 'play' activity, an aside from normal discourse. The fact that it need not be taken into account in subsequent 'serious' interaction does allow messages and formulations to be 'risked' within its framework which would not otherwise be acceptable or possible.

iii) Humour allows the exploration of new ideas in situations of uncertainty or unfamiliarity. Similarly allowed are the negotiation of taboo topics, sensitive issues, and marginal serious content. The possibility of the retrospective definition of actions as either 'serious' or 'non-serious', 'real' or 'joking' imparts an ambiguity and risk to such negotiations which can be exploited.

iv) Humour exerts a boundary function on both internal and external lines, policing groups in terms of membership and is acceptable and competent behaviour. Oppositions of extremes of deviance as either stupid (undifferentiated) or stingy/crafty (differentiated) behaviour are commonly used. The tendency is to affirm the ordinary or negotiated over the extreme or absolute, but the status of the ordinary is constantly undercut and is not established as an ideal.

v) Humour can function as a coping device to release tension, allay fear, forestall threat, defuse aggression or distance the unpleasant.

vi) Humour can represent an implicit contradiction, paradox or 'joke in the social structure made explicit. The 'joke' constitutes a reversal within its boundaries of the patterns of control in the 'real' world. In changing this balance temporarily, it both expresses and contains resistance. It may momentarily demystify the social order, but against the forces of myth and cliche promoting unreflective inertia, sustained challenge requires enormous creativity and energy to be exerted.

vii) 'Canned' jokes and 'situational' jokes are not entirely separate. Canned jokes are not sealed from the situation in which they are told as they always affect it and incorporate interaction into their pattern; situation jokes always have

some impact beyond their context. In our examples it was seen how 'canned' jokes may be perceived as apposite to a cultural situation, and may be taken up and receive connotation and incorporation into the culture. In our example they were used to symbolically reverse and alternate the privileged positions of supervisors and engineers. Situational jokes have similarities with 'canned' jokes at their deep levels of structure, and our examples demonstrated the impact of situational humour in boundary management, moral negotiation, resisting potential symbolic and actual redefinitions of status and control, exposure and realisation of paradox, demonstrations of incompetence in others, and achieving group solidarity. Ambiguity was seen to be used and created in order to resist the threat of loss of autonomy and control.

Conclusions

Finally, I would like to make a few observations about the demystifying role of humour. As has been discussed, humour has been identified as simultaneously exposing dominant ideologies and accommodating resistance to them. Such exposure has been seen as partial or incomplete; to view humour as completely subversive fails to account for its apparent incapacity to change society, whilst to dismiss it as a mere frivolity underestimates its symbolic power.

It does seem possible, however, that the following formulation might present an advance towards a proper conceptualisation of the significance of humour in culture.

a) Humour and joking <u>does</u> expose myth completely but only within its own confining framework of the 'non-real', 'play', or the 'non-serious'.

b) In order for a change in the social order to be achieved the symbolic reversals of humour must be transposed to a 'real life' framework, and actualised in a real situation.

c) The negotiation of such transpositions is not accomplished from an equal <u>material</u> basis. Not only does habit and inertia favour the dominant status quo, but interests, power and

capital also lend the advantage to the dominant-hegemonic(56). This does have considerable influence on what may be defined as humorous and serious, without being absolutely determining.

(d) Myth generally acts in favour of the dominant-hegemonic inits naturalising effect and its foreclosing of reflection and alternative formulations. But it does not do so exclusively - subgroups and subcultures can and do naturalise their own forms and possess their own myths.(57) Such oppositions can become stereotyped into formal oppositional codes. The force of humour is to disrupt and reverse the direction or deterioration of thought in such naturalisations whether dominant-hegemonic or oppositional and to produce a stimulus for them to be re-negotiated in 'real-life' frames. The rules dwhich prevent access to the derivation of myth may be safely broken within the frame of humour.(58)

(e) Such negotiation will depend on the material and interactional bases of social relations, and the extent to which the myth and its alternatives diverge. The practical accomplishment of everyday living must remain possible, as must sense-making and the symbolic ordering of its contexts. Ambiguity is important both in the sense of practical bargaining in the real world and in the reordering of the symbolic in the non-real world. It is when ambiguity is lost and the limits and margins lose their potential as a ground for creative redefinition and negotiation that conflict occurs and resistance solidifies or evaporates.

(f) Finally, the power of humour to stimulate change should not be underestimated. The pens of Erasmus, Swift, Pope and Dickens and other great satirists and humourists bear testimony to this. The feeling that 'nothing I do is taken seriously' or 'they're all laughing at me' has proved enormously disabling for individuals and for whole governments on occasion. Books, pamphlets and T.V. programmes are not burned or banned for their serious content alone. Humour can have great impact in the world by having its content transposed and defined as serious, but also by transposing real-world content into the humorous frame, and defining it as humorous in an indelible and irreversible way. Its impact may be more effectively destructive in this way than through the more tortuous

channels of negotiation and construction. In achieving this, it creates landmarks for other resistances and formulations which could offer potential for more substantial social change.

Chapter Nine: Sabotage, Games, and a Problem of Meaning

Introduction

In this chapter, I will develop the analysis of marginality, and the development of compliance and resistance, which has already been traced through consultancy, induction, and the resistance accomplished by the non-real within the humorous framework, to consider the extreme form of material resistance experienced in acts of sabotage. Previous treatments of sabotage have adopted an approach based either on the social psychology of deviance (as have Taylor and Walton) or on models of the labour process or the class struggle (Dubois, Edwards and Scullion) which have attempted to explain the phenomenon. However, they have paradoxically neglected much contextual data (perhaps because of their analytical presuppositions) whilst affirming the importance of contextual considerations.

In analysing previous treatments of sabotage a number of criticisms are made of explanations which are over-reliant on doubtful indicators, exegesis, the assumption of an everyman explanation or ideal-typical rationality, and the view of the workforce as homogenous. Neglected has been the important difference between the doing of an act of sabotage and its telling - which has importance for any serious investigator. Individual motivations, where considered, have been too frequently ascribed on the basis of flimsy evidence and stereotypical assumptions.

The understanding of acts of sabotage needs to be firmly grounded in their context, in terms of the symbolic order which creates and sustains their meaning. An extension of the anthropological analysis adopted in earlier chapters explores the relationships between the physical body and the social body, noting that in rigidly controlled and role-differentiated cultures (as found in both industry and public administration) boundaries and margins will be morally and conceptually significant. In these cultures physical ingestions and emissions will need to be 'bracketed off', as occurs with the hierarchical separation of toilets and dining areas. Verbally, reference to these processes becomes part of the

joking framework within which reversals are accomplished; physically, the areas are those of worker autonomy and freedom and become symbolically subversive. An associated concept is waste, and this is often incorporated within games as an end or by-product of a controlled subversion of the symbolic order in action. Many 'acts of sabotage' may assume a different assignation when seen in relation to this wider symbolic order. Finally a 'new definition' of sabotage is not suggested - rather a clearer drawing of some of the dimensions which make such a definition so difficult to achieve.

It is possible to formulate the significance of acts of sabotage in industry in a number of ways. If viewed in the context of workplace organisation and control systems, utilising a conflict model of industrial relations, sabotage could be seen as a weapon which the shop steward or equivalent bargainer could tacitly exploit in his negotiating role and a continuing threat to management. This would be consonant with a 'radical' or 'marxist' view of the wider sphere of industrial relations.

A pluralist position, more characteristic of an orthodox trade unionist adopting a control model, might view acts of sabotage as weakening the negotiator's position and undermining his authority. As such they would exert pressure to remove industrial relations from the formal arena in which settlements are achieved through bargaining. Although sabotage is ostensibly against management interests, from this perspective it can be exploited by management against workforce representatives to strengthen their moral position.

Acts of sabotage can also be seen as an effect of poor management, inter-group conflict, individual frustration or simple carelessness. They can be a result of competition between groups and individuals or of a wider struggle for control. Their forms can include destruction of materials or machinery, inattention, withdrawal of cooperation or complete withdrawal of labour. They may serve the ends of some groups and not others with regard to class, function or persuasion. They may be planned, co-ordinated, organised and discussed or implicit. They can be indulged in by

anyone in any capacity.

In this chapter, I want to consider sabotage as an attempt to move from the primarily verbal and symbolic forms of 'resistance' discussed so far into the 'real', the realm of action and the concrete. In discussing previous treatments of the subject, it will be noted that there is little agreement on the definition of 'sabotage' amongst the few writers who have treated it at length. There is also little evidence of the specifically situational significance of sabotage. However, even when situational settings are considered, they are not treated as part of a symbolic system of meaning. The concentration is on forms of sabotage in most cases, and these forms are either interpreted in terms of 'meaning' at a general level of analysis, or as a situational part of the labour process in terms of origins and effect. The link between the situational circumstances and their symbolic significance is not established, and much of the treatment of sabotage, even at its most complex and sophisticated, remains superficial and circumstantial. In my treatment of sabotage at E.L.S. Amalgamated Bakeries, I attempt to consider sabotage in terms of its meaning within the wider, symbolic system in which it exists. This involves consideration of the symbolic manifestations of control and play, and of the social body in the physical environment.

Definitions

Sabotage as a word is not widely used, although as a concept it may be more current. It tends towards the indelicate as it carries strong overtones of underground politics, Trotskyists and Militants, organised, dedicated and subversive. However, it is elusive in both its semantic definitions and its actual occurrence in individual acts. This has resulted in both a dearth of academic writing on the subject, and an unevenness and definitional variety amongst the writers who do consider the subject.

In popular understanding, sabotage may well be equated with machine-smashing and Luddism. Dubois presents an archetype of the popular functionalist dismissal of the contemporary relevance of

sabotage:

> 'Workers' sabotage? That's all past history! A hundred years ago yes, they broke machines, with angry shouts that mechanization was taking away their jobs and their livelihood. But workers today are disciplined: they have won social benefits and they have unions to defend them; negotiating structures work well, and no one would dream of damaging the tools of his trade.'(1)

This narrow definition of violence to the machine which threatens the worker in various ways is challenged by Taylor and Walton, who extend the definition to encompass violence to the product.

> 'They had to throw away half a mile of Blackpool rock last year for, instead of the customary motif running through its length, it carried the terse injunction 'Fuck Off'. A worker dismissed by a sweet factory had effectively demonstrated his annoyance by sabotaging the product of his labour. In the Christmas rush in a Knightsbridge store, the machine which shuttled change backwards and forwards suddenly ground to a halt. A frustrated salesman had demobilized it by ramming a cream bun down its gullet.'(2)

Their definition, which they say is broad, encompasses

> 'that rule-breaking which takes the form of conscious action or inaction directed towards the <u>mutilation or destruction of the work environment</u> (this includes the machinery of production and the commodity itself).'(3)

This does not however offer sufficient breadth for either Brown or Dubois. Brown quotes from a number of writers associated with the 'Syndicalists' in the early part of this century:

> 'Sabotage does <u>not necessarily mean destruction</u> of machinery or other property, although that method has always been indulged in and will continue to be indulged in as long as there is a class struggle. More often it is used in a quieter way. Excessive limitation of output is sabotage. So is any obstruction of the regular conduct of industry.' Frank Bohn, 'Some Definitions: Direct Action - Sabotage' in **Solidarity** (USA) May 18, 1912
>
> '...deliberate violence is, no doubt, a relatively minor fact in the case, as compared with deliberate malingering, confusion, and misdirection of work that makes up the bulk of

what the expert practitioners would recognise as deliberate sabotage.' Thorstein Veblen **On the Nature and Uses of Sabotage** (1919).

'There is no need to smash machinery if one's ends can be served by less destructive methods, and there are forms of sabotage...much more capable of clogging the wheels of capitalism than the outright smashing of the machine itself.' William Mellor **Direct Action** (1920)(4)

Taylor and Walton approach the subject from the perspective of deviance, criticising studies which have dismissed industrial sabotage as being individual and irrational. 'Sometimes the behaviour involves only one person,' they argue 'but the active or passive co-operation of hundreds is observable'(5). They attempt to devote their attentions not simply to actions, but to

'the **meanings or motives** which lie behind such actions. We categorize acts of sabotage, not under such behavioural headings as 'smashing conveyor belts' or 'dropping ball-bearings into cogs', but rather under meaningful and intentional headings such as 'attempts to reduce tension and frustration', 'attempts at easing the work process', 'attempts to assert control'.'(6)

It is in their interpretation of meaning and the attribution of intention that Taylor and Walton leave us room to doubt the value of their approach. Their data, which they admit is unreliable(7), comes in part from the popular press and from casual conversations. Although they were able to view 'the context in which sabotage typically occurs' they did not observe it occurring in its setting, or assess its significance in terms of that setting.(8) They do not attempt to question the adequacy of their informants accounts or their own accounts,(9) nor their informants ability to 'understand' their own actions as distinct from their capacity to account for them. They are also quite liberal in their interpretations and presentations of press and textual material. Their fondness for anecdote pushes them at times into the realm of myth-making, or at least myth perpetuation. Although they stress the move from action to meaning they are still only concerned with the meaning of the individual act (rather than its place in a wider system of meaning) and this is reflected in their perpetuation of the 'hoary old myth' that French-speaking Belgian (Walloon) textile

workers threw their 'sabots' (clogs) into their machines to coin the original phrase.(10) As Brown observes, the derivation is in fact from an older usage, examples of which are 'dormir comme un sabot' (sleep extremely deeply or heavily) and 'travailler comme un sabot' (to work slowly, clumsily, over-deliberately).(11) This moves us away from the machine-smashing image towards the argument of Rocker:

> 'Sabotage consists of the workers putting every obstacle in the way of the ordinary modes of work...The term itself is derived from the French word, **sabot**, wooden shoe, and means to **work clumsily as if by sabot blows.** The whole import of sabotage is actually exhausted in the motto, for bad wages, bad work.' Rudolf Rocker **Anarcho-Syndicalism** (Indore, n.d.) (12)

This reversal of the popular management maxim does have something in common with Taylor and Walton in its representation of sabotage not only as rational, but as 'an almost daily experience in the workers' life'.(13) Brown presents it as another mechanism for negotiating and settling terms of employment.

> '...the productivity of capital is itself partly determined in the class struggle. It is part of what labour and capital are bargaining about when they debate manning, productivity, the speed of the line, the introduction of new equipment and so on.'(14)

Brown's view is essentially British and pluralist and remains tied to the workplace. Dubois adopts a more extreme definition which includes virtually every action directed in the face of capitalism.

> '...everything done by workers, individually or collectively, to the manufactured product or the machinery of production, that results in lowering the quantity or quality of production, whether temporarily or permanently.'(15)

This includes poor management, strikes, arson, theft, going slow, working-to-rule, working without enthusiasm, absenteeism, high labour turnover, avoidance of employment, refusal to work in production industries, starting work later and retiring earlier.(16) The panorama of possibilities is breathtaking, in

part because Dubois appears to have adopted a theoretical position on what constitutes sabotage, based on a Marxist understanding of the class struggle within capitalism, and then works out his definition from that basis. Context and situation are neglected, as is any attempt to define sabotage practically from an actor's perspective - the examples which Dubois offers are subordinated to his theoretical presuppositions. It is doubtful whether such a definition which could include the sick, the lazy, the insane, the criminal, the incompetent and the priesthood amongst others under its rubric, though compelling, could be of any practical analytical value.

Edwards and Scullion confine their definition of sabotage to one of destruction, following Taylor and Walton, as theirs is part of a wider study of forms of industrial conflict.(17) They are concerned with action at the point of production, and are keen to emphasise that it is not the prerogative of politically-motivated groups. They follow Taylor and Walton in including deliberate poor work as well as destruction in their definition, but criticise them for not satisfying their own demands for 'detailed consideration of the context in which the act occurs.'(18) Their own study, although rich in empirical data of a sort, fails to render much coherence to its argument. Their examples are limited in nature and largely instrumentally-orientated, as best as we can tell from their instrumentally-orientated presentation. The concern of Edwards and Scullion to 'explain the significance of the behaviour in specific settings or why some groups of workers engage in it when others do not'(19) lacks some of Taylor and Walton's imaginative and intuitive flair towards understanding that behaviour. There is no attempt to conceive of the symbolic system of which sabotage might be part - it is instrumental, practically orientated, exchange-based, related to reward and control systems and, within limits, subject to many deviations, exceptions and caveats, explicable. They are concerned with sabotage as part of the labour process rather than as a manifestation of the symbolic process.

In the following some of the main points of the above work will be considered and illustrated with examples from E.L.S. Amalgamated

Bakeries where appropriate. It is not pretended that the existing work does not provide useful analyses or classifications or that it has no explanatory power, but that its explanatory power is limited and its level of appreciation of the symbolic significance of sabotage low.

Taylor and Walton

Taylor and Walton offer three justifications for studying sabotage at all. Their first,

i) Industrial sabotage may be an index of underlying conflict

poses problems. Granted, implicit, direct, grass roots action may be taken, and Brown's analyses demonstrate the co-ordination and organisation this may achieve. However, where accompanied by explicit statements of intent, there would be no need for an 'index of underlying conflict' as this would be self-evident; without it, how can the observer know whether an act can be appropriately labelled 'sabotage' or not, or whether, if it can, that this is indeed an index of underlying conflict? The covert nature of sabotage and the difficulty of observing it and even participating in it make the drawing of such implications difficult to take beyond the stage of suspicion.

ii) It may have behavioural and motivational links with other deviance outside work.

It may, and in some cases, certainly does. But this should not lead us into the trap of trying to explain acts of sabotage in terms of deviance found outside work, without first considering all the dimensions of its unique occurrence within its contextual setting. Once those can be established, the links and distinctions drawn will be much less likely to be exegetical.

iii) It illuminates the problem of 'irrational' behaviour.

Certainly there is a strong possibility that sabotage is indeed 'rational' - in many cases this is obvious as the act comes allied to a specific declaration of intent. However, Taylor and Walton have a particular model of rationality, and do not appear to incorporate the possibility of a 'logic of the concrete' in their analyses. For example, they cite the following:

'Near the end of the Scotland-West Germany World Cup qualifying match, one of the Scottish players (their team was losing 3-2 in the closing minutes) chased an opponent for a few seconds in order to kick his legs from under him. This sudden ineffective aggression (the game stopped, the player was sent off, Scotland lost) appeared understandable to the commentator and no doubt to most viewers at that particular point in time because of the Scottish players' general frustration at losing a match which they had looked like winning in the beginning.'(20)

In contrast to their own avowed aim of understanding the context of the act, they simply impute typical interpretations by typical commentators/viewers, assuming that the act was an expression of frustration and as such possibly even beyond the actor's understanding or outside his control. To assess this account we would need to know who the players were (skilful Scottish winger, uncompromising full-back etc) and to have some evidence of the history of their interaction over the course of the game. Most sports fans are familiar with the number of painful and effective 'professional fouls' which can be committed with little possibility of detection. Had this been occurring during this game, the player's run and lunge might well have been one more motivated by revenge, or at least personal frustration, than the general frustration of losing the game. In fact, the act of lashing out and retaliating is far more likely to be a direct reaction to frustration or one incident than is a chase sustained for a number of seconds in order to achieve such retaliation. Taylor and Walton say the act was ineffective - but they have no evidence as to what effect it had on the German's play, his feelings or reputation, and it did have the effect of stopping the Scotsman from getting his legs kicked to pieces, if that is what was happening. There is more to sabotage, as there is to football, than meets the eye.

They follow this with another example.

'Again, fruit-machine players who have consistently lost may deliver a resounding kick at the machine after the last sixpence has disappeared. This is also non-instrumental behaviour (we have never seen a machine disgorge its contents when so treated) but acceptable and 'meaningful' in the context.'(21)

Consider this in the light of the following description of 'natural magic':

> 'Modes of behaviour exhibiting some simple analogy and carried out quite unreflectively and without any basis in theory...It may be noticed on any skittle-alley or bowling-green. A bowler aims and plays his ball, wishing it to run true and hit the jack. He watches eagerly as it rolls, nodding his head, his body bent sideways, stands balancing on one leg, jerks over violently to the other side as the critical point is reached, makes as though to push the ball on with hand or foot, gives a last jerk - and the end is reached. Its hazards past, the ball rolls safely into position.'(22)

If we are going to consider the fruit machine-player's kick, we should consider it not in terms of his final action, but as part of the system of gestures and utterings, which punctuate his whole playing of the game. Most players mutter, beckon, coax, bite their lips, stroke or pat the machine in a way similar to the bowls player's 'natural magic' - and this offers a possibility of rational explanation which does more than consider the individual act as self sufficient and non-contextual. Incidentally, I have seen a fruit-machine disgorge its contents after such a kick!

Taylor and Walton also point out that individuals produce accounts of their behaviour according to what they think their audience will accept - thus many definitions of behaviour as 'irrational' occur because this is acceptable and unproblematic to most people. They may 'in front of more sympathetic audiences' cite other reasons 'which allow them more intentionality'. They may indeed do this - but they may do it simply because they think the sympathetic audience wants to hear this sort of explanation. There may well be something of the 'amateur' psychologist/sociologist in many deviants, and there is nothing to prevent the operation of a more sophisticated version of this simple 'joke' which was played on a research colleague of mine:

> 'Workman: 'You need a bit of psychology to understand George.'
>
> Researcher (with interest): 'Psychology?'
>
> Workman: 'Yes. His trouble is that he's an anal-compulsive.

> Researcher (with excitement): 'He *is*? Do you mean...(overwhelmed)'
>
> Workman: 'Yes...(pause) He can't help making an arsehole of himself.''(23)

Full consideration of actions requires recognition at least of the *possibility* that they may be part of a wider system of meaningful acts, with symbolic rather than simply instrumental significance.

Taylor and Walton go on to identify three types of sabotage, but unfortunately their examples are not always unambiguous examples of that which they claim them to be.

i) *Individual and collective attempts to reduce frustration*

Taylor and Walton give an example of two seamen engaged in tank-cleaning, reduced to their last two buckets (which made the job much harder and longer) and unable to get any more. After the final frustration of being unable to get further buckets

> 'For a moment we looked at each other without saying anything. Then the other seaman grabbed the bucket alongside him and flung it with all his might against a bulkhead and smashed it to smithereens. I did the same.'(24)

This type of action, they argue:

> '(i) does not aim to restructure social relationships, to redistribute power;
> (ii) does not necessarily make work any easier;
> (iii) does not **directly** challenge authority;
> (iv) is spontaneous. The seaman just 'grabbed the bucket alongside him'.
> (v) is a situation in which what or whom gets hurt is relatively arbitrary.'(25)

But their example does not demonstrate this. The redistribution of power is minor but temporary - the seamen do, in effect, countermand an order to do the job with two buckets. The second point depends on the consequences. If the work is stopped, it is easier from the seamen's point of view; if more buckets are obtained because of the situation it is both easier from their

point of view and more efficient from the Merchant Navy's perspective as they would not require overtime. Certainly there is no direct challenge to authority but an implicit challenge to authority is made. The spontaneous nature of the act seems to be created by Taylor and Walton in their introduction of the word 'just', which is not in the text. In the text two seamen exchange a knowing look, as though they both realise what must be done. Then one does it, and the other one follows. Even if the act was spontaneous for the first seaman, it could not have been so for the second. Similarly, the arbitrariness of what or who gets hurt is completely non-existent. It is the bucket which is hurt, not the other seaman, and there is a perfectly rational explanation for it.

I am not arguing that this is the only correct explanation which as such demolishes Taylor and Walton's. We are both interpreting an account of a situation from which we were absent, but I think that the possibilities of my interpretation raise questions about theirs. It is not that their argument that there are cases of sabotage as reactions to frustration falls down completely because of this, but if there are such cases, they will not be known by this method of investigation.

A subdivision of this classification is 'sabotage as fun'. Here workers make technicolour ball-cocks, brick-up garages with lorries inside them, loads are delivered to absurd parts of the factory. The response is 'collective' so we are told, and frequently embodies 'common feelings of hostility towards machinery and authority'. This also includes the 'hysterical atmosphere in which every opportunity for cocking-up the works will be taken', when everyone wants the line to break down, or when the commodity is deliberately messed up to facilitate 'a gleeful release of tension'.(26)

Taylor and Walton indicate that some of their 'stories' may be apocryphal, and it is worth emphasising that we are dealing with stories and not acts. Many acts which are evidence of individual malice or stupidity may well be retold with approval, as long as the teller is not the perpetrator and is not so identified. What accounts for this transformation?

As we have seen in the last chapter, the joke depends on a reversal of symbolic values and interruptions to the flow of naturalisation, an affirmation of its 'possibility'. Sabotage, in a practical way, asserts a similar precariousness, and in being retold presents verbally the 'joke in the social situation'. Stories of sabotage are not retold because they are 'indicators of commonly held values'(27), but because they create temporary anarchy, disturbing dominant values without normally asserting anything other than possibilities. The textual 'saboteur' or 'idiot' in this way may function as the 'outsider' in much Western literature, bringing and stimulating criticism and alternative formulations which are only available to a marginal member of the community.

The Shovels

In this way, the navvies of McPeakes for whom I spent a summer working as a joiner's mate, would tell of the enormous number of shovels which were disappearing from one site. The site yard was on one side of a slope, and at the bottom of the other side part of the development included a small bridge over a stream. When, during a drought, the stream dried up, the shovels were seen to be sticking up, handles first, in the mud, 'like Flanders fucking field'. The navvies, not wanting to carry them back up the hill, had thrown them over their shoulders off the bridge.

The shovel of course, is a well-known symbol of diligence to the navvy. Whilst following a similar occupation with a different employer, Westerman's, complaining that my shovel kept disappearing and so precipitating the wrath of Watson (the foreman), I was told:

> 'If there's one hundred men and ninety-nine shovels, and Watson come's round that corner, tha'll be t'one wi'aht. And as soon as t'fat bastard fucks off, tha'll have ninety-fucking-nine.'

The casting of the shovels was thus more than simply a demonstration of frustration or idleness. It was a reversal of the constant vigilance in the quest for the shovel that the presence of

authority provoked, a relaxation of the watchfulness which was part of even the laziest navvy's life.

Other stories were also told of Paul, who worked the concrete machine which loaded the lorries heading for site. At the back of the cabin (outside) were a pile of old wellingtons. One day the foreman told Paul to 'burn all those boots at the back of the cabin'. Annoyed to find them still there at the end of the day, he discovered Paul stoking a smouldering pile of the delivery books which contained the records of the year's work which had been stored inside, but at the back of the cabin.

The significance of the re-telling of such an act is not to be found in terms of Paul's intentions or motivations, or dismissed simply as incompetence. It achieves its significance by virtue of the ironic reversal it achieves - of the rational and the physical, (book and boots), order and chaos, procedure and expediency, and by revaluation of the typical symbols of the bureaucrats and labourers respective existences.

Sabotage is just as much 'fun' in the telling as the doing.

ii) Attempt to facilitate or ease the work process

This form of sabotage has been well documented, and is probably the most widely-discussed empirically.

> 'This type of sabotage is described by workers as 'helping things along', 'cutting through the red tape', 'getting on wth the job'. Sabotage of this type
> (i) does not aim to restructure social relationships;
> (ii) does attempt to make the work easier;
> (iii) can directly challenge some levels of authority (in this example, air force inspectors);
> (iv) involves planning;
> (v) has a highly specific target.'(28)

Taylor and Walton give examples of the use of the 'tap' in an aircraft factory to make the work easier. They also quote

> 'If (managers) were completely obeyed, confusions would result and production and morale would be lowered. In order to

> achieve the goals of the organisation, workers must often violate orders, resort to their own techniques of doing things and disregard lines of authority. Without this kind of systematic sabotage much work could not be done. This unsolicited sabotage in the form of disobedience and subterfuge is especially necessary to enable large bureaucracies to function effectively.'(29)

Workers cut corners in the interests of organisational efficiency, often against the wishes of management. Donald Roy produces a persuasive account of the workers' efficiency in a machine shop:

> 'If managerial directives are not the guides to efficient action that they are claimed to be, then, perhaps, 'logics of efficiency' would be better designated as 'sentiments of efficiency'...If we conceive of 'logical' behavior not as self-contained ratiocinative exercises but as intellectual operations in continuous reciprocal interplay with concrete experience, machine operators and their service-group allies would appear the real holders of 'logics of efficiency'.'(30)

The object of much of the workers' activity in Roy's study was in fact to earn bonus at an acceptable level, or to 'make-out'. Thus although it would be impossible to deny that the workers contributed to improving efficiency, it might be questioned whether their motivation was one of competition between themselves or a struggle for control of the work process. Burawoy followed Roy thirty years later in the same factory and discovered the same practices, which improved efficiency and the speed of the job if it 'ran well', but increased the risk of turning out scrap or damaging tools if it did not.(31)

Edwards and Scullion

Edwards and Scullion discovered some similar practices in their own researches, but question whether sabotage in this sense was a form of competition or a form of resistance.

> 'Burawoy defines struggle as an attempt to shift the curve relating rewards to effort in the workers' favour. Competition, on the other hand, involves moving up or down an existing effort curve. Since sabotage enabled workers to earn a given amount of money more quickly than if they followed planned times, it appears that the behaviour qualifies as a

type of struggle. Similarly, the forms of making out discussed by Burawoy may be seen as aspects of struggle whereas Burawoy himself stresses that making out is really a form of competition. This ambiguity in Burawoy's usage of the two terms seems to stem from uncertainty about the term 'struggle'. On his formal definition, sabotage is a form of struggle, but he also wants to use the term in its wider sense to denote resistance and attempts to exert control. The confusion can be eliminated by arguing that, while there is a distinction between acceptance of the existing rules of the game and attempts to change those rules, different attempts to change the rules have different implications. In other words there are degrees of struggle. Thus, sabotage altered the rules, but it did so covertly and at the margin.'(32)

The ends of management were ultimately served, and workers in 'bending' the rules tended to be deflected from questioning their basis. Thus Edwards and Scullion line up with Taylor and Walton in seeing this form of sabotage as having distinct differences from that orientated towards resistance, but existing in a complex relationship with control systems which makes simple distinctions questionable.

The idea of making the work easier is complicated when 'piecework' considerations are introduced as the reward and control systems give greater point to those efforts. However at E.L.S. Amalgamated Bakeries, where everyone was paid a flat-rate, workers in some jobs were forced to bend the rules because of the moral pressures of production.

The Apple-Dicer

In the mixing room where fruit was cut up for small pie mixes, the apple was delivered in cans which had to be opened by hand or electric opener (both inefficient). Then the apple pieces had to be diced before they were ready for a mixing. About thirty cans were required for a mixing, and this technically required emptying the cans through a safety grid on top of the dicer. The apple pieces, however, were usually too big to go through and had to be forced by hand. It took about 20-25 minutes to dice one mix in this way, about 6 minutes to do it without using the guard, although this required a little practice in order to save accidents.

Supervision regularly told workers to use the guard. However, they then pursued and pestered them for production targets which could only be met by achieving a six-minute mix. Because of safety pressure from top management, supervision could not acknowledge that work was being done unsafely. Ultimately, they made the compromise that they would find a way to announce their arrival in the mixing room so that they would not see the machine being used without a guard and would therefore not be responsible for infractions of safety rules. Thus despite the occurrence of dangerous work practices which could have damaged either machine or worker being the result of extreme management pressure, the workers were held responsible although they received no benefit from increased production. The work though more dangerous, was, however, less tedious, and supervisors found ways to offer co-operation in other directions, being flexible on break-times etc. This 'negotiated' state of affairs was always subject to attack and erosion and needed to be constantly 'serviced'. This specific instance of an action which did cut corners and could be classed as sabotage, although apparently done to ease the work process, could only be adequately understood in its complex relation to issues of autonomy and control which were important throughout the factory.

Management Sabotage

This state of affairs could relate in some part to Roy's suggestion that managerial inefficiency might amount to sabotage. This is taken to its fullest development by Dubois:

> '...as well as worker sabotage, there can be management sabotage. We may go so far as to say that some factories are only kept going by the workers disregarding the instructions they are given for doing their jobs...To produce anything takes time; yet the real working time that starts when all the conditions are absolutely right can represent as little as a third of the total time spent at work. Almost all non-productive time can be blamed on the administration and in this sense it really is sabotage: errors in the conception and specification of the product, poor manufacturing methods, time wasted, machines out of use or out of order, workers taken from their normal role in the production process to be put on other jobs, trying to make too many different products, changing models too often, poor planning, shortage of raw

materials, plant not properly maintained, inadequate consideration of the siting of machinery, a failure to understand production patterns...management believe their decisions to be completely rational, whereas the workers see the irrationality in action: machines function more or less well - some standing idle for days on end - equipment is inadequate, supplies are ordered without regard to need, periods of intense activity alternate with periods of virtual inactivity, the burden of work is divided quite unfairly as between one position and another, further investment seems to be made quite arbitrarily and made without any proper planning, wages are not related to productivity and promotion goes to the submissive rather than to those who produce most. In other words, the workers realise that the firm exists more to protect a power-system than to foster efficient production...All this management sabotage is undoubtedly far more significant than any sabotage by workers.'(33)

Dubois overstates his case and credits the worker in general with far more perspicacity than he is likely to possess. Management can be conducted well or badly; workers can perform their duties similarly, and if an organisation ever depended entirely on the efforts of one group subverting those of the other, it would never survive. Management and worker interests and subcultures are far less homogeneous than Dubois suggests. However, I could draw examples of everything that Dubois lists from activities at E.L.S. Amalgamated, and although the motivations behind them were far more complex than Dubois seems to imply, their effects were detrimental to the efficiency of production. But I will give only one example, of a slightly different nature, as it demonstrates the formidable impact that management sabotage can have.

The Bread Strike

In the latter part of 1977, a number of small bread bakeries in South Wales struck against their employers for a restrospective premium for working the previous Bank Holiday. The employers were members of the 'Federation', as the employer's association was known. The employees approached the Baker's Union for support, and for the first time in its history, the Union called out all its members in support and the First National Bread Strike began.

The position at E.L.S. Amalgamated was confused. The Company was not a member of the Federation, operated a post-entry closed shop

and provided rates and conditions which were much better than Federation rates. The Company had a number of pre-Christmas export 'freezer' orders to fulfil worth a considerable sum (estimates hovered around the £1m mark). The employees were saving up for Christmas and nobody wanted to lose out. Many of them had never been involved in industrial action before. They were 'losing their virginity'.(34)

The Union sent the call to the local stewards to call a strike in support of the Union nationally. The stewards voted to support this, although in fact they had no option. They called a mass meeting of the day-shift and held a vote. The strike call was defeated on a show of hands. The stewards then announced that they would have to include the night-shift workers in the vote and so had to recount. A question was then asked as to whether the part-time evening shift workers or the part-time morning shift workers would get a chance to vote (all were fully entitled as members). The stewards went into a huddle and contacted the full-time official. They were told that neither they nor their workers had a choice nor ever had had - they were out. They were told to stop 'playing British Bloody Leyland'.

The confusion made the stewards look foolish and the workers feel resentful. They were called out against their will in a situation from which they would not benefit and which would most likely cause harm to the Company - against which they had no specific grievance at the time. They were confused and bitter, but compliant.

On the second day of the strike, I received, as did many others, a personal telephone call from an unidentified voice from the Bakery informing me that there would be a meeting in the canteen at 8.00 a.m. the following morning. 'The Union know...it's official', said the voice. Pleased that there might be some possibility of a return to work, a substantial number of the workforce turned up with hearts full of sympathy for the company only to find picket lines unbreached. The Union had not agreed to any meeting - the management had tried a ruse. Attempting to capitalise on the feelings of the workers, they hoped to get enough of them there at the time when staff, maintenance and management arrived to increase

the likelihood that some might cross the picket lines and follow them into work. The floodgates might then be opened and the strike broken.

The reaction amongst the work force was astonishing. Knowing how they had almost been tricked by the company they had strongly supported morally, they completely reversed their 'sweetheart' relationship. Interest in the progress of conciliation ceased; contact with the firm dwindled. They stayed at home waiting for news of the strike on the television and returned when it was announced to be over.

The effect on trust relations was mortifying. The duplicity of management - no-one ever found out who had done it or whose idea it was - was brought home with stunning clarity. Over twelve months later many workers still felt that the impact of the incident had not fully subsided.

This incident seems to be a perfect example of management sabotage, not directly of the product or means of production, but of the fragile trust relations which had been slowly developing. In production terms, workers became much less willing to show the co-operation and effort which they had previously shown, and the cutting of corners in the interests of efficiency was curtailed. When problems and grievances surfaced, they took time to resolve because of the atmosphere of suspicion. But most importantly, by underestimating the worker's moral commitment to their Union <u>even when it was, in the worker's own opinion wrong</u>, management revealed themselves to be tricksters. The Stewards may well have been considered incompetent, but their integrity was not at the time in question. Management by their actions, sabotaged their relationships with their employees, and their negotiating position in collective bargaining, for a substantial period into the future.

(It could have been suggested that the telephone call might have been made not by management but by the Union, in a sophisticated act of double-dealing. There would, however, have been little point to this - the Company was not the target of the strike,

merely an unfortunate victim and local representatives of the Union were urgently attempting to persuade national officials to exempt them from the strike call. The general level of naivety amongst union officials would support the unlikelihood of such a trick being thought of by them even if they had a motive, and even then practicalities of access to their records (which were in their office in the personnel suite) would have made it unlikely to have been achieved without arousing suspicion. Possibly the most telling circumstance is that although no culprit was ever publicly identified, management never denied the responsibility.)

In terms of Dubois' broad definition of sabotage there is room for consideration for this incident in terms of reducing the amount of work done or stopping production, occasionally.

> 'We may distinguish three types of workers' sabotage: those where the object is to destroy machinery or goods (arson, direct damage to machines, refusal to operate safety services, vandalism, theft); those which stop production (strikes and various other ways of blocking production without actually destroying anything); and those which reduce the amount of work done (going slow, cutting down on working time, working to rule, working without enthusiasm, absenteeism, labour turnover and simply refusing to go into industry at all).(35)

It may even have contributed to turnover or absenteeism. It is impossible to tell. But what it most certainly did was provide a reversal of the habitual order which equates management, efficiency, rationality and morality, but not within the 'joking framework'. The description was a 'real' act with 'real' consequences, which disrupted and effectively sabotaged the symbolic order which helped to maintain control and power relations within the company. Management, temporarily but significantly, lost their advantage in negotiating ambiguity and in defining effective moral boundaries.

This loss of control may well enable classification of our incident under Taylor and Walton's third category.

iii) Attempts to assert control

Should it do so it would be rather as an attempt by management to

re-assert control in a situation of confusion and ambiguity which failed, and constituted a loss of control. However, their categorisation is more straightforward.

> 'Such sabotage has the following characteristics:
>
> (i) It aims to 'restructure social relationships - in its most extreme form to establish workers' control, or in milder variants merely to give the workers temporary control over a specific situation, control wrested from others.
>
> (ii) The work is not necessarily made easier - indeed there may be even self-imposed hardships.
>
> (iii)There is a direct challenge to authority - although the levels will differ, as is implied by the variations described under (i).
>
> (iv) It is frequently planned and/or coordinated.
>
> (v) The target is not arbitrary - the activity is directed against the powerful.'(36)

This type of sabotage is described, in its milder form of working incompetently, by Brown in his analysis. He quotes from utterances made at the time of the strike in Glasgow, in June 1889, by the National Union of Dock Labour. The strike was broken by scab labour brought in from neighbouring farms, and on the dockers' return to work, they were addressed by the founder of the Union, Edward McHugh:

> 'You are going to return to work today at the old rate. The employers have repeatedly said that they were delighted with the services of the farm workers who have replaced us over the past few weeks. We have seen them; we have seen that they don't know how to walk on a boat, that they have dropped half the stuff they carried; in short that two of them can't do the work of one of us. However the employers have said that they are delighted with the services of these people; let us therefore do the same and practice ca'canny. Work like the farm workers worked. Only it happened that several times they fell into the water; it is useless for you to do the same.'(37)

The practice of working inefficiently proved successful when striking had failed. At the end of that year, the Union made it official policy in its review.

'Having mastered all the mysteries of the doctrine of value and the distinction between 'value' and 'price', we were made familiar with the multitudinous forms of orthodox adulteration from jerry buildings and coffin ships to watered milk and shoddy clothes. With only one exception we found the all-prevailing practice to be this, that the 'QUALITY' of each commodity, whether it be a dwelling-house, a suit of clothes, or a Sunday's dinner, is regulated according to the price which the purchaser is willing to pay - the one exception being labour.

We began to ask ourselves and our fellow-members why the 'quality' and 'quantity' of labour should not be subject to the same law as other marketable commodities. We were witnesses of the fact that a trifling increase in wages was scornfully and insultingly refused to Union men, whilst at the same time inexperienced and consequently inefficient scab labour was imported at enormous cost and trouble, and paid at higher rates than were asked by Union men, and, in addition to higher wages, we saw the scabs delicately entertained and provided with free food and lodging, tobacco, and beer - the ability to do these things demonstrating beyond the possibility of doubt that the demand made by Union men was a very modest one indeed, and one which the employers could easily have afforded to grant.

We had the most convincing proof of the **limited quantity** of work done by scabs in the detention of vessel, and of the **inferior quality** in the fact that the ships when stowed were pronounced unseaworthy. For these unsatisfactory results the employers paid generously.

There is no ground for doubting that the real relation of the employer to the workman is simply this - to secure the largest amount of work for the smallest wages; and, undesirable as this relationship may be to the workman, there is no escape from it except to adopt the situation and apply to it the commonsense commercial rule which **provides a commodity in accordance with the price.**'(38)

As a principle which offers the possibility of negotiating the component of fairness in 'a fair day's pay' by variations in the level of 'a fair day's work' this has become accepted practice in many industries. In E.L.S. Amalgamated, I have, on Union instructions, insisted on working with a mate on jobs which, with more effort, I would normally have handled alone. On one occasion, the Union demanded, for ostensible reasons of safety, that every individual be 'passed out' (given a training test and certificate) on every item of equipment or machinery that they were to operate. Without it, no-one was allowed to stop or start the machine, switch

a light on or off, or even use a brush, mop, or squeegee. Long after the dispute had receded into folklore, the question 'Are you passed out on that?' would be asked when someone wielded a new cigarette lighter, or poured a cup of tea from the urn.

Such behaviour often accompanies disputes or in its more subtle forms precedes the annual wage round to strengthen the Union's negotiating position. But not all incidents which appear to be 'political' are in fact what they seem.

Joe Khan

When Joe Khan was Shop Steward on the small pie plant at E.L.S. Amalgamated, he told the engineers, on at least one occasion, that the Union were in official dispute with the management over the authority of operators on the Aston. The engineers then insisted on correct dry-run testing, thorough checks of possible faults, and even helped Joe when he replaced faulty parts with faulty parts, dirty dies and broken air-lines etc. when there were breakdowns. Joe was usually in dispute with somebody about his authority, but on this occasion he was specifically trying to affect the production figures to reflect badly on Myrtle, the day supervisor. She was in contention with Joe's friend, Louisa, for the Senior Supervisor's job.

Nor did Joe's creative use of sabotage stop there. As the small pies came out of the Aston two girls usually adjusted the positioning of the lids on faulty ones and replaced missing lids. One of the girls who regularly worked on this job was Laura, whom Joe lusted after. He bought her a number of gratuitous presents and she did go out with him on one occasion, although he was married with four children. He was persistent, however, and whenever she was refusing to go out with him he would ensure that the lid dies on her lane were faulty, giving her a difficult shift. At the end of a day when she was tired and he was persistent, he was sometimes able to reap the benefits.

I discovered the above only after close observation and working with Joe for a long time. It is doubtful whether Laura ever knew.

The most devious piece of sabotage which I witnessed but was unaware of at the time was the following.

Joe and myself had worked overtime, as we often did, stripping the Aston, cleaning it and reassembling it for the night shift. As we had finished, Joe started the machine and ran it dry, a test which we rarely bothered to do. 'Right,' Joe said, 'it's working - see. Just so those bastards on the night shift don't come fucking complaining see?'

We left the floor and on the way to the showers Joe said, 'You go ahead, I've just got to drop these papers in the office'. Five minutes later he joined me and we left for the pub.

There was some banter in the pub as we met Doug and Phil, the nightshift operators. Doug was dating Marion, one of Joe's dayshift girls, and Joe did not like either her or Doug. We met the operators twice a day - once at night and again in the morning. The following morning, I asked Phil how they had done.

> 'Fucking terrible,' he replied. 'Only 11 doughs'. (20 was average, 30 the record). 'We were broke down for the first two hours'.
>
> 'Well, it was working all right when we left,' I said, 'We tested it'. I was puzzled, however.

It was not until a few days later that I was discussing the relative performances of the shifts with an old school-friend, Stuart, the night-shift supervisor.

> 'Joe Khan's trying to fuck me over but I can't prove owt,' he said. 'I know it's him. The other night we were stood for two hours and when we traced the fault it was these'. He held a handful of small pieces of broken plastic scraper. 'They're <u>just</u> big enough to blank off the cut-outs on the guards and you can't see the bastards at all. We fucked about for two hours for <u>them</u>. I know he put them there, but I can't accuse him 'cos they could have got there by accident. Something goes wrong or missing every couple of nights and I find a trick lik this, but I can't <u>prove</u> anything, and he's such mates with Jack (the manager) that I'd need it cast-iron to get him.'

I then remembered the great show Joe had made of the dry run, and the five minutes unaccounted for, which were just enough time for an experienced operator to have made the necessary adjustments.

Joe's motivations for this continual sabotage of the other shift, of which I obtained further evidence once aware of its possibility, were ultimately unfathomable in the circumstances. Certainly, he affected their performance and enhanced his own credibility in the eyes of management, although not to the point of complete destruction of the night-shift reputation (their record was 29 doughs, only one less than dayshift). Certainly he did not like Stuart, nor Doug. But his reasons were his own and he was very secretive about what they might be. He is still Plant Controller on the same line at E.L.S. Amalgamated and his ambitions were never to rise any higher - he knew that both his written English and his 'human relations' were not of sufficiently high standard to make him a supervisor.

Some form of psychological explanation of Joe's behaviour might be possible, but in order to offer any genuine contribution to understanding his behaviour it would demand of the investigator considerably more intimacy with Joe and his lifestyle than it was possible to achieve in the circumstances. Joe, despite his apparent need for a number of friends, tended to keep others at a distance, and had some sophisticated ego-defences. There was neither the time nor the opportunity available to explore these, even should I have felt competent to do so. Although not denying the possibility for and the potential contribution of psychological explanations to understanding behaviour at work, it may perhaps be observed that some psychological explanations (for example, some of those of Taylor and Walton) are offered without such a degree of intimacy as Joe's case would seem to merit. Such explanations, for all their apparent coherence, cannot claim to adequately account for the behaviour of specific individuals in particular contexts.

Whatever the reasons for his behaviour, it was clearly sabotage. It could be seen as a result of his personal ambitions, his role as shop steward, or his personal relations but none of these alone can

do justice to its extent and its effects. Also, without working very close to Joe, or even being in his confidence, even the evidence of its occurrence would be difficult to obtain. It seems also that models which seek to ascribe homogeneous motives to 'workers' and 'management' as classes might well be misinterpreting the behaviour of the Joe Khans of industry. How many more are there? How do we find them? Their existence certainly does not undermine completely the adoption of a broader explanatory thrust for theories of sabotage, but it does emphasise the need to be both cautious about developing such theories and careful to develop them from data obtained in context.

There was other sabotage in E.L.S. Amalgamated, and this can be rendered intelligible to some extent by considering the symbolic context of meaning in which it occurred. In the following pages, I will sketch something of this context. As an analytical framework for this picture, I will first outline some of the dimensions of cultural organisation developed by Douglas.

The Social Body

The categories which constitute a 'world-view' are themselves a product of social relations. Douglas identifies them as existing along two axes, a vertical one of 'grid' and a horizontal one of 'group' (see Figure 9). 'Grid' represents levels of classification beginning from the confused at level zero, extending in one direction to the private, in the other, vertically through increasing compexity to the publicly shared system. Horizontally, the 'Group' axis represents demands made on the individual from none at zero, to extremes of being subject to control or subjecting others to control.(39)

The social system, and the situation in industry, will be centred above the horizontal, and usually for the workers at least, in the right-hand sector. It is along these dimensions that our symbolic classifications and reversals move. The social 'body' as represented by these classifications and differentiations, constrains the perception of the physical, and before considering how the E.L.S. Amalgamated subculture affected the definition and

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Figure 9: Grid and Group (Douglas)

perception of physical acts such as sabotage, we should consider this more generally.

> 'The social body constrains the way the physical body is perceived. The physical experience of the body, always modified by the social categories through which it is known, sustains a particular view of society. There is a continual exchange of meanings between the two kinds of bodily experience so that each reinforces the categories of the other. As a result of this interaction the body itself is a highly restricted medium of expression. The forms it adopts in movement and repose express social pressures in manifold ways. The care that is given to it, in grooming, feeding and therapy, the theories about what it needs in the way of sleep and exercise, about the stages it should go through, the pains it can stand, its span of life, all the cultural categories in which it is perceived, must correlate closely with the categories in which society is seen in so far as these also draw upon the same culturally processed idea of the body.'(40)

The ways in which we move and respond physically are not natural. They are learned. In a recent television interview Lord Carrington, former Foreign Secretary, remarked of Chinese Marxism 'You don't see many Chinese smiling'. Indeed not, for in their culture it would tend to identify you as a man of indelicacy - it is a learned sign of embarrassment, not joy. Let Lord Carrington smile now.

Other bodily gestures, like the bow in Japanese culture, can convey a range of expression with a delicacy which escapes our culture, including effervescence, irony, suspicion, and sexual agitation. We are conditioned to a way of using our body which reflects our view of society, and the degree of control which is manifested in the operation of the one is mirrored in the other.

> 'In any kind of communication whatever, if more than one band is being used, ambiguity would result if there was no smooth co-ordination of meanings. Hence we would always expect some concordance between social and bodily expressions of control, first because each symbolic mode enhances meaning in the other, and so the ends of communication are furthered, and second because, as we said earlier, the categories in which each kind of experience is received are reciprocally derived and mutually reinforcing.'(41)

As Douglas points out, communication is not confined to verbal channels alone, so in studying culture we should expect to find some physical equivalents of the verbal messages, symbols and figures of expression which we have already discovered in our accounts and jokes.

The body is viewed as an image of society, and

> '...there can be no natural way of considering the body that does not involve at the same time a social dimension. Interest in its apertures depends on the preoccupation with social exits and entrances, escape routes and invasions. If there is no concern to preserve social boundaries, I would not expect fo find concern with bodily boundaries. The relation of head to feet, of brain and sexual organs, of mouth and anus are commonly treated so that they express the relevant patterns of hierarchy. Consequently I now advance the hypothesis that bodily control is an expression of social control - abandonment of bodily control in ritual responds to the requirements of a social experience which is being expressed. Furthermore, there is little prospect of successfully imposing bodily control without the corresponding social forms. And lastly, the same drive that seeks harmoniously to relate the experience of physical and social, must affect ideology.'(42)

We are not here concerned with the presence or absence of bodily control in ritual or religious ceremony, as Douglas is, but her observations can be applied to the presence or absence of bodily control in every day life. Douglas presents a model of conditions for 'ritualism' or 'effervescence' in religious forms,but this can be applied to the industrial order (see Figure 10).(43)

If we examine the conditions for ritualism we can see that the dominant-hegemonic culture of an industry such as E.L.S. Amalgamated with its high classification and strong control; rigid differentiation of roles and rules of conduct for predefined situtaions; emphasis on rationality and logic above intuition; low priority of interpersonal relations and stress on the objective needs of production; and the subordination of individual to company goals is a prime site for ritualism to flourish. Compare Weber:

> '(Bureaucracy) develops the more perfectly the more the

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bureaucracy is 'dehumanized', the more completely it succeeds in eliminating from official business love, hatred and all purely personal irrational and emotional elements which escape calculation.'(44)

and Simmel:

'The individual is reduced to a negligible quantity, perhaps less in his consciousness than in his practice and in the totality of his obscure emotional states that are derived from this practice. The individual has become a mere cog in an enormous organisation of things and powers which tear from his hands all progress, spirituality and value in order to transform them from their subjective form into the form of a purely objective life...'(45)

Control, Tea and Toilets

In E.L.S. Amalgamated this devaluation of the individual was manifested in the required control of the physical body. Running was forbidden, as was horseplay or rowdiness; untidiness in dress was frowned upon. I was once chastised in a most unpleasant manner for sitting on the edge of a table. I similarly witnessed two workers, obviously tired and covered in chocolate after a gruelling session of overtime, slumped near the time-clock waiting for the minutes to tick round to the half-hour, a commonly accepted practice. They were bitterly bawled out by a passing manager who compelled them to straighten themselves out and stand up, in an orderly queue. As Douglas again observes, strong social control will demand strong bodily control, and this will be reinforced by the 'purity rule', an attempt to etherealise forms of expression.

'Social intercourse requires that unintended or irrelevant organic processes should be screened out. It equips itself therefore with criteria of relevance and these constitute the universal purity rule. The more complex the system of classification and the stronger the pressure to maintain it, the more social intercourse pretends to take place between disembodied spirits. Socialization teaches the child to bring organic processes under control. Of these, the most irrelevant and unwanted are the casting-off of waste products. Therefore all such physical events, defecation, urination, vomiting and their products, uniformly carry a perjorative sign for formal discourse. The sign is therefore available universally to interrupt such discourse if desired...Other

> physiological processes must be controlled if they are not part of the discourse, sneezes, sniffs or coughs. If not controlled, formal framing-off procedures enable them to be shorn of their natural meaning and allow the discourse to go on uninterrupted'(46)

Hence the common preoccupation with experiences like 'farting in church', and the concentration of references to genitalia and excrement in the 'dirty' joke, where the symbolic forms are reversed. In our industrial setting, where rigid control and rationality are part of the social system, entrances, exits, rules and boundaries are important. This is mirrored in the official treatment of bodily functions, where those functions to do with eating and defecation are 'bracketed off' into special areas on the periphery of the main work and office areas. Even within them, stratification occurs with staff and directors dining rooms, 'executive' washrooms and the like. Where low-grade activities take place however, is where grid and control breaks down, and the area of space (toilet or canteen) and time (breaks) in which these functions are performed is also a place and time of freedom and autonomy. Where control breaks down and alternatives are available, interaction and horseplay take place, topics of conversation change, jokes are told and cigarettes smoked. The world of the toilets and the canteen is the physical bracketing of the 'non-real' from the 'real' just as the 'joke' is its verbal form. In the 'bogs' and breaks the rational order is weakened - for tenminutes or an hour, control is reduced. Personnel managers often wonder why workers tend to complain only about 'tea and toilets' issues when asked for their views on the organisation of work. It is not simply that they spend a great deal of time there - they are symbolically important in the cultural system.

Waste

A similarly important consideration is one of waste. A controlled and rational social system not only denigrates bodily waste products, but waste of any sort, even beyond simple economic justifications. In the toilets at E.L.S. Amalgamated were signs informing the workers than the new bactericidal soap was there 'for your own good' and that it should be <u>used</u>, but used <u>sparingly</u>. The

implication was that the workers were low in the hierarchy and in not understanding the issues of dirt and cleanliness, economy and excess, they were merely physically demonstrating their inability to understand the social purity rule, to comprehend the rational bases of the culture and hence rise within it. Many of the workers often wore their dirt after a particularly filthy job as a badge, a challenge to management, and they would make themselves as visible as possible until they reached the showers.

Games

In jokes we often find the language of excess, of gluttony, of priapism, of enlarged genitalia. Similarly, in practice, at E.L.S. Amalgamated in particular, symbolic reversals were achieved either by deliberate waste or through games which incorporated a wasting of the product. Variations on these games were:

Target Dough - lumps of dough would be hurled about 30ft at the clock. The soft dough stuck to the wall and scores were awarded for proximity. As the dough dried out, it added spice to the game as it fell on the heads of passers-by.

Blackberry golf - Enormously difficult to play, with the handle of a squeegee and a frozen blackberry. Blackberries were lined up for each player and the furthest 'drive' counted.

Cricket - A similar game played with a paddle and a frozen raspberry, featuring some spectacular 'suicide' fielding.

Aston dough throw - Requiring some detailed explanation. As the squares of dough for the pie bases descended a sloping belt, 12 pies wide, they fell into foils below carried by trays. One worker sat at either side of the belt filling empty foils or otherwise correcting mistakes. The point of the game was to throw a piece of dough at the opponent's lane to try to remove as many of his pieces from the belt as possible. This created work for him, as he had to replace them before they reached the dies. Another variant was to time the throw with such force that it took the foil through the tray and caused the dough on the belt to fall through before the

opponent could replace it. This was only achieved by the best players.

These games all did, to a minor extent, sabotage the product. They weren't intended to, nor were they simply distractions from boredom. They were creating another bracketed-off world where the physical values of the organisation could be reversed and resisted, an alternative symbolic order which permitted waste, and flair, and physical expression. This rendered the sabotage both meaningful and exhilarating, beyond the effect of the act itself.

Definitions: Bashing the Brandenbergs

Sabotage, as a word, implies resistance, planning, and alternative modes of control. In all my time at E.L.S. Amalgamated, it was only used once jokingly, when Tam, the Supervisor, overhearing an ambiguous technical discussion about cars, came up and in a loud voice enquired

'Are ye talking sabotage, cunt?'

Sensitivity to such an issue is not surprising. There was an incident on the Brandenberg oven outfeed in which I was involved which illustrates the lengths to which management would go to avoid referring to the abomination. A number of slabs of cake had been damaged on the storage racks. In normal operations, they were pulled from the oven in boxes (hot), stripped by the oven-man (on the night in question this was me) and tipped onto cardboard sheets. The stacker then picked these up with one hand underneath and one on top, and racked them. They were left to cool until hard enough to cut and work with.

On the night following the damage, I was called to the manager's office with Ken, my previous night's assistant. Sixteen slabs had been damaged, and the supervisors and managers assembled assessed the damage at £160-£320 (usually imprecise for them). They told us they knew how 'it' had been done - there was only one way. It had to be deliberate. Someone had lifted the slabs and made holes in

the cake and replaced them. We denied it, honestly. We were pressed. We further denied it. Then I responded, indignantly,

'Do you know what you are accusing us of?'

A supervisor replied, cogently,

'Ah...well...no...now...all we want is...we just want to know if... if...anybody's been...er...playing ducks and drakes at that oven end...that's all, see?'

I thought it wise not to press for further clarification. We had been told that the rational organisation knew how we did it and that this was inevitable, as there was only one way. But the rational organisation when pressed, dare not accuse the Other, dare not invoke the symbolic presence of chaos, of disorder, of opposition. It was later discovered that the damage had been caused accidentally, because of faulty cardboard.

In E.L.S. Amalgamated, as, I suspect, in many other firms, much sabotage would not be acknowledged or defined as such, and the possibility of studying it then becomes even more remote. As management was often unwilling to overtly acknowledge forms of sabotage, the workforce similarly had certain forms of sabotage which were abominated and condemned.

Goods are carriers of meaning no less than forms of art.(47) The products that were created at E.L.S. Amalgamated carried meaning into the world and that meaning was established and changed in relation to other products. Workers left work, became consumers, and returned to work with a bit of that meaning with them. Although they adopted different frames of reference, they were never totally consumers and never totally workers. Although it was a food factory, supposedly producing family food, wholesome and nourishing, there was a strong awareness by the workers that the product contained large quantities of preservative, sugar and additives which were unwholesome and fattening if not carcinogenic. One publicity pack read 'Made to a traditional recipe just like mother used to bake. We think they're that bit better' (the recipe

used was ironically the standard one). This prompted one worker to remark 'I can just picture me aging white-haired mother as she quaveringly asked me to pass her the potassium sorbate and monosodium glutamate!'

There was an ambivalent attitude towards a product which was not really food, but an unhealthy luxury. But the product was to be eaten by people, and taken inside their bodies, and any action taken against the finished product which would affect the consumer in this way was rigidly circumscribed by the whole factory culture. There were incidents of bolts and safety pins being found in pies, and it was possible, when pies were standing (waiting between shifts for packing for example) to raise a lid (which required skill) and insert something. But this form of sabotage was outside dominant and oppositional systems of meaning, and constituted immorality rather than reversal, and was condemned by both.

The existence of these forms of sabotage, in relation to the meaning-system rather than in actual occurrence, was important in defining its boundaries, identifying what was immoral and illegitimate and thereby confirming the morality and legitimacy of normal practice. The general reluctance to identify and define sabotage except in extreme cases was an understandable response to a practical problem when viewed from both management and worker perspectives, which was that of acknowledging the chaotic element of everyday relations. A flexible relationship to abominated acts such as sabotage, sustained by implicit postponement of acknowledgement although quite unequivocal once defined as sabotage, enabled the negotiation of perspectives and establishment of order and practice to be facilitated. The attitude displayed by the workers towards the product and its physical sabotage often resulted in actions which under a broad definition could be defined as sabotage themselves, in that specifications and observance of quality guides and packing procedures were sometimes exceeded if it was felt that they would be unacceptable to consumers. This I would call 'positive sabotage' of a constructive, if uneconomic nature.

A number of perspectives from workers, management, and consumers

thus interacted and conspired to create individual acts which may have possessed a potential situational definition as sabotage. These definitions then were either confirmed or disconfirmed within the situational systems of meaning in which they occurred.

Conclusions

This chapter began by looking briefly at the main existing texts on sabotage and the controversy over its definition, be this confined to destruction of machinery and product (Taylor and Walton); extended to cover working inefficiently (Brown); or extended further to cover virtually anything not in the interests of capitalism (Dubois). Taylor and Walton attempt to render sabotage meaningful but concentrate too much on individuals, interpret too liberally from questionable sources and ambiguous evidence, and ultimately fail in their avowed aim to provide contextual understanding.

Edwards and Scullion provide a wider range of contextual evidence following a similar definition and emphasise the complexity of the phenomenon. Their emphasis on understanding is very much in terms of the labour process, however, and by strong implication in terms of control.

Some problems which were observed were the difficulty of using sabotage as an index of underlying conflict as the index is more difficult to define and identify than the conflict; the tendency to seek explanation through exegesis to other forms of deviant behaviour before context has been fully explored; and the tendency in attempting to see sabotage as rational to impose a commentator's or everyman rationality on the acts.

The types and varieties of sabotage were then examined by a critical analysis of Taylor and Walton's types. Attempts to reduce frustration are not well demonstrated by Taylor and Walton though they may well exist. This classification is an all-too-easy one to apply prematurely. The subset of sabotage as fun does bear further examination. Although collective hostility to the 'line' may

appear to run high, in practical terms this is often short-lived as one man's 'laiker' (easy shift due to breakdowns) is another man's 'grueller' (extra work due to breakdowns). The workforce is not homogeneous in these circumstances.

Some of Taylor and Walton's stories demonstrate that sabotage is not fun to do but is fun to relate. This creates a joking framework in which symbolic reordering can occur. Stories of 'idiots' and others who have caused destruction, are popular in demonstrating through alleged physical acts the partial and tenuous nature of control, the emergence of resistance and the possibility of otherness, even 'refreshing' chaos.

Easing the work process implies in many cases that the workers are more efficient and knowledgeable then management. They may sabotage the rules but in the greater service of productivity. Much of the evidence for this has come through studies of piecework, and there is debate about whether this constitutes competition which supports the system or a struggle for control. Edwards and Scullion stress the difficulty of making the distinction. An example from E.L.S. Amalgamated illustrated than even in non-piecework situations, workers can commit acts of sabotage in response to production pressure, and that this can be used as a factor in informal bargaining for other advantages and autonomies within the wider social framework.

Also mentioned was the possibility of management sabotage. This was extended from material destruction to the destruction of the relationships and the symbolic order which enable control to be actualised it was suggested that such self-inflicted symbolic reversals can be more damaging to order and efficient production than physical destruction.

Attempts to assert control were examined in terms of working inefficiently. This has become so common that it is almost taken-for-granted, and as such it is open to abuse by individuals like Joe Khan. Joe provides a salutary reminder that individual actors cannot be neglected in understanding sabotage, but it is the context in which they act which gives their actions significance or

raises actors to prominence.

The question of the symbolic order, the meaning system in which sabotage occurs was then raised. As the social body constrains our perception of the physical body, rationally ordered, controlled, role-differentiated cultures as are predominantly found in industry require a restrained, controlled, inhibited perception of the physical body. Where security and boundaries are important, bodily orifices will assume significance and physical emissions will need to be controlled or 'bracketted off'. These physical signs are used verbally, especially in jokes, to interrupt the flow of discourse and effect reversals and breaks in control.

Worker interaction and autonomy is often confined to the areas where formal control breaks down symbolically and physically in the areas where ingestion and emission takes place. These areas are symbolically subversive and suggest why worker concern with 'tea and toilets' is more frequent and important than its substance would imply.

An associated concept is of course waste, both economic and symbolic anathema to control. Games are often built around waste, not absolutely uninhibited waste, but 'controlled' waste as being one end of the game. Again here the symbolic order is subverted and control is weakened.

Finally it was suggested that sabotage is not only difficult to define as a concept and an act, it is difficult to acknowledge for many managers because as an idea it constitutes an abomination in terms of their dominant-hegemonic culture.

Sabotage will always be a difficult subject to research, and I must admit that much of my data was fortuitous in its occurrence. Had I gone looking for data on 'sabotage' I don't know that I would have found it, so I cannot offer any methodological guidelines for future investigations. I will, however, assert that if acts and accounts of sabotage are to be properly understood and rendered meaningful, then they need to be considered symbolically, in the context of the system of meaning in which they occur and which

defines them. This may then lead us to agree with Taylor and Walton, Brown, Dubois or Edwards and Scullion, but our analyses will be the more pertinent having grown towards them from a consideration of sabotage in its cultural context.

Chapter 10: Conclusions: Ambiguity, Negotiation and Structure

As I have already indicated in my introduction, the research process neither begins with identifiable beginnings nor concludes with identifiable conclusions. However, there are phases of development after which some conceptual taking of stock is appropriate, and this I wish to do here. Any research thesis can be analysed along the dimensions of the relationships between the focal research problem, the research method, the research context, and associated theory, and its contribution to knowledge in each of these areas, and this is perhaps an appropriate model for my present purposes.

The Research Problem

In my introductory chapter, I identified the problem which I sought to address as being that of determining some of the symbolic dimensions by which control in organisations was both established and resisted. This related to other formulations of the problem of control which had related it to the labour process, or had conceptualised it as a problem of asymmetrical social exchange. Even those approaches which have emphasised actors' perspectives and have adopted participant methodologies (including Roy and Burawoy) or have produced negotiated order theory (Strauss et al) have basically espoused an instrumentally-based exchange model. As a result of this, much symbolically relevant data has remained unrecognised and unexplored.

In this thesis, I have 'reclaimed' some of this typically neglected data, in terms of jokes, stories, cautionary tales, games, maxims etc. and have outlined its importance in terms of the symbolic order of the organisation, or at least in terms of competing verions of that symbolic order. Some dimensions of how the symbolic order of the organisation was explored, established, resisted and negotiated were outlined, and in particular the importance of margins and marginal data was emphasised. In marginal areas, both physical and symbolic, order is established resisted and overturned in both the non-real and the material worlds. The symbolic order can be overturned in the bracketed-off

non-real worlds of humour and play, but this meaning does not remain hermetically sealed: like the light of Wittgenstein's reading lamp, it diffuses into the material dimension. The problems of both negotiation and emergence of structure can be seen to have symbolic rather than simply exchange significance, with the maintenance of ambiguity being often the crucial factor in sustaining order.

The Research Method

The initial idea of approaching symbolism through a literary-critical analysis of data led to an exploration of the nature of language, new developments in critical theory, and deconstruction. The connection between fictional production and the productions of a qualitative methodology were seen to be similar and to a considerable degree inseparable. The impossibility of producing anything but a fictional, persuasive or 'subjective' account does not render the research process invalid or meaningless. Indeed the imperative should be rather to increase our sensitivity to the variety of data which everyday life provides by seeking to adopt a multiplicity of perspectives - to share, exchange and work out our prejudices and presumptions between themselves.

The Research Context

It is difficult to separate context from method, particularly in this case. The neglect of context in some other investigations, particularly those focussing on sabotage, points up the necessity of practical participant involvement if the data required for the fullest possible treatment of the symbolic aspects of research problems are to be obtained. Although in part my choice of methodology, in context, was fortuitous it was also essential: I could have obtained my data in no other way.

The connection between contextual exploration and the practical problems of observation was raised in the discussion of methodology, and the importance of context similarly connects with theoretical considerations. Particularly relevant is the consideration of the significance of the development of structural

models and systems models, which can lead either to the neglect of important data in structuring the researcher's expectations of what constitutes data, or can lead to the neglect of practical research altogether for the sake of developing theory.

Theory

The interconnection between theory and methodology was perhaps the most initially significant in this thesis. The connection between the model of literature and social life, developed through the analysis of language and the text, accompanied the examination and rejection of positivist methodologies and the adoption of a qualitative, anti- or plural methodology. This was animated by the examination of the relationships and shortcomings of hermeneutics and structuralism, and a realisation of the need to combine both modes of analysis in developing a full reading of social life.

The influence of deconstruction allowed the link between theory and the research problem to be more clearly defined, for in symbolic terms humour in particular had a deconstructive effect on the social order. The ambiguation and negotiation, containment, distancing and overturning of the symbolic order in both real and non-real frameworks relate to this impulse.

In terms of the theory of organisations, it now appears crucial that further work should be done to conceptualise organisations as symbolic realities. In this thesis, I have outlined the inadequacies of a semiotic model of culture in favour of a model which treates the symbolic as a cognitive rather than a communicative system. I will offer here an outline of the directions which such theorising might take.

Symbolisation and Organisations: further work

If we begin with a model of man as an information-seeking organism, (indulging in practices which 'make sense' of his environment), and organisations as information-seeking systems (produced to support and as a result of this sense-making) we can identify the process

of handling information as being one of reducing variety in the environment, by organising it around landmarks, classifying some and rejecting other information. This produces a version of the world which, even in ideal (or undistorted) circumstances, is not necessary (i.e. not the only possible formulation of 'truth'); in other circumstances and for other individuals or groups this may even be not desirable, not acceptable or not possible. The information creating process operates with a metonymic economy which reduces variety but is still perhaps too congruent; other economies are affected by the metaphorical processes, like humour, which reveal the unnecessary nature of the customary formulation, and powerfully suggest alternatives in reintroducing the realisation of excess. In some cases, such as sabotage, this may be done by extreme, excessive or wasteful behaviour.

The overall process of symbolisation can be represented as in Figure 11. Beginning with the model of man as an information-seeking system, which would also relate to cybernetic organisation theory and attribution theory, the first stage is that in which he comes to make sense of the world experienced as a random assemblage of impulses, sensations, objects, conditions or effects which we shall call (things). These are first of all registered as data in the first interpretative moment. The second moment consists of establishing the relations between these (things), which is accomplished by rationalisation and most importantly, symbolisation. Symbolisation produces an evocation which can narrow the symbolic potential, where related to processes of interpretation which link it back to rationalisation and reduce ambiguity; or it can expand the symbolic potential, as for example through bricolage. Interpretative systems like cognitive consistency theory, or possibly some formulations of 'ideology' and 'myth' loop the interpretation back to the stage of rationalisation/symbolisation and lose track of the arbitrary state of the origin: deconstructive or interruptive impulses, including criticism and humour, loop the expansion back into appreciation of the arbitrariness of its origins. Most organisation theory has in the past concentrated on the smaller loop; in this thesis, I have concentrated on the larger, which identifies a potential area for the development of the study of organisational symbolism.

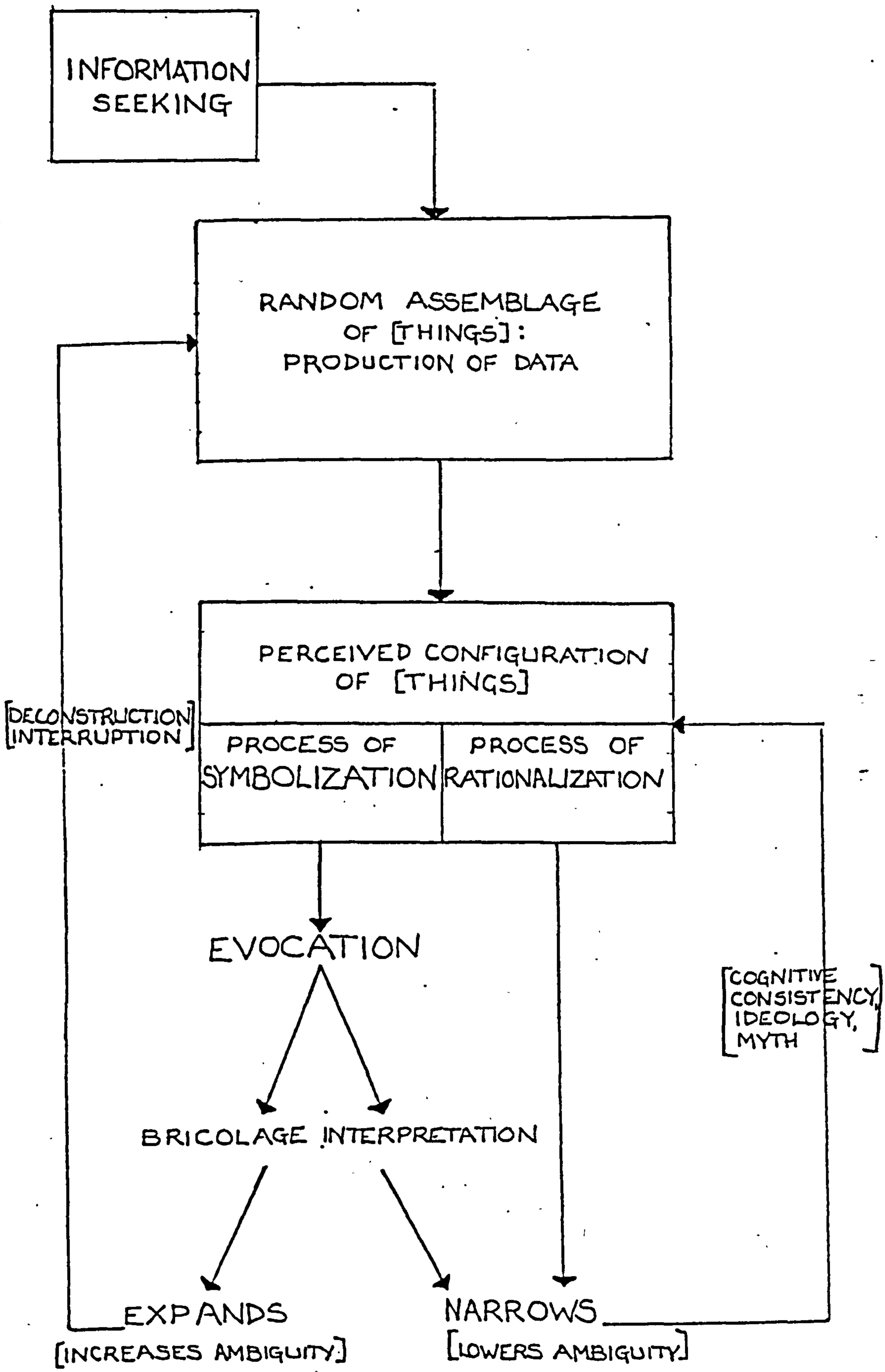


Figure 11: Stages in the process of symbolization

Generally, then, I would see the need for much more work to be done on the application of deconstructive criticism to organisational theory and research; for an expanded treatment of symbolism in organisations both in terms of theory and in practical data-gathering; a reconceptualisation of the ideas of organisational structure and exchange-based theories of control; an exploration of the influences of culture on fields of evocation and rationalisation; and a wider acceptance of what constitutes data. In organisation theory, perhaps the last major development was Contingency Theory, which in exploring the determinants of structure enabled its reconceptualisation to incorporate many of the insights of the action approach to organisations. The time is ripe now for an orientation which draws on a background of social anthropology, linguistic and literary criticism, hermeneutics, structuralism and post-structuralism to develop a Post-Contingency Approach based on organisations as symbolic realities. I hope that this thesis may contribute to this development.

Notes to Chapter One

1. Douglas, Keith, **Alamein to Zem Zem** (ed. Fraser, G.S., Hall, J.C. and Waller J.) London, Faber and Faber, 1966, p 27.

2. Bullough, Edward, "Psychical Distance' as a Factor in Art and as an Aesthetic Principle' in Tillman, F.A. and Cahn, S.M., eds., **Philosophy of Art and Aesthetics**, New York, Harper & Row, 1969, p 398. Quoted in Brown, R.H. **A Poetic for Sociology**, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1977, p 51.

3. **ibid**, p 399.

4. Merleau-Ponty, M., **Signs**, Evanston, Illinois, Northwestern University Press, 1979, p 109. Quoted in Brown, R.H., **op cit**, p 52.

5. Brown, R.H., **op cit**, p 69.

6. 'Persons who are interested in bias are similar to the believers whom Socrates discriminated from true philosophers; like the pursuit of beautiful things, the concern with bias is a concern with whether a 'thing' (speech treated as a thing) appears biased or unreliable. Because a thing which appears biased can also appear unbiased, the 'object' for the believer is not the Real but something which changes and becomes', Blum A.F., Foss, D.C., McHugh, P. and Raffel, S., **On the Beginning of Social Inquiry**, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974, p 48.

7. Sellitz, C. et al., **Research Methods in the Social Sciences**, New York; Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1962, p 50.

8. Blum et al, **op cit**, p 70.

9. **ibid**, p 51.

10. Sellitz, **op cit**, p 2, and Goode, W.J. and Hatt, P., **Methods of Social Research**, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1952, p 130. Quoted in Blum et al, **op cit**, p 51.

11. The idea of a 'reflexive' sociology which includes a declaration of the sociologist's assumptions and postulations about the world which may inform his research is presented in Gouldner, A.W., **The Coming Crisis in Western Sociology**, New York, Basic Books, 1970. As a method it has recently been adopted by Tony J. Watson in **The Personnel Managers**, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977, pp3-4.

'This conception of reflexivity is taken up in this study to enable the reader to make better sense of my theorising activity and to enable him more easily to evaluate both my own reporting and interpretations by revealing to him something of my self, the nature of my involvement in my research settings and, most importantly, the value positions and the structure of sentiments which are behind the accounts which make up this volume. If the reader of a sociological study can see something of the way that the sociologist generally fits into

and interprets the world which they both, to varying extents, are bound to know, then he can more effectively decide which of the findings to assimilate into his own understanding of the world and which to reject. The assumption is being made here that sociology cannot be value-free. It must therefore be incumbent upon the writer to reveal to his audience his value position for two reasons. First, one's values cannot be stated briefly in a few introductory comments or summarised in an appendix, and second, they are a part of one's **self** and **experience**, so the sociologist's value stance must be brought from the background into the foreground'.

12. Gouldner, A.W., **op cit**, p 493.

13. Watson, **op cit**, p 4, discusses these concepts of Gouldner's, and builds his first chapter discussing those of his own which amply illustrates the futility and irrelevance of the project.

14. Dawe, A., 'The role of experience in the construction of social theory: an essay in reflexive sociology.' **Sociological Review**, Vol 21, pp 25-55, p 35, quoted in Watson, **op cit**, p 5. There would seem to be little alternative available to us - the particular must always stand for the 'general' because we can never have access to the 'general'. See Golding, D., 'Establishing Blissful Clarity in Organisational Life: Managers', **Sociological Review**, Vol 28, No 4, Nov. 1980, pp 763-782, for a view of the 'abstraction and simplification' process by which this is often accomplished.

15. Willis, P., 'Notes on Method', in Hall S, Hobson, D., Lowe, A., and Willis, P., eds., **Culture, Media, Language**, London, Hutchinson, 1980, p 90, discusses the theoretical 'confessional' with approval. Neither he nor Watson, in stressing that theory is inseparable from their accounts, makes a justification for their attempts to **separate** it from them. There is no reason why we should notleave 'theory' where it is, and allow it to speak **through** our accounts, to be considered within them, rather than as an external constraining influence. The key ideas, certainly in Watson, would appear to be 'evaluation' and 'the world as object', both of which are characteristic of a positivistic approach. Willis attacks the positivistic notion of the 'world as object' but nevertheless fails to expunge the shade of 'evaluation' from his account.

16. Watson, **op cit**, p 3 ff.

17. Socrates, quoted in Wimsatt, W.K., **The Verbal Icon**, London, Methuen, University Paperbacks, 1970, p 7.

18. Blum, A.F. et al, **op cit**, p 51. 'Taking seriously the statements that no guarantees are available and that observer effects cannot be eliminated we can begin to see the auspices we set out to depict: bias exists in every study, but do not act as if it does. This is necessary because if bias exists

in any study, it also exists in any 'solution', thus converting any solution into an icon of its insolubility'.

19. **ibid**, p 52 and Chapter 4, 'Evaluation'.

20. Cf. Willis, P., **op cit**, p 90.

21. Blum et al, **op cit**, p 62.

22. **op cit.**

23. **op cit**, p 92.

24. **ibid.**

25. **ibid.**

26. This bears some similarity, in the recognition of the value of 'interruption' with Garfinkel's methods for investigating common-sense. See Garfinkel, H., **Studies in Ethnomethodology**, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice-Hall, 1967. An interesting comment on this method is given in Cuzzort, R.P., and King, E.W., **20th Century Social Thought**, New York, Holt Rinehart & Winston, 1980, (3rd Ed.), p 313: 'The building blocks of social reality are examined by a process of subjecting them to collisons that reveal their nature - much as the collisions between particles in a cloud chamber give clues to the nature of matter'. Where Garfinkel sets out to cause these collisions, Willis would appear to be content to wait for them to occur naturally.

27. Gellner, E., 'Philosophy: The Social Context', in Magee, B., **Men of Ideas**, London, BBC Publications, 1978, p 297.

28. Silverman, D., 'Methodology and Meaning' in Filmer, P., Phillipson, M., Silverman, D., and Walsh, D., **New Directions in Sociological Theory**, London, Collier-MacMillan, 1972, p 189. cf also, Kosinski, J., quoted in Klinkowitz, J., **Literary Disruptions**, Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1975, p 84. 'The most essential stage of the writing process is...the process whereby the writer comes to stand outside the experience he intends to mirror in his book'.

29. Sartre, Jean-Paul, **Nausea**, London, Penguin Modern Classics, 1970, p 9.

30. Willis, **op cit**, p 92.

31. cf Garfinkel, **op cit.**

32. Brian Moore was discussing the ending of his novel, **An Answer From Limbo**, London, Secker & Warburg, 1962, in a BBC Television Interview, 4/3/80.

33. Cohen, S., and Taylor, L., **Escape Attempts**, London, Pelican, 1978.

34. Bauman, Z., **Hermeneutics and Social Science**, London, Hutchinson, 1978, p 181.

35. Schutz, A., **Collected Papers**, Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague, 1967, Vol 1, pp 343-4. Quoted in Bauman, Z., **op cit**, p 176.

36. Ditton, J., **Part-Time Crime**, London, MacMillan, 1977, p 10.

37. Ditton, **ibid**, p 37, quotes Goffman, E., 'Alienation from Interaction', **Human Relations**, 10, 1957, pp 47-59.

38. **ibid**, p 5 'In fact (and this, I suggest, is perhaps the mark of the truly accepted observer) I had far greater problems in getting out'.

39. **ibid**, p 9, 'In December 1973, I returned to Durham with a total of 4560 hours of participant observation and thirty-four taped and typed interviews under my research belt'.

40. **ibid**, p 10, 'If something that was said seemed important but likely to be swiftly dropped if I took written interest in it, I immediately interjected a wholly spurious question on job preferences or something and, under the guise of noting the answers, was able to make the notes that I wanted'.

41. **ibid**, p 5.

42. Klinkowitz, J., **op cit**, p 85.

43. Blum, A., et al, **op cit**, use this term which it would seem is an active expression of 'positivism'.

44. Ditton, **op cit**, p 11. This seems incongruous when placed alongside his description of his questionnaire, p 6. 'Although initially designed purely as a blind - so that attention would be drawn away from the participant side of things, and so that the workers would be able to divide my time into 'actual research' (distributing questionnaires) and just 'getting ready' to do it (all the rest of the time) - to side-track any deliberate attempts to mislead me from the research proper the first questionnaire grew into a Frankenstein monster. Greedily, because I thought that I would have to spend a lot of time designing, producing, distributing and collecting it, (even finally to throw it away as I had originally intended) I thought that I might as well try to extract a bit of research value from it...'.

The ideas which dominate in the above quotations are those of the separability of date; the analysis of otherwise inert and unintelligible experience; the discrete time separation between analysis and experience; and the only disqualification to the idea of analysing 'all this data' being the human impossibility of handling the **quantity**, would seem to strongly support the interpretation of Ditton's 'method' as being implicitly positivist. One wonders what his reaction would have been if he had fallen foul of circumstance, as did Edmund Leach, who writes in **Political Systems of Highland Burma**, London, Bill & Sons, 1954, p 312:

'My Hpalang field notes were all lost as the result of enemy action'. Leach wrote his seminal work from memory.

45. O'Neill, J., **Sociology as a Skin Trade**, London, Heinemann, 1972, p 217.

46. Ditton, **op cit**, p 6.

47. **ibid**, p 9.

48. **ibid**, p 9.

49. **ibid**, p 6.

50. **ibid**, p 12.

51. Silverman, D., **Reading Castaneda**, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975, p 22.

52. **ibid**.

53. Tanner, Tony, **City of Words**, London, Jonathan Cape, 1971, p 22-23.

54. See Silverman, D., **op cit**, p 23...'the explanation of events as, for all social scientific purposes, the outcome of inadequate socialisation (or whatever), can itself only be a persuasive version (which produces the character of those events (as events). It is an account which, in this case, speaks the language of the community of social scientists - a language which constitutes the character of both what they look for and what they find'. And p 32, 'Scientific explanations, works of art, every day accounts, are all persuasive because, in understanding them as they wish to be understood, we sustain our communal mode of existence'.

55. Willis, **op cit**, p 91.

56. Blum, A., et al, **op cit**, p 70.

57. Ditton, **op cit**, p 12.

58. **ibid**, p 10, 'The research was done intuitively, without text books clutched in the left hand...'

59. Heidegger, M., **On the way to Language**, New York, Harper & Row, 1971, p 74, 'The sciences know the way to knowledge by the term method. Method especially in today's modern scientific thought is not a mere instrument serving the sciences, rather it has pressed the sciences into its own service'.

60. 'In an important sense, in the world there is **no** value and there are no murders, tables, houses. But our language is not about **that** world in which there is no value or no tables... that world, the world of raw data, cannot be described for the sense of that world also lies outside of it and the very description of it, likewise, lies outside it. Thereof, one cannot really speak.' J. Kovesi, (**Moral Notions**, London,

R.K.P., 1967), quoted by Blum, A.F., in 'Theorizing' in Douglas, J.D., ed. **Understanding Everyday Life**, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971, p 312.

61. 'My experience is rooted in my language which is never mine but always ours. Even as I have what I take to be a most private thought or most personal experience, I exemplify my membership of the language-community in which such understandings arise, and my commitment to the mode of existence which sustains it. My community is always present in my speech, because, in representing objects, it represents a way of knowledge'. Silverman, D., **op cit**, p 31.

62. The notion of a text having a life of its own, or no life at all until interpreted, or consequently as many lives as readings is discussed in Chapter Five. What is relevant here is to stress the notion that a text, whether fictional or not, has no absolute 'meaning' and exists separately from its author's intentions. Not only will the author's intention diverge from his ability to express it, but it will exist in the realm of thought or imagination outside language. It can be suggested that 'meaning' is not given to the text by an author, and received by a reader, but that the text has meaning only as a result of a creative act - either writing or reading - and has no meaning beyond that act. Ronald Sukenick discusses this point with reference to fiction and creative language, but his argument is relevant to all forms of written and even spoken text: 'Rather than serving as a mirror or redoubling on itself, fiction adds itself to the world, creating a meaningful 'reality' that did not previously exist. Fiction is artifice but not artificial. It seems as pointless to call the creative powers of the mind 'fraudulent' as it would be to call the procreative powers of the body such. What we bring into the world is **per se** beyond language, and at that point language is of course left behind - but it is the function of creative language to be left behind, to leave itself behind, in just that way. The word is unnecessary once it is spoken, but it has to be spoken. Meaning does not pre-exist creation, and afterwards it may be superfluous.' Quoted in Klinkowitz, J., **op cit**, p 175.

63. Blum, A.F., **op cit**, p 317.

64. Quoted in Klinkowitz, J., **op cit**, p 83.

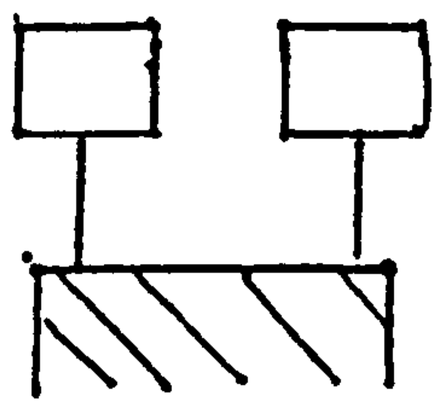
65. C. Wright Mills, **The Sociological Imagination**, London, Oxford University Press, 1959, pp 211-212.

66. In Klinkowitz, J., **op cit**, p 84.

Notes to Chapter Two

1. 'New Criticism' - the general flavour of English and American literary criticism has been overwhelmingly influenced this century by this school, which included such critics as Empson and I.A. Richards. Its main tenets were of the autonomy of the work of art, and that it should not be judged by reference to external criteria. The critic was in relentless pursuit of the complexity of a work, not its referential 'meaning'. Great things were thus expected of the critic, and the critic could easily gain a somewhat distorted impression of the importance of his task and his own contribution to its accomplishment. T.S. Eliot encapsulates this in his statement 'There is no method - except to be very intelligent', quoted in Hawkes, T., Structuralism and Semiotics, Methuen, London, 1977, p 152.

2. A tine-truck is a form of fork-lift truck with four thin spikes replacing forks. These 'tines' slot in between the bottles in a case of milk to allow twin-stacks to be lifted without pallets.



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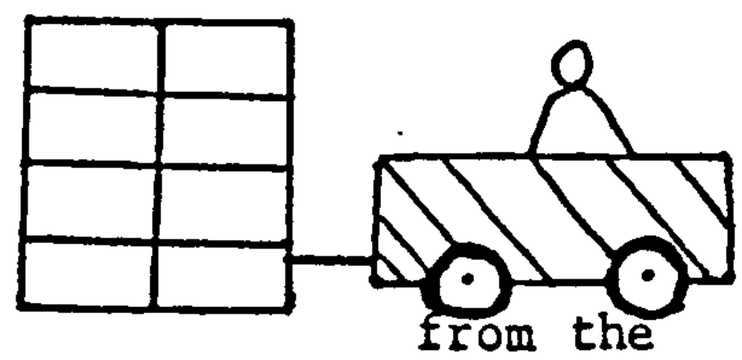

from the side

3. These were legendary exploits, part of dairy folklore. One Christmas, the dairy received a delivery of hampers for distribution on the rounds. They were unloaded by a human chain from lorry to cold store. At the far side of the cold store, persons unknown extended the chains and purloined six of the hampers which were hidden by the railway line and sold in the 'George and Dragon' that evening (The Human Hamper Chain).

   The 'Bacon Butty Blag' arose one winter on the checkpoint, where roundsmen booked in their returns of milk, eggs, butter etc. The checkpoint was heated by a gas heater. The checkpoint staff were for a time serving bacon and egg sandwiches fried over the fire to the roundsmen, with management approval. The eggs were returns which were being cracked and the shells booked in as transit breakages. The bacon was a similar fraud. The practice ceased in the spring, and when management started to query its history, no culprits could be ascertained.

4. The author on moving to his present occupation, was surprised to happen upon Ron in a local Post Office. When he inquired as to Ron's current status, he was told that he was training manager for a chain of sex shops.

5. Dialogue reconstructed from notes made shortly after the event occurred.

6. Portcullis would seem to be striving after meaning in a world which does not afford him the meaning he craves, and hence

steps outside into a world of illusion. Not only does he appear absurd to his fellows, but is truly absurd in the sense of **The Sociology of the Absurd**, S.M. Lyman and M.B. Scott, Appleton-Century-Crofts, NY, 1970, who quote Albert Camus (p 11):

'A world that can be explained by reasoning, however faulty, is a familiar world. But in a universe that is suddenly deprived of illusions and of light, man feels a stranger. His is an irremediable exile, because he is deprived of memories of a lost homeland as much as he lacks the hope of a promised land to come. This divorce between man and his life, the actor and his setting, truly constitutes the feeling of absurdity'.

7. Not a problem confined to the factory alone, but this was a specific and peculiar location with its own particular imperatives. The author's interest at this stage was entirely practical.

8. Consideration could here be given to the views of Lemert, who suggests that the behaviour which marks the 'paranoid' out produces a response in the community which treats him and defines him as **paranoid** thus confirming the behaviour and making it impossible for him to break the mould of exclusion. cf Lemert, E., 'Paranoia and the Dynamics of Exclusion', **Sociometry**, 25 (March 1962), 2-25.

9. A course in Bibliography and Textual Criticism was part of the requirement for the degree of M.A. in English Literature of the University of Leeds, taken in 1976.

10. Bowers, Fredson, **Textual and Literary Criticism**, Cambridge, University Press, 1966, p 2. 'How many conventional readings in the text of **Hamlet** - one, two, five, ten, twenty, fifty, a hundred, two hundred? - must be proved unsound before the 'total values' of the play are affected and the literary critic should begin to grow uneasy about the evidence on which he is formulating his hypothesis for the whole?' It is argued in this thesis that a similar claim could be made for a proper 'textual' analysis of the basis on which social knowledge is founded.

11. Monologue reconstructed from notes made after the event. This is offered as a point of information rather than validation, as it is the argument of this thesis that their proximity is irrelevant.

12. Lienhardt, G.R., response to question on the difficulty of replication of ethnographic data and its consequent validity in seminar given at the University of Hull, April 1981. 'What one person says to you may be more significant than what 20,000 people replicate for you'.

13. Taken from the **Staff Handbook.**

14. Noted from conversation.

15. M.Sc. in **Organisation Development**, (CNAA), Sheffield City Polytechnic, 1978-80.

16. Bauman, Z., **Hermeneutics and Social Science**, London, Hutchinson 1978, p 149. Bauman is summarising the position of Martin Heidegger; as he says, Heidegger himself 'and his doctrine are rarely quoted as paragons of lucidity...'.

17. I owe much of the development of my argument to the series of research seminars organised by Sheffield City Polytechnic during 1980-81. The comments of Dr. M.J. McAuley were especially helpful in stimulating its clarification.

18. Garfinkel, H., **Studies in Ethnomethodology**, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs and London, 1967, pp 30-31. Quoted in Bauman, **op cit**, p 188.

19. cf Chalmers, A.F., **What is this thing called Science?**, Milton Keynes, Open University Press, 1978, discusses the theory-dependence of observation and the unreliability of perception, pp 20-34, and discusses the theory of science which depends heavily upon observation, 'naive inductivism'.

20. **ibid**, p 22.

21. Kuhn, T.S., **The Structure of Scientific Revolutions**, Chicago, 1961, p 70, discussed by A.F. Chalmers, **op cit**, p 26 and Chapter 3.

22. Ryle, G., **The Concept of Mind**, London, Peregrine, 1970, pp 17-18.

23. McHugh, P., 'On the failure of Positivism', in Douglas, J., ed., **Understanding Everyday Life**, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970, p 322.

24. Silverman, D., **Reading Castaneda**, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975, p 76.

25. **ibid**.

26. McHugh, P., **op cit**, p 324.

27. **ibid**, p 325.

28. Silverman, **op cit**, p 76.

29. McHugh, P., **op cit**, p 329.

30. Bauman, Z., **op cit**, p 181.

31. Schutz, A., and Luckmann, T., trans. Zaner, R.M., and Engelhardt, H.T., Jr., **The Structure of the Life-World**, Heinemann, London, 1974, pp 4,5, quoted in Bauman, Z., **op cit**, p 180.

32. See Garfinkel's incongruity techniques employed in **Studies in Ethnomethodology**, Englewood Cliffs, NJ, Prentice-Hall, 1967.

Garfinkel uses verbal disruption of conversations, active disruptions of interaction, and also employs it as an analytical technique. As analysis it is employed in Silverman, D., and Torode, B., **The Material Word**, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980, (Chapter 1: Interrupting the 'I').

33. Ussher, A., **Journey through Dread**, Devin-Adair, New York, 1955, p 80, quoted in Bauman, Z., **op cit**, p 156.

34. See Garfinkel, H., and Sacks, H., 'On Formal Structures of Practical Action', in McKinney, S., and Tiryakian, E., **Theoretical Sociology**, NY, Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1970.

35. Understanding my words does not mean that there is a specific process which is consciously grasped by the hearer and applied in order to proceed through my discourse. Wittgenstein discusses this in **Philosophical Investigations**, (Wittgenstein, L., tr. Anscombe, G.E.M., Oxford, Blackwell, 1978), pp 59-61. He states 'Try not to think of understanding as a 'mental process' at all - for **that** is the expression which confuses you. But ask yourself: in what sort of case, in what kind of circumstances, do we say, 'Now I know how to go on...'.

36. Golding, D., 'Establishing Blissful Clarity in Organisational Life: Managers', **Sociological Review**, Vol 28, No 4, Nov. 1980, p 763-782. Quotation from pp. 765-766.

37. This idea owes something to Schutz's 'finite provinces of meaning', (see Schutz, A., **Collected Papers**, Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague, 1967, vol 1, pp 343-4) and to John Heeren's far more specific depiction of the 'Process of Defining the Situation - bring relevant typifications, signs, symbols into play' (a diagrammatic representation of 'zones of relevance'). This appears in Heeren, J., 'Alfred Schutz and Common-Sense Knowledge' in Douglas, J.D., ed., **Understanding Everyday Life**, London, R.K.P., 1970, pp 45-56, on p 46.

38. Garfinkel, **op cit**, pp 76-103.

39. **ibid**, pp 80-81.

40. **ibid**, p 89.

41. **ibid**.

42. Cuzzort, R.P., and King, E.W., **20th Century Social Thought**, New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, (3rd Ed.), 1980, p 317.

43. Garfinkel, **op cit**, p 90.

44. **ibid**, p 91.

45. **ibid**, p 70.

46. **ibid**, p 92-3.

47. **ibid**, p93.

48. **ibid**, p94.

49. Popper, K.R., **Conjectures and Refutations**, London, R.K.P., 1969, p 27.

50. Polanyi, M., **The Tacit Dimension**, London, R.K.P., 1967, p 78-9.

51. **ibid**, p64.

52. **ibid**.

53. Blum et al, op cit, pp 76-108.

54. **ibid**, pp 91-92.

55. The concept of 'multiple realities' is developed by Schutz in a number of places: 'On Multiple Realities' (pp 207ff) and 'Symbol, Reality and Society' (pp 287ff) in **Collected Papers**, Vol 1, The Hague: Nijhoff, 1962; and 'The Stranger - An Essay in Social Psychology', pp 91ff, and 'Don Quixote and the Problem of Reality' (pp 135ff) in **Collected Papers**, Vol II, The Hague: Nijhoff, 1964. The illustration of this idea by Robert Musils novel 'The Man Without Qualities' appears in Peter Berger 'The Problem of Multiple Realities: Alfred Schutz and Robert Musil' in Thomas Luckmann, ed., **Phenomenology and Sociology**, London, Penguin, 1978, pp 343ff.

56. Wittgenstein, L., trans. G.E.M. Anscombe, **Philosophical Investigations**, Oxford, Blackwell, 1978, p 88.

Notes to Chapter 3

1. An account may be said to be persuasive not only in the sense of its having rhetorical intent, but simply in that it presents one view of things to the exclusion of others. By its existence, its having-been-brought-into-being, not only its presentation, it can be called 'persuasive'. Also cf. Wittgenstein, L., **Lectures and Conversations**, Berkeley, California, University of California Press, 1972, p 27. 'What I'm doing is also persuasion. If someone says, 'There is not a difference', and I say, 'There is a difference', I am persuading. I am saying 'I don't want you to look at it like that'.

2. Phillips, Derek L., **Abandoning Method**, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, 1973, p 167.

3. **ibid**, p 153.

4. **ibid**, p 153, cites Toulmin, S.E., **The Uses of Argument**, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1969.

5. The conflict engendered by such arguments does not, or rarely, disrupts the basis of community as where it threatens to do so, methods of conflict resolution, or sustaining community, are established. This can be done in a number of ways, one of which is the 'Let it pass' clause by which minor discrepancies are overlooked, at least temporarily. For examples, see Handel, Warren, **Ethnomethodology: How People make Sense**, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1982, particularly Chapters 2, 3 and 4.

6. A recent example is the controversy over the work of Sir Cyril Burt, an enormously influential educational researcher, whose many writings influenced subsequent educational research and practice to the extent that they became almost standard. However, when it was discovered that he had falsified some of his data, i.e.broken the rules of correct method, he and his work were thoroughly discredited. (At the time I was told by one educationalist: I'm embarrassed to have cited him in my dissertation, and I submitted it two years ago'). Whatever creative and intuitive insights Burt had were negated by his failure to observe method. Whatever value was rescued from his work (by those who had invested their faith in it) was justified by claiming 'His research might have been wrong, but mine was correct and came to similar conclusions', if such was the case. The implications of this serendipity for the status of method were not usually explored further.

   In the original article by Oliver Gillie, 'Pioneer of IQ Faked his Research Findings', **Sunday Times**, Oct 24, 1976, Dr. Ann & Professor Alan Clarke, and Michael McAskie, producers of the evidence of Burt's duplicity, state:

   'Burt was responsible for misleading many of those engaged in the scientific study of man, a pathetic epitaph for someone with his gifts, earlier achievements and scientific responsibilities. Nevertheless we admire his early pioneering

research on educational and social problems, and his development of statistical techniques for their elucidation'.

Such has been the popular response however, that most of Burt's good work has been all but forgotten, his reputation in shreds. The importance of community is further underlined in a recent article on how scientists account for error, where the authors state, '...it is clear to us from reading research papers that observational errors are almost never corrected in the formal literature'.

The informal network carries the news of the error, but to do it in print 'is considered rather bad manners', and may have disproportionate repercussions. (Michael Mulkay and G. Nigel Gilbert, 'Accounting for Error: how scientists construct their social world when they account for correct and incorrect belief', **Sociology**, Vol 16, No 2, May 1982, pp 165-183, p 179.

7. Phillips, D.L., op **cit**, p 154.

8. **ibid.**

9. **ibid**, p 155. An example of the problematic status of ethnomethodology might be found in the dispute between Lewis A. Coser and ethnomethodology in general and Harvey Sacks in particular. Leiter, Kenneth, **A Primer on Ethnomethodology**, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1980, cites Coser's article 'Two methods in search of a substance', **American Sociological Review**, 40, 691-700, 1975, as proposing 'that the study of common sense knowledge, has no relevance for the real issues of sociology, power, stratification, institutions, and sexism', (p 29). Leiter also states that 'Coser's criticism was that ethnomethodology had become so micro in its approach that there was no relation between the phenomena it described and everyday social order' (p 215) and this led him to characterise the work of Sacks as 'trivial'. In contesting Coser's view, Leiter nevertheless admits that Sacks' work is 'controversial among ethnomethodologists as well'. Sacks' 'rule-governed formulations' have 'alienated ethnomethodologists who stress the interpretive side of social behaviour', among them Aaron Cicourel. Ethnomethodology is even problematic to ethnomethodologists.

10. Dalton, Melville, 'Preconceptions and Method in 'Men who Manage'', in Hammond, P.E., (ed.), **Sociologists at Work**, NY, Basic Books, 1964, pp 50-95. Refers to Dalton's **Men Who Manage**, NY, John Wiley, 1959.

11. **ibid**, p 52, quoting P.W. Bridgman 'New Vistas for Intelligence', in E.P. Wigner, ed., **Physical Science and Human Values**, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press), 1947, pp 144-145.

12. **ibid**, p 58, quoted in Wigner, op **cit**, pp 156-57.

13. **ibid**, p 57, quoting Albert Einstein, 'Geometry and Experience', in H. Feigl and M. Brodbeck, eds., **Readings in the Philosophy of Science**, NY, Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1953, p 189.

14. **ibid**, p 58, Dalton cites G. Polya, **Mathematics and Plausible Reasoning**, (2 Vols., Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1954), Vol 2, p 76, No source for Gauss.

15. **ibid**, p 52, quoting Polanyi, M., **Personal Knowledge**, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1958, p 311.

16. Zimmerman, D., 'The Practicalities of Rule Use' in Douglas, J.D., **Understanding Everyday Life**, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970, pp 221-238, p 233.

17. Polanyi, op cit, p 11, quoted by Dalton, op cit, p 53.

18. Blum, A.F., Foss, D.C., McHugh, P., and Raffel, S., **On the Beginning of Social Inquiry**, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974, p 87.

19. Leiter, op cit, p 192.

20. Giddens, A., **Studies in Social and Political Theory**, London, Hutchinson, 1977, p 165.

21. Winch, P., **The Idea of a Social Science**, NY, Humanities Press, 1958.

22. Winch notes: 'What is important is that they have all **learned** in similar ways, that they are, therefore, **capable** of communicating with each other about what they are doing, that what any one of them is doing is in principle intelligible to the others', **ibid**, p 86, without any assessment of its implications for the assessment of 'findings'.

23. Phillips, Derek L., 'Hierarchies of Interaction in Sociological Research' in Brenner, M., Marsh, P., and Brenner, M., **The Social Contexts of Method**, London, Croom-Helm, 1978, pp 210-236, p 223.

24. **ibid**, pp 224-5.

25. Phillips, D.L., **Abandoning Method**, San Francisco, Jossey-Bass, 1973, p 169.

26. Garfinkel, H., 'The Rational Properties of Scientific and Common Sense Activities', in **Studies in Ethnomethodology**, Englewood Cliffs, NJ, Prentice-Hall, 1967, pp 262-283, p 272.

27. Outhewaite, W., **Understanding Social Life: the method called Verstehen**, London, George Allen & Unwin, 1975, p 101.

28. Bleicher, Josef, **Contemporary Hermeneutics**, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980, p 1.

29. **ibid**.

30. '...human behaviour is not unique because no other behaviour is quite like it, but because it is only about humans that we make suppositions of a special kind, and consequently ask about their behaviour questions we would not ask of any other conduct...'Understanding' other humans' behaviour, as against merely 'explaining' the conduct of inanimate objects, means ultimately extrapolating the method we use to account for our own action on to our accounts of the behaviour of other objects whom we recognise as human'. Bauman, Z., **Hermenetucs and Social Science**, London, Hutchinson, 1978, p 211, and discussion, pp 210-213.

31. **ibid.**

32. Dilthey, W., **Gesammelte Schriften**, 4th Ed., Stuttgart, Teubner, 1964, Vol VII, p 278, quoted in Outhwaite, W., **op cit**, p 25.

33. Dilthey, **op cit**, p 333, in Outhwaite, **op cit**, p 27.

34. Outhwaite, **op cit**, p 28.

35. Cf. **ibid**, pp 46-55.

36. Abel, Theodore, 'The operation called **Verstehen**', **American Journal of Sociology**, vol 54, 1948, p 218.

37. See for example Nagel, Ernst, 'On the method of **Verstehen** as the sole method of philosophy', **The Journal of Philosophy**, Vol 50, 1953, Nagel, E., 'The subjective nature of social subject matter', and Hempel C.G. and Oppenheim, K., 'Theory of Scientific Explanation' in H. Feigl and M. Brodbeck (eds.), **Readings in the Philosophy of Science**, NY, Macmillan, 1953, Hughes, H.S., **Consciousness and Society**, NY, Vintage Books, 1961; Parsons, T., **The Structure of Social Action**, Glencoe, Illinois, Free Press, 1949.

38. Weber, M., **Basic Concepts in Sociology**, NY, Collier Books, 1963, p 142.

39. 'If adequacy in respect to meaning is lacking then no matter how high the degree of uniformity and how precisely its probability can be numerically determined it is still an incomprehensible statistical possibility whether dealing with overt or subjective processes', Weber, M., **The Theory of Social and Economic Organisations**, Oxford University Press, 1947, pp 99-100, quoted in Phillips, D.L., **Abandoning Method**, San Francisco, Jossey Bass, 1973, p 171. A further example of the difference between the two modes of enquiry can be found in the comparison of Emile Durkheim's **Suicide: a study in Sociology** (trans. John A. Spaulding and George Simpson, introduction by George Simpson), Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1952, and Jack D. Douglas's **The Social Meaning of Suicide**, Princeton University Press, 1967. Durkheim focusses on 'social facts' like the rate of suicide, constant he says for any given society, and seeks to explain its antecedent causes and functions. Douglas however, focusses on where by

whom and how a suicide is defined, on its **situated meanings** and concludes that the wide differences in contextual interpretation of suicide must call into question the utility of the concept of a 'rate ' of suicide.

40. Giddens, A., **New Rules of Sociological Method**, London, Hutchinson, 1976, p 19.

41. Connections between these thinkers are discussed as 'Interpretative Sociology' in Burrell, G., and Morgan, G., **Sociological Paradigms and Organisational Analysis**, London, Heinemann, 1979, pp 228-259.

42. Dilthey distinguishes three classes of 'expressions of mental life' (**geistige Lebensausserungen**):

1. Propositions (**Begriffe, Urteile, grossere Denkgebilde**). These are distinguished by their 'correspondence to logical norms'. They are context-independent and are, as it were, transported from one person to another without any change in their content. 'Thus the understanding is more complete here than in the case of any other life-expression. At the same time, however, it says nothing to the person who grasps it about its relations to the rich background of mental life'.
2. 'Actions form another class of life-expressions. An action does not originate in the intention to communicate, but this is given by its relationship to a purpose. An action is systematically related to the mental content which it expresses and permits probable inferences about the latter. But an action, Dilthey continues, reveals only a part of the mental life from which it sprang.
3. In the case of an **expression of experience (Erlebnisausdruck)**, however, 'a special relation exists between it, the life from which it springs and the understanding which it generates. An expression can contain more mental content (**vom seelischen Zusammenhamg**) than can be grasped by 'introspection'. It cannot, however, be judged true or false, but only 'authentic or inauthentic'.

Outhwaite, op cit, p 31, derived from Dilthey, op cit, pp 205-209.

43. 'Re-creating and re-living what is alien and past shows clearly how understanding rests on special, personal inspiration. But, as this is a significant and permanent condition of historical science, personal inspiration becomes a technique which develops with the development of historical consciousness. It is dependent on permanently fixed expressions being available so that understanding can always return to them. The methodical understanding of permanently fixed expressions we call exegesis. As the life of the mind only finds its complete, exhaustive and, therefore, objectively comprehensible expression in language, exegesis culminates in the interpretation of the written records of human existence. This method is the basis of philology. The science of this method is hermeneutics.' Dilthey, W., **Selected Writings**, (Ed. Rickman, H.P.), London, Cambridge University Press, 1976, p 228, in Burrell & Morgan, p 236.

44. Dilthey, **Gesammelte Schriften**, **op cit**, p 209, in Outhwaite, **op cit**, p 31.

45. 'There are no absolute starting points, no self-evident, self-contained certainties on which we can build, because we always find ourselves in the middle of complex situations which we try to disentangle by making, then revising, provisional assumptions', Rickman, in Dilthey, **Selected Writings**, p 11, cited in Burrell & Morgan, op **cit**, p 237.

46. Dilthey, **Gesammelte Schriften**, **op cit**, p 209, in Outhwaite, **op cit**, p 34.

47. Cf Bleicher, op **cit**, pp 123-4, for a discussion of this point and Held, D., **Introduction to Critical Theory**, London, Hutchinson, 1980, p 303.

48. **ibid**, p 97, it would not advance our argument to discuss Betti's advances and developments on Dilthey here - for these purposes their fundamental position remains the same. 'According to Betti there are four premises of hermeneutics of which Gadamer treats only the first three: the object has to be understood in its own terms, i.e. as a subject (hermeneutic autonomy); it has to be understood in context ('meaningful coherence'); it has to conform to what Betti calls the 'actuality' of the experience of the interpreter ('pre-understanding'). But there is also a fourth element involved, which although it underpins the other three does not appear in Gadamer's work. This is that of 'meaning-equivalence' (Sinn adaquanz des Verstehens), that the interpretation of a human product or action is 'adequate' in relation to the intentions of its originator'. Giddens, **New Rules of Sociological Method**, 1976, p 62.

    Betti does not seem to have understood Gadamer - Gadamer does not embrace any idea of 'correct' or 'incorrect' accounts to be checked with the author. For him the text has its own existence independence of the author, and interpretation is a creative act which **produces** new meanings and readings.

49. Wolff, op **cit**, p 107.

50. Gadamer, in Bleicher, op **cit**, p 110.

51. Gadamer, p 336, quoted in Wolff, op **cit**, p 106.

52. **ibid**, p 105.

53. **ibid**, p 104.

54. 'A dialogue can be treated as analogous to the interpretation of a text in that in both cases we experience a fusion of horizons: both are concerned with an object that is placed before them. Just as one person seeks to reach agreement with his partner concerning an object, so the interpreter understands the object of which the text speaks...in successful conversation they both come under the influence of the truth of the object and are thus bound to one another in a

new community...(it is) a transformation into a communion, in which we do not remain what we were'(pp 360, 341).

'What, then, characterises this hermeneutic experience? The central task of the interpreter is to find the question to which a text presents the answer; to understand a text is to understand the question. At the same time, a text only becomes an object of interpretation by presenting the interpreter with a question. In this logic of question and answer a text is drawn into an event by being actualized in understanding which itself represents an historic possibility. The horizon of meaning is consequently unlimited, and the openness of both text and interpreter constitutes a structural element in the fusion of horizons. In this dialogical understanding the concepts used by the Other, be it a text or a thou, are regained by being contained within the interpreter's comprehension. In understanding the question posed by the text we have already posed questions ourselves, and, therefore, opened up possibilities of meaning.' Bleicher, op cit, p 114, reference to Gadamer, **Wahreit und Methode**, Mohr, Tubingen, 4th Ed., 1975, and the translation **Truth and Method**.

55. Wolff, op cit, p 105.

56. ibid, p 121.

57. Giddens, op cit, p 57.

58. Wolff, op cit, p 116.

59. Bleicher, op cit, p 116.

60. ibid.

61. ibid, p 123.

62. Wolff, op cit, p 124.

63. Cf Bleicher, op cit, p 143.

64. Apel, K-O, **Transformation der Philosophie** (2 vols), Suhrkamp, Frankfurt, 1973, cited in Bleicher, op cit, p 151.

65. Held, David, **Introduction to Critical Theory**, London, Hutchinson, 1980, p 302.

66. ibid, p 307.

67. Apel, K-O, 'The a priori of communication and the foundation of the humanities', **Man and World**, no 5, Feb. 1972, p 34.

68. Cf. Held, op cit, p 314, on common ground and disagreements between the two.

69. Habermas, J., 'Summation and Response', **Continuum**, vol 8, nos 1 & 2, Spring & Summer 1970, pp 123-33, p 125, Amended translation by Held, op cit, p 314.

70. **ibid**, p 315.

71. Habermas, J., 'A review of Gadamer's **Truth and Method**', in Fred R. Dallmayr and Thomas A. McCarthy, eds., **Understanding Social Enquiry**, (Notre Dame Indiana: The University Press), 1977, p 360.

72. Habermas, J., 'The hermeneutic claim to universality', trans. in Bleicher, op **cit**, pp 181-212, cited also on p. 163-164.

73. Habermas, J., 'A postscript to **Knowledge and Human Interests**, **Philosophy of the Social Sciences**, vol 3, 1973, p 166.

74. Habermas, J., **Legitimation Crisis**, London, Heinemann, 1976, pp 107-108. Bleicher, **op cit**, p 163, also amplifies the connection between discourse, consensus, and the ideal speech situation:

'A discourse differs from interaction in that here the norms and opinions, which are 'taken-for-granted' in communicative action, are problematized; it is only discoursively that the validity of these naively accepted norms can be ascertained consensually. Successful interaction pre-supposes that actors follow norms intentionally and that these norms appear to them as justified. It is thereby pre-supposed that actors are convinced that the norms underlying their actions can be justified at any time within a discourse.

But just as in interaction, so in discourse, too, there are pre-supposed a number of 'counterfactual' elements. In the course of a consensus theory of truth Habermas arrives at the view that the concept of truth provides no criterion for distinguishing between true and false consensus since truth itself can only be arrived at via a consensus in a discourse. It follows that in discourse we pre-suppose that any consensus arrived at within the framework of a discourse can be regarded as a true consensus.

This conception of truth as consensual in turn pre-supposes - or rather anticipates - the 'ideal speech situation' which is characterized by the exclusion of extraneous pressures, i.e. it is discussion free from domination. This situation provides a climate in which debates allow the formulation of the true interests of the participants and the eventual emergence and acceptance of the best argument.

Preconditions for successful interaction - such as the intelligibility and truth of what is said at an appropriate time by a sincere speaker - are thereby transposed onto discourse; the participants may not deceive themselves or others about their intentions, thereby excluding the possibility of a distortion of the communicative process. Just as full intentionality is pre-supposed in interaction, so the ideal speech situation counterfactually circumscribes the conditions in which true consensus may emerge.'

75. Karl R. Popper, **Objective knowledge: An Evolutionary Approach**, Clarendon Press, Oxford & NY, 1972, cited in Bauman, Z., op cit, p 237-8.

76. Giddens, A., **New Rules of Sociological Method**, London, Hutchinson, 1976, p 162:

> **'Sociological concepts thus obey what I call a double hermeneutic:** (1) Any generalized theoretical scheme in the natural or social sciences is in a certain sense a form of life in itself, the concepts of which have to be mastered as a mode of practical activity generating specific types of descriptions. That this is already a hermeneutic task is clearly demonstrated in the 'newer philosophy of science' of Kuhn and others. (2) Sociology, however, deals with a universe which is already constituted within frames of meaning by social actors themselves, and reinterprets these within its own theoretical schemes, mediating ordinary and technical language. This double hermeneutic is of considerable complexity, since the connection is not merely a one-way one (as Schutz seems to suggest); there is a continual 'slippage' of the concepts constructed in sociology, whereby these are appropriated by those whose conduct they were originally coined to analyse, and hence tend to become integral features of that conduct (thereby in fact potentially compromising their original usage within the technical vocabulary of social science).

77. Held, D., op cit, p 393.

78. **ibid**, p 392, and also Giddens, A., **Studies in Social and Political Theory**, Hutchinson, London, 1977, p 149.

79. Habermas, J., **Legitimation Crisis**, p 11.

80. Cf. Held, op cit, pp 394-5, Giddens, **Studies in Social & Political Theory**, pp 158-161, for examples of objections.

81. Giddens, **ibid**, p 152.

82. Hans-Georg Gadamer, trans. P. Christopher Smith, **Hegel's Dialectic: Fine Hermeneutical Studies**, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1976, p 115, and in Bauman, op cit, p 171.

Notes to Chapter Four

1. Kristeva, J., 'The system and the speaking subject', **Times Literary Supplement**, 12 October 1973, p 1249.

2. See Wittgenstein, L., **Philosophical Investigations**, tr. G.E.M. Anscombe, Oxford, Blackwell, 1978, p 2. Wittgenstein quotes St. Augustine:

   'When they (my elders) named some object,and accordingly moved towards something, I saw this and I grasped that the thing was called by the sound they uttered when they meant to point it out. Their intention was shewn by their bodily movements, as it were the natural language of all peoples: the expression of the face, the play of the eyes, the movement of other parts of the body, and the tone of voice which expresses our state of mind in seeking, having, rejecting, or avoiding something. Thus, as I heard words repeatedly used in their proper places in various sentences, I gradually learnt to understand what objects they signified; and after I had trained my mouth to form these signs, I used them to express my own desires.'

   'These words, it seems to me, give us a particular picture of the essence of human language. It is this: the individual words in language name objects - sentences are combinations of such names. In this picture of language we find the roots of the following idea: Every word has a meaning. This meaning is correlated with the word. It is the object for which the word stands.'

3. Silverman, D., and Torode, B., **The Material Word**, R.K.P., 1980, p 7.

4. **ibid.**

5. **ibid**, p 330.

6. **ibid**, p 7.

7. See for example, Giddens, A., **Central Problems in Social Theory**, London, MacMillan, 1979, p 20. The criticism comes from Paul Ricoeur, who contributed with Levi-Strauss to a symposium debate entitled 'La Pensee Sauvage et le structuralisme' in **Esprit**, 11 November 1963. Levi-Strauss's reply in 'Reponses a quelques questions', **Esprit**, Vol 31, p 633, 1963 is: 'I am...completely in agreement with M. Ricoeur when he defines - no doubt to criticise it - my position as 'a Kantianism without a transcendental subject'. This deficiency causes him to have certain reservations, whereas nothing stops me accepting his formulation'. Cf Donato, Eugenio, 'The two languages of criticism', in Macksey Richard, and Donato Eugenio, **The Languages of Criticism and the Sciences of Men**, Baltimore, 1970. Also Giddens, A., **New Rules of Sociological Method**, Hutchinson, London, 1976, esp. Ch. 3, pp 118-121, where he also observes that Levi-Strauss has 'subsequently recoiled from this position'. The Kantianism of both Levi-Strauss and Chomsky is also discussed at length by Benoist, J-

M., **The Structural Revolution**, Weidenfeld & Nicholson, London, 1978, pp 76-88.

8. op cit, p 330.

9. ibid, p 6.

10. Saussure, Ferdinand de, **Course in General Linguistics**, tr. Wade Baskin, London, Fontana, 1974. This was written by students from lecture notes and published posthumously in French in 1916. This may well account for some obscurities which are not characteristic of Saussure's other works.

11. Jameson, Frederic, **The Prison-House of Language**, Princeton & London, Princeton University Press, 1972, pp 5-6.

12. Saussure, op cit, p 9.

13. Belsey, C., **Critical Practice**, London, Methuen, 1980, pp 38-9.

14. Benveniste, Emile, 'The nature of the linguistic sign', **Problems in General Linguistics**, Florida, University of Miami Press, 1971, p 44.

15. Saussure, op cit, p 116. Hjelmsler, Louis, **Prolegomena to a Theory of Language**, tr. F.J. Whitfield, Madison, Wis., University of Wisconsin Press, 1969, p 53.

16. Quoted in Belsey, op cit, p 39.

17. Saussure, op cit, p 118.

18. Culler, Jonathan, **Saussure**, London, Fontana, 1976, p 23.

19. Giddens, A., **Central Problems in Social Theory**, p 15.

20. See Silverman, D., and Torode, B., op cit, pp 3-6, for a discussion of Saussure's representation of the communicative process as the transmission of mental concepts from one brain to another. In examining Saussure's own argument and demonstrating the impossibility of such a transfer, and hence its improbability as the basis of communicative understanding, they suggest that the point of communication is the 'mutual learning by practitioners of linguistic practices'. This is not, as they say, a passive reception, but an active process of comparing the signs communicated with the way in which they are communicated, thus producing a new set of signs.

21. Giddens, op cit, p 12.

22. Culler, op cit, p 27.

23. Giddens, op cit, p 16.

24. Jakobson, R., 'Linguistics and Poetics', in de George, R. & F., eds., **The Structuralists**, New York, Doubleday, 1972, pp 85-122, p 93. Reprint of 'Closing Statement: Linguistics and Poetics', in Sebeok, Thomas A., ed., **Style in Language**,

Cambridge, Mass., MIT Press, 1960. Jakobson seems to echo Vico's conception of the 'sapienza poetica', the cognitive, 'poetic wisdom' by which man responds to the world, consciously casting those responses in terms of metaphor, symbol, and myth. See Vico, Giambattista, **The New Science**, (trans. Thomas Goddard Bergin and Max Harold Fisch), Ithaca and London, Cornell University Press, 1968; discussed in Hawkes, T., **Structuralism and Semiotics**, London, Methuen, 1977, pp 11-15.

25. Culler, op cit, p 48.

26. Lakoff, G. and Johnson, M., **Metaphors We Live By**, Chicago University Press, 1980, p 36. Lakoff and Johnson go on to point out that metonymy also has a function of understanding in that the particular part or related object which is chosen determines the aspect of the subject on which we focus. We actively conceptualise one term according to its proposed relationship with another term.

27. Jakobson, R., and Halle, M., **Fundamentals of Language**, Januara Linguarum, Series Minor, I, The Hague; Mouton, 1956, pp 69-96.

28. After Hawkes, op cit, p 78.

29. Jakobson, op cit, p 95.

30. Saussure, op cit, pp 11-12.

31. Jakobson, op cit, p 89.

32. ibid, p 91.

33. ibid, p 95.

34. The constitution of the 'I' in Saussure and others is examined by Silverman and Torode, op cit, Ch. 1.

35. Jakobson, op cit, p 111.

36. Rutherford, John, 'Structuralism', in Wolff, J., and Routh, J., eds., **The Sociology of Literature**, B.S.A. Sociological Review Monograph, 1979, p 44.

37. See Sapir, Edward, **Language**, New York, Harcourt & Brace, 1921, and **Essays on Culture Language and Personality**, (ed. David G. Mandelbaum), Berkeley, University of California Press, 1964, for a classical statement of Sapir's ideas.

38. Whorf, B.L., **Language, Thought and Reality**, (ed. John B. Carroll), Cambridge, Mass., M.I.T. Press, 1956. Similarly to Sapir (ibid) a collection of important writings stressing the capacity of language to structure 'reality', and the relativity of cultures.

39. Sapir, E., 'The Status of Linguistics as a Science', in Mandelbaum, ed. **op cit.** Quoted by Hawkes, Terence, **Metaphor**, London, Methuen, 1972, p 78.

40. Lee, Dorothy, 'Linguistic Reflection of Wintu Thought', **International Journal of American Limguistics**, Vol 10, 1944, quoted by Hawkes, **ibid**, p 82.

41. For a fuller discussion of the phoneme see Hawkes, T., **Structuralism and Semiotics**, (op cit), pp 22-24.

42. Vincent B. Leitch summarises this influence succinctly:

'Going beyond Saussure, Troubetzkoy details the rules for determining, classifying, and combining phonemes. Then Jakobson provides a further refinement, demonstrating that phonemic oppositions are systematically binary, begetting ternary structural patterns through the presence of gradational or mediating phonemes. This theory of dichotomous relations deployed with systematic mediations is the machine that powers all of Levi-Strauss' structuralist studies: his anthropological data regularly reduce to mediated binary oppositions. Just as basic linguistic units like phonemes necessarily operate within systems of binary/ternary relations, so elementary cultural units function through demonstrable patterns of two- and three-way oppositions'.

Vincent B. Leitch, **Deconstructive Criticism: an Advanced Introduction**, London, Hutchinson, 1983, pp 16-17. Levi-Strauss himself relies on Troubetzkoy's formulation of the structuralist programme in terms of four basic operations:

'First, structural linguistics shifts from the study of **conscious** linguistic phenomena to study of their **unconscious** infrastructure; second, it does not treat **terms** as independent entities, taking instead as its basis of analysis the **relations** between terms; third, it introduces the concept of **system** - 'Modern phonemics does not merely claim that phonemes are always part of a system; it **shows** concrete phonemic systems and elucidates their structure'; finally structural linguistics aims at discovering **general laws**, either by induction 'or...by logical deduction, which would give them an absolute character.'

Levi-Strauss, C., **Structural Anthropology**, tr. Claire Jacobson and Brooke Grundfest Schoepf, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1977, p 33. Levi-Strauss quotes Troubtezkoy, N., 'La phonologie actuelle' in **Psychologie du Langage**, Paris, 1933, p 243.

From this influence, Levi-Strauss could be said to derive his desire to be rigorous and scientific, in producing models which were amenable to mathematical and algebraic analysis, and in which the computer could play a significant part,and to simultaneously be both non-reductionist and non-positivistic. This characteristic stimulated the early Barthes (up to **Elements of Semiology**, London, Cape, 1967) and the work of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (see Hall, S., 'Cultural Studies and the Centre: some problematics and

problems' in Hall, S., Hobson, D., Lowe, A., and Willis, P., eds., **Culture Media, Language**, London, Hutchinson, 1980, pp 29-30.

43. Levi-Strauss, C., **Structural Anthropology**, op cit, pp 279-80.

44. **ibid**, p 34.

45. **ibid**, pp 213-19.

46. My modification of Levi-Strauss' diagram, **ibid**, p 214.

47. Levi-Strauss, **Structural Anthropology**, Vol 2, p 143.

48. Levi-Strauss, **Structural Anthropology**, p 210.

49. Hawkes, T., **Structuralism and Semiotics**, p 49.

50. **ibid**, p 51.

51. See Derrida, Jacques, 'Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences' in **Writing and Difference**, tr. Alan Bass, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981, pp 278-93 for a recent translation of a paper written in 1966. A contemporary paper appears in **Of Grammatology**, tr. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976, pp 97-140.

52. Cf. Gowler and Legge's discussion of digital and analog textures of meaning in accounts: Gowler, D., and Legge, K., 'Negation, Synthesis and Abomination in Rhetoric' in Antaki, C., ed., **The Psychology of Ordinary Explanations of Social Behaviour**, London, Academic Press, 1981, pp 243-269 (esp. pp 252-258).

53. Hebdige, Dick, **Subculture: The Meaning of Style**, Methuen, 1979.

54. Willis, Paul, **Profane Culture**, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978, cited by Hebdige, op **cit**, p 113.

55. Clarke, J., 'Style', in S. Hall et al (eds.), **Resistance through Ritual**, London, Hutchinson, 1976. Quoted by Hebdige, op **cit**, p 104.

57. Hebdige, op **cit**, p 106.

58. Hebdige, op **cit**, p 115.

59. Barthes, R., **Mythologies**, London, Paladin, 1973, p 109.

60. **ibid**, p 110.

61. My modification of Barthes' diagram, **ibid**, p 115, includes terms from his ensuing discussion, and also his discussion of denotation and connotation in **Elements of Semiology**, London, Cape, 1967.

62. Barthes, **Mythologies**, p 132.

63. **ibid**, p 143.

64. Barthes, Roland, **S/Z**, Paris, Seuil, 1970. Quoted by Marina Camargo Heck, 'The ideological dimension of media messages', in Hall, Hobson, Lowe and Willis, eds., **Culture, Media, Language**, London, Hutchinson, 1980, p 126.

    Connotation is here not viewed simply as the method of the myth-reader, but as the method which writes/reads any text. It thus **produces** denotation as a closure of the productivity of the text to one meaning.

65. Baudrillard, J., **Pour une critique de l'Economie Politique du Signe**, Paris, Gallemard, 1972, p 190, tr. by Heck, p 127.

66. Barthes, **Mythologies**, p 12.

67. Silverman, D., and Torode, B., **The Material Word**, p 262.

68. Gramsci, A., **Selections from the Prison Notebooks**, Lawrence & Wishart, 1971, pp 181-2, quoted in Hall et al, p 35.

69. Hebdige, D., op **cit**, p 16 and p 17.

70. Young, R., **Untying the Text: A Post-Structuralist Reader**, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981. Introduction, p 8.

71. A criticism begun in 'Differance' in **Speech and Phenomena, and Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs**, tr. David B. Allison, Evanston, N.W. University Press, 1973, pp 129-60, and continued in **Of Grammatology**, tr. G.C. Spivak, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976.

72. Young, op **cit**, p 15.

73. Weedon, C., Tolson A., and Mort, F., 'Theories of Language and Subjectivity', in Hall et al, eds., op **cit**, pp 195-216, p 199.

74. Young, op **cit**, p 18.

75. Barthes, R., 'The Death of the Author', in **Image-Music-Text**, tr. Heath, S., London, Fontana, 1977, pp 142-148, p 148.

76. Barthes, R., 'From Work to Text', in Heath, ed., op **cit**, p 159.

77. Barthes, R., **S/Z**, London, Cape, 1975, quoted in Silverman and Torode, op **cit**, p 265.

78. Weedon, Tolson and Mort, Hall et al, op **cit**, p 200.

79. **ibid**, p 201.

80. **ibid**, p 203.

81. Althusser, L., **Lenin, Philosophy and Other Essays**, London, New Left Books, 1971, contains 'On Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses', and 'Freud and Lacan' which demonstrates this connection.

82. Weedon et al, **op cit**, p 204. The concept of interpellation has been extended into that of interdiscourse by Michel Pecheux. In Woods, R., 'Discourse Analysis: The Work of Michel Pecheux', in **Ideology and Consciousness**, No 2, Autumn, 1977, Woods argues:

'The constitution of subjects is always specific in respect of each subject...and this can be conceived of in terms of a single, original (and mythic) interpellation - the entry into language and the symbolic - which constitutes a **space** wherein a complex of continually interpellated subject forms interrelate, each subject form being a determinate formation of discursive processes. **The discursive subject is therefore an interdiscourse, the product of the effects of discursive practices traversing the subject throughout its history'.**

The subject may often experience conflicting interpellations for example as member of a 'national' group and as member of a 'class' group. The identification of contradictory interpellations lays stress on the shifting, provisional properties of the process of positioning the subject, which is neglected by 'Screen Theory'. The subject of the text, or the subject in language, is often generalised and not sufficiently distinguished from the social subject. See also Morley, Dave, 'Texts, readers, subjects', in Hall, et al, **op cit**, pp 163-173.

83. Lacan, Jacques, 'From Interpretation to the Transference', in **The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis**, tr. Alan Sheridan, ed., Jacques-Alain Miller, Hardmondsworth, Penguin, 1979, pp 249-251.

84. Kristeva, Julia, 'The Ethics of Linguistics', in **Desire in Language**, ed. Leon S. Roudiez, tr. Thomas Gora, Alice Jardine, and Leon S. Roudiez, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1980, p 24.

85. Weedon **et al**, p 210.

86. **ibid.**

87. Cf. Kristeva, J., 'The Bounded Text', in Roudiez, ed., op **cit**, p 36:

'...the **text** is defined as a trans-linguistic apparatus that redistributes the order of language by relating communicative speech, which aims to inform directly, to different kinds of anterior or synchronic utterances. The text is therefore a **productivity**, and this means: first, that its relationship to the language in which it is situated is redistributive (destructive-constructive), and hence can be better approached through logical categories rather than linguistic ones; and second, that it is a permutation of texts, and intertextuality: in the space of a given text, several

utterances, taken from other texts, intersect and neutralise one another'.

The translator's introduction to this volume gives a useful analysis of some of Kristeva's more problematic terms.

88. An interesting but rather cryptic attempt to apply some Lacanian ideas to the analysis of the discourse of official reports of inquiries into law, order, and justice occurs in Burton, F., and Carlen, P., **Official Discourse**, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979. The rather brief text employs a number of problematic concepts which are poorly explicated and this serves to limit the possibilities of assessing it.

89. Foucault, M., **The Archaeology of Knowledge**, tr. A.M. Sheridan Smith, London, Tavistock, 1972, p 49.

90. Weedon et al, op cit, p 210.

91. Foucault, M., **The History of Sexuality**, New York, Pantheon, 1978, p 93.

92. Weedon et al, p 212.

93. Foucault, M., **Power/Knowledge**, London, Harvester Press, 1980, p 118.

94. Cf. Gallie, W.B., 'Essentially Contested Concepts', in **Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society**, 56 (1955-6), pp 167-98. An essentially contested concept is one whose application is **inherently** a matter of dispute. This is applied to the concept of power by Stephen Lukes in **Power: a radical view**, London, MacMillan, 1974. Similar treatments of power include Clegg, S., **Power, rule and domination**, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975; Whitley, R.D., 'Concepts of Organisation and Power in the Study of Organisations', **Personnel Review**, Vol. 6, No. 1, Winter, 1977, pp 54-59; Golding, D., **'Some Aspects of the Symbolic Manifestation of Power in an Industrial Hierarchical Organisation'**, unpublished PhD Thesis, CNAA (Sheffield City Polytechnic), 1979.

95. Cf. Giddens, A., **Central Problems in Social Theory**, MacMillan, London, 1979, p 47.

96. Throughout this chapter, indeed this thesis, I have tried to use the terms 'structuralist' and 'post-structuralist' with circumspection, mindful of the fact that Derrida, Lacan and Foucault rejected the appellation vehemently:

'In France, certain half-witted 'commentators' insist in labelling me a 'structuralist'. I have been unable to get it into their tiny minds that I have used none of the methods, concepts or key terms that characterise structural analysis... There may well be similarities between the work of structuralists and my own work. It would hardly behove me, of all people, to claim that my discourse is independent of conditions and rules of which I am very largely unaware, and which determine other work that is being done today. but it

is only too easy to avoid the trouble of analysing such work by giving it an admittedly impressive-sounding, but inaccurate label'.

Foucault, M., **The Order of Things**, London, Tavistock, 1980, p. xiv. Perhaps the best working definition, and one which I have broadly and I hope, in the light of Foucault's comments, responsibly, followed is Culler's:

(By the distinction between 'structuralism' and 'post-structuralism')...'structuralism becomes a series of systematic, scientific projects - semiotics, the successor to structuralism in this sense, is generally defined as the 'science' of signs - and structuralism's opponents are various post-structuralist critiques of these projects or explorations of their ultimate impossibility. In simplest terms, structuralists take linguistics as a model and attempt to develop 'grammars' - systematic inventories of elements and their possibilities of combination - that would account for the form and meaning of literary works; post-structuralists investigate the way in which this project is subverted by the workings of the texts themselves. Structuralists are convinced that systematic knowledge is possible; post-structuralists claim to know only the impossibility of this knowledge.'

Culler, J., **On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism after Structuralism'**, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983, p 22.

Notes to Chapter Five

1. Crook, Steve, review of Bleicher, Josef, **The Hermeneutic Imagination: Outline of a Positive Critique of Scientism and Sociology**, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982, in **Network**, Newsletter of the British Sociological Association, No. 26, May 1983, p 19.

2. Ricoeur, Paul, 'The Model of the Text: Meaningful Action Considered as a Text', **Social Research**, Vol 38, 1971, pp 529-562. A number of Ricoeur's other writings which develop some of the detailed thought behind some of the concepts which inform his theory, including 'What is a text?', 'Metaphor and the problem of hermeneutics', 'Distanciation' and 'Appropriation', are translated alongside 'The Model of the Text' by John B. Thompson, in Ricoeur, P., **Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences**, Cambridge University Press, 1981.

   'What is a Text?' also appears in translation in Rasmussen, D., **Mythic-Symbolic Language and Philosophical Anthropology: A Constructive Interpretation of the thought of Paul Ricoeur**, The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1971, pp 135-150.

3. **ibid**, pp 529-30.

4. **ibid**, p 530.

5. **ibid**, pp 530-1.

6. **ibid**, p 532.

7. **ibid**, p 532. Ricoeur relies on the work of Austin, J.L., **How to do things with words**, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1962, and Searle, J., **Speech Acts**, Cambridge University Press, 1969.

8. **ibid**, p 534.

9. **ibid.**

10. **ibid.**

11. **ibid**, p 535.

12. **ibid**, p 536.

13. **ibid**, p 537.

14. **ibid**, p 534, Cf also Sperber, Dan, **Rethinking Symbolism**, Cambridge University Press, 1975, tr. Alice L. Morton, pp 84-9.

    'The word meaning has so many meanings that it always fits in somehow. It is said differently that the word 'moon' means the moon, that 'Hear, Hear!' means approval, that fever means illness, and that the election of the new President means nothing good. Meaning and reference, meaning and connotation, meaning and diagnosis, meaning and prognosis, are confused.

But what may be confused harmlessly in ordinary speech should be carefully distinguished in philosophical or scientific exposition. Especially in the latter one should not introduce the notion of meaning without having sufficiently circumscribed it, having shown that it is relevant and that it leads to better work'.

15. I am thinking particularly of the work of Goffman and Garfinkel, but that of Ditton and Willis is also worth consideration, without mentioning Marx, Durkheim, Weber etc. all of whose work shares the realisation that there is a potential divergence between the speaker's meaning and the meaning of his discourse.

16. Thompson, John B., **Critical Hermeneutics: A Study in the Thought of Paul Ricoeur and Jurgen Habermas**, Cambridge University Press, 1981, p 126.

17. Ricoeur, op cit, p 541.

18. Thompson, op cit, p 126.

19. ibid, pp 126-127.

20. Ricoeur, op cit, p 544.

21. Thompson, op cit, p 127.

22. Cohen, L. Jonathan, 'Guessing', **Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society**, Vol. LXXIV, 73/74, Methuen, 1974, pp 189-210. Cohen considers how guessing differs from, and resembles, 'conjecturing, speculating, suspecting, assuming, supposing, hypothesising and other kindred forms of conduct or states of mind', because, he argues, that it 'demands elucidation as an essential preliminary to the construction of any theory about the more highly valued cognitive states or activities, like knowing, recognising, discovering, explaining, understanding etc.' Cohen sees himself as being involved in the 'preliminary cleansing of one's apparatus' before responding to the calls of modern skepticism 'that rationally sophisticated enquirers ought to engage in the activity of guesswork, rather than that they ought to laspe into the passivity of doubt'. Ricoeur, on too many occasions, seems content to work with 'dirty' apparatus.

23. Thompson, op cit, p 161.

24. Ricoeur, op cit, p 551.

25. Hart, H.L.A., 'The Ascription of Responsibility and Rights', **Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society**, 49 (1948), 171-194. Ricoeur, p 552.

26. Sperber, D., op cit, p 113.

27. Ricoeur, op cit, p 560.

28. Thompson, op cit, p 174.

29. Bourdieu, Pierre, **Outline of a Theory of Practice**, tr. Richard Nice, Cambridge University Press, 1977.

30. Jenkins, Richard, 'Pierre Bourdieu and the Reproduction of Determinism', **Sociology**, Vol. 16, No. 2, May 1982, p 272.

31. Sperber, op **cit**, p 83.

32. **ibid**, p 87.

33. **ibid**, p 122. Also p 123, 'the symbolic mechanism creates its own pathways in the memory, which anything may set in motion and nothing seems to be able to stop'.

34. **ibid**, p 33, 'A landmark is not a sign but an index which serves cognitively to organise our experience of space'.

35. **ibid**, p 148.

36. Thompson, op **cit**, p 177.

37. Jenkins, op **cit**, p 278.

38. **ibid**, p 274.

39. Feyerabend, P.K., **Against Method**, London, Verso, 1978, p 26.

40. **ibid**, p 30.

41. Cf. Imershein, A.W., 'The Epistemological Bases of Social Order: Toward Ethnoparadigm Analysis', **Sociological Methodology**, ed. David R. Heise, 1976, pp 38ff; and Fineman, S., 'Work Meanings, Non-Work, and the Taken-for-Granted'(1), **Journal of Management Studies**, 20, 2, 1983, pp 143. Fineman states:

'It is as if removal from a situation where participation has become relatively fixed in its roles and scripts, to one which renders such patterns inappropriate or invalid, can accentuate that which had been previously taken for granted, assumed to be present, or simply never considered.' The difference in emphasis amongst these authors seems to centre around how actively if at all the researcher should **create** such situations. A further advocate of the use of 'discrepant' data is Pym, D., 'Post-Paradigm Enquiry', Paper Presented to Conference, **Qualitative Approaches to Organisations**, University of Bath, April 1982.

42. Feyerabend, op **cit**, p 42.

43. Phillips, D., **Abandoning Method**, San Francisco, Jossey Bass, 1973, p 160.

44. **ibid**, pp 162-3.

45. Linstead, S.A., Unpublished M.Sc. Thesis, CNAA (Sheffield City Polytechnic), 1980.

46. Norris, C., **Deconstruction: Theory and Practice**, London, Methuen, 1982, p 11.

Notes to Chapter Six

1. See McAuley, M.J., **The analysis of culture in organisational settings: Methodological and substantive problems in the location of shared knowledge**, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Manchester, 1981, p 1.

   '...I could not readily identify the operation of culture in organisational settings even though there was a **sense** that it was there and the literature **told** me that it was there'.

2. See Parsons, Talcott, **Structure and Process in Modern Societies**, Glencoe, Free Press, 1960; **The Social System**, NY, Free Press, Glencoe, 1951.

3. Jaques, E., **The Changing Culture of a Factory**, London, Tavistock, 1951.

4. McAuley, J., op cit, p 2.

5. See Braverman, H., **Labour and Monopoly Capital**, New York, Monthly Review Press, 1974.

6. Littler, C., and Salaman, G., 'Bravermania and Beyond: Recent Theories of the Labour Process', **Sociology**, Vol. 16, No 2, May 1982, p 256.

7. Strauss, A., Schatzman, L., Ehrlich, D., Bucher, R., and Sabshin, M., 'The hospital and its negotiated order', in Friedson, E., ed., **The Hospital in Modern Society**, New York, MacMillan, 1963, pp 147-69. Extracted in Salaman, G., and Thompson, K., eds., **People and Organisations**, London, Longmans, 1973, pp 303-320. Another writer who explores cultural plurality is Bate, Paul, 'The Impact of Organisational Culture on Approaches to Organisational Problem-Solving', paper presented to Conference, **Qualitative Approaches to Organizations**, University of Bath, April 1982.

9. Strauss et al, **Psychiatric Ideologies and Institutions**, Transaction Books, 1981, p 374.

10. Littler & Salaman, op cit, p 258-9.

11. Smith, S.L., and Wilkinson, B., 'From Old School Hunches to Departmental Lunches: Changing Patterns of Industrial Bureaucracy', unpublished paper, **Business and Society Research Unit**, University of Nottingham, 1983. Also 'Management Strategies for Technical Change', **Science and Public Policy**, April 1983, pp 56-61.

12. Smith & Wilkinson, 'From Old School...', p 22.

13. Smith & Wilkinson, 'Management Strategies', p 59.

14. Smith, S.L., and Wilkinson, B., 'Food Manufacturers 2: Managers Managed', unpublished paper, **Business and Society Research Unit**, University of Nottingham, 1983, p 22.

15. Turner, B., **Exploring the Industrial Subculture**, London, MacMillan, 1971, p 2. Subject to even greater constraints is Harris's attempt to formulate the characteristics of the 'Metaindustrial Work Culture', in Harris, Philip R., 'Future Technological Work Culture', part 1, **Leadership and Organization Development Journal**, Vol 4, No 1, 1983, pp 7-12, which confines itself largely to systematic features and misses much of what gives Turner's analysis its strength. Harris's line of argument at times would seem to vindicate Braverman's analysis: 'The prophecy of Robert Schrank in the **Harvard Business Review** of 1979 (Sept-Oct) (Are Unions an Anachronism? pp 107-115) is already coming true: 'The post-industrial, automated, humane workplace of the future may spell the end of the labour movement as we know it', p 10.

16. McAuley, op cit, p 2.

17. Roy, D., 'Making Out: A Workers Counter-System of Control of Work Situation and Relationships', in Burns, T., ed., **Industrial Man**, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1976, pp 359-379, p 377.

18. Roy, D., op cit, p 378.

19. McAuley, op cit, p 3.

20. Turner, op cit, p 10. Much of Turner's argument derives from the thought of Schutz, Cf Schutz, A., **Collected Papers**, Vols 1 & 2, Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague, 1967.

21. Burns, T., and Stalker, G.M., **The Management of Innovation**, London, Tavistock, 1967, p 114. Quoted in Turner, op cit, p 4.

22. Turner, op cit, p 14.

23. This model is comprehensively expounded by Leach, E., **Culture and Communication**, Cambridge University Press, 1976, from an anthropological perspective.

24. Sperber, D., **Rethinking Symbolism**, Cambridge University Press, 1975, p 6.

25. **ibid**, p 16.

26. **ibid**, p 67 and p 68.

27. Turner, op cit, p 20.

28. Sahlins, M., **Culture and Practical Reason**, Chicago & London, University of Chicago Press, 1976, p 220.

29. Smith, S.L., in personal communication to D. Golding, December 1982.

30. Golding, D., 'Authority, Legitimacy and the Right to Manage at Wenslow Manufacturing Co', **Personnel Review**, Vol 9, No 1, Winter,1980, pp 43-48, p 44. Golding quotes Sohn-Rethel, M.,

'Translators Forward', in A. Sohn-Rethel, (ed.), **Intellectual and Manual Labour**, London, MacMillan, 1978, p ix.

'It has become clear beyond question that the hands which plot the paths of technology and the hands which operate it and which should benefit from it have undergone the most total schism'.

31. Littler and Salaman, op cit, p 259.

32. Hebdige, D., **Subculture: the meaning of style**, London, Methuen, 1979, p 3.

33. Douglas, M., **Purity and Danger**, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980, p 121.

34. Cherns, A.B., 'Can behavioural scientists help managers improve their organisations?' **Organisational Dynamics**, Winter, 1973.

35. Gill, John, 'Research as Action - an Experiment in Utilising the Social Sciences', **Personnel Review**, Vol 11, No 2, 1982, pp 25-34, p 25; see also McGivern, C.K., and Fineman, S., 'Research and Consultancy: towards a conceptual synthesis', **Journal of Management Studies**, (forthcoming).

36. 'Most researchers choose their language and methods to impress their peer group', Gill, op cit, p 25. Gill also refers to V. Scott Armstrong, 'Unintelligible Management Research and Academic Prestige', **Interfaces**, Vol 10, No 2, 1980, pp 80-86.

37. Gill, op cit, p 25.

38. Gaskell, G., and Hampton, J., 'A note on styles in accounting', in Douglas, M., ed., **Essays in the Sociology of Perception**, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1982, pp 103-111, p 103.

39. Saynor, J., **'The Trainer as Consultant in Planned Organisational Problem Solving and Change'**, unpublished paper, Sheffield City Polytechnic, 1977, p 3.

40. See for example Simmons, M., in **Basic Consultancy Skills for O.D.** Shepperd Moscow Associates/Sheffield City Polytechnic Handbook, 1974, p 11.

41. The questionnaire was divided into the following areas: Children; Marital Arrangements; Main Earners or Second Earners; Travelling Arrangements; Type of Work; Supervisor's effect on attendance; Sick Pay; Disciplinary Procedure. Between 4 and 7 questions were asked in each area with little connection. In the presence of the supervisor, the honesty of the answers to questions like 'How do you feel the work is supervised in your areas?' could only have been questionable.

42. See for example, Gill, J., 'Consultant-Client Relationships' in **Management Review and Bibliography**, Bradford, MCB Books, 1978. Also McGivern, Chris, 'Some Facets of the Relationship

between Consultants and Clients', **Journal of Management Studies**, Vol 20, No 3, July 1983, pp 367-386, and also Walton, Michael, 'It suddenly went 'phut'!': Learning from Premature Closures in Consulting Practice, **Leadership and Organization Development Journal**, Vol 4, No 1, 1983, pp 3-6.

43. Cleverley, G., **Managers and Magic**, Pelican, London, 1971.

44. **ibid**, p 64.

45. Levi-Strauss, C., **Structural Anthropology**, Peregrine, London, 1977, p 168.

46. Mauss, M., **A General Theory of Magic**, Tr. Brain, R., Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1972, p 40.

47. **ibid**, p 44.

48. **op cit**, p 179.

49. Benedict, R., **Patterns of Culture**, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1971, p 58.

50. **ibid**, p 86.

51. Douglas, M., **Purity and Danger**, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1980, p 121.

52. Mair, L., quoted by Cleverley, **op cit**, p 56.

53. Van Gennep, A., **The Rites of Passage**, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1965, p 11 and throughout.

54. Bailey, F.G., **Morality and Expediency: The Folklore of Academic Politics**, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1977, p 184-185. Also referred to by Gowler, D., and Legge, K., 'Negation, Abomination and Synthesis in Rhetoric' in Antaki, C., (ed.), **The Psychology of Ordinary Explanations of Social Behaviour**, Academic Press, 1981.

55. Smith & Wilkinson, 'Fron Old School Hunches...', p 19, give an example of such a headhunting. Don Lyons the former employee of OK Consultants, was recruited as Production Director because 'they knew I wouldn't ride roughshod'.

56. Levi-Strauss, **Structural Anthropology**, p 176.

57. **ibid**, p 179.

58. Mauss, M., **op cit**, p 40.

59. Zimmerman, D., 'Ethnomethodology and the problem of social order', Colloquium talk delivered at University of Southern California, 1971, p 4. See also Zimmerman, D., and Weider, D.L., 'Ethnomethodlogy and the Problem of Order: Comment on Denzin', in Douglas, J.D., ed., **Understanding Everyday Life**, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974, pp 285-295.

60. Handel, W., **Ethnomethodology: How People Make Sense**, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice-Hall, 1982, p 35.

61. Cicourel, A.V., **Cognitive Sociology**, London, Penguin, 1973, esp. Chapters 1 & 2.

62. Chomsky, N., **Aspects of a Theory of Syntax**, Boston, M.I.T., 1965.

63. Morris, M.B., **An Excursion into Creative Sociology**, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1977, p 96.

64. Cicourel, op cit, p 46.

65. Cicourel, op cit, p 52.

66. Cicourel himself suggests that there may be six in an early paper (reprinted as Ch. 2 **ibid**), but later four. These are referred to by Leiter, K.A., **A Primer on Ethnomethodology**, Oxford University Press, 1980, p 173. I have followed Leiter's slight recasting of the typology, p 174.

67. Schutz, A., **Collected Papers Vol. 1: The Problem of Social Reality**, Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague, 1973, especially pp 315-6.

68. Leiter, op cit, p 174.

69. **ibid.**

70. Cicourel, op cit, p 40.

71. Nielsen, R.P., 'How Inclusive Should a Consulting Report Be in a Participative Decision-Making Situation?', **Personnel Review**, Vol 9, No 3, pp 54-55.

72. **ibid**, p 54.

73. **ibid**, p 55.

74. See Golding, D., 'Authority, Legitimacy and the 'right to Manage' at Wenslow Manufacturing Co.', **Personnel Review**, Vol 9, No 1, pp 43-48, for a discussion of this concept.

75. Nielsen, op cit, p 54.

76. **ibid**, p 55.

77. **ibid**, p 54.

78. See Smith and Wilkinson's 'Old School' and 'New School', op cit.

79. Levi-Strauss, C., **Structural Anthropology**, Peregrine, London, 1977, p 175.

80. **ibid**, p 176.

Notes to Chapter Seven

1. Douglas, M., **Purity and Danger**, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978, p 94.

2. Louis, Meryl Reis, 'Surprise and Sense-Making: What Newcomers Experience in Entering Unfamiliar Organisational Settings', **Administrative Science Quarterly**, Vol 25, June 1980, p 246. In a full bibliography which is however confined to North American writings, Louis cites a number of sources which include Mitroff, I., and Kilmann, R., 'On Organisational Stories: An approach to the design and analysis of organisations through myths and stories', in Kilmann, R., Pondy, L.R., and Slevin, D.P., (eds.), **The Management of Organization Design: Strategies and Implementation**, New York, Elsevier, pp 189-208. A European text which should be noted here is Westerland, G., and Sjostrand, S., **Organisational Myths**, London, Harper and Row, 1979.

3. Gurning, M., **Theory and Practice of Personnel Management**, London, Heinemann, 1968, p 144. The high incidence of recruit turnover has been referred to as the induction 'crisis' (indicating the quality of attention it has received) as opposed to the periods of 'differential transit' and 'settled connection'. For discussion see Burgoyne, J., 'The Induction Crisis: A Sociologist Looks at Induction', **Personnel Review**, Vol 3, No 1, Winter 1971.

4. Fowler, A., **Getting off to the Right Start: induction and the Employee**, London, IPM, 1983. A 'typical' induction programme is discussed by Marriott, D., 'A Sociologist Looks at Induction', **Personnel Review**, Vol 3, No 1, Winter, 1974, pp 4-10, p 5.

5. See Marriott, op cit, p 5.

6. **ibid.**

7. Torrington, D., **Successful Personnel Management**, London, Staples, 1969, p 97, quoted by Marriott, **ibid.**

8. See Fox, A., **A Sociology of Work in Industry**, London, Collier-MacMillan, 1970, and **Man Mismanagement**, London, Hutchinson, 1974.

9. Marriott, op cit, p 5.

10. Louis, op cit, p 227.

11. **ibid.**

12. Cf. Kotter, J.P., 'The psychological contract: Managing the joining up process', **California Management Review**, 15, 1973, pp 91-99.

13. Louis, op cit, p 229.

14. Cf Hughes, E.C., **Men and their Work**, Glencoe, Free Press, 1958.

15. Cf Van Maanen, J., 'Experiencing Organization: notes on the meaning of careers and socialization', in Van Maanen, J., ed., **Organizational Careers: Some New Perspectives**, N.Y. Wiley, 1977, p 15-45. The socialization perspective is given a broad outline by Van Maanen in his article 'Breaking In: Socialization to Work', in Dubin, R., (ed.), **Handbook of Work, Organization and Society**, Chicago, Rand McNally, 1976, pp 67-130.

16. Louis, op cit, p 231.

17. **ibid.**

18. Louis cites Van Maanen, J., and Schein, E., 'Toward a theory of organizational socialization', in Barry M. Straw, (ed.), **Research in Organizational Behaviour**, Vol 1, 1979, p 209-64. Role negotiation as a part of the induction and orientation process in education is discussed in Linstead, S.A., 'Theory from Practice: the development of a general model of role-making from work with D.M.S. students', **Business Education**, Vol 4, No 1, 1983, pp 26-37.

19. Louis, op cit, p 232. Quotations are from Geertz, C., **The Interpretation of Cultures**, N.Y. Basic Books, 1973.

20. Louis, op cit, p 233

    'In general, the processes by which recruits come to appreciate pivotal organizational values, role-related abilities and missions, and interpretation schemes appropriate to the local culture have not been adequately explored in the literature on organizational socialization'.

21. Schutz, A., 'The Stranger - an essay in social psychology', in Broderson, A., ed., **Collected Papers No 2 - Studies in Social Theory**, Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague, 1971, pp 91-105.

22. Marriott, op cit.

23. Schutz, op cit, p 92.

24. Marriott, op cit, p 6.

25. Schutz, op cit, p 96

    'Thinking-as-usual may be maintained as long as some basic assumptions hold true, namely: (1) that life and especially socal life will continue to be the same as it has been so far; that is to say, that the same problems requiring the same solutions will recur and that, therefore, our former experiences will suffice for mastering future situations; (2) that we may rely on the knowledge handed down to us by parents, teachers, governments, traditions, habits, etc., even if we do not understand its origin and its real meaning; (3) that in the ordinary course of affairs it is sufficient to

know something **about** the general type or style of events we may encounter in our life-world in order to manage or control them; and (4) that neither the systems of recipes as schemes of interpretation and expression nor the underlying basic assumptions just mentioned are our private affair, but that they are likewise accepted and applied by our fellow-men.

26. Van Maanen, J., and Schein, E., op **cit.**

27. Louis, **op cit**, p 236 relies on the work of Gestalt psychologists: Koffka, K., **Principles of Gestalt Psychology**, NY Harcourt Brace, 1935, and Kohler, W., **Gestalt Psychology**, NY Mentor 1947. To these could be added Perls, F.W., Hefferline R., and Goodman, P., **Gestalt Therapy**, NY Dell Publishing, 1965, (also London, Pelican, 1977).

28. Van Maanen, J., 'Experiencing Organization', op **cit**, p 20.

29. Louis, op **cit**, p 239.

30. **ibid**, p 242.

31. This discussionis based on the argument in Burton F., and Carlen, P., **Official Discourse**, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979, pp 31-33 and 21-23.

32. Cf. Fox, op **cit**, on the Unitary frame of reference

33. Salaman, G., **Work Organisations: Resistance and Control**, London, Longmans, 1979, pp 198-212, discusses some variations on the unitary perspective, which he identifies as Structuralism, Psychologism, Consensualism, Welfareism and Legalism which are used to frame the various debates.

34. Hall, S., 'Encoding/decoding' in Hall, Hobson, Lowe and Willis, (eds.), **Culture, Media, Language**, pp 128-138, p 136-138.

35. Gowler, D., and Legge, K., 'Negation, Synthesis and Abomination in Rhetoric' in Antaki, C., ed., **The Psychology of Ordinary Explanations of Social Behaviour**, London, Academic Press, 1981, pp 243-269, p 245.

36. Gowler and Legge, op **cit**, p 251, quote Douglas, M., **Implicit Meanings: Essays in Anthropology**, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975, p 4.

37. **ibid**, p 269.

38. **ibid**, p 259.

39. Lyman, S.M. and Scott, M.B., 'Accounts' in **The Sociology of the Absurd**, NY, Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1970, p 112.

40. For the use of these images in press reports of business activity in Britain and France, see Clayton, S., 'The Images of the Development of Companies', **Sociological Review**, Vol 31, No 1, Feb. 1983,pp 83-104.

41. Burton, F., and Carlen, P., op cit, p 106.

42. The debate on whether Trade Unions can be revolutionary through the traditional methods of collective bargaining is summarised by Clark, T., 'Introduction: The Raison d'Etre of Trade Unionism' in Clark, T., and Clemens, L., (eds.), **Trade Unions under Capitalism**, Glasgow, Fontana, 1977,pp 7-23.

Notes to Chapter Eight

1. Fry, William F., **Sweet Madness: A Study of Humour**, Palo Alto, Pacific Books, 1963, p 5.

2. Barthes, Roland, **The Pleasure of the Text**, tr. Richard Miller, London, Cape, 1976. See also 'The Death of the Author' and 'From Work to Text' in **Image-Music-Text**, essays selected and translated by Stephen Heath, London, Fontana, 1977, pp 142-8 and 155-64; and 'The Theory of the Text' in Young, R., **Untying the Text: A Post-Structuralist Reader**, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981, pp 31-47. In his introduction to the latter essay, Young notes:

   'The closest word to 'jouissance' in English would be enjoyment if the English word had a little more frisson. 'Jouissance' means enjoyment in the sense of enjoyment of a right, of a pleasure, and, most of all, of sexual climax. 'Jouissance' and 'signifiance' invoke the sense of an ecstatic loss of the subject in a sexual or textual coming - a textasy'. p 32.

3. Fry, op cit, p 125, quotes from the soundtrack of the film by Gregory Bateson and W. Kees, **The Nature of Play**, 1952.

4. Fry, op cit, p 125. See also Bateson, G., 'The Message This is Play', in Schaffner, B., ed., **Group Processes**, Proceedings of the Josiah Macy Jr. Foundation, NY, 1955, pp 145-242, where Bateson discusses his animal experiments and psychiatric experiences with a seminar group. Fry expresses the idea succinctly

   'Humor, then, is an episode set off from the rest of the world by a play frame: 'What is contained herein is not real'.' p 143.

5. Goffman, E., **Frame Analysis**, London, Peregrine, 1975, p 41.

6. **ibid**, p 43-4.

7. **ibid**, p 43.

8. Fry, op cit, p 8.

9. Douglas, M., 'Jokes' in **Implicit Meanings: Essays in Anthropology**, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975, pp 90-114, states 'It would be wrong to suppose that the acid test of a joke is whether it provokes laughter or not. It is not necessary to go into the physiology and psychology of laughter, since it is generally recognized that one can appreciate a joke without actually laughing, and one can laugh for other reasons than from having perceived a joke', p 92.

10. Turner, B., in **Exploring the Industrial Subculture**, London, Macmillan, 1971, p 42:

    'The joking mode should not be confused with 'humour' or 'wit' - those things which make people laugh - for although the

joking mode may, in our culture at least, contain jokes and witticisms, and although it may make people laugh, this does not appear to be essential'.

11. Fry, op cit, pp 9-10.

12. Emerson, Joan, 'Negotiating the Serious Import of Humour', **Sociometry**, XXXII, 1969, pp 169-181, p 169-70.

13. Turner, op cit, p 43.

14. Emerson, op cit, p 170.

15. **ibid**, p 174.

16. **ibid**, p 176.

17. **ibid**, pp 179-80.

18. Davies, Christie, 'Ethnic jokes, moral values and social boundaries', **British Journal of Sociology**, Vol 33, No 3, September 1982, pp 383-403, p 383.

19. See Douglas, M., **Purity and Damger**, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978, especially Chapters 6, 7 and 8.

20. Davies, op cit, p 384.

21. Gowler, D., and Legge, K., 'Negation Synthesis and Abomination in Rhetoric', in C. Antaki, ed., **The Psychology of Ordinary Explanations of Social Behaviour**, London, Academic Press, 1981, pp 243-269, p 246.

22. See Coward, Rosalind, 'Lacan and Signification: an Introduction', **Edinburgh 76 Magazine**, No 1,1976, pp 6-20.

23. Davies, op cit, p 396.

24. Turner, op cit, p 43.

25. Davies, op cit, p 395.

26. Fry, op cit, p 106.

27. **ibid**.

28. **ibid**, p 104.

29. Powell, C., **Humour, potential sociological directions**, paper presented to British Sociological Association, Sociology of Humour Study Group, Universityof Aston, April 1983.

30. Cohen, S., and Taylor, L., **Escape Attempts**, London, Penguin, 1976, p 34.

31. **ibid**, p 35.

32. Douglas, **Implicit Meanings**, p 95.

33. **ibid**, p 98.

34. **ibid**, p 96.

35. op **cit**.

36. Golding, D., 'Establishing Blissful Clarity in Organizational Life: Managers', **Sociological Review**, Vol 28, No 4, 1980, pp 763-782, p 776. Quoted is Cohen, A., **Two-Dimensional Man**, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974, p 78.

37. op **cit**, p 767.

38. Zijderveld, A., **On Cliches**, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979, p 6.

39. Douglas, **Implicit Meanings**, pp 96-97.

40. Fry, op **cit**, p 43.

41. Douglas, op **cit**, p 93.

42. **ibid**, p 94.

43. Douglas, **ibid**, p 95 argues: 'If I may sum up the differences of emphasis between Bergson and Freud I would suggest that for Bergson the man who slips on a banana peel would be funny because he has lost his bodily control and so becomes a helpless automaton; for Freud this man would be funny because his stiff body has for two seconds moved with the swiftness of a gazelle, as if a new form of life had been hidden there'.

44. Fry, op **cit**, p 53.

45. **ibid**, p 53-54.

46. The reference is to Wittgenstein's discussion of the Augustinian description of language, and his presentation of the idea of a language game in Wittgenstein, L., **Philosophical Investigations**, tr. G.E.M. Anscombe, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1978, p 3.

    'Let us imagine a language for which the description given by Augustine is right. The language is meant to serve for communication between a builder A and an assistant B. A is building with building-stones: there are blocks, pillars, slabs and beams. B has to pass the stones, and that in the order in which A needs them. For this purpose they use a language consisting of the words 'block', 'pillar', 'slab', 'beam'. A calls them out; B brings the stone which he has learnt to bring at such-and-such a call. Conceive this as a complete primitive language.'

47. The incongruity of intellectualism and manual labour is given an added force in the following joke which also exploits the ethnic dimension in a reversal of the usual joke pattern:

Irish Labourer: I've come for the job,sir.

Building Site Foreman: Have you any qualifications?

Irish Labourer: No sir, but ye can ask me anything you like.

Foreman: OK, what's the difference between a joist and a girder?

Irish Labourer: That's easy, sir. Joist wrote 'Ulysses' and Girder wrote 'Faust'.

(My acknowledgement to Joseph A. Capstick of Swallownest, Sheffield, for the above).

48. Davies, **op cit**, p 394.

49. Douglas, **Purity and Danger**, p 121.

50. Douglas, **Implicit Meanings**,p 97.

51. **ibid**, p 101.

52. Zijderveld, **op cit**, p 10, defines a cliche:

    'A cliche is a traditional form of human expression (in words, thoughts, emotions, gestures, acts) which - due to repetitive use in social life - has lost its original, often ingenious heuristic power. Although it thus fails positively to contribute meaning to social interactions and communication, it does function socially, since it manages to stimulate behaviour (cognition, emotion, volition, action) while it avoids reflection on meanings. **Summary:** The sociological essence of a cliche consists of the supersedure of original meanings by social functions. This supersedure is caused by repetitive use and enhanced by the avoidance of reflection'.

53. Douglas, **Purity and Danger**, p 147.

54. **ibid**,p 121. See also Leach, E., 'Magical Hair', **Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute**, No 88,1958, pp 147-163.

55. Douglas, **Implicit Meanings**, p 97ff.

56. See Hall, S., 'Encoding/Decoding', in Hall et a, eds., **Culture Media Language**, London, Hutchinson, 1980, pp 128-138. See also previous chapter.

57. In arguing this, I am rejecting the distinction between myth and connotation observed by Heck:

    '...Myth seems identifiable with the lexicons of very large groups, if not of the society as a whole. Myth therefore differs from connotation at the moment at which it attempts to **universalize** for the whole society meanings which are special to particular lexicons. In the process of universalization, these meanings, which in the last instance are particular to certain lexicons, assume the amplitude of reality itself and

are therefore 'naturalized'. Thus, we might say **myths are connotations which have become dominant-hegemonic.'** Marina Carmargo Heck, 'The ideological dimension of media messages', in Hall et al, eds., **op cit**,pp 122-127, p 125.

This implies that subgroups normally regard their subcultural meanings as having no more significance than at the level of their verbal formulations, where they rub shoulders in plurality with other forms of jargon or slang, and do not regard them as having anything to say about universal and absolute reality. This reduces themto an inconsequential existence. It is ridiculous to assume that human beings labour to define the world and do not attribute some universal status, even if temporary, to their labours. As Vladimir says to Estragon '...But at this place at this moment of time, all mankind is us whether we like it or not...' Beckett, S., **Waiting for Godot**, Faber and Faber, London, 1956, p 79. Also quoted by Golding, **op cit**, p 763. Myth is both inescapable and necessary to a degree; it is not a product of the ambitions of subgroups.

58. See Golding, **op cit**, pp 773-774 for a discussion of the 'sense of limits' which is manifested as a rule which blocks access.

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1. Dubois, Pierre, **Sabotage in Industry**, Harmondsworth, Pelican, 1979, p 21.

2. Taylor, Laurie and Walton, Paul, 'Industrial Sabotage: Motives and Meanings' in **Images of Deviance**, ed. Stanley Cohen, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1971, pp 219-245, p 219.

3. **ibid.**

4. Brown, Geoff, **Sabotage**, Nottingham, Spokesman Books, 1977, p v.

5. Taylor and Walton, **op cit**, p 219.

6. **ibid**, p 220.

7. **ibid.**

8. Edwards, P.K., and Scullion, Hugh, **The Social Organisation of Industrial Conflict**, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1982, p 153.

9. For a discussion of the concept of 'adequacy' in interpretations of informants' accounts, see Carroll, R., 'Adequacy in Interpretive Sociology: a discussion of some of the issues and implications of Alfred Schutz's postulate of adequacy', **Sociological Review**, Vol 30, No 3, August,1982, pp 392-406; and also Wallis, R., and Bruce, S., 'Accounting for Action: Defending the Common Sense Heresy', **Sociology**, Vol17, No 1, February 1983, pp 97-111.

10. Taylor and Walton, **op cit**, p 236.

11. Brown, **op cit**, p xii.

12. **ibid**, p v.

13. Taylor and Walton, **op cit**, p 219.

14. Brown, **op cit**, p v.

15. Dubois, **op cit**, p 14.

16. **ibid**, p 17.

17. **op cit.**

18. Taylor and Walton, **op cit**, p 225.

19. Edwards and Scullion, **op cit**, p 153.

20. Taylor and Walton, **op cit**, p 223.

21. **ibid**, p 223-4.

22. Otto, Rudolf, **The Idea of the Holy**, London, Oxford University Press, 1957, pp 117-18.

23. I am indebted to Bob Grafton-Small for this vignette.

24. Taylor and Walton,**op cit**, p 227.

25. **ibid.**

26. **ibid**, p 231.

27. **ibid.**

28. **ibid**, p 231-232.

29. **ibid**, p 233-34. The quote is from D.C. Miller and W.H. Form, **Industrial Sociology**, NY, Harper and Row, 1964.

30. Roy, Donald, 'Making Out: A Worker's Counter-System of Control of Work Situation and Relationships', in T. Burns, ed., **Industrial Man**, London, Penguin, 1971, pp 359-379, p 378.

31. Burawoy, M., **Manufacturing Consent**, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1979, pp 51-62.

32. Edwards and Scullion, **op cit**, p 156.

33. Dubois, **op cit**, pp 14-15.

34. See Pedler, M., and Wood, S., 'On Losing their Virginity: the Story of a Strike at the Grosvenor House Hotel, Sheffield', **Industrial Relations Journal**, Vol 9,No 2, 1978, pp 15-37.

35. Dubois, **op cit**, p 21.

36. Taylor and Walton, **op cit**, p 234-5.

37. Brown, **op cit**, p 4.

38. **ibid**, p 6.

39. Douglas, Mary, **Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology**, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1978, p 84. Gerald Mars, in **Cheats at Work: An Anthropology of Fiddling**, London, George Allen and Unwin, 1982, uses a similar model confined to the upper right hand quadrant, p 29.

40. **ibid**, p 93.

41. **ibid**, p 96-7.

42. **ibid**, pp 98-9.

43. **ibid**, pp 103-4.

44. Weber, Max, 'Bureaucracy' in Gerth, H.H. and Wright Mills, C., (trans. and eds.), **From Max Weber**, pp 196-244, p 216. Translation of **Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft**, part II, ch. 6, pp 650-78.

45. Simmel, Georg, 'The Metropolis and Mental Life', in Wolff, K.H., (trans. and ed.), **The Sociology of Georg Simmel**, Glencoe, Free Press, 1950, p 422.

46. Douglas, **op cit**, pp 100-101.

47. Douglas, M., and Isherwood, Baron, **The World of Goods: Towards an Anthropology of Consumption**, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1980, p 72.

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