

Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.

# **The Influence Of Context:**

## **Social Movements, Knowledge, and Social Change.**

**A thesis presented in fulfilment of  
the requirements**

**for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy**

**in Sociology at  
Massey University**

**J. A. Margaret Denton**

**1999**

## ABSTRACT

*Sociological approaches to social movements are discussed. I argue that the unintended consequences of social movement activity tend to be ignored. Social movement activity often exacerbates existing social divisions, and how this happens is not explained. I argue that this exacerbation is a consequence of divergent understandings, where it is not simply the case that one side of the conflict is 'right' and another 'wrong'. I examine debates in quantum physics, feminist epistemology, the sociology of scientific knowledge and ecocentric sociology for insights into how such differences in understandings arise. I find four different ways in which knowledge is shaped: through our ongoing socialisation, through the particular experiences that we draw on (observe) to form that knowledge, through physiological processes, and through being shaped for an end use. To take the influence of these contexts into account we need to maintain a distinction between reality and preterreality, and between noumena and phenomena. I argue for an evolutionary approach to understanding the ongoing mutual influence between our experiences and our understandings. I draw on Durkheim's theorisation of the emergence of understandings from social categories and recent work in the sociology of emotions to develop an understanding of the ongoing processes of mutual inherence that constitutes our identity in relationship to our social experience. I argue that the social does not exist as noumena; yet our understandings usually assume that it does. The social exists in the phenomena we experience, and is increasingly stabilised by socialised noumena as our shared understandings diverge. Social movements enable understandings to emerge from the social experience of the movement; but people outside the movement do not share that experience. Any understanding is not readily grasped by people who have not had congruent social experiences. Being exposed to social*

*movement understandings will then mean that the ideas and experiences that were not congruent will be revisited and so reinforced. When social movement insights are enforced through regulative fiat the social situation can diverge further by introducing new forms of closure. I examine some ways in which this has occurred in public sector reforms in New Zealand. I suggest a way in which social movements can act to avoid this, by developing social movement sacraments that align processes of mutual inherence with social movement objectives.*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Numerous people have contributed in a variety of ways to this thesis, too many to name. I would especially like to thank my supervisors Paul Perry and Paul Green not only for their inspired teaching of environmental sociology that gave me a new perspective on theoretical difficulties in sociology, and their invaluable comments on my efforts, but also for their encouragement and support throughout the trials and tribulations I encountered along the way. I also owe Mike O'Brien, who supervised my Honours dissertation that forms much of the content of the chapter on displacement, many thanks for developing my early interests and drawing my attention to the difficulties my position entailed. Joy O'Connell of Statistics New Zealand Information and Consultancy Services prepared the data that went into Tables 5.7-5.9. I would like especially to thank my family for their support. Gerard has been an occasional critic as well as a sympathetic husband throughout; and my children - Francis, Eoin-Pol, Cormac and Michael - have all gone out of their way to help me when needed, as well as supplying a few reality checks along the way.

# CONTENTS

<b>Abstract</b>	ii
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	iv
<b>Chapter One</b>	
<b>Introduction: Different Understandings</b>	<b>1</b>
1981 Tour Protests as a Social Movement	4
New Social Movement Theory	9
Closure Theory	22
Resource Mobilisation Theory	27
Social Construction Theory	32
Theoretical Silences	35
<b>Chapter Two</b>	
<b>Four Debates about the Context of Knowledge</b>	<b>40</b>
Quantum Physics	44
Feminist Epistemology	52
The Sociology of Scientific Knowledge (SSK)	60
Ecocentric Sociology	67
Four Contexts of Knowledge	75
So How Do We Know?	77
<b>Chapter Three</b>	
<b>Realism, Constructivism and the Influence of Contexts of Knowledge on the Preterreality Formed</b>	<b>82</b>
Preterreality	84
Realism and Constructivism	87
The Context(s) of Socialisation	90
The Cognitive Context	96
The Observed Context	108
The Target Context	116
The Influence of Context	123
<b>Chapter Four</b>	
<b>Evolution: The Theory of the Influence of Contexts</b>	<b>128</b>
A History of Evolutionary Thinking in Sociology	136
Sociological Critiques of Evolution	139
Physiological Reductionism	147
The Social 'Layer'	150
William Harms' Acquired Behavioural Traits Model	152
William Runciman's Competitive Selection Model	156
Jurgen Habermas' Learning Model	161
Klaus Eder's Social Contradictions Model	165
Stephen Sanderson's Competitive Interaction Model	168
Starting with Humans	177

Trade-offs	182
The Ratchet of Social Change	187
The Mutual Emergence of Social and Preterreal Institutions	192
Emotions and Evolution	198
The Emergence of the Symbolic	202
Anchored in Objects	205
Conclusion	210
Chapter Five	
<b>Displacement</b>	<b>213</b>
Social Closure	217
Public Sector Reform	224
The Creation of Marginal Jobs	238
Redefinition of Jobs	241
Credential Inflation	244
Changes to the Structure of Public Sector Organisations	246
Moral Prerequisites	248
Conclusion	254
Chapter Six	
<b>Sacrament: Creating a Stable Material Context of Knowing</b>	<b>260</b>
The Quilt	271
Pakaitore Marae - Moutoa Gardens Occupation	277
Cervical Cancer Controversy	283
1995 Moruroa Protests	289
Social Movements as Sacramental Centres	294
Objects in Knowledge	300
Conclusion	302
Chapter Seven	
<b>The Mutual Impact of Social and Preterreal Contexts</b>	<b>306</b>
Knowledge	311
Reality	316
Preterreality	324
Social Evolution	328
Sacrament	332
Displacement	339
Agendas	343
Conclusion	345
<b>References</b>	<b>349</b>

## **TABLES**

Table 5.1 Ethnic Group by Class Category, 1984 & 1993 Surveys	223
Table 5.2 Gender by Class Category, 1984 & 1993 Surveys	224
Table 5.3 Class category by Sector, 1984 & 1993 Surveys	225
Table 5.4 Managers by Income, 1991 and 1996 Census	226
Table 5.5 Professionals by Income, 1991 and 1996 Census	226
Table 5.6 Proportion Managers by Gender and Ethnicity, 1991 and 1996 Census	227
Table 5.7 Proportion Managers in Central Government by Gender and Ethnicity, 1991 and 1996 Census	228
Table 5.8 Proportion Central Government Sector who are Managers by Gender and Ethnicity, 1991 and 1996 Census	229
Table 5.9 Minority Group Differentials for Managers, 1991 and 1996 Census	231
Table 7.1 Real Disposable Incomes, 1984 and 1990	319
Table 7.2 Change in Labour Force Participation Rates, 1987-1997	320

## ILLUSTRATIONS

Maori Policy and Planning Manager Job Advertisement, 1991	239
EEO Co-ordinator Job Advertisement, 1991	240
Employment Centre Job Advertisements, 1986 and 1990	243
Laboratory Technician Job Advertisements, 1986 and 1991	245
Charge Physiotherapist Job Advertisements, 1991	252

## Chapter 1

# **Introduction: Different Understandings**

'...I started hearing people telling stories (not to me) about Norm Kirk...It was only after I heard all this rather tatty innuendo in Auckland, New Plymouth, Christchurch, Blenheim and Gisborne, that I felt I should talk to Charlie about it. I told him that I did not believe one word that I'd heard....I said that I was going to tell [Kirk] and to suggest that he take his wife Ruth with him on even more assignments to gain some positive family publicity....Charlie...was strongly opposed to my doing this....In Charlie's opinion, Norm would strongly resent me telling him this....He said that Norm trusted me and I should not do anything to damage that trust....I felt that Charlie misunderstood the degree of trust between Norm and me. We were both political survivors and comrades in the best sense of the term - how could he believe that I mistrusted him?..

I chose my time, and after a National Executive meeting, accepted Norm's invitation to have a talk with him in his office. After we discussed the proceedings and talked about possible solutions, I told him what I'd heard, assured him of my complete support and suggested some things he could do to combat those scurrilous rumours. The minute that the words came out...I wished with all my heart that I could stuff [them] back. I could see from the look on Norm's face that this was the end of the road for us. He was furious...

'Back home, Charlie refrained from saying "I told you so"...but, as days went by, I became very angry about the male-manipulated political system which made Norm

so distrustful of friends that he could not believe that all I wanted to do was help....Norm Kirk never acknowledged me again unless under exceptional circumstances. This dislike was to trail after me through my political life like the Ancient Mariner's albatross.' (Davies, 1984: 169).

Norm Kirk was New Zealand's Prime Minister during the 1970s, and died in office. Sonja Davies is best known as a champion of women's issues and a trade union leader; although she did enter parliament in the 1980s. In the quote Davies is describing an incident in which there was a misunderstanding. When people have differences like this we tend to think that one side must be 'right' and the other 'wrong'. We could conclude, for example, that Kirk was 'wrong' to interpret Davies motives in the way that he did. Yet it is not the case that either Norm Kirk or Sonja Davies were ignorant or deceitful. Rather, Norm Kirk's previous experience led him to interpret Sonja Davies actions differently to how she thought they would be taken.

Social movement activity at times involves similar exchanges. Both sides interpret the other side's words or deeds in a rather different manner to the way that the people concerned assumed that they would be understood. The consequences may be far from what either party desires. Yet this aspect of social movement activity is often overlooked by sociologists interested in theorising the contribution that social movements make to social change. Sociologists tend to highlight whatever has contributed to the success or failure of social movement actors in attaining their stated goals, and have not been as concerned with the effect of social movement activity on people who do not agree with their aims. I argue that a focus on the 'others' would show that social movement activity tends to exacerbate

existing social divisions; often the very divisions that social movements are challenging as unjust. To be able to understand why this happens, we need to understand the relationship between social situations and the understandings that people have of those situations. Quite clearly, any social movement debate against the status quo involves people with different perceptions of the same situation. However, neither side may be ignorant or deceitful. Different understandings can arise because our past social experience has accustomed us to interpreting the same action in a different way to someone else, as in the incident that Sonja Davies describes.

Sometimes we do recognise these differences between people. More often a misrecognition results. Another example of a misrecognition is the encounter between Maori women and the crew of the French vessel, *Saint Jean Baptiste* discussed by Patricia Maringi Johnston (1998: 32) and Anne Salmond (1991: 330-1). The whakapohane of the Maori women, meant to express their contempt for the French sailors, was interpreted by the sailors as 'lasciviousness'. This can happen on a large scale. The clash of different understandings during the 1981 protests against the Springbok<sup>1</sup> tour is an example of this. There the clash was between two different interpretations of the worthiness of the tour that was linked to different social experiences. My thesis is that adverse social consequences can arise when social movements introduce the understandings forged within the movement into other social contexts, where other people have not had congruent social experiences. In this chapter I will review the social movement literature in

---

<sup>1</sup> The Springboks are the South African national rugby team. Rugby is a major sport in South Africa, as in New Zealand, and the games between the two teams are often closely contested. The game that was cancelled in Hamilton was to have been the first ever live coverage of a game outside South Africa transmitted to South Africa (Chapple, 1984: 102).

the light of the 1981 Tour protests. In later chapters I work towards a clearer understanding of how we come to have differences in understanding. I develop an evolutionary explanation of the ongoing interplay between our social experience and our understandings of those experiences. I examine one situation in which the adverse social consequences of social movement understandings can be made apparent, the recent public sector reforms in New Zealand. I also suggest a way that these adverse social consequences can be alleviated, by extending social movement sacraments beyond the movement.

### **1981 Tour Protests**

The 1981 Springbok rugby tour of New Zealand precipitated the most widespread protests ever experienced in New Zealand. Demonstrations were organised before the tour and at each rugby match of the tour to protest against sporting contacts with South Africa. Those opposed to the tour were dismayed at the opportunistic attitudes of the government who had agreed to support sports boycotts in international forums. They perceived the attitude of the many New Zealanders tour supporters to be at best selfish, at worst blatantly racist,. What other reason could there be for maintaining sporting contacts with South Africa, when this supports and upholds an oppressive regime that few New Zealanders would appreciate existing in their own country? Those supporting the tour were equally dismayed, not only at the overt political intrusion into the recreational opportunities of so many New Zealanders, but at the betrayal of all that rugby stood for. Rugby symbolised what it meant to be a New

Zealander.<sup>2</sup> Opinion polls showed that New Zealanders were equally divided over the tour, and these divisions cut across all social boundaries. The government of the day decided on a policy of maintaining law and order. Newly trained riot squads of police armed with helmets, shields, and long batons were ordered to advance onto people even though they were involved in marches that the police had authorised. For the first time in New Zealand riot squads moved to injure passive protesters who had already stopped at a police line. Not only march participants, but medics attending to the injured in clear spaces were batted. The police exercise was the most extensive one ever mounted in New Zealand's history (Chapple, 1984).

The protests are an example of social movement activity. A 'social movement' has been defined as 'various forms of collective action aimed at social reorganisation' (Abercrombie et al, 1984: 227). There have been various attempts to define the term rigorously, but there is such an array of groups that this is no easy task. One survey of historic and contemporary groups that can be included by the term 'social movements' lists:

'Liberalism, the American Revolution, the Methodist movement, Temperance, the Civil Rights movement, Populism, the Sepoy rebellion, the Taiping rebellion, the Labor movement, 'cargo cults', McCarthyism, Pan-Africanism, the Peace movement, Technocracy, Messianism, Zionism, the Free Love movement, the New Right, the New Left, the Natural Childbirth movement, Surrealism, Feminism, Freudianism, Progressivism, Neorealism, and

---

<sup>2</sup> Geoff Fougere's (1989: 111) refers to several authors who have written about rugby's contribution to New Zealanders' sense of identity. Rugby symbolises a pattern of social relationships that provided the basis for constructing both national unity and an individual identity.

Antidisestablishmentarianism. All of these met our criterion for social movements being the socially shared activities and beliefs directed toward the demand for change in some aspect of the social order' (Gusfield, 1970: 2).

The difficulty with Gusfield's definition is that it is so broad that it could include groups, such as political parties, that are not usually considered to be social movements.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, narrower definitions tend to exclude groups that should be included in a definition of social movements:

'Social movements are the collective efforts by socially and politically subordinated people to challenge the conditions and assumptions of their lives' (Darnovsky et al, 1995: xii).

While it may seem relatively self evident that people fight for a place in the sun, the 1981 tour protesters were acting 'on behalf' of other people in a different country. They wanted to change the conditions other people suffered under, and not the 'conditions or assumptions' of their own lives.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> Sociologists have no clear distinction between 'protests' and social movements either (Foss & Larkin, 1986).

<sup>4</sup> Although HART was formed specifically to co-ordinate those who opposed sporting contacts with South Africa (Richards, 1975: 209), many of organisations and individuals involved in anti-tour protests were concerned about racism in New Zealand, and this became incorporated into the HART agenda. Indeed, at least some of the people involved may have been more concerned with the racism in New Zealand and were exposing that by exposing the racism implicit in New Zealand's complicity with apartheid in South Africa. However, the point remains that the anti-tour protests were at least ostensibly about opposing apartheid in South Africa, and not about improving the social position of anti-tour protesters.

The difficulty in defining social movements reflects the problems that contemporary social movements pose for the way that sociology has traditionally described social action. For example, social movements can incorporate both instrumental and expressive behaviour, both secular and sacred, radical and conservative, 'left' and 'right' thinking. These dichotomies underpin many established sociological theories that were formed in the light of the successes and failures of nineteenth century social movements. The distinctions drawn are not always readily applicable to more recent movements (Pakulski, 1991: xiii). Sociology needs to be able to account for the way that contemporary social movements respond to a different social context, with differing outcomes.

One hundred years ago, New Zealand social movements were leading the world. The Liberal government of the 1890s enacted legislation that movements in other countries were still struggling to achieve decades later. The most notable of these was the female franchise. Women were given the vote in New Zealand in 1893, the first country in the world to do so. Other socially progressive legislation for the time included pensions for the elderly and a system of industrial conciliation and arbitration. In the last thirty years, social movements in New Zealand have faced a very different climate. Far from being world leaders, recent movements have found it difficult to make inroads into domestic policy, even when they have a considerable weight of international political pressure behind them, as was the case with the Springbok tour protests.

However, the heritage of last century's social movements seem to have provided more recent activists with a lingering reassurance that the divisiveness of social movements will not last forever. A new generation

will think of yesterday's reforms as common sense. Tomorrow's children will not be able to imagine the world as it was before. This is quite evident when Greg Chapple (1984: 59) talks about the protesters representing New Zealand's future, against the tour supporters, representing New Zealand's past. The tour protests met with a violent response that suggested that 'New Zealand past' was not going to lie down and quietly die. Not only the Tour, but other recent movements, have wedged more permanent differences in our perceptions. These perceptions reflect a social reality of increasing inequality, increasing poverty, and decreasing participation; quite the antithesis of what happened last century, and quite the opposite of what social movement activists themselves profess to be their aims.

The 1981 Springbok tour protests were the most obviously divisive social movement actions in New Zealand's history, but it is by no means the only social movement that has been divisive. The fact that social movements increase antagonisms between people tends to be glossed over in the more recent sociological literature. The literature on social movements does acknowledge that changes have occurred both within social movements themselves, and in the sociological analysis of social movements in recent decades. Although the more recent theories highlight a change in the nature of political practice, and also a change in the social awareness that the social movements have brought about (Escobar & Alvares, 1992:3), they rarely deal with the way that social movement actions and arguments have a negative spin-off in creating new injuries and resentments, as well as a positive spin-off in creating an increasing awareness of issues that were previously ignored. The sociological approach that stresses the changes in the nature of social movement activity over the recent decades is new social movement theory.

## **New Social Movement Theory**

New social movement theory is of continental European origin (Buechler, 1995: 441; Canel, 1992: 22; Munk, 1995: 670). It is particularly strong in countries that had strong socialist movements earlier this century, and thus a Marxist intellectual heritage. By the 1960s the difficulties in using traditional Marxist theory to explain changing social realities was becoming apparent. Although it is no longer the case today, in the late 1960s it seemed that capitalism had overcome the problem of economic cycles and recession that were so central to Marx's analysis. Moreover, the most active and radical social movements were not working class movements but student, peace, and women's movements; and these movements were not articulating class demands. The events of 1968 seemed to be classical revolutionary action, but they were carried out by what Marx would have considered more privileged people (Scott, 1990: 56).

New social movement theory tackled the changing situation by challenging the Marxist ideas that all historically significant social action is a consequence of the prevailing mode of production, capitalism; and that the significant social actors are defined by the class relationships of capitalism (Buechler, 1995: 441-2; Canel, 1992: 23; Cohen, 1983: 231; Eder, 1993: 6). New social movement theorists understand social movement action to be based on political, ideological and cultural imperatives rather than purely economic ones. The influence that differences such as gender, ethnicity and sexuality has for identity has been highlighted, against the previous focus on class (Buechler, 1995: 442; Canel, 1992: 23-4).

Most new social movement theorists had a considerable empathy with traditional Marxism, but were disillusioned with its explanatory power. As Scott (1990: 80) argues, much new social movement theory was originally motivated by the desire to find a substitute for the working class as the oppositional force in society. Although there is no consensus as to which groups and organisations qualify as new social movements, the peace, feminist, ecological, local autonomy, anti-nuclear, citizens, youth and squatters movements have all been given as examples of new social movements (Adam, 1993: 332; Cohen, 1985: 663; Bartholomew & Mayer, 1992: 141; Kriesi, 1989: 1079; Tucker, 1991:75).

This lack of consensus as to which groups to include in the category 'new social movement' reflects fundamental disagreements about how each word in the label should be understood (Cohen, 1983: 1985). What qualifies as a 'new' movement? Most new social movement theorists think of 'new' in contrast to the 'old' social movement, the labour movement (Dalton et al, 1990). These theorists usually consider the women's movement to be a 'new' movement (Kriesi, 1989: 1079), but Jurgen Habermas considers the women's movement to be part of the 'tradition of bourgeois-socialist liberation', and not a new movement (Adam, 1993: 321). What is meant by 'social'? Does 'social' include politics and economy as well as culture, or is the 'social' distinguished from politics and economics? Alain Touraine, for example, is reluctant to define the peace movement as a new social movement because it is critical of the state, so he views it as a political movement rather than a social movement (Scott, 1990: 131). What is meant by 'movement'? Is it organised collective behaviour against the prevailing social system, or is it simply a change or shift in social phenomena? Sidney

Tarrow distinguishes a movement (mass opinion) from a protest organisation (a form of social organisation) and protest events (forms of action). Alberto Melucci (1989:24) critiques this conception of 'movement' as creating a metaphysical entity based on empirical generalisation, and defines movement as a form of collective behaviour that involves solidarity, conflict, and changing the system.

Although new social movement theorists do have different perceptions of what a new social movement is, there are common themes that identify the characteristics of both new social movements and new social movement theories. Common themes include the generation of new issues, new values, new forms, and a new politics within the movements (Adam, 1993: 321-2; Buechler, 1995: 442; Canel, 1992: 22; Cohen, 1983: 664; Kriesi, 1989: 1079; Klandermans, 1991: 26-8; Lustiger-Thater, 1992:178-9; Melucci, 1989: 205-6; Tarrow, 1991: 400; Tucker, 1991: 75).

New social movements tend to focus on private lives, on the cultural sphere, on civil society rather than, or in connection with, the public arena of state or politics. They politicise aspects of everyday life, such as sexuality, that had previously been thought of as a private matter rather than a political issue.

'all movements, to some degree, are linked with issues of individual and collective identity via the way that focal grievances affect everyday life' (Johnston et al, 1994: 22).

The tour supporters clearly regarded sport as a 'private' matter, to be kept out of politics, while the protesters pointed out that not only racially

selected teams, but racially different opportunities to learn and play rugby in South Africa meant that sport was very much part of politics. Supporters countered that blacks usually played soccer. The cleavage between white sports and black sports in South Africa was considered to be an historical accident, a matter of personal preferences rather than deliberate policies. Supporters were also dismayed at the cleavages being exacerbated within New Zealand by the tour protests. In their mind, rugby had always united New Zealand, blurring racial, class, local and provincial boundaries. How were New Zealanders to be united if not through rugby? The protesters did not suggest ways of promoting unity and so blurring these boundaries in a way that was congruent with movement aims. Although the tour protests did make 'political' what had been 'private', this was achieved by exacerbating cleavages rather than through building consensus. Thus the tour protests contributed to a polarisation and fragmentation of identities and alliances that created a very different political situation in the years to come than what had previously existed in New Zealand.

It is perhaps ironic then that theorists have highlighted the tendency of new social movements to focus on developing participant's identities without asking what happens to their opponents identities. Theorists have argued that the new social movements are usually more concerned to promote autonomy, self-realisation, self-determination, and the quality of life, rather than achieve political power (Calhoun, 1993). Certainly these movements do not aim to seize power in the same way that the working class movement has, at times, sought to do. There is comparatively little demand for representation in political processes, and certainly not to the exclusion of others. Squatters do not demand power to allocate state housing, for example, but demand access to facilities that already exist but

are not utilised or are under utilised. New social movement theorists also argue that political action tends to be defensive rather than or as well as offensive. The anti-nuclear movement wants the state to refrain from certain activities, and refuse to get involved with further activities; rather than do one thing instead of another. The link between the tour protests and identity, however, is not as clear as new social movement theorists would expect:

‘Mobilization factors tend to focus on cultural and symbolic issues that are associated with sentiments of belonging to a differentiated social group where members can feel powerful’ (Johnson et al, 1994: 10).

The tour protesters did not fit this definition. They were not a ‘differentiated social group’ that were themselves affected by the South African regime. The tour protesters were not claiming an identity for themselves, in the same way that feminist or Maori activists might. Yet one of the effects of their claims was that they were destroying an identity for others. One of the great ‘successes’ of the protests was getting onto the field at Rugby Park in Hamilton just before the game was due to start, forcing the game to be cancelled. The tour protesters felt justified in going outside the law because of the manipulation and deceit on the part of the government (Chapple, 1984: 68). The rugby supporters, incensed with rage, equally felt that revenge beyond the law was fully justified (Chapple, 1984: 118). As darkness fell that day, rugby supporters took their personal revenge on known and supposed tour protesters. Greg Chapple (1984: 116) describes the outrage of one such attacker as he retreated after vandalising a home and assaulting protesters:

“You cunts!’ the man screamed at him. “New Zealand will never be the same again.”

This man and the social groups that he represented lost something that day. What was lost was the assurance that the values and practices embodied in rugby represented the cultural unity of all New Zealanders (Fougere, 1989: 120). Perhaps this is what many of the tour protesters had wanted: that the social groups who had ‘won’ from that vision of ‘New Zealand’ would now know what it was like to lose. Yet it was certainly not the articulated strategy of the anti-tour movement to make particular social groups losers. The intentions of the rugby protesters was to avoid violence, yet they did engender violence and intolerance in others. Certainly the protesters were not themselves violent. They were on the receiving end of violence. Yet they were not entirely innocent. It was the protesters who were the first to break what they saw as the ‘old rules’ that day (Chapple, 1984: 85, 95). Doubtless tour supporters felt quite justified in breaking the rules too. Certainly some new social movement theorists have recognised that some social movements do promote intolerance of others. As Johnston et al (1994:30) observe:

‘The spectre of violent skinheads and neofascist youth movements in Europe raises the question if these, too, somehow fit into the ...equation of identity quest, everyday embeddedness, and broad structural change’

Yet what the tour protests quite clearly point to, that is not well recognised in the literature, is that movements have the potential to affect

the identities and embeddedness of those that do not share their perspective. New social movement theory does recognise that collective identities and shared ideas are socially constructed, and are not simply a consequence of structural opportunities or constraints (Buechler, 1995; Scott, 1990), but focus on the significance of movement constructions, and not on what may be happening as a consequence elsewhere. Feminism, for example is recognised not simply as a response to the discrimination women experience, but involves generating an idea of what women's experience should be like. New social movements in this way are less oriented to grand political theories, and more to collective learning. Thus the question of how to respond to a new situation is a matter for discussion and reflection on any similar past experience, rather than arguments about the proper interpretation of authoritative texts or agreed principles, as tended to be the case in Marxist movements.

Opportunities for collective learning may have been stressed within the movement, but do not seem to extend to learning from opponents. There seems to be little acknowledgement that people outside the movement may have some insight that people within the movement do not. The early anti-apartheid movement activists saw their job as dispelling ignorance by informing and educating. The activists assumed that once people had the information, the rest followed (Chapple, 1984: 10, 18). Perhaps one of the reasons that activists were so convinced that this is all it takes, was because that was all it took for them. Certainly few had direct experience of the conditions in South Africa before they became activists. Their understanding was totally in their heads. When they found that 'ignorance' was not 'dispelled' by 'information' for many other New Zealanders, they concluded that there must then be a refusal to admit the information, a

determination to remain 'ignorant', a desire to be racist. Geoff Chapple (1984: 18) describes this as a biological instinct, a reptilian repulsion to race that permitted New Zealanders to be sympathetic to apartheid. It does seem quite ironic that an anti-racist activist can be quite happy to argue for biological determinism when it suits him! Surely a more consistent position for a 'new social movement' to make is that the tour supporters were not able to deconstruct a pro-rugby position and reconstruct an anti-apartheid position from the materials available to them. Perhaps it is simply the case that the tour supporters were not convinced by abstract arguments because that was not all there was to it for them. As Geoff Fougere (1989: 117) argues, rugby represented a way of life, both an individual and collective identity. Tour supporters were unable to get sufficient distance from their own experience of the benefits of rugby to deconstruct that viewpoint, yet alone gain enough practical, kinaesthetic experience of any alternative collective identity that would enable them to build a position congruent with the anti-apartheid movement. Not only social movement activists, but also some sociologists seem to assume that there is some sort of process of social osmosis whereby, once the movement has got all the ideas worked out, any reasonable person outside the movement will sooner or later come to agree.

Yet it is quite clear that the supporters were not being 'unreasonable'. They were defending an egalitarian myth, the chance for people to have a 'fair go', rural as well as urban, and not to have their 'private' pleasures disrupted for dubious 'higher causes' by 'city stirrers' (Chapple, 1984: 58). The idea that new social movements promote post-materialist values that are nevertheless egalitarian (Beuchler, 1995; Klandermans, 1991: 26) is certainly true of the tour protesters, but it is equally true of the tour supporters. Theorists note that new social

movements activists do not perceive themselves as fighting primarily for material rewards. Green activists do not want to halt clear-felling of forests or pumping sewage into a harbour because they perceive some financial benefit for themselves by doing so. They may certainly perceive aesthetic or health benefits from doing so, but express more concern about everyone's total well-being. Yet this much was also true for the tour supporters. As far as the tour supporters were concerned, rugby epitomised the egalitarian code of what it meant to be a New Zealander. The moral imperatives demanded for team success has long been recognised as the basis of rugby as a secular religion in New Zealand (Cleveland, 1972). In 1981 rugby was an amateur sport at all levels. To be sure, many rugby players found that the contacts and publicity were advantageous professionally but none became wealthy from the sport. Nor were most rugby supporters standing to gain financially from the tour; rather it was the defence of an ethos that was at stake.

Given that the ethos that the tour protesters wanted to replace the rugby ethos with was one of greater participation, it is ironic that many of the actions came to be so hierarchically organised. Sociologists have noted that new social movements tend to have more non-hierarchical organisational forms. Many groups have formal stipulations about rotating leadership roles, and inclusive decision making. New social movements usually involve networks of personal relationships in mobilising for collective action, rather than formal organisation (Buechler, 1995; Cohen, 1983; Melucci, 1989: 205). The network of black churches was important to the growth of the civil rights movement, for example (McCarthy and Wolfson, 1996: 1071). This networking was certainly true of the tour protests (Chapple, 1984: 37), even though there was substantial formal organisation. The 'atypical' new social movement actions were justified by

the concern about police spies infiltrating the organisation to learn what was being planned (Chapple, 1984: 67). There was considerable angst within the movement about the compromise of principles implicit in the secret planning that went on in addition to the more public decisions about action. It became a question of ends over means, whereas the new social movement position is that the means are the end. Protesters in their crash helmets quite clearly recognised it as a battlefield with an end to be won, even though they were unarmed and 'peaceful'. It is hardly surprising that the tensions of battle affected people far from the battlefield. The media carried the images and messages of the Springbok tour into the homes of all New Zealanders. We were not merely informed of the differences between people, but the intensity of feeling that the differences aroused was heightened (Fougere, 1989). The media reinforced the obviousness of whichever position we took as individuals by simply repeating the messages of both sides. The media was as unable to bridge the differences as we ourselves were as individuals. Even so, it was clear to everybody that what was at stake in the Springbok tour protests was what it meant to be a New Zealander.

The lack of sociological interest in how social movements can affect those who do not support them, and the broader implications that this can have for social life, is surprising given that new social movement theorists generally wish to locate movements in the context of large scale social change (Canel, 1992: 38). The concern with large scale social change reflects the Marxist heritage of new social movement theory. Jurgen Habermas (1973), Claus Offe (1985), Laclau & Moffe (1985) and Alain Touraine (1969, 1985, 1992) all explain the emergence of new social movements by discussing structural transformations and long range political and cultural changes that create new sources of conflict and alter the process

of constituting collective identities (Cohen & Arato, 1992: 25). Alberto Melucci is the only major new social movement theorist who could be justly accused of underplaying the way in which an individual's capacity to act is structured by unequal power relationships (Bartholomew & Mayer, 1992: 148). Yet even Melucci (1989: 185-6) acknowledges that we live within a system with a definite logic and limits; and, moreover, that there is a growing interdependence in the world system. Several theorists are interested in the conjunction between Immanuel Wallerstein's world system theory and new social movement theory (Amin, 1990; Miztal, 1988). Perhaps it is the Marxist heritage that influences the concern with what the movements can achieve directly, rather than ongoing effects of the consequences of social movement actions and ideology for others.

Certainly many of the points that I have been making have echoes in the literature on new social movements. Barry Adam (1993: 327) argues that new social movement theorists fail to elucidate the ways in which social movements not only resist economic and political power, but also become enmeshed in and articulate political and economic power. Henri Lustiger-Thater (1992:178-9) acknowledges that new social movement theory has celebrated the successes of the movements in using culture to expand the political, but points out that there has been little critical examination of the limitations of identity politics. New social movement theorists have been reacting against the Marxist tendency to reduce social life to economic principles. Yet the emphasis on culture, private lives, personal issues and the interpersonal formation of identity that new social movement theorists have developed has emphasised human agency without paying much attention to the ways in which that agency may be constrained. The attention paid to culture rather than politics by new social movement

theorists has been regarded by commentators both as a point of debate within new social movement theory (Buechler, 1995: 451-3; Eder, 1993: 4-5), and as a criticism of new social movement theory (Canel, 1992: 22; Adam, 1993: 320-1; Bartholomew & Mayer, 1992: 153; Lustiger-Thater, 1992:178-9).

Several sociologists have noted the failure of new social movements to confront the issue of power (Darnovsky et al, 1995; Mooers & Sears, 1992; Pakulski, 1991; Sethi, 1988). Certainly, new social movements can be seen as a major protagonist of social change, but it is unclear whether they can emerge as vehicles of historical transformation (Boggs, 1986). Some new social movement theorists, such as Laclau & Mouffe, have tried to deal with this by stressing the need to locate a principle of unity that will bring together various social struggles. Any such principle has remained elusive to discovery. A more common approach has been to dismiss the need for political power. This position agrees with Michel Foucault (1980) that power and domination are ubiquitous, and not centred in capitalism or political relations (Carroll & Ratner, 1994; Steinmetz, 1994). Yet those adopting this approach have failed to theorise the mechanism of change. To be sure, there is the commitment to lead by example, creating alternatives that more and more people will adopt. This seems to suggest that the idea is that the growth of alternatives will underwrite the withering of present social relations; yet this is supposed to be happening at the very time that inequality is growing, and power is becoming ever more focused in smaller elites within and between communities of all sizes. There seems little recognition of the way that social movement ideologies and demands can be selectively used to benefit the interests of those with power to influence change.

One debate between new social movement theorists that does touch upon economic realities is the question of the class base of new social movements. The original new social movement theory argument was that the social base of movements has shifted from class, and that other forms of domination and deprivation exist that cannot be reduced to class. However, some new social movement theorists now argue that new social movements do indeed have a class base in the middle class, and seek to theorise the interconnection between class and movement (Bagguley, 1992; Buechler, 1995: 453-6). New social movement theorists either react against an emphasis on class by showing the relationship between movement issues and forms of social domination related to other identities such as gender or ethnicity, or reaffirm the significance of class by showing the relationship between class interests and social movement issues. What trade-offs are made in the flux of competing social identities, is not explored. The interrelationship between class and other identities thus remains under theorised. Indeed, the celebration of social movement achievements tends to not only ignore, but deny the existence of any interrelationships that the movement fails to expose. I will examine the interrelationship between class and other identities in Chapter 5. As there is little substantive empirical evidence for any postulated decline of class differences (Svallours, 1995: 70-71), it is possible that 'new' social movements emerged not as class declined, but during a realignment of class fractions. New social movement theory certainly does not hint at any class realignments. This is, perhaps, more the province of closure theory.

## **Closure Theory**

For sociologists in Britain as well as those in continental Europe, the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s highlighted the inadequacies of traditional Marxist theory. In Britain, however, the social movements had a comparatively low profile, with close links to the labour movement. This enabled social movements to influence policy making, particularly through Labour party politics and the 'urban left' in London. Many social movements in Britain operate as pressure groups, which has encouraged a political analysis rather than a cultural analysis of their activities (Neidhardt & Rucht, 1991: 433, 5; Rudig et al, 1991). In these circumstances, the sociology of social movements did not thrive in Britain as it did in continental Europe and the USA. One influential perspective did emerge, closure theory, which like the continental European new social movement theory, sought to overcome the difficulties perceived with Marxist theory. New social movement theory declared there to be a new development that could not be adequately explained by Marxist theory, and began to revise Marxist theory by contrasting the 'new' and 'old' movements. Closure theory turned instead to the conceptual repertoire of Max Weber. Social closure is a term used by Weber to describe the way in which social groups tend to become closed to others. Groups will maximise advantages by manipulating access to resources and opportunities for the benefit of group members. Examples given by Weber (1916: 401) include the Hindu caste system and the merchant and craft guilds of the Middle Ages, each of which sought to monopolise a whole trade.

Although closure theory was developed by Fred Parkin while studying social movements, closure theory is not widely recognised as a theoretical approach to social movements. Within Britain closure theory became absorbed into a class-reductionist political sociology rather than a sociology of social movements (Bagguley, 1997: 147, 149-50). Closure theory is a more general theory of the processes of social inequality that is more often identified with class theory,<sup>5</sup> and is rarely highlighted, even in the literature that discusses the class status of social movements (see, for example, Bagguley, 1992; Eder, 1993; Kriesi, 1989; Mooers & Sears, 1992; Steinmetz, 1994).

Alan Scott, however, does locate closure theory with the theories that deal with social movements. Scott (1990: 135, 150) argues that social movements articulate the grievances and demands of groups who are excluded from benefits that most citizens enjoy, or who are excluded from elite groupings and the processes of elite negotiation; so social movements oppose specific forms of social closure. In articulating the grievances of groups that are excluded, they verbalise issues excluded from normal social, including political, decision making. It is certainly true that tour protesters were verbalising issues that had been excluded from the 'common sense' of many New Zealanders. In the past rugby had provided not only a form of entertainment in a pre-television era, but also an opportunity for involvement and expression that reflected the vision that New Zealander's had of themselves and their country. The 1981 Springbok tour protests challenged the veracity of the vision of New Zealand that rugby symbolised and enacted. As Geoff Fougere (1989: 118-9) explains, relationships

---

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, Collins, 1979; Witz, 1992.

between men and women, Maori and Pakeha,<sup>6</sup> and international relationships had all changed significantly from what was assumed by the traditional rugby ethos.

The form of closure that the rugby protesters were opposed to was undoubtedly racism. Yet the extent to which the protesters achieved any attenuation of racial boundaries, either in New Zealand or in South Africa is debatable. What was achieved, instead, was a deepening of class cleavages.

‘The 1981 Springbok tour did many things, but one of its most enduring legacy was the crushing blow it dealt to any lingering feeling of solidarity the New Left felt for the working class. The murderous anger of the crowd at Rugby Park in Hamilton on the day the match was cancelled, the palpable hostility of the young rugby fans as they passed by the huddled ranks of protesters, shocked and hardened the middle class “left”. If these were Marx’s heroic proletarians, then Marx was full of shit. Let them stew in their own racist juices! From now on the working class was on its own.’ (Trotter, 1995: 102).

It would seem that Chris Trotter did seriously expect the working class males of Hamilton to thank him for depriving them of their game, their meaning of life. There seems to be little recognition that some of the less privileged people in our country were excluded from one of the few resources that they did customarily have access to, a rugby match, by middle

---

<sup>6</sup> ‘Pakeha’ is a Maori word originally designating a person who is not Maori. When used as a self identity it typically designates someone of European descent born in New Zealand and identifying as a New Zealander; as distinct from both Maori and immigrant (Willmott, 1989: 10, 12).

class protesters invoking a 'higher cause', anti-racism.<sup>7</sup> Many sociologists have noted that the 'new' social movements throughout the world during the past three decades have been predominantly middle class movements (Bagguley, 1992; Buechler, 1995; Eder, 1993; Parkin, 1968); and this had been shown to be true in the anti-apartheid movement in New Zealand (Brock, 1975). Perhaps it is the case that middle class radicalism is implicated in the struggle to enhance the distinctiveness of the radical middle class faction, and insist on its superiority to others at a time when employment opportunities were becoming increasingly scarce. Yet this was not the purported objectives of the movement; so it does not readily fit the understandings developed within closure theory.

The concept of social closure was developed by Fred Parkin (1968, 1979) in his study of the anti-nuclear movement and in later theoretical work. He considered two forms of closure: exclusion and usurpation. Exclusion refers to the actions of a group which restricts the access of others to resources and opportunities that they have some sort of control over. The tour protesters did manage to exclude tour supporters from their enjoyment of the rugby game at Hamilton, but this is not what is usually meant by exclusion, as it is not an ongoing feature of social life. Parkin (1979: 75) refers to the traditional caste system and the stratification of ethnic communities in the USA as examples of exclusion. Usurpation refers to the actions of a group which aims at gaining control over opportunities and resources that they have limited, if any access over. The tour protesters certainly aimed at increasing the control the Blacks in South Africa have

---

<sup>7</sup> Rugby supporters were by no means all working class. Many were well placed. Chapple (1984: 81), for example, recounts how Waikato students protesting against the tour were threatened with employment being withheld.

over opportunities and resources, but unlike collective industrial action which Parkin refers to as an example of usurpation, the protesters did not present claims for themselves. They were not ostensibly aiming to achieve representation in decision making processes; rather they wanted to see certain outcomes implemented. Parkin also considers a third form of closure, dual closure, where a group practices both exclusion and usurpation with respect to different groups. Parkin (1979: 90-1) offers the example of the Australian labour movement, which historically has been simultaneously involved in political and industrial action against employers (usurpation) and against foreign workers (exclusion).<sup>8</sup>

There is little in the literature that would be helpful in analysing the closure that results indirectly from social movement activity. Murphy (1998: 73-5) provides a typology of the relationship between different forms of exclusion, but this classifies the resulting compromise reached rather than elaborating the processes that produced the result. Murphy (1998: 45, 49-50) claims that social closure is dynamic, but Murphy himself has developed closure theory more as a descriptive rather than explanatory device. As the process of closure has not been elucidated, closure theory does not show how groups maximise their advantages by manipulating access to resources and opportunities for the benefit of group members.

---

<sup>8</sup> There is a definitional squabble over the key terms: exclusion, usurpation, and dual closure. Raymond Murphy (1988: 52-4) uses the concepts differently to Parkin. Murphy argues that usurpation cannot easily be distinguished from exclusion. Exclusion is involved in usurpation, as a subordinate group that organises itself to usurp the dominant groups' privileges will exclude members of other groups, including the dominant group that it is organising against. Murphy prefers to consider usurpation to be a type of exclusion; one that creates a group of excluded ineligible. Usurpation thus involves what Parkin refers to as 'dual closure'; biting into the advantages of other groups by excluding those even lower. Murphy then conceives of dual closure as excluding lower groups without biting into the advantages of higher groups, becoming closed in both directions, which is what Parkin would call exclusion.

Presumably the process of closure revolves around the opportunities and constraints presented by the situation that actors find themselves in. Yet this remains untheorised. Questions of opportunities and constraints are addressed by the resource mobilisation approach to social movements. Perhaps this approach can throw some light on the 1981 tour protests?

### **Resource Mobilisation Theory**

Resource mobilisation emerged in the United States of America at the same time that the new social movement approach emerged in continental Europe, and in response to a similar increase in social movement activity. Theorists on both continents were examining movements that addressed similar issues, and in a similar manner. Resource mobilisation theory emerged from a different theoretical heritage, however, and in a different political and cultural context.

The state has had less direct involvement in economic and cultural initiatives in the USA in comparison to Europe. The civil rights movement and others that followed in the USA in the 60s and 70s were perceived to be making traditional demands for redistribution, political rights, and equality. The USA also has a history of civil disobedience, of voluntary associations, and of cultural and moral protest movements that were viewed as involved in the politics of the day, rather than opposed to involvement in party political processes. Social movement ideals were already embedded in US politics, and because there already existed a climate of co-operation between social movements and political institutions, the movements were easily co-opted. Movements tended to get drawn into single issue politics using

pressure group tactics; which in turn made the movements more entrepreneurial, more competitive, more active, and less like talk shops than their European counterparts (Mayer, 1991: 50-1, 53, 58). The absence of a strong socialist movement in the USA also made it difficult to conceive of the social movements of the 60s and 70s as being particularly new (Larana et al, 1994: 26-7; Neidhardt & Rucht, 1991:435).

Resource mobilisation theory emerged as a reaction to the theoretical explanations of collective behaviour that were used to explain social movements in the USA (Benford, 1993: 197; Buechler, 1993: 218-9; Canel, 1992: 22; Cohen, 1985: 674; Kitschelt, 1991: 325-6; Mayer, 1991: 49; Neidhardt & Rucht, 1991: 422). Social movements had previously been theorised in the USA as an 'elementary' form of collective behaviour, such as crowds rioting. This line of explanation had been developed largely in response to the rise of fascism in the 1930s. This traditional approach has its roots in Durkheim's view of collective action as anomic and irrational behaviour that is the result of rapid social change (Canel, 1992: 22). Durkheim's theory prompted European interest in mass psychology, which in turn influenced Park and Burgess, and the Chicago school of the 1920s. In the 1930s to 50s American studies of social movements perceived social movements to be abnormal phenomena, and social movement participants to be abnormal. The various theoretical approaches: collective behaviour, breakdown, mass society, and relative deprivation, all emphasised what was 'wrong' with the individual, or what was 'wrong' with the social life that these individuals were immersed in. The younger sociologists of the 60s and 70s, who were often movement sympathisers or movement activists themselves, noticed some flaws in the adverse assessment of themselves and their movements. Against the received notions they preferred to postulate

social movements as an extension of institutional action, and social movement activity as normal, rational, and highly organised challenges by aggrieved groups. Herbert Blumer (1939) and Neil Smelser (1962) developed influential theories that were so widely accepted that attention became focused on what was not explained: how collective action came to be mobilised. Mancur Olson's (1965) theory of collective action and Ralph Dahrendorf's (1959) theory of conflict and domination gave theoretical leverage against the earlier collective behaviour theories, and at the same time opened the space to explore the organisational forms and modes of communication used by social movements. The debates around these issues gelled into a coherent resource mobilisation approach under Mayer Zald's advocacy (Benford, 1993: 197; Cohen, 1985: 674; Kitschelt, 1991: 325-6; Munk, 1995: 669; Neidhardt & Rucht, 1991: 441; Pakulski, 1991).

Resource mobilisation theory has developed in two main directions, the organisational-entrepreneurial approach of McCarthy and Zald (1973); and the political model of Charles Tilly (1978), Anthony Oberschall (1973), William Gamson (1975) and Sidney Tarrow (1989). The organisational model focuses on organisation dynamics, leadership and resource management. It uses economic and organisational theories to study social movements. As a consequence of the emphasis on political rather than cultural aspects of social movements within resource mobilisation theory, the critical issue for the continued viability of a social movement becomes a question of social movement strategy. Social movement strategy in turn depends on the internal and external limits or constraints on the organisation. For resource mobilisation theorists the variables stressed are objective ones: organisation, recruitment, resources, and tactics. The

individual participant is assumed to be a rational actor,<sup>9</sup> using strategic and instrumental reasoning. Individual motivation thus becomes a focus of interest, as the individual will calculate the cost and benefits of participation. The organisational approach to resource mobilisation theory became interested in solving the 'free-rider problem'; which asks why individuals will participate in action at considerable personal cost if the benefits are allocated to everyone in the aggrieved group regardless of their participation (Buechler, 1993: 218-9; Canel, 1992: 23-4, 38-9; Cohen, 1985: 674-5; Klandermans, 1991: 24-5; Scott, 1990: 111-5). The 1981 Springbok tours protests would be even more problematic if this approach was taken. The protesters were engaged in action to benefit people in another country, and so were not members of the aggrieved group. In other movements, such as feminists fighting for abortion rights, the participants are usually women themselves and so may well personally benefit from that right being extended to all women.

The political model studies the opportunities for collective action, the role of pre-existing networks, and horizontal links within the aggrieved group (Canel, 1992: 39; Cohen, 1985: 674,6). Resource mobilisation theory regards social movements as agents of social change, and that social change is necessarily political in character. A continuity between political parties, social movements and pressure groups is perceived, and the nature of the political system is considered critical to social movement development as political opportunities are needed for social movements to mobilise. Social movements are certainly perceived to be mobilising for conflict, but it is not

---

<sup>9</sup> See Hindess (1988) for a discussion of rational choice models.

conflict against the institutions of the State; rather it is conflict that is considered to be built into institutional relationships.

What then was the relationship between the social movement and the state for the tour protesters? Given the background of growing awareness of and opposition to the South African policy of apartheid in New Zealand, most commentators found it surprising that the tour went ahead at all. There were certainly precedents for cancelling the tour. In 1966, the New Zealand rugby union decided not to tour South Africa after the Prime Minister of the day, Keith Holyoake, openly told the Union of the importance of mixed race rugby to our national unity. Again in 1973, the Prime Minister, Norman Kirk, advised the Rugby Union to postpone the South African tour of New Zealand until such time as the Springboks were selected on merit. International pressure on the government had also been mounting. In 1968 the United Nations General Assembly asked all member countries to support a sports boycott of South Africa. The New Zealand Prime Minister in 1977, Robert Muldoon, signed the Gleneagles agreement,<sup>10</sup> and promised to combat apartheid by discouraging sporting contact. However the same Prime Minister did not put the degree of pressure on the Rugby Union that earlier leaders had done. The tour supporters had traditionally voted for the opposition political party, and the government hoped to harness their support, especially in the provinces, to win another term in office (Chapple, 1984: 1-10). The New Zealand Prime Minister became tied to different sides of the tour debate in different contexts. In international politics, New Zealand needed to reaffirm its ties to the anti-apartheid position, but in

---

<sup>10</sup> The New Zealand Prime Minister agreed to take every possible step to discourage sport contact with South Africa in agreeing to the Commonwealth Statement of Apartheid in Sport at the Gleneagles retreat (Chapple, 1984: 29).

internal politics it was more expedient to strengthen ties with tour supporters. If anyone was making the most of political opportunities, it was the politicians who were quite happy to exacerbate internal divisions for their own ends. This is one social movements that certainly was mobilising for conflict, and it is was conflict against the institutions of the State. Even before the tour began there were practice sessions for protest marchers, including resisting arrest (Phillips, 1987: 263).

Although resource mobilisation theory is concerned with political opportunities, these are considered in terms of what is available within the political system. Larger questions of how the political system limits social movement activity through the state monopoly of coercive power, the consequences of prevailing economic relations or an hegemonic ideology are not considered. Neither is consideration given to how social movements may affect the environment that the political system operates in. Again the focus is on what social movements achieve and how they achieve it, rather than the broader social consequences of social movement activity.

## **Social Construction Theory**

Social construction theory arose from a rather different set of discontents than resource mobilisation theory (Benford, 1993: 199; Snow & Benford, 1988: 198; 1992: 136; Snow et al, 1986: 466; Williams, 1995: 125). Social construction theory disputes the resource mobilisation theory assumption that beliefs and grievances are constant and ubiquitous, and the rational actor model that is central to resource mobilisation theory. Resource mobilisation theory tends to side-step ideology, whereas social

construction theory emphasises that far from being a 'given', social movements actively engage in the production of beliefs and grievances, of ideas and meaning, for themselves and for others (Benford, 1993: 198; Snow & Benford, 1988: 198; Larana et al, 1994).

This insight into the inadequacies of resource mobilisation theory largely derived from the rediscovery of culture in American sociology which stimulated interest in interpretative issues. The work of Erving Goffman (1974) has been highly influential. Most of the work using the social construction approach has been concerned with utilising and elaborating Goffman's frame analysis (Mayer, 1991: 67-8; Snow et al, 1986: 465). Steven Buecheler (1995: 441) refers to the approach as social construction rather than frame analysis, and this allows the inclusion of those social movement theorists who are interested in how culture comes to be constructed by social movements, but do not use frame analysis. Rhys Williams (1995), for example, examines the relationship between the collective action frames of movements and the wider cultural repertoire in which the social movement is situated; whilst Julian McAllister Groves (1995) examines the construction of emotions rather than ideas within movements. However, in calling this approach 'social construction', I do not mean to include new social movement theorists who are labelled 'social constructivist' and are interested in processes of social construction but do not examine the actual processes of construction within movements, such as Alberto Melucci (Bartholomew & Mayer, 1992: 141).<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> Melucci (1996: 348) acknowledges that the literature on framing processes provides a better understanding of how actors define their action, but argues that this must be understood within a theory of ideology.

Social construction theory recognises that mobilisation not only requires social conditions to be ripe for collective action to occur, but that people must collectively define the situation as ripe, and persuade others that it is ripe on an ongoing basis (Benford, 1993: 199). The main area of interest has been in micro-mobilisation processes. This involves understanding how people in social movements interact and communicate in such a way as to produce a congruence between the changing interests, values and beliefs of the individuals involved in a social movement; and the activities, goals and ideology that is being defined and redefined for the organisation. These processes are referred to as 'frame alignment', deriving from Goffman's (1974: 21) concept of 'frame' as a 'schemata of interpretation' that helps individuals organise and analyse both the experience of their own lives, and other events beyond (Snow et al, 1986: 464).

It is certainly true that the protesters fought rugby with principles and ideals. Yet tour supporters also had ideals and principles. Equality was celebrated in a rugby game, where everyone is part of a team, all in it together. Freedom is freedom to participate, to watch and play; not to be prevented from doing things by people who think they know better. Rugby supporters had more than airy fairy ideas, they had a game. You learnt the game by playing the game, not just by talking about it. The rugby supporters knew about South Africa, but for most of them, this was knowledge in their heads. The ideas and principles of rugby were experienced by supporters in all their being, in every rugby match they watched or played. The protesters thought about rugby contacts with South Africa in relation to racism in South Africa, and in isolation from the context of rugby in New Zealand. It was this isolation of one aspect of a rugby tour, and placing it in another

context to that of the tour supporters, that made the difference between the understandings of the tour protesters and the tour supporters.

To be sure, the protesters had formed an outlook in which putting their lives on the line by invading a rugby field seemed a perfectly justifiable course of action; but they were quite dismissive of the outlook of tour supporters, and there is no indication in the social construction literature on how such bridges could be built. Rhys Williams (1995: 125) considers the culture constructed by a movement to be a response to the external, strategic needs of the movement. Williams argues that ideology can be thought of as cultural resources used in the rhetorical struggle amongst competing frames in public political debate. Participants pull elements from the wider cultural repertoire into a debate, and adapt them to the movement's purposes. Williams (1995: 140) considers the relationship between the social movement's cultural resources and the wider cultural repertoire to be crucial, not only to the developing political struggle, but to the process of frame alignment undertaken by the movement. In the case of the 1981 tour protests it would seem that the 'external, strategic needs' of the protest movement were for something more than ideas and rhetoric. The rugby supporters had something much more tangible to unite them, and the protesters nothing comparable to offer.

### **Theoretical Silences**

The political situation of New Zealand in the 1960s and 1970s was probably nearer the situation in Britain and Europe than the USA. There was a strong 'welfare state' heritage, and the expectation of 'cradle to grave'

social security. Social movements in New Zealand, on the other hand, were not as concerned about the effects of state intervention in their lives as their counterparts in Europe. As a younger country state involvement in social security is seen as 'traditional'. As a consequence, New Zealand's social movements have been more like the American movements in addressing 'traditional' concerns of equality and justice and demanding state action. There has been a strong sense of continuity with previous movements, as national pride in being the first country to give women the vote, and in our history of 'enlightened' race relations, has been reinforced by social movements to legitimate the new demands being made. It could well be the case that the example of the 1981 tour protests does not fit well with overseas theories because of the peculiarities of the New Zealand context. New Zealand does not have a distinctive, indigenous sociology (Crothers and Pavlich, 1995:64) that could be used to broach this question.<sup>12</sup>

None of the theories claim to be limited to specific national political contexts. Certainly some of the difficulties I have raised I would logically expect to cross national boundaries. For example, social movements have been thought of as presenting claims by a group aiming for improvements in their own situation, whereas the tour protesters were protesting 'on behalf of others'. It would seem that this is also true in other movements: environmentalists wanting areas that they are never likely to visit protected, for example. The assumption seems to be that people are acting for changes that will be of some benefit to them personally, even if the theoretical approach does not specify a 'rational actor' model. This introduces a gloss

---

<sup>12</sup> Sociology is a relatively recent discipline in New Zealand, dating from the late 60s and 70s. There has been a dual heritage from both British and American sociology, but British work has been more influential, possibly reflecting colonial deferences.

that directs sociological attention in a particular way.<sup>13</sup> Social movement activists are assumed to be members of an oppressed minority struggling for their share of the good things in life. Justice is done when their wishes are acceded to, and life becomes that bit more fairer. These glosses quietly ignore the way that social movements can engender violence and intolerance in others, as the four protests showed. They ignore the way that social movements can create new injuries and resentments.<sup>14</sup> They ignore the divisiveness that a social movement can cause. They ignore the way that social movements exacerbate existing cleavages, fragmenting existing alliances amongst the disadvantaged. They ignore the way that social movements affect the identities and embeddedness of everyone else in the social context in which they operate. They ignore the way that social movements can help create new sets of losers. It is this implication for the lives of those outside the movement that cannot simply be read off movement aims for creating a fairer society. The tendency in sociology is to focus on the direct achievements of social movements, to understand movement 'success' in terms of whether or not a movement achieves its aims. This completely ignores the more hidden social effects of the trade-offs involved in achieving those aims. All four sociological perspectives discussed above have not situated the movements in a wider social scene that includes other people who are also affected by social

---

<sup>13</sup> This same gloss has been tackled in other ways. Actions 'for the good of others' makes the protesters sound suspiciously like some sort of later day missionaries. Are they, like missionaries, in some ways the agents of the very 'colonising' powers they are trying to subvert? (Tricia Laing and Jenny Coleman (1998) discuss four white women who were 'mother educators', 'civilising' Maori as both agents and disrupters of the imperial endeavour, for example). What gives the activists the right to speak for others? Patricia Maringi Johnston (1998) points to the racism that underlies the prerogative of white women to speak on behalf of black women, for example.

<sup>14</sup> For example, returning private land to Maori from whom it was unjustly taken would create an injustice to the owners who bought the land in good faith and according to proper legal procedure (Sharp, 1994: 232).

movement 'successes'. These are the others who will bear the brunt of the social movement 'success', as those who are more powerful will ensure that they themselves are not adversely affected by any change.

What I find particularly disturbing is the dismissive attitude of at least some of the tour protesters towards the understandings of tour supporters.<sup>15</sup> The assumption seems to be that the supporters were morally incompetent. There was a complete absence of any attempt to form a consensus. There was a readiness amongst tour protesters to advance the government's strategy of divide and conquer to the politicians' own political advantage, with little concern for the affects such divisions would have on us all. To be sure, the activists hardly had time to think, events overtook them. Yet nothing was done subsequently to heal the breach. As Chris Trotter's comments above indicate, the cleavage engendered in the political left subsequently sedimented, effectively paralysing any response to successive onslaughts from the political right.

How could such a consensus to be achieved? It is quite clear that tour protesters and supporters attached different meanings to the same information, such as information about the conditions in South Africa. Both groups also attached different meanings to the same concepts or principles such as 'a fair go' or 'egalitarian'. Neutral media reportage, that covered both sides equally, merely served to heighten the feelings on both sides, and so reinforced these differences. If these differences are not to be reduced yet again to simplistic dichotomies, such as morally competent or incompetent, we need to understand how different people come to interpret the same

---

<sup>15</sup> This attitude was reciprocated by the tour supporters, to be sure; but then it was not the supporters who were setting out to change New Zealand.

information differently. The difference, I am arguing, is that both sides were considering the same thing, the tour, in relation to different contexts; in a rather abstract relation to apartheid in South Africa for the protesters (but doubtless more concretely embedded in local experiences of difference), or as embedded in rugby in New Zealand for the tour supporters. They were considering different aspects of the tour in isolation from many of the aspects that the other side was concerned about, and tying these aspects to a completely different series of situations and concerns. The ideas of the opposing groups were shaped by quite different influences; the resulting understandings were incompatible. How can such a situation arise? What can be done about it? The next chapter examines four debates about knowledge to consider the influences that exist on our understandings.

**Footnote:**

I should acknowledge the contribution that Karl Mannheim has made to the sociology of knowledge and our understanding of the concept of 'objectivity'. Mannheim argued against Marxist explanations, that forms of belief can be explained by reference to the individual's positioning in the economy or the class structure. Mannheim argued that beliefs are influenced by a variety of social settings, and not only by class. Knowledge is formed in the full spectrum of social processes. This position is similar to Durkheim (see pp. 193-197 below), in that the forms that knowledge take is causally related to the social structure that the people with the understanding are located in. The social groups that people participate in determine their beliefs. Mannheim recognised that if all types of thinking are 'situationally determined', then this calls into question whether there can be any socially independent criteria of truth. This 'perspectivism' is precisely the problem that feminist epistemologists and the sociology of scientific knowledge continues to wrestle with today (discussed in the next chapter). Initially Mannheim's solution was to propose that there is a class of socially independent propositions. Later Mannheim argued that his earlier assumption, that social experience determined the truth value of any proposition, was incorrect.

Mannheim, K., 1936. *Ideology and Utopia*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Mannheim, K., 1952. *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

## Chapter 2

### **Four Debates About the Contexts of Knowledge**

The 1981 Springbok tour protests demonstrate that there can be significant social consequences when people act on the basis of different understandings. Indeed all social movements exist because there is a lack of difference of opinion about an issue. In these situations people have not only different understandings, but they have antagonistic ideas about whatever is at stake. How can the same event, a game of rugby against the Springboks, be seen by some people as a celebration of all that is good and valued at the heart of what it means to be a New Zealander, while others see something ‘reptilian’, something shameful about life in New Zealand? How is it that the same thing, a rugby game, can be understood by different people as reflecting entirely different realities?

In this chapter I will clarify the extent to which these differences are unavoidable. I will engage four major epistemological<sup>1</sup> debates of the century: that in quantum physics, in feminism, in the sociology of scientific knowledge (SSK), and in ecocentric sociology. The quantum physics debate points to the way that two understandings can complement each other. It is simply not the case, when you have two different views, that one will eventually replace the other. Furthermore, the feminist debate shows that we cannot assume that we’ve got all angles covered, even if we put all our understandings together. We need to be aware that our views may still have

---

<sup>1</sup> Epistemology is concerned with ways of knowing and their relationship to experience and being (McLennan, 1995b: 391).

limitations in common when combined. The SSK debate emphasises the relativity of knowledge. Even when our views do not change over time, this may say a good deal more about the stability of the social environment that we find ourselves in than it does about the adequacy of the view. A stable view is doubtless adequate for the situations that it has been used in, or it wouldn't be stable. We can never, however, be sure that it will always remain stable. The ecocentric debate emphasises the embeddedness of both the knower and the known, that places limitations on our knowing. Things are not always as we see them, not because of any refusal of nature to be known, nor merely because of any social conditioning that blinds us to reality, but because there are also real constraints on the process of knowing that impinge on the account we can give.

These four debates about knowing all provide insights into the way that the process of knowing influences the accounts that we can give. The debates all point to the way the process of knowing tends to create an objectified reality by separating the object from its environment and attributing features, or properties to the object. Tour supporters tended to separate rugby in New Zealand from elsewhere in the world, and identify what they saw as valuable national characteristics with rugby. Equally the protesters tended to separate rugby in New Zealand from its local context in communities. By linking rugby in New Zealand to an international context, protesters identified support for rugby with what they perceived to be undesirable characteristics. In both cases characteristics were attributed to a reality, ignoring other possible constructions. The decision about what to exclude from consideration provided the basis of the understanding that enabled different characteristics to be attributed to the reality.

Decisions about what to include and exclude from consideration are unavoidable. We know by interacting<sup>2</sup> with whatever it is that we wish to know about, using our senses. This immediately places limitations on our knowledge because we can sense only difference. To be able to make sense of difference in a gradual continuum, we need to institute boundaries that signify difference to us. We know by sensing difference, and instituting boundaries that act as signs of that difference. A certain amount of simplification and silencing are inherent whenever boundaries are drawn, as a trigger level or trigger sign is needed to establish that there is a difference; and it is inevitable that the trigger is to a certain extent arbitrary.

Knowledge is influenced by context, as it depends on how we draw boundaries, on what is included and excluded. Whether we tend to relate rugby to a local context or an international context will depend on our familiarity with these contexts, on what makes sense in the light of our experience. Knowledge is thus relative to some frame<sup>3</sup> of reference. Regularities can be shown to exist empirically, but many regularities may exist that are not discerned. Any regularity that is discerned can be interpreted relative to different frames of reference. For example, one

---

<sup>2</sup> I am using the term 'interaction' to refer to any situation in which there is any sort of mutual impact, however unequal. For example, when a cow grazes on pasture, there is an interaction between cow and grass, even though it looks decidedly like the cow is having more impact on the grass plant than the plant on the cow. Yet, at a chemical level, the grass certainly does interact with the cow's digestive enzymes; and the grass can also be considered to act upon the cow through the processes of natural selection. Some sociologists prefer the terms 'mutuality' or 'reciprocity' (see, for example, Costall, 1997). I consider these terms inappropriate. In the example of cow and grass, the energy flow is one way. The cow does not return energy to the grass. The arrangement is not reciprocal.

<sup>3</sup> I will use the term 'frame' as it has a well understood reference in both sociology, as discussed in the previous chapter, and in physical sciences, even though it does seem to imply a rigidity in viewpoint that the term 'perspective' does not. It also seems to emphasise the way that limitations come from the way the frame directs our viewing, in the same way that a window frame limits the view that we have of the outside. The window does, in fact, enable us to view outside, and the limitations that the window imposes on us vary with our position in relation to the window.

regularity associated rugby is the relative exclusion of women. This can be viewed as an indictment of the game, or a virtue, depending on the frame adopted.

I suggest that we do need to be able to distinguish between a reality that exists and the knowledges that we may have of that reality; so that we can appreciate the ways in which knowledge may differ from the reality being known. One difference that is now better acknowledged is that knowing in science often involves 'objectivation', creating an object or a thing that is more strongly demarcated in our knowledge than it is in the situations that inform that knowledge.

Scientific knowledge is based on observation. Science assumes that observing any reality is not much different to observing everyday simple objects such as an apple or a door (Alcoff and Potter, 1993:6). Not everything is as readily accessible as these simple objects, so science aims to make reality more accessible to us by making it more objective. Science has had many successes through this project. For example, the gene was for many years a hypothetical entity that served to make sense of statistical regularities in inheritance, and where these 'genes' were located was not fully understood. With advances in microscopy, however, we can now see photographs of chromosomes, and we can demonstrate that what we had thought of as genes refer to sets of information carried on these chromosomes. Yet this project of making objects has also had its failures, which can show the limitations of objectifying reality. Such was the case in quantum physics earlier this century.

## Quantum Physics

The classical physics of last century viewed sunlight and air as being essentially different phenomena. Air, like earth or water, was considered to be 'matter', and made up of particles, or little bodies, too small to be visible, occupying distinct, discrete points in space. Sunlight was thought to be a form of radiation, made up of waves, which could impact on particles, but were not themselves particles. Waves, in contrast to particles, spread out over a large area, and had energy but no substance; more akin to the nerve impulse of a thought than a body. In the early years of this century the distinction between waves and particles became problematic. Albert Einstein demonstrated that light was particle-like, and although H. A. Lorentz showed that some phenomena of light could not be explained by point-like bodies, Einstein continued to try and disprove wave theory (Murdoch, 1987: 9-12). Einstein thought that as he had shown light to be particle-like, this excluded it from being a wave. It seemed highly counter-intuitive to think that light could be represented both as a discrete point in space, and as spread over a wide area. Neils Bohr, who was working on the structure of atoms, recognised that the energy changes that occur with structural change within the atom weren't continuous, as was assumed by wave theory. Yet Bohr did not reject wave theory as Einstein had done; he supported wave theory as being well confirmed empirically. Bohr instead questioned the presuppositions of classical physics; as not only wave theory, but other areas of classical physics also presuppose continuity.

In 1925 Werner Heisenburg's matrix physics used a particle model to mathematically describe the behaviour of electrons. Soon after, Erwin Schrodinger used a wave model to produce what was soon found to be a

mathematically equivalent formula (Pais, 1991: 22). This meant that it is possible to describe electrons both as particles and waves. In classical physics light was made up of waves, and matter was made up of particles; but now it was known that both light and matter (electrons) can act both as waves and as particles. Both things that were thought of as bodied, like electrons, and things that were thought of as not-bodied, like light, were shown to act as though they were bodied in some experiments, and to act as though they were not-bodied in other experiments.<sup>4</sup>

Heisenberg resolved the problem by arguing that we have a consistent mathematical schema that can tell us everything that can be observed, so it wasn't necessary to use the concepts of waves and particles in quantum physics. Heisenberg went on to mathematically demonstrate, through the uncertainty relations, Max Born's assertion that the classical concept of causality in physics is not valid in quantum physics because we cannot know all the information we need to know to be able to predict accurately. If we precisely know one factor, such as the location of the electron, this precludes knowing another factor, such as the momentum precisely enough to be able to predict. Thus Heisenberg conclusively demonstrated that there were empirical limits to our knowledge.

---

<sup>4</sup> Wave and particles do appear simultaneously in the double slit experiment, but there are different 'levels' of order involved. Each 'point' allows the concept 'particle' to be attributed; the pattern of points allows the concept 'wave' to be attributed. Carsten Held (1994: 881-2) argues that this counter example demonstrates that the attribution of mutually exclusive properties cannot be the result of exclusive experimental arrangements. However, different information was used from the experiment in the formation of the 'particle' conclusion, than was used in the 'wave' conclusion. The information itself was not entirely mutually exclusive, but rather allowed two different sorts of interpretation to emerge from different aspects of the information, which in turn allowed mutually exclusive conclusions to be drawn from the same experiment.

To Bohr, however, waves and particles were important because we can only express experimental results using classical language (Folse, 1985: 120). To try to explain the paradox Bohr developed the concept of complementarity. Bohr's argument was 'that the elucidation of one and the same object might require diverse points of view which defy a unique description' (Bohr, in Held, 1994: 873). The contradiction between wave and particle models can be resolved by considering ways in which things behave, rather than how things actually are (Pais, 1991: 22). Complementarity thus points to limitations on the way a concept can be meaningfully applied (Murdoch, 1987: 145). Bohr sought to resolve the validity problem of classical causality by arguing that concepts do not relate to the intrinsic properties of an object, but to our description of the outcome of observations. In classical physics, the outcome of an experiment tells us something about the properties of the object experimented on. In quantum physics we usually can not mathematically separate the object from the measuring instrument once the interaction that measures the object has taken place. This means that unless we can assume continuity, we can not know precisely what to attribute to the object, and what to the measuring instrument. We can not assume continuity, because the energy changes involved are discontinuous. Thus our descriptions can only apply to the observational situation as a whole (Folse, 1985: 68-70). This is not to say that what we have thought of as properties are merely artefacts of the process of observation. Rather, the properties of a quantum object are known relative to a specific frame of reference (Murdoch, 1987: 134-5). In different observations the same object can be described differently, giving rise to 'complementary descriptions' of 'complementary phenomena'.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> This discussion refers largely to wave-particle duality. Position-momentum duality and space-time co-ordination-claim of causality were also significant issues in the debate (See

Bohr argued that the consequences of quantum physics for epistemology are that we can only be certain about how things behave, and not of what they are. This means that knowledge based on picturing reality is always suspect. Drawing pictures in our minds has encouraged us to think in terms of the properties of things involved, rather than understanding what we observe as phenomena<sup>6</sup> emerging in interactions that involve whatever it is that we are interested in studying. Contradictions arise because 'properties' that arise are collapsed onto some 'thing' involved. For Bohr, the validity of knowledge relates to the lack of ambiguity in describing observations. What we describe, then, are ways in which phenomena are stable. We can only know how accurately the knowledge reflects reality beyond the observation by comparisons between different observations. This in one sense reinforces the standard of scientific confirmation being the prediction of an as yet untested result, a new phenomenon that forces a choice between the new and the old ideas about what is stable in such phenomena. What was so unusual about the situation in quantum physics is that the various new experiments produced contradictory results, some forcing one choice, others forcing another. The phenomena clearly is not adequately represented by either choice alone. Yet the same noumena is involved in the phenomena across all

---

Held 1994 for a concise introduction).

<sup>6</sup> I will be using Immanuel Kant's term 'noumena' to indicate that I am referring to a reality, 'out there' that we are interested in knowing about as it exists beyond the observational situation; and 'phenomena' to indicate that I am referring to the reality as we observe it, in whatever observational situation, whether it be an experiment, interview, or questionnaire. I am using the phenomena/ noumena distinction somewhat differently to Kant. Kant argued that we can never get beyond the phenomenal world to perceive the noumenal world because the phenomenal world is partly a function of our own minds, which we must use in order to perceive anything (Smith and Darlington, 1996: 14). Kant's usage of 'phenomena' is more like what I will refer to as 'preterreality' below. My usage is more in line with the current usage of 'phenomena' by sociologists and more generally as what can be observed; so 'noumena' is distinguished from 'phenomena' as referring to aspects of reality as it exists independently of any observational situation.

cases. Our only way forward is to look at whatever else may be involved in producing the phenomena from the noumena and representing it in knowledge.<sup>7</sup>

Bohr's approach to the difficulties in conceptualising quantum realities is by no means the only approach available. Another approach to the difficulties posed in attempting to theorise about subatomic particles was proposed by David Bohm in the 1950s. Bohm starts with Schrodinger's wave equation, which he treats as describing a physical system rather than simply being a mathematical formulation. These wave functions are thought to be akin to classical force fields, such as magnetic fields, which, in effect, push the electron around, so that the position of any electron can be determined by the wave function and the starting position as in classical physics. The wave functions are not able to be detected by any measuring device. The wave functions are not perceptible, but they are causally effective, as the presence or absence of information from them can be decisive to the motion of the electron (Albert, 1994).<sup>8</sup> Bohm agrees with Bohr that quantum results can only be given terms of statistical probability because of epistemic uncertainty: the act of measurement gets in the way of what is being measured.

Physicists today agree that quantum physics has shown us that there are empirical limits to knowledge, and that these limits are epistemological

---

<sup>7</sup> Held (1994: 878) asks whether the description of a phenomenal object as a wave or particle conveys information about the independent (noumenal) object or not; arguing that if the descriptions refer to the same noumena, they ascribe contradictory properties to it. The information does imply that contradictory properties can be ascribed, the problem lies with understanding the information as 'proving' that the 'property' exists as a feature of the noumena, rather than the understanding that the noumena has the capacity to behave in both ways, much like some people have the capacity to both admonish and praise in the same remark.

<sup>8</sup> Demonstrated in the double slit experiment.

rather than ontological. That is, the limits reflect difficulties in knowing, as collecting data interferes with what we want to know, rather than any refusal of reality to be known. They would also agree that quantum physics has shown us that realism, as it was usually understood, is no longer tenable. The Bell-Winger argument establishes that traditional realism, of the sort that Einstein wanted to maintain, can no longer be considered a valid position. The conditions needed for realism to be maintained are that physical objects have definite, observer-independent properties that hold at all times, and for events occurring to them to be under strictly deterministic laws, with local causes. These conditions are referred to as the intrinsic properties condition, the objective values position, the locality condition, and the matching condition. The Bell-Winger argument showed that these conditions do not exist simultaneously in reality. They are all essential to realism, as it was traditionally understood. All physicists now agree that it is not possible for them all to be true. As yet there is no agreement as to which condition(s) should be given away.

Bohm's theory dispenses with the locality condition: what happens in one area can affect something in another area, even though they are separated (Stone: 1994). Most quantum physicists today would argue that it is the locality condition that should be dispensed with (Sokal, 1996: 220). The locality condition underpins assumptions about causal mechanisms. Physicists assume that physical effects have physical causes, and this is not being questioned. What is being questioned is the idea that there must be direct physical connections between cause and effect, like a chain of cars in a pile up on a motorway. Most contemporary quantum theorists find that they need to allow the possibility that something that occurs in one region can have an instantaneous physical effect in another region, no matter how far

apart these regions are, and quite independent of the conditions that exist in the space between the two regions (Albert, 1994: 39). Bohm's theory is not popular because it makes no empirical predictions that differ from standard quantum physics that would enable it to be tested. The more common contemporary understanding of quantum theory is that the measurement problem reflects the limitations of human categorisation. Both Bohm and Bohr would disagree. They both stress the error of attributing the results of the measurement process to the observed system, rather than to the interaction between the measuring instruments and the observed system (Aronowitz, 1996: 185).<sup>9</sup>

Bohr's theory dispenses with the intrinsic properties condition: that objects have properties corresponding to the terms used to characterise them. Bohr argues that assigning attributes to the objects is a somewhat arbitrary process, as what we know is only the observational situation as a whole (Folse, 1993: 351). Bohr does hold that there is an independent reality that lies behind the phenomena that we observe. He views the task of scientific theories as being to describe the phenomena we observe as the empirical consequence of the behaviour of objects that really exist; but Bohr argues that the properties we attribute to an object are not necessarily possessed by the object, but may arise from the observational interaction between objects and measuring instruments. In any particular physical interaction between electrons and the objects used to observe them, the resulting phenomena is typically either a wave or a particle.<sup>10</sup> What was deceiving was the

---

<sup>9</sup> The position that I am arguing for is both epistemological and ontological; in that there are real mental limitations in that the mind deals only in difference, as well as real limitations involved in measuring, as the observed is only known through irreducible interaction with a measuring system.

<sup>10</sup> The interaction is not a factor in the situation that could be calculated with better technology, the interaction is the situation, it is what we observe.

presupposition that a physical system, as it exists independently of its phenomenal appearances, had to be either wave-like or particle-like. Waves and particles can describe phenomena produced by observational interactions, but do not describe the noumena, the independently existing reality beyond the observation.<sup>11</sup>

There are many other theoretical positions in quantum physics besides these two, but they all demonstrate that the quantum revolution has forced physicists to discard the idea that entities exist in distinct loci in time and space, possessing separate, independent mechanical states. Quantum theory has thus demonstrated that science itself has produced anomalies that undermine that basis of scientific forms of knowledge, and the impossibility of realism as it usually has been understood. Bohm's creation of a non-detectable material reality, a new 'thing' is a familiar scientific strategy, and certainly less troublesome to the scientific mind than many other proposals, such as many-worlds and many-minds, also designed to overcome these anomalies. Bohr's position is more interesting epistemologically, as he instead examines the way scientific knowledge is formed, and shows how this process can lead to misleading conclusions. Bohr has critiqued the processes involved in objectivation; in particular, how the results of an observational situation are attributed to an object as properties of that object.

Bohr also offers solutions. The framework of complementarity seeks to replace the classical idea of representing nature detached from interaction,

---

<sup>11</sup> I do not agree with Held (1994: 892) that what is real is only what we actually observe in a specified arrangement. What we observe is a reality, the reality of the observed situation. This does not mean that subatomic particle/waves that contribute to the observed situation are somehow unreal and do not exist independently of the observational situation; only that the subatomic reality cannot be directly accessed. We only have news of that reality filtered through interactions with other realities.

with the goal of describing in different complementary ways noumena that emerge as phenomena in different interactions. The distinction between reality as we come into contact with it (or phenomena) and reality as it exists beyond our interaction with it (or noumena) is important, as it concedes that our knowledge is dependent on the observational situation, the way that reality becomes available for observation in a given context.

### **Feminist Epistemology**

Quantum physics has shown us that there are empirical limits to knowledge. The feminist insight would reword this: there are limits to empirical knowledge. As is the case in quantum physics, there is no universal agreement on the epistemological consequences of feminist insights. In general, feminist epistemologists call into question the premise that a general account of knowledge that uncovers justificatory standards *a priori* is possible. They argue that this premise ignores the influence of the social context and the status of the knowers on the knowledge (Alcoff & Potter, 1993:1).

Feminists have been drawn into epistemological issues as feminist researchers in the social sciences often found it difficult to justify their analysis to other social scientists. The kind of evidence feminists presented was often not acceptable to people judging it from a perspective based on men's experiences, values and judgements (Harding, 1987).<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> It should be noted that I am referring to the entrenched male establishment epistemological position in the social sciences in the 1950s to 1970s, which did aim for the supposed 'neutrality' and 'objectivity' of the physical sciences. This position is no longer as dominant as it once was; and, indeed, there always have been alternative perspectives. In the

Sandra Harding (1987) is one feminist theorist who discusses the increasingly radical epistemological commitments of feminists (see also Elizabeth Grosz, 1998; Liz Stanley and Sue Wise, 1990; and discussions by Holmwood, 1995 and McLennan, 1995b). Harding draws attention to the difference between the feminist empiricist position, the feminist standpoint position, and the feminist postmodernist position. Harding argues that men's science has assumed that it is objective, as it is protected from the values and interests of the researcher by scientific methodology. Yet feminist social research showed that it could be more reliable, and more likely to be confirmed, than the so-called 'neutral' scientific beliefs it replaced, even though feminist research was value-laden. The 'neutral' scientific beliefs were shown to be sexist and androcentric. The first epistemological response feminists made to this anomaly was to suggest that as the claims made by so-called 'neutral' science have been sexist and androcentric, they are not neutral, and therefore not scientific. The solution then is seen as making research more neutral and more scientific by forcing researchers to note their biases and eliminate them. This solution Harding refers to as the feminist empiricist position. It aims to conform more strictly to the standard methodological norms.

The next position Sandra Harding discusses, the feminist standpoint position, begins to problematise not only the results of men's science, but the men's understanding that is implicit in men's science; and thus opens the possibility of questioning the standard methodological norms. Feminist claims are thus more scientific because they come from, and are tested

---

1970s Marxist perspectives became increasingly popular, and many feminist social scientists began their critiques from this perspective, before becoming critical of Marxism.

against, a more complete and less distorting kind of social experience. Men with power have monopolised certain preferred activities, which they consider to be 'social' activity, worthy of study, while dismissing the activities assigned to women as merely 'natural' tasks. Men's understanding of what the social is, is thus distorted. Men's understanding must be fought against if we are to achieve any understanding of women's social experience. The aim of both feminist empiricists and standpoint theorists is to try and make accounts of the social world less partial and distorted than prevailing accounts. Both positions aim for a feminist science.

The third position that Harding discusses is the feminist postmodern position, that argues that there can never be a feminist science; but only many stories that different women tell about the different knowledges that they have. 'Reality' only comes to have a structure because someone generalises their own perspective of it.

Feminists agree that the epistemological turn in feminism has challenged many of the assumptions of traditional science. The presumed objectivity of science was an early casualty of this critical examination. Feminist research clearly showed that what had passed as objective scientific evidence was biased. It showed that scientific method does not, in fact, eliminate the widespread social biases that all researchers accept. The social experiences of the researcher, whether male or female, black or white, middle class or working class, does make a difference to the results obtained (Harding, 1987).

From this it follows that, as scientific norms are constructed to answer men's questions; those who do not ask men's questions, and those who do

not provide men's answers, are excluded from science. Science privileges the masculine knower, so that the knower whose position is not masculine does not have equal access (Loribond, 1994). As Luce Irigaray (1985) argues, all knowledge is produced from a position which leaves its trace on what is produced. Claims about the truthful, objective, neutral, global position of science mask a refusal to recognise its social location. The ideals that men attribute to themselves are projected onto the forms of scientific knowledge:

'The scientist now strives to stand before the world; naming it, legislating it, reducing it to axioms. While he manipulates nature, using it, exploiting it, he is forgetting that he too is within nature - that he is still part of the physical world and not just placed before phenomena whose physical nature he occasionally misreads' [Irigaray, 1985: 83; in Grosz & de Lepervanche, 1988: 26].

The aspects of science Irigaray problematises from a feminist perspective are similar to those problematised by Bohr in the previous section with reference to developments in quantum physics earlier in the century. Both point to the limits of empirical knowledge. Feminists note that we can still have a qualitative idea of some aspect of reality, even if we can't attach precise numbers. In quantum physics what the feminists describe as the 'qualitative idea' is expressed quantitatively in terms of probability, but the limit to empirical knowledge is thereby acknowledged: we can only determine what is likely, and how likely it is. There is a difference in commitment here in that quantum physics is a form of knowledge in which comparisons are based on measuring and thus maths; whereas feminism is willing to explore other forms of knowledge.

Both Irigaray and Bohr also draw our attention to the scientific focus on the 'thing'. Bohr argues that we cannot know with any certainty what any 'thing' actually is in reality, only how it behaves. Irigaray problematises the 'thing' as a projection of the scientist's self image, that is constructed using concepts that reflect the scientist's own social position, and then certifies this representation of reality as 'science'. Somewhat different conclusions are drawn from this. Perhaps the key issue for both Irigaray and Bohr is that the intervention of the measuring instrument between the knower and the reality to be known is presumed to be neutral by science. The difference is that Irigaray proceeds to tie the measuring instrument to the knower, whereas Bohr ties it to the experiment itself.

For Irigaray, the choice and the use of the measuring instrument reflects the social influences on the experimenter in the construction of the experiment. That another experimenter repeats the experiment and gets the same results merely means that the social influences on the experimenters were similar, it does not mean that the social influences were neutralised to produce objective, unbiased results. Irigaray argues that as observers from different social backgrounds have, in some situations, produced different results, there are different realities that correspond to the different experiences of different observers. Irigaray thus problematises the epistemological assumption of science that there is a single reality that is distinct from and observable by the knowing subject. I would argue that Irigaray's claimed epistemological assumption of science is not logically coherent. How can any conception of a 'single reality' not include people, which necessarily includes the knowing subject? The problematic assumption of science is that an adequate experimental situation can effectively make the process of observation neutral. Attention focuses on the

reality being studied, and it is assumed that the procedures used will have no effect on the reality being studied. This ignores the way that the process of observation has shaped the information obtained from the object of study. It also obscures the biases introduced by the choices made in shaping a process of observation.

For Bohr, observations arise in interactions that include the measuring instrument. The measuring instrument is part of the whole situation, and we can only arbitrarily distinguish between the measuring instrument and what is observed. Difficulties arise because what we observe is an entire situation, but we represent this situation by attributing the phenomena that arise to the thing(s) involved in the experiment without recognising that the phenomena is a result of the interactions involved. This does not lead Bohr to problematise the idea of a single reality as Irigaray does, but he does problematise the idea that it can simply be read-off from the observational situation. Both would agree that reality is known relative to a context that influences the knowledge. For both Bohr and Irigaray, the context is made explicit in the observation by its design. The difference is that Bohr locates the difference in contexts within science, whereas Irigaray locates the difference in contexts in the social circumstances that locate scientists. Irigaray thus draws our attention to the status of social contexts that produce frameworks that are not accepted as science.

Bohr would agree with Irigaray that validity rests on intersubjective understandings, as he bases validity on the lack of ambiguity in describing observations, and not the accuracy of the knowledge in reflecting reality beyond the observation. To this extent language and representation does need to be questioned, but Bohr seems (at least by today's standards) rather

naively optimistic that unambiguous communication is achievable.<sup>13</sup> I can only speculate where Bohr would position himself in relation to Grosz's demand that the continuity between observer and observed be recognised. Certainly Bohr was opposed to London and Bauer's attempt to collapse the observation onto the observer,<sup>14</sup> just as he was opposed to science collapsing the observation onto the 'thing' involved; but whether or not he absolutely ruled out any interaction between observer and measuring instrument in a 'well defined' experiment is another question. Bohr did not specifically focus on the reasons for choosing one experiment rather than another. For Bohr there was no need to consider the status of frameworks and thus the validity of other knowledge considered to be outside science.

Grosz's demand that feminist knowledge should occupy the ground left uncovered by dualisms would be meaningless to Bohr. The problem with dualisms, for Bohr, is that they cover the same ground twice in different ways, thereby disturbing our picture of a single reality. Bohr locates the problem in trying to form a single picture. For Grosz, dualisms refer to separate realities, thus there is the possibility of realities left uncovered by a dualism. However, theory as context and observer dependent does not necessarily implicate multiple realities; it need only implicate multiple frameworks for observing reality, and hence different knowledges. Different theoretical perspectives can thus be commensurate, or in Bohr's terms,

---

<sup>13</sup> Habermas notwithstanding.

<sup>14</sup> Fritz London and Edmond Bauer argued that it was not the interaction between the object of interest and the instrument of measuring that gave rise to the phenomena observed, but the conscious act of observation. Schrodinger replied with a thought experiment that had a hypothetical cat sitting inside a box with a door. The cat shares the box with a suitable amount of a radioactive material so arranged that if an atom of it decomposed it would trigger the release of a gas that would kill the cat. We have no way of knowing whether or not an atom has decomposed without looking inside the box. Schrodinger pointed out that according to London and Bauer it is the act of observation, that is looking inside the box, that determines whether or not the cat is alive or dead.

complementary; able to refer to the same single reality, but occupying different positions. For Bohr the framework of complementarity was taken to be the framework, replacing all others; whereas for feminist epistemologists all judgements of truth are relative to a particular framework, complementarity is only one framework among many.

Feminists are not agreed on the extent to which the continuity between observer and observed can be taken. Lorraine Code (1993: 21), for example, argues that the world's intractability to intervention and wishful thinking is strong evidence of its independence from human knowers. An understanding of knowledge does need to avoid the extreme positions of denying that the social location of the knower makes any difference to the knowledge produced, or of denying that the knowledge produced refers to anything beyond the social location of the knower. However, in a more limited sense the idea of continuity between observer and observed does gel well with an ecocentric understanding of the embeddedness of the knower and the known discussed below.

Feminist epistemology thus takes us further than Bohr. Bohr problematises the attribution of properties to an object, and feminism alerts us to the fact that in this process of objectivation, scientists shape the object in ways that reflect their own social position. Feminist epistemology thus draws attention to a different context of knowledge than the quantum debates. The context that the feminist epistemologists are concerned about is the context that the knower comes from. It is the context that situates the person observing, the influences that enable an observer to notice some aspects of the observational situation rather than others.

## **The Sociology of Scientific Knowledge**

Developments in feminist epistemology have parallels in the sociology of science, as both have increasingly drawn attention to the effects that the social context in which scientific knowledge is created has on that knowledge. As a consequence both groups have concluded that the knowledge produced is therefore relative, rather than absolute, in character. In the last two decades the sociology of science has increasingly turned its attention from the study of scientific institutions to the study of the scientific knowledge produced; arguing that the knowledge is shaped by its social location (Aronowitz, 1996; Cooper, 1995; De Laet, 1995; Fuller, 1995b; Pinch, 1990; Velody, 1994; Woolgar, 1988). This change had its origins in the conceptual space cleared by Kuhn's (1970) The Structure of Scientific Revolutions. This work suggested to some social scientists that the acquisition, maintenance and change of scientific beliefs demanded a sociological explanation rather than a philosophical account of scientific rationality (Roth, 1994; Shrum, 1995; Turner, 1994; Velody, 1994).

Earlier work in the sociology of science had invoked social causes to explain why scientists sometimes arrived at wrong conclusions. The turn to analysing the knowledge rather than institutions of science found expression in the 'principle of symmetry', first formulated by David Bloor (1981), which suggested that sociologists should explain beliefs that are currently taken to be true, such as the existence of electrons, in the same way as beliefs that are currently understood as being false, such as the existence of phlogiston.

When sociologists began to examine the actual work of knowledge production, they found that scientists did not strictly adhere to the predetermined rules and procedures that were used to philosophically justify the truth of scientific argument. Rather they found a fluidity and creativity in what seemed more like a craft of transforming the notes in the lab to a finished article (Ward, 1994: 73).<sup>15</sup>

Bruno Latour (1987: 87-92) describes how a new object emerges in science. He argues that all that can be done to establish new objects is to list the answers to tests made. The new object is defined by the answers that are found in a series of tests. The process of definition means providing the object with limits or edges (*finis*), giving it shape. The list of trials becomes a thing, it is reified. Any new object is also shaped by simultaneously importing older ones in a reified form. This is similar to Bohr's position noting that properties are attributed to objects on the basis of phenomena observed. The object is defined by the properties attributed to it; by the contrast between what is considered to be inside the boundary, and what is considered to be outside. For Bohr, the objects are there, but their nature needs to be clarified. For Latour, however, the objects are called into existence, and their existence does not go unchallenged. The object needs to have its existence established, and this requires the support of friends other than the creator. Alliances are established that cut across the boundaries between people and 'things'. Furthermore, such alliances are not only

---

<sup>15</sup> The rationality of tests designed to confirm the validity and reliability of the results are equally called into question by SSK practitioners. Such tests may consist of replications, which means repeating the procedures and thus replicating the creative pathway without the fluidity of the original. In this case the procedures take on a form rendered 'rational' by virtue of copying the scientifically acknowledged aspects of previous behaviour which was not philosophically justifiable in the first place. The alternative is an independent confirmation, in which the results are forged along a new creative pathway, which is no more philosophically justifiable.

necessary to establish a scientific fact; these alliances maintain scientific facticity in the face of a challenge. It is precisely when there are no challenges that truth is established.

Practitioners of the sociology of scientific knowledge (SSK) find no basis in the actual practice of scientists for the idea that the rationality of scientific practices explains the beliefs that the scientists accept or reject, as scientists themselves assume.<sup>16</sup> The standards and practices of scientists are instead seen as historically contingent and culturally specific (Roth, 1994: 96). SSK is therefore only part of a contemporary epistemological debate in the sense that it declares that the traditional philosophical concerns of epistemology are now obsolete and a new 'social epistemology' is needed (Fuller, 1995a). SSK rejects the epistemological search for a rational basis for knowing something to be true. SSK rejects the distinction between belief and knowledge, appearance and reality, science and mythology (Ward, 1994: 73). Thus the distinction that Bohr maintains between the appearance of reality, or phenomena, and the reality as it exists beyond the observational situation, or noumena, is collapsed in the opposite direction to the scientists Bohr was contending with. According to SSK theorists, we cannot distinguish any reality beyond the phenomena that we observe.<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> Peter Atkins (1995) presents the claims of 'science as truth'. He contends that science is the best procedure for exposing fundamental truths about the world. The claim of universal competence for science can be justified by its achievements. Science is seen as open and honest. Science is based on the expectation of rationality, and the view that observations and theories will form a mutually supportive network. Atkins claims that science is the ultimate market economy of knowledge, where only valid observations and plausible theories survive.

<sup>17</sup> Caroline New (1995: 814) comments that this constructivist ontology is characteristic of postmodern thought, and discusses the problems that arise for sociology as a consequence. Most sociologists find themselves adopting some variant of constructivist epistemology somehow tied to a realist ontology, more or less similar to some form of representationalism in psychology (Smith and Darlington, 1996).

SSK's insistence on the relativity of scientific knowledge is explained by Steve Woolgar (1988: 20) as a necessary consequence of the distinction between an object and its description or representation in science. The faithful representation of an object must be both similar to that object and distinct from it. What counts as similar - that is, what aspects of reality are considered to be the most important - is the upshot of social negotiation. SSK thus considers 'truth' to be a term honourifically attached to those items of belief that have managed to prevail in the contest for scientific knowledge and progress (Norris, 1995: 110). Thus SSK theorists argue that it is not the case that constructs become stabilised because the real properties of things in some way cause the regularities observed in phenomena that we observe. Rather stability is imposed upon phenomena by social agreements (Murphy, 1995).

For SSK theorists, relativism is constrained by social reality. As Bruno Latour (1988: 156) argues, knowledge, truth and reality do exist. They are the labels given to a completely successful knowledge construction. Scientific facts can only be constructed by establishing strong networks that bring together researchers, others interested in research, and the objects being studied. The hardness of a truth claim relates to the strength of a network establishing it.<sup>18</sup> If truth claims are not attacked, there is no controversy among competing truth claims, so the claims are true. 'Rational', 'scientific', 'reality', 'truth' are the labels attached to these resistant coalitions (Ward, 1994).

---

<sup>18</sup> For Latour, the distinction between rational and irrational, text and reality, knowledge and belief can be made sociologically by the type of association involved. Science is distinguished from other knowledge by the resources involved. The cost of proof in science is high; few centres have the resources available to become involved.

There is an important difference here between SSK and the standpoint feminist position. Standpoint feminists would typically point to the need to expand our understanding of 'truth', so that the truth of other forms of knowledge is acknowledged. SSK practitioners deny that 'truth', as it is conventionally understood, can be known by science. Most postmodern feminists would share this position. The difference is tied up with the way each considers knowledge to be produced. SSK practitioners note that producing science seems to necessarily involve a lot of activity that in the terms that science sets for itself is not 'rational' and therefore not truth producing. Standpoint feminists would agree that producing science involves activity that science itself defines as irrational; but whereas SSK uses the scientific standard that such activity is not in itself rational (and therefore that the label 'rational' must be attributed on a social rather than a methodological basis), standpoint feminists would argue that such activity can, nevertheless, be truth producing. Science can produce truth, even if the methods it uses to produce truth involves elements that are esoteric, creative, intuitive, or anarchic.<sup>19</sup> However a consequence of this is that science is no longer

---

<sup>19</sup> I would argue against describing the esoteric, creative, intuitive or anarchic as 'irrational'. I do not regard insights or intuition as 'irrational', but as typically invoking 'forgotten' knowledge. Information or knowledge taken to the 'unconscious' by the death drive is often described as 'repressed', but although it may be socially unacceptable, it is more likely to be discarded as insignificant. If it is subsequently resurrected from the 'unconscious' by the lifedrive back into conscious awareness, the insights and intuition produced seem to appear out of nowhere (See Brennan, 1997). It may require great labour to incorporate such insights into formal systems of proof, as they are 'filed' in the unconscious by a very different system. It should be remembered, however, that the landscape of the unconscious is only biologically given in the earliest, rudimentary moment. In any individual the actual configuration of an instinct or an archetype can be rationally traced back to earlier events if need be. Yet this form of rationality does not help us place the insight into a discursive framework that allows us to communicate its results to others. The storage of knowledge in the unconscious, and its subsequent retrieval and push into the conscious as 'intuition', is not therefore an irrational process; but merely one that makes the knowledge more difficult to justify to others. It is no different to any other situation where the reason for doing something is forgotten, or was not explained, so that what was a rational course of action appears to be irrationally motivated, as it cannot be justified. Is it irrational for me to take medication prescribed by a doctor, for example, unless I can explain the biochemical processes involved? Is my faith in my doctor any more 'rational' than my faith in God? As science can no longer be privileged as somehow more 'rational' than other forms of knowledge, what

privileged. Scientists have to admit that other knowledge can also be true, such as local knowledge,<sup>20</sup> and can not be dismissed simply because its practitioners more explicitly acknowledge that their methods contain esoteric, creative, intuitive or anarchic elements.

SSK debates have in the past been confined to specialised academic seminars, journals and monographs with limited circulation; but now SSK debates have been taken up by the media and by natural scientists, who take SSK to be an attack on science (See Fuller, 1996; Nelkin, 1996; Velody, 1994). Gross and Levitt's (1995: 127) demand that SSK show how an important body of scientific knowledge derives from particular politics, and not from internal disciplinary history and logic, shows that some scientists do have difficulty grasping the insight that politics is an integral part of a disciplinary history and logic (Fuller, 1995a). It is quite incorrect to think that SSK argues that politics causes knowledge. Rather, both are produced in the same process; or as feminists would concur, politics and knowledge are both means and ends of scientific production (Ward, 1994).

SSK theorists have explored the role of what is studied, nature, in the production of scientific knowledge. SSK practitioners assume that social circumstances intervene between reality and the produced account. This position certainly differs from the typical scientist's realist position, but does

---

becomes important to examine, then, is the standard of evidence that the form of knowledge requires, and what social biases may be evident in that standard, which may serve to augment any social biases involved in the process of observation. The SSK and postmodern feminist positions bypass concern with possible biases in the standard of evidence, by ruling out the need for any standard.

<sup>20</sup> Local knowledge refers to knowledge that appears to be more intuitive than scientific knowledge because knowledge comes from the same context that it is intended for. An example is traditional midwifery, where there is no distinction between learning and having attained proficiency; all births attended are 'practice' in both senses of the word.

not necessarily coincide with the extreme constructivist position.<sup>21</sup> Whilst radical relativists argue that scientific knowledge is entirely socially shaped, others argue that the natural world also constrains scientific belief (Pinch, 1990: 221). Those within SSK agree that there is a natural reality, but this is often not clearly stated (Murphy, 1994). They are divided over the extent to which nature impacts on the accounts scientists produce.

Paradoxically, it is Bruno Latour, the SSK theorist who most emphatically rejects causal explanation, and even undermines the need to be consistent, who does most to promote the involvement of nature in the production of knowledge about it. Latour suggests a principle of super-symmetry: treating natural actants the same way as we treat human actors (Pinch, 1990: 225). Latour seeks to explain how nature and society are brought into being together. Against this, other SSK practitioners argue that it is not the things themselves that speak, but humans speaking and interpreting for them. There is thus no agreement within SSK about the relative importance of nature and society in the production of scientific knowledge. The emphasis in SSK is not so much on the contexts that knowledge have come from, whether that be the social context of the human knower prior to the observation that concerns feminist epistemologists, or the context of observation that concerns quantum physicists. For SSK theorists, the focus is more on how knowledge is shaped to fit the context it is going to, the context for which the knowledge is intended. Their detractors have, in turn, stressed the importance of cognitive processes in shaping knowledge,

---

<sup>21</sup> The realist position postulates that real world entities do exist independently of their description, and accounts of reality seek to reflect the entity or the event described. The constructivist position considers that accounts do not reflect any reality beyond the constructs, but rather reality is created by virtue of the accounting done by the actors (Murphy 1994: 958).

and argue that those who emphasise social factors either ignore cognitive issues or collapse them onto the social context (Nola, 1994: 694). All three debates have all highlighted different contexts, but all have showed that we have, in the past, ignored the impact that contexts of knowledge have on shaping the knowledge gained. Ecocentrism decenters each of these specific contexts, and provides a more general frame for considering interaction within a context.

### **Ecocentric Sociology**

Ecocentrism postulates the internal relatedness of all organisms within an environment (Mellor, 1996; Miller, 1991). Organisms do not simply live in interrelationship with other organisms in their environment; organisms have the characteristics they do because of these interrelationships. Thus the characteristics that we observe in an organism are phenomena that arise out of interrelationships, and not the independent property of an organism. This is the biological equivalent of Neils Bohr's assertion that no physical 'thing' has properties that exist independently of the observational environment.

Ecocentric sociology critiques the anthropocentric bias within sociology, and emphasises our ecosystem dependence. Although ecocentric sociology can trace its intellectual roots back to Marx (Benton, 1989), Durkheim and Chicago School 'human ecology' (Buttel, 1986); William Catton and Riley Dunlap's (1978) contribution marks the first specifically ecocentric challenge to mainstream sociology. Catton and Dunlap contend that a new ecocentric basis is needed for sociology if we are to come to terms

with a series of social changes that have been difficult to explain in traditional sociological terms. Catton and Dunlap refer to the traditional sociological approach as the 'Human Exceptionalism Paradigm'. This paradigm assumes that humans are unique because they have a culture, and that culture is capable of more variation and much more rapid change than genetic traits, so that most human difference has become social rather than genetic. This has caused people to consider that social change can eliminate all undesirable difference. In this view, social problems can always be solved. Catton and Dunlap argue that sociologists could easily be convinced of the doctrine of progress when natural resources were plentiful, so that any limits to progress remained unforeseen. However the greater visibility of ecosystem constraints have now made these assumptions problematic for sociology, and new assumptions have become essential. Catton and Dunlap proposed what they refer to as the 'New Environmental Paradigm'. This paradigm assumes that humans are one species among many interdependently positioned in biotic communities. This situation produces unintended consequences of any human action that fails to take these interdependencies into account. It also imposes finite limits on economic growth and other social phenomena.<sup>22</sup>

An ecocentric perspective is thus highly critical of much that passes as sociological knowledge. How accurate can a social theory be if it ignores our ecological embeddedness? Does this not suggest that social theory often is unaware of its own limits, and may be used inappropriately as a consequence? Sociology tends to treat environmentalism as a moral panic, ignoring the degree to which humans alter the environment, and the affect

---

<sup>22</sup> See also Buttel, 1986; Humphrey and Buttel, 1982; Spaargaren, 1987; Taylor, Bryan and Goodrich, 1990.

that this may have on us. Environmental problems are social problems, that have social causes and require a social solution, not merely a technical solution (Eichler, 1998: 15). The problem is that sociologists regard social problems, or indeed anything social as something that happens between people; anything else is considered irrelevant. The ecocentric insight is that everything needs to be considered in context. Studying interactions between people, as if there is nothing else influencing those interactions, is a bankrupt project.

The New Environmental Paradigm, however, locates the environment as something outside of society. It draws attention to the limits placed on society by our biotic location, but fails to capture the implications that an ecocentric perspective has for sociology in terms of our human embodiment. In other words, our ecological interdependence impacts on our biological and cultural constitution within society as well as without. Freud recognised that whatever culture designates as 'other', as alien, as incommensurably different, is never, or rarely so. The absolutely other is inextricably within (Dollimore, 1991: 82). Ecocentrism recognises this outside inside for the 'other' of culture; that is, nature:

'Ecocentrism is based on an ecologically informed philosophy of internal relatedness, according to which organisms are not simply interrelated with their environment but are also constituted by those very environmental interrelationships' (Robyn Eckersley, 1992: 49).

The theoretical idea that organisms, including ourselves, are a product of interrelationships once again emphasises the idea of the influence of context that results from interaction. An ecocentric epistemology thus can

serve to draw together the other debates already presented, in their common recognition of contextual influences on knowledge.

The ecocentric concept of embeddedness clarifies much of what the problem of quantum physics was actually about. Intuitively we consider something like an apple or a chair to be thing-like; and something like sunlight or sound to be not-thing-like. The quantum revolution showed us that this distinction was problematic. We can indeed consider our ordinary everyday 'things' like apples and chairs as waves; and our ordinary everyday 'not-things' like light as particles. It is important to remember, however, that in our ordinary, anthropocentric, everyday lives, there may not be a lot to be gained by thinking of chairs as waves. The whole realm of quantum mechanics deals with subatomic particles/waves which are in a grey area where it is not immediately obvious to us, from an anthropocentric perspective, whether we would be better off thinking in terms of waves or of particles. The quantum physicists, however, could not solve the problems they were interested in from this anthropocentric perspective, and needed to find some other, more useful frame for their problems. Their conclusion was that we need to take care with the claim that an electron is a particle, because this gives the impression that the noumena we call an electron is more of an independent entity than we can justify by our knowledge.

Equally, we can conclude from the insights of quantum physics, that even an apple, which seems to us to be a pretty obvious example of an independent entity, is not as thing-like as we usually think of it as being. One of the reasons that we come to regard apples as independent entities may well be the fact that we buy them from a store, and pay for them as independent entities. If we grew them ourselves, we may be more sensitive to the

knowledge that the apple did not somehow come into existence independently of the tree it grew on, and that it will one day be returned to the soil, one way or another. Our culture gives us a heavy bias towards seeing 'things'. Our observation of our apple that identifies it as an independent entity does so by considering it from an ethnocentric and anthropocentric frame. If our observational frame had been on a much larger, planetary time scale, an apple would appear as a highly temporary and unstable moment in a general flux.

We only experience a limited range of frequencies as real: those pertaining to our situation in the world. If this range of frequencies somehow shifted, our experience of any actual frequency would also shift. An actual frequency that we now experience as corresponding to a 'thing', like an apple, may then come to appear to us to be more like what light or sound now appear to us to be (or vice-versa, depending on the direction of the shift). None of this changes the fact that the actual frequency does exist in the universe, whether we are aware of it or not. What it does alert us to is our own anthropocentrism in knowing and describing one phenomena as a 'thing' and another as lacking substance. The particle/ wave boundary is an arbitrary demarcation decided by our anthropocentric perspective. Our embeddedness in the universe gives us a location that views certain wavelengths as 'things' and others as 'not-things'. Equally we know that our placement of an apple in space and time involves making an anthropocentric, arbitrary demarcation between space and time that could have been made differently.

We can indeed conclude that our knowledge of noumena consists of what we attribute to it on the basis of various phenomena that we experience. Although we can know that an apple exists, its properties, or the form we

perceive it as taking is dependent on the context that we observe it in, and hence the frames that we have available to describe it from. In the absolute sense, it does have properties, just as it does exist, but the existence and the properties we ascribe to it are relative to the context that we observe it in. Each frame introduces distortions due to the reductions involved in the process of observation. Each observation already underlines some aspects by ignoring others.

In relation to the feminist debate, an ecocentric epistemology would find the feminist conception of multiple realities problematic. An ecocentric position would find the concept of many realities troublesome because it would make the reality of our ecosystem dependence merely one of many realities that may not actually affect me, if I do not think or know about it. An ecocentric position would regard it as important to acknowledge that the ecological dependence of humanity affects me quite irrespective of my experience or knowledge of that reality. For there to be multiple realities there must be aspects of one reality that does not occur in another reality, and therefore can not have any impact on that reality. An ecocentric epistemology, with its emphasis on interconnection, would deny that any such aspect of reality exists. This means accepting at least partially the Bohrian view of duality. Dualisms cover the same ground twice, typically projecting idealised male and female (or sacred and profane) identities on the same material reality. This is not to say that dualisms exhaust the possibilities, as Bohr assumes; but rather that what we are aiming to do is re-examine the same grounds from new perspectives, rather than finding new grounds.

Perhaps the feminist concept of multiple realities can best be understood using feminism's own terms, as a reflection of an academic

feminist's own position, the projection of her own self image onto reality.<sup>23</sup> Such a fractured self image surely stems from negotiating multiple identities, or persona, in a situation where two identities are defined by others as incompatible. Successful academic women usually do fracture their identity (Edwards and Ribbens, 1991). My rejection of multiple realities may equally reflect a commitment to a more holistic identity. An ecocentric position can readily acknowledge that reality is experienced differently by different people, and, indeed by the same person at different times; and so can be perceived as different realities. Yet the ecocentric emphasis on interaction would encourage the view that these 'different realities' can also be perceived as interactive parts of a broader reality that includes these 'different realities'. It is the capacity the 'different realities' have to interact that causes a larger single reality beyond the multiple perceived realities to be perceived, and thus a single rather than multiple realities. As Fuller (1995: 518) argues, culturally specific forms of knowledge are not necessarily about autonomous domains of reality. I will use the expression 'preterreality' to refer to a perceived reality, a view or assessment of reality, to distinguish this from the total reality.

In relation to the SSK debate, an ecocentric epistemological position would be alarmed at the SSK focus on the construction of scientific ideas that, for a large part, manages to neglect the interaction with the objects of investigation. Raymond Murphy (1994: 969) makes this point, also noting that the tendency within SSK to fabricate a science without nature reflects the way sociologists typically construct their theories as though nature does not matter. The feminist epistemological position alerts us to the influence of

---

<sup>23</sup> Sabina Loribond (1994) discusses Braidotti's championing of the non-unity of the subject.

socialisation, and this also applies to the socialisation of sociologists as sociologists. I would suspect that those sociologists who have been more heavily influenced by feminist or anti-racist argument are familiar with the way that popular explanations that call on nature (such as women's 'maternal instincts') are used to justify adverse social treatment (such as gendered inequalities). Amongst these sociologists there is a tendency to regard all explanations that call on nature as ideological, whereas their own explanations calling on social phenomena are somehow free of ideology. Those sociologists that are more heavily influenced by the green movement or some form of spirituality, on the other hand, note that explanations calling on social phenomena (such as the need for economic growth) are used to justify adverse treatment of nature (such as the destruction of rain forests). From this perspective it becomes apparent that explanations that invoke social phenomena are equally as liable to ideological exploitation as those that invoke natural phenomena. Applying the symmetry principle, no social explanation can be taken to be unproblematically true, while others are false. If ideology influences the production of false explanations, it also influences the production of true explanations, including this one.<sup>24</sup>

David Cooper (1995) argues that science begins with taxonomy and classification. Theories are about significant classes of categories of things. Thus, for things to be examined, they must constitute a distinctive category for us. The categories we use are more sensitive to our purposes and interests than generally occurs to us. People with different interests may carve up the world differently, and the resultant 'science' may be different to our own. The most a scientific theory can claim is to be true relative to certain

---

<sup>24</sup> This is the reflexivity issue discussed extensively in SSK. See Baber, 1992; Fuller, 1994; Woolgar, 1988; Woolgar & Ashmore, 1988.

purposes and interests. Cooper argues that in spite of this, many classifications reflect purposes and interests any human is bound to have; it is therefore misleading to speak of social constructs. I would argue that these constructs are still social constructs, even if they are not culturally specific. Our knowledge reflects a bias not only informed by ethnocentrism and anthropocentrism, but to privileging the sentient, that we have only become aware of in the attempt to be more scientific.

### **Four Contexts of Knowledge**

The debates about the contexts of knowledge have identified four different contexts of knowledge that may have some affect on the knowledge produced. One context is the social context that the knower comes from that enables the knower to ask particular questions and observe certain features more readily than others. Another context that can affect the knowledge produced is the specific situation that is accessed for information. The third context is the cognitive processing of information. The last context is the context that the knowledge is intended to inform, or have some effect in. These contexts are not necessarily all actually distinct contexts. For example, a rugby player will typically have played the game since childhood. In doing so he is socialised by and for the game. In playing particular games throughout his life he may notice good moves by another team, for example, that he can suggest to his own team. In this case, a rugby game can be the social context the knower comes from as well the situation that is observed and the context that is informed by the knowledge. However, the distinction between the four contexts is still useful even if some of them are the same actual context in particular situations, because they refer to distinct ways that

knowledge can be influenced. For the 1981 tour protesters, on the other hand, a rugby game is much more likely to have been an observational situation only. Women protesters in particular were likely never to have played rugby. The socialisation context that the knower comes from in the case of the tour protesters is likely to have been quite different to that of the tour supporters. Greg Chapple identifies the protesters as predominantly middle class (1984: 76, 125, 226, 320), motivated by moral ideals of equality, and intellectually aware of racism as an international issue (1984: 10, 22, 28, 37, 83). The observational situation, a rugby game against the Springboks, was considered in the light of this context and found by the protesters to be supporting racism. On the other hand, for rugby supporters, particularly in the provinces, a rugby game could well have been the least racist of all environments that they had experienced. If anything, it was one of the few sites available in which racial differences could be overcome. There was nothing irrational in their 'building bridges' argument. For the supporters the actions of the protesters served no useful purpose: the South African regime was hardly going to crumble over a game of rugby. The protesters' aims of disruption could only be interpreted as city stirrers hell bent on destroying the New Zealand way of life, in the same way as the 1951 Watersiders.<sup>25</sup> Equally, the context that the knowledge that the protesters were creating by their actions was not intended primarily for a rugby audience as such, but for national and international political consumption (Chapple, 1984: 22, 102, 170).

The flow between the four contexts of knowledge, where the knower comes from, the circumstances in which they access what is to be known, and

---

<sup>25</sup> The 1951 waterfront dispute is another defining moment in New Zealand's history, leaving a legacy of bitter emotions (See Bassett, 1971).

the situation that they contribute their knowledge to, suggest that producing knowledge is a process. What is needed, then, is an understanding of knowledge as practice, a process in time, rather than as a 'picture', a product that can be isolated and moved from place to place. We have formed male-female, sacred-profane, life-death, day-night dichotomies by taking a picture, an analytic snapshot of a ritual or myth or human interaction frozen in time. If we played the ritual, myth or human interaction out over time, we would understand them as processes, as cycles of life-death-life, summer-winter-summer, day-night-day, in which there is movement (Pinkola Estes, 1992: 135). All days are not the same. Today is not the same as yesterday, however similar it may seem, because we have already achieved what we achieved yesterday, and moved through the night. A commitment to knowledge-as-practice, however, moves beyond the constructivist, postmodern position. Just as the postmodernists and poststructuralists reject the structuralist stasis of system, structure and binary opposition in favour of dynamics, of individual construction of self and society (Hollinger, 1994: 87); knowledge-as-practice rejects the excessive individualism of the times, and stresses the embeddedness of interaction in process.

### **So How Do We Know?**

From an ecocentric perspective, no less than from a feminist perspective, knowing and being are implicated in each other. The epistemological debates that I have discussed all point to the error of focusing on the object of study and neglecting the interactions that decide what we will observe, those that create what we observe and those that create knowledge from what we observe. The interactions that make up the process of knowing

includes whatever is in the observational situation, measuring instruments, our senses, and our mental processes, and anything that may influence these. To a certain extent we can take these influences into account, but in doing so we make somewhat arbitrary distinctions, as all knowing depends on establishing difference. It suits our knowing to make distinctions clear cut. It facilitates our knowing if a number of clear cut distinctions can be made, facilitating the perception of an object that is clearly demarcated from the circumstances that we have come to know it in. This process of objectivation has been critiqued in all four debates examined. Ecocentrism critiques the process of objectivation as it hides from view the embeddedness of the knower and the interactive nature of reality. This interactive nature became apparent in the debate in quantum physics which critiqued the way that classical physics encouraged us to assigning properties to things on the basis of what was observed in the observational context without recognising the interactions involved in that situation. Feminist epistemology adds that the properties we ascribe also reflect our socialisation: we project aspects of our self onto the thing. SSK concurs: the 'thing' is socially negotiated, just as the self is. What counts as important in the process of simplification necessary to form an idea about an object is socially negotiated. I argue that there are cognitive limitations over and above the social limitations on knowledge. As Bateson (1972, 1977) argues, we cannot process information unless it is in the form of difference. We can only access reality by recognising some differences in that reality. All our ideas are built up from pieces of information that inform us about a difference. Boundaries that are used to demarcate the 'thing' are indicators of difference. These boundaries are always more or less arbitrary, but such boundaries are cognitively necessary. We cannot think without making distinctions. Thus we need to remember that our assessments of reality are more arbitrary than the reality

our assessment refers to. I refer to our assessments as a preterreality, but a preterreality also becomes part of reality whenever that knowledge is communicated or acted on.

All four debates point to the relativity of knowledge. The conclusion drawn by all four debates is reality can only be known relative to some pre-existing context, and that 'truth' or 'validity' rests on intersubjective understandings.

The most contentious issue that is resolved differently between the four debates is the question of what is meant by 'reality'. All four debates acknowledge interaction in the production of knowledge. Quantum physics emphasises the interaction between what is known and the measuring instrument used in the process of knowing. Feminist epistemology stresses the interaction between the knower and the known. SSK draws our attention to the way that interaction between knowers defines what is known. Ecocentrism puts all these together in the constitution of both knower and known by the interactions involved. Given the interaction involved in knowing, it becomes difficult to distinguish the reality that is known from the knowing of it. This is probably why the debates leave unresolved such questions as single or multiple realities; or whether reality only exists in our minds rather than 'out there'. An appropriate epistemology could jump any which way on these questions. The position that I take is that it is most useful to think of a singular reality, but we do need to acknowledge that there are multiple ways of knowing reality, as knowledge is relative to the context that it is known in. Rather than referring to multiple realities I would prefer to differentiate between reality as it exists 'out there' and our 'pictures' of reality, which is a preterreal assessment of that reality. That assessment in

turn becomes part of reality, but is not located in the same way as the reality that was assessed. Reality is only known through preterreal assessments. The preterreal assessments are evaluations based on indicators of difference.

The four debates have examined the way that knowledge is influenced by context. We can examine the way that various contexts shape knowledge by considering the difference between the noumena we wish to know and the phenomena we observe. The phenomena results from the interaction between the noumena and the measuring instruments that are part of the observational situation. We can also consider the difference between the real phenomenal situation and our preterreal assessments of it. Our preterrealities result from the way information is biologically and socially processed and transmitted. This indicates that the relative importance of aspects of reality depends on what is appropriate to the context of interest. This is clearly different to the realist idea that what is important is the underlying mechanism or 'structure' of reality, as distinct from the appearance. It is also different to the constructivist idea that what is important is the social location of the knowledge, rather than any relationship between the knowledge and the reality that it refers to. What may happen, then, when charges like 'oversimplification' are raised, is that a realist who notes that the view is inappropriate for a situation that they are interested in, understands this to mean that the underlying mechanism or 'structure' has not been adequately illuminated. Equally the constructivist in a similar situation will find that the social location of the knower has not been adequately accounted for, that there is a lack of reflexivity in the account given. This is not to say that arguments from these positions fail to uncover limitations of the view in question. They may well do so. However, such arguments may also serve to entrench the preferred epistemological position without necessarily adding

much to our knowledge. In the next chapter I examine the inadequacies of these popular epistemological positions, realism and constructivism, in more detail; with the aim of providing a more adequate account of the influences of the contexts of knowing.

## Chapter 3

# **Realism, Constructivism, and the Influence of Contexts of Knowledge on the Preterreality Formed**

In the last chapter I argued that differences in understanding between people derive from the influence of various contexts of knowledge on the perspective that people form. The relevant contexts that shape all knowledge are the social contexts that the knower has been socialised in, the different contexts that are examined for information, the biological context of our sensual and cognitive ability to process information, and different orientations that result from having to derive an understanding to fit the purposes of whatever context that the knowledge is intended to be used in. My argument is that when people have different understandings, the differences can be traced to different experiences of one or more of these contexts. One consequence of this is that when social movements introduce understandings forged within the movement to people outside the movement, they may find that their understanding does not make much sense to people outside the movement. The people outside the movement have not had congruent social experience that would enable them to confirm the social movement understanding. Indeed, they may well have had other experiences that enable them to reject the social movement understanding and prefer an alternative explanation. The social movement activity thus reinforces the importance of those experiences, and the understanding derived from them for those people.

The epistemological debates in the previous chapter have shown that when there are competing views it is not always the case that one is right and the other wrong. Neither is it the case that we can always arrive at one view that explains all that the other view(s) can and more besides (Holmwood, 1995: 424). In the quantum physics debate physicists such as Einstein argued that the particle model would replace the wave model; but for almost a century the situation has been that there is, as yet, no single unifying theory. On the other hand, it is not the case that all views will necessarily continue to be divergent and complementary either. In the feminist debate theorists such as Irigaray perceive the situation to be that there are irreconcilable disparities between feminist and malestream knowledge. However the actual situation seems to be that feminist insights have steadily eroded and replaced an andocentric perspective. Certainly it is by no means clear that there is any aspect of malestream science that feminist theory cannot incorporate or replace. Malestream science could well be redundant (McLennan, 1995b: 393).

The lack of settlement on such issues provides the epistemological background against which SSK theorists can argue with credibility about the social negotiation that impacts on all science. The social influence on scientific arguments has come to displace an examination of the cognitive and phenomenal reasons for areas of doubt in SSK discourse about science, and in postmodern thought more generally. Against this, ecocentric theorists have pointed to the harm done by considering the social in isolation from its biological and physical embeddedness in the ecosystem and in our bodily functioning, which includes our cognition of phenomena. A more adequate epistemology, then, raises our awareness of the influence of the contexts that situate both the knower and the known; and the limitations that

are thereby placed on our knowing. At times such limitations may be critical; and then it is important to have more than one perspective available, as the perspective most appropriate will vary depending on our interests.

The most popular epistemological alternatives at the moment are realism and constructivism. I argue that both of these epistemologies are problematic because the distinction between reality and the information that we have about reality tends to be collapsed in one direction or the other. I argue for an epistemology that maintains the distinction between real and preterreal,<sup>1</sup> as well as between noumena<sup>2</sup> and phenomena.

## **Preterreality**

I have distinguished the real from the preterreal because the debates in the previous chapter have shown that it is important to distinguish reality as it is perceived (our idea of what it is) from the reality that is the phenomena being perceived (the situation that we observe). The phenomena being perceived may also need to be distinguished from the noumena we wish to know about beyond the observational situation. Taking an electron as an example, the electron as we meet it in an experiment is usually either a wave or a particle, depending on the experiment. We don't actually meet the electron as such, the noumena, in the experiment. What we meet is a situation in which the electrons exhibit either wave-like or particle-like behaviour. This is the phenomenal situation that we access. We meet the

---

<sup>1</sup> I introduced the concept of preterreality in the last chapter to refer to a perceived reality, a view of reality, an assessment of reality, to be able to distinguish reality as it exists 'out there' from our perceptions of that reality. Preterreality is part of the total reality.

<sup>2</sup> See footnote 6 of Chapter 2 for a discussion of the terms 'phenomena' and 'noumena'.

electrons as phenomena, embedded in a context; not as noumena. However, what we want from that meeting is an idea of what the electrons are like as noumena. Our preterreal understanding of electrons is that they are neither waves nor particles, but can display the behavioural characteristics of both waves and particles in appropriate situations. Although we can be reasonably confident this preterreal understanding better represents the noumena of the electron than a particle or wave representation would, we still cannot say that we have grasped the electron, we know the noumena of the electron. However, it is the knowledge of the noumena that we are aiming at, and not merely to describe the phenomena that are apparent to us through observations.

The relationship between the real and the preterreal is like the relationship between past and present. We can think of the preterreal as being largely influenced by the real phenomena being perceived, in the same way that the present that we live in can be thought of as being influenced by what has happened in the past. We can only be informed about phenomena through our preterreal constructions of it, in the same way that we can only access the past through the traces that remain in the present. Yet, just as events in the past happened whether or not any trace remains in the present; so too the phenomena that we observe exists independently of any construction that we make of it. I should emphasise that the distinction between real and preterreal should not be conflated with the distinction between material and ideal. The phenomena that we study can be ideal as well as material, such as when we study attitudes or preferences that people express; and the preterreal can be material as well as ideal, as in the case of genetic information encoded in chromosomes. I mean to include a wide

range of information in the preterreal, such as instincts and emotions as well as reasoned thoughts.

The concept of the preterreal thus corresponds roughly with Henry Plotkin's (1994) concept of 'knowledge'. Plotkin argues that biological adaptations to an environment are biological knowledge of the environment. Thus, the cactus 'knows' that water is scarce and must be conserved in its stem; and the hummingbird 'knows' that flowers have nectar available that can be accessed with a slender beak (1994: 228). Plotkin thus views knowing as some sort of assimilating, incorporating or adaptive informing and conforming of knower and known, enabling a fit between internal and external structure (Allen, 1997: 234-5). My understanding of preterreality is similar, in that preterreality emerges with biological organisms, and informs their actions. I would not however, identify preterreality with the broader biological process of adaptation that considers what is happening to a population of individual organisms in an environment. Preterreality rather refers to internal(ised) influences on the agency of an individual.

I am using knowledge in a much narrower sense of the aspects of preterreality that inform action when a choice is taken. Thus DNA codes and instinct certainly inform the action of an individual, but are not knowledge, as the individual does not make a decision about what action to take. Intuition, emotion, ideas and reasoning all can be a part of knowledge as they can inform decisions. This concept of knowledge is broader than the philosopher's conception of knowledge as justified true belief (Allen, 1997: 238), as I am recognising as knowledge aspects of knowing that cannot be formally assessed as true or false. Practical knowledge, for example, can be judged as appropriate or successful relative to the situation, but not as true

(Dalmiya and Alcoff, 1993). For example, a midwife may know that now you should squat, or now you should get on you hands and knees, but may not be able to articulate exactly why one position was more appropriate for you than another. There are doubtless factors, like how fast the baby is coming and how comfortable the mother is, that will be taken into account; but these are precisely the sort of factors that can not be reliably reduced to a mathematical formula that could be used by any midwife anywhere. The midwife's assessment of the mother is socially situated, and requires an assessment of the mother's emotional condition as well as what we may be inclined to think of as her 'medical' condition. In situations where the midwife already knows the mother, the midwife is already well positioned to interact with the mother socially and emotionally, rather than strictly 'medically'. If the midwife's learning has been in and for a local situation, the midwife can develop and use social and emotional resources, and is not as heavily dependent on a logical analysis of 'symptoms' as in the Western medical tradition. As Barbalet (1996: 87, 89) argues, emotion evaluates external or environmental events and processes through bodily and non-deliberative reactions to them. This is a successful strategy insofar as the emotional commitment of an actor to an outcome tends to generate the outcome that is commensurate with the emotion. In short, I recognise knowledge as both immanent and transcendent.

## **Realism and Constructivism**

The realist position tends to err to the side of treating the preterreal as real, by tending to treat an understanding as corresponding accurately to reality when the account is limited and partial. The constructivist position,

on the other hand, tends to err to the side of treating the real as an effect of the preterreal. Both positions fail to take into account the complexity of interrelationships that constitute both the real and preterreal.

The realist project is to uncover the '(real) underlying and often unobservable mechanisms that connect phenomena causally' (Abercrombie et al, 1984: 203). Describing these mechanisms means describing the 'nature' or 'essence' or 'inner constitution' of various 'entities' (Keat et al, 1982: 30). Recent work in the realist tradition often derives from the work of Roy Bhaskar (1975).<sup>3</sup> This approach is based on the ontological claim that there are levels of reality: reality as it exists 'out there' has ontological 'depth' and we do not have easy access to the underlying levels. At the underlying level there is 'structure' that influences the behaviour we observe, but the underlying structure is also maintained or changed by what happens in the more accessible levels of reality (Craib, 1984: 22).

The classical constructivist position highlights how a person's understanding and interpretation of an activity is constitutive of the activity itself (Manning, 1994). Anne Rawls (1996: 475) explains social constructivism as arguing that:

'Social consensus, structure or shared practices...lead persons to believe certain things or think in certain ways. Because persons share the same beliefs, they act in ways that reinforce those beliefs. The resulting consensus creates the appearance of a valid relation between thought and reality where there can in fact be none. This

---

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, Norris, 1995; Wainwright, 1994.

makes scientific practice and everyday understanding possible within certain limits but rules out the possibility of empirical validity.'

The denial that reality exists at all except as mental constructs is also a constructivist position, but this position is not popular among sociologists. There is, however, a good deal of ambiguity in constructivist argument, so it is not always altogether clear exactly what is being argued. As Nola (1994: 697) comments, there is a widespread slippage between constructing a view of nature, and constructing nature in constructivist writing. This results from applying what is a reasonable position to take with regard to social reality - that social institutions exist to a considerable extent because we take them for granted and so act in ways that maintain them - to all of reality. It is not, however, anything like as reasonable to argue that the sun and moon exist because we act in ways that maintain them.

The constructivist and realist positions both do acknowledge to varying extents that different contexts of knowledge can affect on the knowledge produced. Yet neither position analyses the contexts of knowledge with an aim of improving the knowledge derived. For realists, the influence of the contexts of knowledge tends to be underrated, and difficulties with the adequacy of knowledge are assumed to be caused by an inadequate theorisation. For constructivists, the social contexts of knowledge are stressed, exposing some of the limitations of the process of knowing. This is rarely turned back upon the knowledge product itself to suggest what a more accurate or more effective understanding would be.

## **The Context(s) of Socialisation**

One context that influences knowledge that is well accepted in the social sciences, at least, is the social context that the knower comes from that enables the knower to ask particular questions and observe certain features more readily than others. For the 1981 Springbok rugby tour supporters the contexts of socialisation that influenced their knowledge were likely to have been local contexts, particularly contexts of playing and watching rugby, participation in rugby clubs and support groups, as well as their more general social experience in local communities. These contexts positioned the supporters to experience and therefore know of rugby as a way of uniting 'men over and against all of the differences of background, occupation, education, income, experience and belief that otherwise divide them' (Fougere, 1989: 116). For some tour protesters rugby was not a context of socialisation. For others rugby was one context of socialisation among many; and did not serve to integrate the various social contexts, as it did for tour supporters. Tour protesters were involved in social contexts that exposed them to different values than those of rugby, such as contexts where women were increasingly participating on their own account, rather than in support of men.

Many people are aware of the affect that their upbringing has on their understanding of the world. We are also aware of how we have rejected some of the ideas we were brought up with, but do not always consider this as an aspect of socialisation. Those who have had some sort of conversion or epiphany experience may perceive the change in perspective as casting off the ignorance of the past and embracing 'the truth', rather than

understanding both perspectives as being more appropriate to different circumstances. Certainly, most social scientists have become increasingly aware of the influence of their socialisation in the wake of feminist critiques of mainstream social science. This is true whether they consider themselves to be a realist or a constructivist. Living a social life both within and beyond the academy may sensitise us as individuals to some aspects of social life, but will also mean that we are likely to take other aspects of our situation for granted. We are not always aware of how our socialisation may be affecting the ideas we produce and reproduce. In the natural sciences many scientists remain convinced that their initiation into science has converted them from the ignorance of everyday life, into 'the truth'. They do not consider 'every day life' and 'science' as two contexts in which they have been socialised; but rather argue that the methods of science are enough to guarantee the neutrality and objectivity of science, so that the established results are 'the truth' (see Atkins, 1995; for example). To understand the impact of contexts of socialisation, then, it may be useful to explore how such contexts intersect.

Take the case of baby Chris who is a hermaphrodite. In a biological context, Chris is both male and female, having both sets of sexual organs. Within the context of my own Pakeha culture, Chris is an anomaly, being neither male nor female. The anomaly will be resolved when the parents of Chris to decide whether Chris will be male or female, and the doctors alter Chris' body accordingly. The truth of the proposition 'Chris is male', thus varies between the two contexts. Relative to the scientific context the proposition is true. It would be considered true in this frame even if Chris' parents decide that Chris will become female, as no biological change has taken place. Chris is still biologically male. In the scientific frame the

proposition has been declared true because it is true that Chris is male, as well as being true that Chris is female. In deciding that Chris is truly male, we have simply ignored the fact that Chris is also truly female, which is irrelevant to the proposition at hand. In the Pakeha frame, the proposition is neither true nor false, even though it will in due course become either true or false, depending on the parent's decision. If the proposition was changed to 'Chris is male, and not female' the truth status of the proposition does not change in the Pakeha frame, it is still neither true nor false at the moment. However, in the scientific frame, the proposition is now false, and not true. It is not true because it is not true that Chris is not female, even though it is true that Chris is male. Thus, we have used the principle of bivalence, that a statement can only be true or false, to define a statement that is both true and false to be false. The effect of closing down the 'both true and false' option, and so excluding statements that are only partially true from scientifically authorised knowledge, is that we are left with fewer 'truths'. What is not 'true' is excluded from scientific knowledge. The bivalence strategy thus tends to reduce our knowledge of reality.

What has happened here is that merely by adding 'and not female', the truth status of 'Chris is male' in the scientific context changes entirely from true to false. What happens when the addition of 'and not female' is written into the definition of what is meant by 'Chris is male', as an unspoken assumption derived from cultural prejudice? The true statement, 'Chris is male' is thereby rendered false. We have excluded the truth of Chris' maleness on the basis of our assumption or cultural definition in conjunction with the bivalence strategy. This suggests that the bivalence strategy reduces knowledge in a systematic way, distorting that knowledge

as a result of the influence of everyday assumptions that are not adequately articulated.

Constructivists reject the realist principles of bivalence and mind-independence (Nola, 1994: 703) . The principle of bivalence is that every proposition is either true or false; and the principle of mind-independence is that it is the mind-independent world which determines which disjunct is true. I would suggest that we should reject the bivalence principle, but we shouldn't be in such a hurry to reject the mind-independent principle. Rather we should be more concerned that the framework for judgement is made explicit.

The truth status of propositions, whether they are true, false, both true and false, or neither true nor false, can be considered relative to a particular framework, and this consideration would be mind-independent. A discrepancy between the truth status of a proposition assigned by two individuals need not indicate error, it can indicate a discrepancy between the framework used. The framework is being understood here as being like the different frameworks used to measure speed in physics.<sup>4</sup> That the truth status of a proposition can vary depending on the frame is accepted in the natural sciences. What has not been so well accepted is that all science, indeed all propositional knowledge, is relative to a frame. What is not at all accepted is that the truth status can have a value other than true or false, and this is what I argue needs to be reconsidered.

---

<sup>4</sup> For example, if I am travelling in a car at 100kph, then the speed I am travelling at relative to the road is 100kph, but relative to the car is 0kph. My speeds would be different again relative to the sun or the moon, and in these cases it will also be affected by the direction the car is travelling (relative to the rotation of the earth).

The difficulty that the bivalence principle presents for science can be seen in the quantum physics debate over whether electrons were best described as particles or as waves. In some situations electrons appear to act like particles, and in others like waves. What was misplaced was the idea that the noumena, whatever it is that we refer to by the label 'electrons', had to be either particles or waves. What we had was evidence that the phenomena observed in an experimental situation involving electrons showed the characteristics of particles or of waves. The conclusion reached in the debate was that the noumena that physicists were studying can be considered both as particles and as waves. We can consider massive objects, such as the planets, as waves; and the seemingly ephemeral phenomena, such as light, as particles. The problem, at root, was the 'either/or' understanding that did not allow 'both' as an option, because it seemed absurd that the object of study could be both a 'thing' and a 'not-thing'. This was only resolved when it was realised that although some results suggested thing-like properties and other results suggested not-thing-like properties, this may have something to do with the experimental situation that made the results appear to support the conflicting interpretations.

Sokal quotes Heisenberg (1958:28 in Sokal 1996:219) as arguing that we can no longer speak of the behaviour of the particle independently of the process of observation. This points to the problem of observational context discussed below, that the same noumena can appear to be different depending on the observational context that we assess it in. Sokal goes on to quote Heisenberg as saying: 'nor is it possible to ask whether or not these particles exist in space and time objectively'. This alerts us to the false boundaries we foisted on reality by being socialised, anthropocentric

observers. As observers we are predisposed to assume an either/or reduction across an anthropocentric boundary, such as object (particle) or not-object (wave), or time and space, when no such boundary exists in physical reality. These physically preterreal distinctions are, nevertheless biologically and socially real, even though they are not physically real. We have indeed foisted biological and social constructs onto physical reality in our attempt to understand reality.

However, this does not mean that all of physical reality is a social construct. As Raymond Murphy (1994: 958-60) points out, sociologists writing from a constructivist perspective often seem to implicitly deny that reality does exist independently of social constructions of it. Alan Sokal (1996: 217), for example, argues that: 'It has thus become increasingly apparent that physical 'reality', no less than social 'reality' is at bottom a social and linguistic construct'. Care needs to be taken here not to confuse epistemology with ontology. What is becoming 'increasingly apparent' is that what we know of physical and social realities is indeed constructed anthropocentrically, and hence is linguistically and socially as well as biologically constructed. It is another matter altogether to argue that reality itself is a linguistic and social construct, although linguistic and social constructs are, of course, an important part of social reality. Many constructivists collapse the distinction between knowing and being on to knowing, as a reaction against the realist tendency to collapse the distinction on to being.

We can only overcome the limitations imposed by our own locatedness by making comparisons across different situations that allow anomalies to be exposed. This is indeed what happened in the quantum

physics debate, and scientists are quite correct to argue that science can overcome our anthropocentric positioning through such comparisons. Yet it is by no means evident that similar contentious issues will always conveniently emerge to challenge our locatedness. If this was merely a problem of ethnocentrism it would not necessarily be too problematic, as we can get outside our own culture if we are willing. What is more problematic is the question of biases introduced by anthropocentrism, including the problem of biological limitations to our mental processes, to which there may be no easy solution.

### **The Cognitive Context**

The affect that the cognitive processing of information has on the knowledge formed seems to be considerably less acknowledged than the effect of contexts of socialisation. In discussing the difference between tour supporters and tour protesters, Geoff Chapple (1984: 19) does explain the 'instinctive racism' of tour supporters by reference to the triune brain; and yet does not explain how it is that tour protesters, who also have a triune brain, have managed to overcome 'instinctive racism'. The cognitive context cannot explain differences in understanding between people as we are all affected in the same way; but as our cognitive processes do shape our knowledge, it can make differences that already focus our attention in different ways even more divergent than they would otherwise be.

Social constructivism entirely ignores the cognitive dimension of knowledge. Influences on knowledge are considered to arise from the social positioning of the knower (Gross & Levitt, 1995: 127; Nola, 1994: 694).

There does seem to be a widespread misunderstanding, even among social realists, that views the construction of knowledge as a purely social attribute, rather than a biological attribute (e.g. Wainwright, 1994: 107) when it should be quite clear that all multicellular organisms need to co-ordinate bodily activity, and so process information. All multicellular organisms thus have some form of knowledge that informs action.

Although I have argued above that knowledge is shaped by the social context that knowers are socialised in, knowledge is not only shaped by the social. Another influence on knowledge is the way information is processed biologically. Knowledge has the potential to be elaborated socially, but it can not be called into existence independently of its biological constitution. We do have measuring instruments that can help to overcome the limitations of our senses, but these still focus our knowledge in particular ways. The most basic biological influence on our knowledge is the consequences of information being brought to the mind in the form of difference. This will always shape our knowledge, because we can not mentally grasp a phenomenon as it exists.

Gregory Bateson (1972, 1977) has shown that difference is needed to process information, whether we are considering sensory receptors, nerve impulses, DNA-RNA codes, lectures or laws.<sup>5</sup> For example, although temperature is a continuous variable, we feel either hot, cold, or comfortable. We also describe today's temperature as, say, 25 degrees. What we are assessing, the temperature, is not neatly divided into degrees or comfort zones; but we make distinctions between different temperatures,

---

<sup>5</sup> Niklas Luhmann (1997: 52) regards differentiation as 'the original sin', whereas Bateson regards it as a necessity for all biological life, as all organisms use information.

both biologically and culturally, to suit our needs. An ambient temperature that you may experience as cold, may be quite comfortable for me. Even within the same species, then, the biological assessment of temperature is relative. This is even more obviously the case with cultural assessment. To say 'the temperature is 25 degrees' is completely meaningless unless the person already understands which temperature scale you are using - Celsius, Fahrenheit, or Kelvin - and already has some framework for understanding the significance of the temperature evaluation. Biologically, our body has preterreal understanding of temperature that is differentiated into what is comfortable or not, whereas the physical reality is continuous, and not differentiated. Culturally, we have created an understanding of temperature that is even more differentiated than our biological understanding. The preterreal assessment of temperature as cold/comfortable/ hot in turn becomes part of biological reality, that is linked to bodily mechanisms that regulate the temperature of the body. Equally the preterreal assessment of 25 degrees becomes part of cultural reality, that is linked through the weather forecast to decisions we make like what to wear today, or what leisure activities to pursue.<sup>6</sup>

Similarly, from real biological difference, such as the difference between the male and female of a species, preterreal social differences are created that become more differentiated than the biological reality that they are linked to. How many sociological questionnaires give the options of male, female and hermaphrodite for a question on sex, for example? We

---

<sup>6</sup> I am not denying that temperature is real, or arguing that our indices of temperature are not based on real factors. Indeed water does boil at 100 degrees Celsius. The reality is that the energy transfer is enough to change the water into steam. Yet to give this temperature an assignment of 100 degrees Celsius is an arbitrary choice which could have been made differently, and indeed is on other scales. This assignment only becomes real when someone knows what it means. It is socially real, but physically preterreal.

live in a society where parents of a baby who is born hermaphrodite must choose which sex their child will be. The baby's body is then mutilated, and hormones are fed to it, so that society's demand that we are all either male or female is satisfied. Even as adolescents or adults, if we are not comfortable with the tasks allocated to us on the basis of certain biological characteristics, we are encouraged to think that we must prefer the other set of tasks, so that we willingly mutilate our bodies and eat hormones so that our body conforms to the preferred social role. As Julia Epstein has noted, the technology for removing sexual ambiguities permits a legal fiction of absolute binary gender (Willmott, 1996). It is easier to change the biological reality, the 'wrong' body, than to change social reality, the inflexible location of tasks across a medically policed boundary.<sup>7</sup> This example shows that the social boundary between male and female is less flexible than the bodily distinction that marks it. The social demarcation between male and female is a social reality that is based on a preterreal evaluation of biological difference; it makes the boundary more distinct and thus is more arbitrary than the biological reality actually is.

The sociological demarcation between male and female, in turn, makes a preterreal evaluation that tends to be even more arbitrary than the social difference that does exist. As Margrit Eichler (1998: 13) notes, the use of sexual dichotomies within sociology ignores the overlap between

---

<sup>7</sup> Willmott (1996) argues that the body is ontologically distinct from, and irreducible to its socio-cultural entanglement. I would argue that a body that has been fed hormones and surgically altered clearly bears the marks of its socio-cultural entanglement. Even from a genetic perspective, once the social emerges, this becomes the environment that defines what biological characteristics will be successful. The body is not ontologically distinct from its socio-cultural entanglement (more on this below), although it is certainly not reducible to it. A characteristic has to be there before it can be selected.

males and females, producing gender stereotypes cloaked in scientific respectability.

Within sociology we take real social differences, such as class differences, and attempt to create preterreal classes. Theory aims to locate boundaries, instituting them by definitional fiat, and reinforcing them in scholarly work; with competing schools promoting competing boundaries. We become faithful disciples of one school or another, for whom the distinction between bourgeois and proletariat; or manager and worker, is more meaningful than the rather more messy reality. Alternatively, if we are unable to settle on an arbitrary boundary in our mind, we conclude that there is no reality that corresponds to the concept 'class'. We are unable to create a preterreal social object to enter our mental reality, so class differences hold no meaningful significance for us. The more consensual the preterreal object, or the more intersubjectively co-ordinated (Jarvie in Gabo, 1995: 460), the more likely it is to sustain meaning for the individual.

Physical, biological, and social features in reality can be differentiated because they are informed by differing forms of knowledge. The major distinction we can make between the boundedness of physical, biological and social aspects of reality is that the imputed boundaries tend to become more distinct, more sharply demarcated as we move from physical to biological to social realities.<sup>8</sup> Boundaries may exist in the reality that the

---

<sup>8</sup> As I will argue below, some preterrealities are less well grounded in reality than others; but this may not be easily proved. For example, it would now be very difficult for anyone to argue with credibility for a flat earth. However not all scientific controversies are as readily resolved by empirical evidence. If we test two preterrealities, and one correlates well with reality on all tests and another does not; this may merely mean that we haven't tried some tests where the successful one does fail but the 'unsuccessful' one passes. Such a case existed with quantum physics early in the century, where the particle model for light looked like being 'the answer', but the wave model continued to be found to be more

preterreal refers to, but they tend to be less clear cut than they are in the preterreal formulation.

The constructivist position ignores the cognitive context of knowledge, and so attributes the preterreal demarcations that we make to the social position of the knower rather than the cognitive processing of the knower. As a consequence, a constructivist views the social as being more strongly demarcated than it actually is, as the social position of the knower must be made to bear the weight of cognitive demarcation. This may be another factor in the constructivist enthusiasm for the idea of multiple selves discussed in the previous chapter: they see themselves as being more socially demarcated than they actually are, because they assume that the results of the cognitive need to demarcate are a consequence of their social positioning.

The tendency of the realist position, on the other hand, is to attribute the preterreal distinctions - the overly arbitrary preterreal boundaries, the necessarily simplified preterreal evaluations - to the reality that the preterreal is trying to make sense of (Bateson, 1972: 456). Robert Willmott (1996: 729) does this when he proposes 'the analytical indispensability of the ontological sex/gender distinction'. Willmott claims that we are 'dealing with two *levels*', which 'is fundamentally to make an *ontological* claim; namely that reality is quintessentially stratified'. As Willmott argues, this understanding does sit well with an evolutionary perspective, as few people would now disagree with the idea that the social is emergent from the biological. However, it is possible to accept, in evolutionary terms, that the

social does emerge from the biological, without agreeing that the social thus forms a separate strata of reality to the biological. I think that it is more useful to understand gendered difference as the use of information about biological realities to make social decisions. Thus gendered differences are biologically preterreal but socially real; whereas sexual differences are both biologically and socially real.

It is not the fact that the social emerges from the biological in evolutionary terms that makes it tempting to postulate a separate 'layer' of reality for the social. After all, there are many critical breakthroughs in evolution that we do not treat as signifying a new layer of reality. Examples would be the emergence of chemical compounds, or the emergence of aerobic life. What generates the distinctive layer-like difference between the social and the biological is that a different form of knowing, which includes knowing about the biological emerges with the social. When the temperature is a bit cold for me, so that I begin to shiver, and look for warmth, such as a jacket, this is my response to biological information. When the weather forecast is grim so I think that I'd better take a jacket to work, just in case it does turn cold, then this is social information that includes knowing about the biological. These different types of information are part of reality, but this does not mean that reality as a whole is consequently stratified. We could alternatively suggest that reality is formed in interactions that includes different sorts of information. 'Layers' or 'levels' thus relate to forms of knowing, and not to forms of being.<sup>9</sup> The social provides an 'external' assessment of reality, which gives the impression of adding a layer to reality. Yet we cannot conclude that reality

---

<sup>9</sup> Gregory Bateson (1977) argues that 'levels' emerge when end organs receive news of difference, which creates the possibility of differences between differences.

as a whole is layered because knowledge is layered, and knowledge is part of reality. We can only conclude that that part of reality is layered in this way.

The difference between biological and social knowing is not simply that the social can refer to the biological, however. They are distinctive types of knowing. I can best illustrate this by drawing an analogy with the double slit experiment in quantum physics. The double slit experiment was unusual in that it does show electrons to be both 'particles' and 'waves' in the same experiment. When electrons go through the slits, they each hit the surface that they are being projected onto beyond the slit at a single point, and are thus particle-like. However, the pattern of points formed is an interference pattern, thus the electrons also behaved in a wave-like fashion. There are different levels of abstraction involved here. The wave-like appearance involves information about the particle-like appearance, which itself involves information about the individualised electrons. This is similar to the difference between biological and social information, in that the social can include biological information. However, just as particle-like and wave-like behaviour is distinctive, so too social and biological knowledge is distinctive. Social knowing is different to biological knowing not only because the social can refer to the biological, but because it involves a different process, where what is important in generating and establishing the knowledge changes.

When we make an element that does not otherwise exist on this planet, such as Lawrencium, we have used social information to form a material entity. Lawrencium is undeniably a social product, as it does not occur 'out there' unless we make it. It can be considered both as a social

entity, and as a physical entity. We can decide to place it unambiguously in either the social or the physical 'strata' of reality, but only by definitional fiat. If we are a chemist we will tend to consider it as an element, and thus as a material entity belonging to the physical 'strata'. If we are a sociologist, we will tend to consider Lawerencium as a social product, that only came into existence through human endeavour, and so as belonging to the social realm in precisely the same way that the high rise buildings of New York or the kava drink of the South Pacific are social. We would be hard pressed to find many entities that unambiguously belong to a single 'strata'. This implies that the entities or phenomena must themselves be stratified, if the claim that reality is stratified is to be upheld. Thus you are made up of a social layer, sitting on top of a biological layer, which in turn sits on top of a physical layer; and these layers actually exist within you, this is an ontological claim, according to Willmott. I would suggest that this representation of reality lacks credibility. A claim that the social and biological are relatively autonomous would be easier to defend, but that does admit that the biological can influence the social, and vice versa.

The problem is that Willmott repeatedly insists that the claim that the biological and the social form separate layers is ontological; and yet he also repeatedly insists that these layers interact. These assertions are contradictory. 'Separate' means no overlap, no point of contact; yet without contact there can be no interaction. Interaction not only implies contact, but some sort of invasion, some sort of mutual impact. Perhaps what Willmott has in mind is something analogous to two people discussing an issue, but both remain separate people. In this situation the illusion of separateness is maintained because of the physical separation of the two minds in two bodies. The two people are sharing thoughts which enter each others'

minds. An idea that one person expressed may be remembered later by the other, but that person may not remember where that idea came from and so comes to think of it as 'my idea'. We are not only what we eat, but also the ideas we think. We tend to assume that our bodies and minds are distinct; and at any point in time they largely are, but over time they are not. Even our bones are completely replaced within a decade. We are made up of various comings and goings: digestion, excretion, reading and writing among them. 'Interaction' is another name for these comings and goings; they are the very points at which 'not me' becomes 'me', and 'me' becomes 'not me'. Interactions are the very points at which 'me' is not distinct. The biological and social are not physically distinct in the way that two minds in two bodies are. For example, if I am pregnant or suffering from PMT, there are both biological and social reasons for my condition; and both biological and social consequences. I think it would be more reasonable to argue that the biological and social are distinctive because they involve different sorts of regularities in reality that are maintained by different sorts of information.

The preterreal is not only created from evidence of the real, but the preterreal itself becomes part of reality. A preterreality becomes implicated in subsequent interactions of the knower, so that what is acted on is in turn influenced by the preterreal. We act on the basis of preterreal understandings, the preterreal typically becomes more meaningful to us than the real. In so acting, we act to create reality in the image of the preterreal. Yet this does not mean that we create social products that are ontologically separate from the biological or physical entities that constitute them. This we can not do. The social products that I have referred to - Lawrencium, the high rise buildings of New York, and the kava drink of the Pacific - are all physical entities. There are no purely social entities, nor any purely

biological entities for that matter. What we are more likely to think of as social entities - such as a parliament, a multinational corporation, a soccer club, an internet chat group- are constituted by people and non-human resources, and would not exist without them. Indeed, whether or not these 'social entities' do exist as entities in reality is debatable. A social realist is likely to argue that they do, and a social constructivist that they don't. Even if we concede that some aspects of the social may exist in reality in some sort of entity-like form, it remains incoherent to argue that this existence forms an ontologically distinct 'strata' of reality from the biological and material realities that constitute it; or alternatively that the entity-like form itself is ontologically stratified into distinct social, biological and physical layers.

Talk of 'strata' draws a conceptual boundary around our classifications to make regularities that we label 'social' distinct from those that we label 'biological'. I agree with Willmott that that distinction is an important one to make for analytic purposes. It is valuable to distinguish between 'sex' and 'gender', not only because we can arrive at a better understanding of reality if we do so, but also because they do refer to different sorts of regularities that we find in reality. It is not valid, however, to project this intellectual distinction onto reality, and to argue that sex and gender refer to different 'layers' of reality, rather than different sorts of regularities that can be perceived in reality.

Gavin Kitching (1994) has made a similar argument in discussing 'formal equality', (that is, political or legal equality), which is thought by Marxists to be an 'appearance', whereas the reality is that people are substantively or materially unequal class subjects. Kitching observes that

this argument parallels the idea that tables and chairs appear solid, but physicists have shown that they contain much more 'space' than 'substance'. Against this Kitching argues that the reality is that people are equal as citizens and voters, but not equal in terms of income or access to resources. Material inequality does have pernicious effects on formal equality, and we are socialised to view formal equality as a social virtue, but material inequality as natural and inevitable. Yet the formal equality is a reality not an appearance, and Marxists have no 'scientific' insight that parallels the physicists knowledge from which to judge one aspect as more real than others. I agree with Kitching's analysis.<sup>10</sup> Some aspects of reality are more obvious to us than others, but that does not mean that the universe contrives to hide some of them in a 'deeper layer' of reality, as suggested by Bhaskarian realism. Rather we need a better appreciation of the cognitive limitations of our own biological embeddedness that make some aspects of reality easier for us to grasp than others, and tends to distort the view of reality that we achieve. We need to maintain a strong distinction between reality and a knowledge of reality. That is, we need to acknowledge the limitations of our own sensory perceptions, cognitive processing, and the limitations of our own organisation of knowledge, which includes the affect of our own socialisation in shaping what is obvious to us. We also need to acknowledge the limitations of our own access to reality.

---

<sup>10</sup> I disagree, however, when Kitching argues that because natural science has experiments, which are non-discursive practices, this somehow exempts natural sciences from epistemological critique. I would argue that the debates in quantum physics earlier this century have shown that the meaning that is attached to experiments is debatable, and establishes that natural sciences are by no means exempt from epistemological critique. As Kitching (1994: 45) himself argues, knowledge is a practice. Knowledge is a participation in what is to be known, and is constrained by the limitations of that participation, even before we begin to form a 'picture' of the participation that we can discuss.

## The Observed Context

Another context that can affect the knowledge produced is the specific situation that is accessed for information. The observed contexts for rugby supporters and protesters differed. For rugby supporters the 1981 games against the Springboks were tied to observations of other rugby games, which, especially at a national level, served to bridge differences between races. For tour protesters the same games were tied to observations of rugby in South Africa, which served to unite the white population and largely exclude the blacks, and beyond rugby, to the entire apartheid regime in South Africa. Both groups made the same observation: they both understood the tour to be important as it upheld and reinforced the set of associations that they made. Yet this same observation was tied to different observations in a way that resulted in dramatically different understandings.

We need to consider how any difference that may exist between what is to be known as it exists 'out there' as noumena, and the known as it exists in the observational situation as phenomena shapes the process of knowing. The situation in quantum physics is that the same noumena, such as electrons, appeared to have the characteristics of being matter or particles in some situations, and the characteristics of being insubstantial or wave-like, in others. The appearance of the electrons as phenomena in different experiments differed. This sort of situation is very familiar in the social sciences. We cannot assume, for example, that because a respondent suggests that they would act in a particular way in a given set of circumstances when interviewed; that this means that they would do so when observed in that situation 'out there', as the factors involved in the decision may change, or the person may give a different weight to different

factors. As I have argued in the previous chapter, the quantum debates have shown that the descriptions that we give of whatever it is that we are interested in describing can be the product of interactions within an experiment or situation we are observing, and do not necessarily reflect the nature of the entity we wish to know about.

We tend to attribute the product of interactions we observe to the entity that we are interested in knowing about as its property or essence. A common example is that we tend to judge a person's nature by their behaviour. This may be fair enough if it is someone that we have been with in a number of different situations; but if we only come across someone in a limited range of situations, such as at a club or workplace where the person interacts with much the same people, we could end up with a rather distorted view of their nature, as they may well act differently in other situations. Peter Manicas provides us with another example of this error of attributing the result of what happens in a situation to one specific thing in the situation. Manicas (1987: 252-5), in his defence of realism, analyses the sentence: 'water tends to freeze when its temperature is reduced to freezing point'. Manicas argues that this is a statement of the form: 'when C, A tends to F in virtue of structure S', where A is water, F is freeze, and C is temperature at or below freezing point.

The structure 'S' is an explanation Manicas gives. 'S' does not appear in the original sentence. It is not an observation. What the sentence itself said was that A tends to F in circumstance C. This need not imply that water has any innate power of freezing that is independent of the circumstances that it freezes in, as Manicas argues. The realist interpretation understands 'F-ing' to be a property of A, in the sense that it is

a characteristic that A possesses.<sup>11</sup> However, both C, the weather, and A, the water, are implicated in the observed result, F. The power to F, or the cause of the observed phenomena F, lies in the interaction between C and A, and not in either C or A on its own.

Perhaps the difficulty we have in grasping this is that water presents itself to us as being more 'real' than the ambient temperature. The temperature seems to us to be a secondary consideration, a condition needed for the water to freeze. We could invert this orientation by focusing on the temperature, and think that for the temperature to display its capacity to turn something into a solid state, a condition must be met; and that is that there must be something in the environment like water, which can inscribe this property of temperature so that it becomes apparent to us. This inversion shows us that what we think of as the 'thing' and what we think of as the 'circumstance' is interchangeable. Our designation of the 'thing' is thus also arbitrary, and the attribution of the causal powers to the thing rather than the circumstance is also arbitrary.

Realism separates what is seen as the thing A, in this case the water, from what is seen as the circumstance C, in this case the temperature; so that C is seen as the conditions under which 'A will F', rather than that F occurs through the interaction between A and C. Realism thus produces a distinction between A and C which is at the roots of the structure-agency dualism. Agency results whenever we consider F as something that A is

---

<sup>11</sup> To be sure, changes do take place in the water, but this is because the bonding between the molecules is affected as energy is transferred to the environment. The interaction has brought about a change in the state of the water. It is not the case that the water has transformed itself under its own volition, by virtue of any innate structure that responds to a change in the environment.

capable of, whilst structure results when we attend to C, the conditions which have to be met for A to F. A more adequate epistemology would note that neither A nor C are sufficient for F to occur; F is the phenomena that we observe when A and C interact. It is misleading to attribute F to either A or C, or even to them both independently. It is the interaction that is critical.

Manicas (1987: 25) himself quotes Weininger (1984: 939) that 'molecular structure results from an interaction between molecule and environment in a way for which *ab initio* theory cannot yet account'. Manicas fails to note the implications of this for his water molecules A, interacting with their environment, C. By his own admission, Manicas must concede that we can not prove that there is some property or power of A, quite independent of the ambient temperature, C, that explains the observed result of the interaction between the two, F.

As F only exists as a result of the interaction between A and C, F can not be attributed to A independently of C. Generalising from this, it becomes possible to argue that we are liable to err whenever we attribute to A a 'nature' that exists independently of the circumstances in which it is observed. The realist contention that objects have a nature that is independent of our own experience of them and which can be known (Manicas 1987: 247) trips up on the problem of being certain that what we have attributed to A is, indeed, a property of A. As the quantum revolution has amply demonstrated, the 'nature' that we observe depends on the situations we observe it in.

This position is realist, however, in the sense that A, C, and F are all acknowledged to exist in reality. However, we can never be sure how

accurately our perception of A corresponds to the reality that is A. We cannot describe A as an independent entity without making some attempt to demarcate A from not-A. We only know of A through its interaction with C, and other interactions. We cannot know or describe A independently of the interactions it has been observed in. To describe A, we must draw a boundary between A and not-A. To be sure, we need to draw boundaries to understand anything, and the understandings we produce are not only useful but vital to our survival. Yet we also need to be aware that the boundaries that we draw to assist in our understanding, although they seem obvious enough to us, do not actually exist 'out there'. We can be misled into thinking that reality actually is as we think of it being.

This position is objectivist in the sense that F is the objective phenomena that arises in an objective situation of A interacting with C; but subjectivist in the sense that if we wish to describe A, we must demarcate A from C. How we decide to demarcate A from C is to a certain extent arbitrary and subjective, in that it can be done differently.

Kate Burningham and Martin O'Brien's (1994) account of the way global environmental concepts are localised in specific local contexts of action provides a social example of the way that a realist approach tends to reduce the observational situation to the object involved, in this case the values of the person. Burningham and O'Brien (1994: 924) 'suggest that the search for definitive accounts of respondents 'real' values is likely to be an unproductive venture'. They critique the realist approach to values deriving from Kluckholm and used by Inglehart and the European Values Survey, which understand values as a more or less stable 'conception of the desirable' which is held by an individual or group (1994: 927). A realist

tends to understand the values that someone expresses to be values that they possess, and discount the way that people express different values relative to different situations. The realist position thus discounts the influence of the respondent's positioning in a particular situation that encourages them to select something from a range of values that they may express. Burningham and O'Brien position themselves closer to the constructivist account of value research deriving from Mills and developed by Spector and Kituse (1977), which understands values as 'linguistic resources which members employ to justify their conduct' (1994: 927). They suggest 'that it may be more profitable to regard environmental values as a resource which individuals and organisations employ' (1994: 929). There is a slippage in Burningham and O'Brien's position<sup>12</sup> that moves them toward the constructivist position that understands the values being expressed as being selected from those socially available, and tends to ignore the way that the site being evaluated restricted the particular selection. Constructivists tend to generate the impression that the agency of individuals or organisations is considerably less constrained than they actually are.

An example of this is Searle's argument that 'there are things in the world that exist only because we believe them to exist', and gives the example of a banknote only being money because we acknowledge it as such (in Corsten, 1998: 103). This account ignores the way that 'belief' in

---

<sup>12</sup> Spector and Kituse explain 'that vocabularies of value may be chosen very strategically according to features of the context in which the claim is made, and to whom it is directed' (Burningham and O'Brien, 1994: 927) but they themselves argue 'that actor's commitments to the environment are always situated within a framework of choices, decisions, goals and purposes conditioned by the localising contexts of action' (1994: 926). This could be taken as an acknowledgement of the influence of the context of observation, but could also be taken to only refer to the target context. Their actual discussion does not refer to the way that the interview situation including the sites discussed and the way that the interviewer shaped the discussion enabled and constrained the choice of value, only to the way that the values chosen for various sites were related to the target context.

money is hardly optional in our society: it is very difficult to survive without money, we are constrained to use money. We need to use money because we need to eat, we need clothes and shelter. These are all material realities, and remain material realities even though, like the banknote, they may be highly socialised material realities. The constructivist focus on ideas and discourse encourages us to notice how the banknote is viewed as a symbol or sign, and so dismisses the materiality that the banknote still retains as irrelevant (Corsten 1998: 108); effectively writing out the way that we need money to provide material resources that enable us to eat, keep warm, live. By ignoring the observational context of knowledge, constructivism tends to write out the way that our social experience is embedded in a material context, and constrained by the social arrangement of material reality, including the actions of other people. The individual is seen as being more of a free agent than they actually are. Instead any constraints on human action are considered to be the result of our reification of both natural and social facts. Dick Pels (1995: 138), for example, critiques Latour's acknowledgement of material constraints as a failure to develop a critical theory that considers how social constraints are instituted and stabilised by these reifications and so become 'blackboxed' or accepted social institutions. Pels argues that social facts are not things but reifications which exercise a constraining influence upon the actions of people as long as they define them as things. I agree with Callon and Latour's (1981) suggestion, that the state held monopoly of legal coercion is anchored in the differential access to mundane things such as guns, cars, helicopters, tear gas and gas chambers provides a more accurate account of social reality, precisely because it does acknowledge that constraints do exist beyond the beliefs we impose on ourselves and each other.

One of the difficulties that the observational context presents for social scientists is that science emphasises the distinction between the observational context and the contexts of the knower, and this distinction can not be as strongly demarcated in the social sciences as it can be in the physical sciences. It is not possible to produce a social preterreality that does not, sooner or later, become socially real. Any distinction made, such as SES categories, sooner or later starts to feedback into the reality being studied. SES categories are used to determine certain funding differentials for state support for schools, for example. It is not that it is difficult for social scientists to separate the analytic preterreal from the real that is being analysed, it is more that the distance that the natural scientist finds easy to achieve is not as readily attainable for social scientists. There is no strong demarcation between the information gathering methods of the scientist and the actants<sup>13</sup> being studied for social scientists, as there is for natural scientists.<sup>14</sup>

As Holmwood (1995: 413) argues, the discussion about our position as knowers, standing inside or outside of whatever is to be known, has often been misleading. Our positioning 'inside' does not raise additional epistemological concerns beyond those already problematic in natural sciences. All the epistemological debates discussed in the last chapter have

---

<sup>13</sup> I am using Latour's (1997: 4) term 'actant' to refer to anything that acts, or to which activity is granted by others.

<sup>14</sup> One response to the problem has been to retreat from explanation into description, adopting the informational perspective of the actant. What seems to be achieved with this approach is even more limited than what the actants themselves achieve, as it adds nothing new to what is already known, yet cannot hope to capture all that the actants themselves already know. As Joel Smith (1995:59) comments: '...the very people that the ethnomethodologists refuse to classify and generalise about, classify and generalise with ease in their own lives' (see also Pleasants 1996). This position would be treated with ridicule if it was suggested to a natural scientist. What good reason is there for suggesting that biology would be more successful if those studying ants, for example, restricted themselves to what ants know about reality.

shown, in one way or another, that interactions with the actants we are studying are inevitable. Instead the inside/outside distinction relates to the form of knowledge used to process information, whether it is a form that the actant uses, or whether it is imposed on the reality as a preterreal distinction that we find useful to make about that reality for whatever purpose we have in mind. Our constructs are not invalid simply because they are imposed. Some forms of imposition are indeed essential for the survival of any animal in its ecological niche, and this includes the formation of constructs, such as some form of preterreal mapping of its habitat. We should have much more concern about the accuracy of the construct, its limitations, and its appropriateness for the use to which it is put.

### **The Target Context**

The context that the knowledge is intended to inform, or have some effect in, also shapes the knowledge. The 1981 Springbok rugby tour supporters had little ambition to influence anyone beyond their local contacts, so the flow of knowledge was circulating in a local context, where there was little need for new insights or innovation. The supporters' understandings consisted largely of a restatement of what was already obvious to them. The protesters, however, had several target audiences: the larger population of New Zealanders that needed to be made aware of the situation in South Africa and the political decisions being made in New Zealand, South Africa and internationally with respect to sporting contacts with South Africa, the political decision makers in New Zealand, and their own support network. The difference these contexts can make can be seen in the way that once the tour had arrived in New Zealand, going outside the

law was justified to the general New Zealand audience by reference to the manipulation and deceit of the New Zealand government. In terms of the support network, however, there was no goal on the right side of the law to motivate a crowd (Chapple, 1984: 68,75). Another much more dramatic difference that target context made, was with respect to the government's statements. The Prime Minister signed the Commonwealth Statement on Apartheid in Sport at Gleneagles in July 1977, and then agreed to take every practical step to discourage sport contact with South Africa, a position that he maintained that he was endeavouring to achieve whenever he spoke internationally, even during the tour. Within New Zealand, however, there were six marginal provincial seats where most people wanted rugby and hated city protesters (Chapple, 1984: 58); so the Prime Minister's 'discouragement' of sporting contact within New Zealand was considerably less assertive than previous Prime Ministers had been, and did achieve his internal political goal of cementing his position in the next election.

That knowledge is shaped to fit its destination should be apparent to anyone who has experienced learning in educational institutions. Yet perhaps a location in educational institutions also serves to reinforce the notion that 'the truth' is 'simplified' for pedagogical purposes, and ignores the way that the 'simplified' 'truths' may subsequently be used by students in contexts where they do become oversimplifications. Against this it is important to assert that what counts as useful knowledge does depend on the target context. Take, for example, some athletes wishing to improve their performance. Athletes know that taking drugs is against the rules, so some won't use drugs; but will try to gain a competitive edge by developing new training or performance techniques, or other means within the rules. Knowledge about drug testing procedures only matters to the extent that

something relatively innocent, like cough mixture, may produce a positive test, and the athlete thus needs to know what products need to be avoided. Others will want to find out as much as possible about the drug testing procedures so that they can find ways of avoiding detection whilst taking drugs to gain a competitive edge. The same information about drug testing procedures is shaped into different sorts of knowledge as it is applied to different ends.<sup>15</sup>

Having science as the target context similarly shapes information in a different way than a target context of practical or local knowledge. I agree with Mills that all knowledge originates in practical knowledge (Forrester, 1996: 4-5). All knowledge is local to begin with and only becomes 'universal' scientific knowledge when it can be generalised beyond the context of origin. Scientific knowledge requires a standard of 'proof' that places more emphasis on reliability and less on usefulness than a standard of effective practice. Scientific knowledge reduces the local practices that an apprentice would become familiar with to a few well established procedures that can be taught in an academy. When the students graduate they find that they still have to learn local practices specific to their employment. The target context of passing exams produces a different knowledge to the target context of meeting job expectations, even if the purpose of training was to prepare you for that job, and there was a significant overlap in terms of information required to perform adequately.

---

<sup>15</sup> Examples of this sort can be multiplied relentlessly once we recognise that the basic choice is either for the hero identity, which admires success through the ability to play the game; the meritocratic, ability plus effort formula; or for the trickster identity, which admires success per se; the market 'choice', resources plus preference formula (see Brown, 1995, on market versus merit).

The ecofeminist debate between Cecile Jackson (1996), Ariel Salleh (1996) and Mary Mellor (1996) provides an example of different commitments to local and scientific knowledge. Mellor argues that claims to scientific rationality are tied to capitalist patriarchal structures of exploitation, and so must be suspect. The only model of sustainability we have is subsistence economies tied to local knowledge. Salleh agrees, quoting Mies and Shiva that women's practical ecopolitical sensibility is a learned outcome of gender ascribed labours and responsibilities. All seem agreed that no knowledge can equate with actually existing reality, whether 'women's perceptions' or science. All perception is removed from what is being referred to. Yet Jackson (1996), in reply to Salleh, claims that there is an extra-discursive reality which one struggles to grasp, by triangulating the pluralities of perceptions and discourses, in an increasingly less provisional way. I would agree with Salleh that this does imply a masculinist view of scientific process. The singular view that Jackson envisages could well be inaccurate, as it has been in the past. Feminist social scientists have shown that the established 'male' social scientists' best efforts at triangulation had produced biased accounts in the past. Jackson's position does reflect what Harding (1996: 22) describes as the imperialist ideal of 'one maximally ideal knowledge system'. Given the limitations on knowing that are already well established, I do agree with Harding that we need to adopt a more flexible approach that seeks out the most useful form(s) of knowledge for our situation. Jackson does not seem to have grasped that even within science there is no guarantee that an 'increasingly less provisional' grasp of reality will eventuate, as the quantum debates have shown. Equally Salleh does not acknowledge the value of 'universal' knowledge is precisely that it has proved effective in many situations, and so it is not likely to be beneficial to act in ignorance of that knowledge. That being said, it remains

true that for many social movements local knowledge provides a sphere of expertise against the professional assessments they dispute (Burningham & O'Brien, 1994: 926). Local knowledge can have advantages over scientific knowledge in a political target context.

At the end of the day it matters little whether those with local knowledge are right, have the best solutions, or have the closest ideas to 'the truth' available if they lack power to implement their solutions because they are up against those who are more strongly positioned globally. It is important that ecofeminists remain clear headed about the political limitations of local knowledge, irrespective of its truth value. Like practical knowledge, the knowledge produced for a political target context needs to be effective for the situation it is intended for. The knowledge of social movements positioned against powerful international actors needs to be particularly sensitive to what is useful to the given situation. They do not have the same capacity to bulldoze through all opposition as their opponents. We know that the Western techno myth continues to be propagated even though it is harmful and destructive, precisely because it enables the powerful to implement their will. What we do not know is how it can be effectively replaced. The range of possible solutions tried for the past two centuries: revolution, reform, traditionalism, and small scale experiments - all referred to by Marx in 1848 - have produced no effective replacement to ecologically destructive capitalist expansion to date. Science, however, is concerned with generalisations, and not with identifying the factors that are important in every specific, local, historical circumstance. What was an important factor at one time and place may never matter again, and so will be of little concern to science. Yet both realists and constructivists tend to collapse this distinction between a

scientific and a political target context. Realists argue that we can make generalisations about critical factors; all that can happen in any situation is caused by the 'underlying mechanisms' which need to be exposed by theory. If an important factor at any time and place falls outside current social theory, then this means that the theory is inadequate and the 'underlying mechanisms' have not been properly theorised. Constructivists will argue that such an enterprise is doomed, science is merely politics by another name. Rather the situation is that the understandings we have address particular end-use contexts, and the end-use of political efficacy can cause us to give a different weight to the same feature of reality than an end-use of scientific generalisability. What is an 'essential feature' for one context may not be for another. That being the case, the understanding that was appropriate in one context is inappropriate in another.

I have considerable reservations about the usefulness of a social definition of truth that some constructivists prefer, such as Latour, precisely because it takes the target context of science to be political, and so judges knowledge by its effectiveness. I prefer the position that the truth of knowledge is relative to a framework. I would argue that it is possible to establish something as provisionally true within the rules of evidence for that framework, but we do need to acknowledge, with Latour, that its truth is always open to question. However, I think that it would be unfortunate to completely lose the realist concept of 'the truth', because at times we do need it to be able to compare the various truths that are established as truths in their various different contexts. We can make these comparisons, and I would argue that at times we can have good empirical grounds for arguing that one truth is closer to 'the truth' than another.

I am arguing, then, that scientific explanations can be judged true or false or neither or both with reference to a given framework for the regularity being considered. The regularity may be strong or weak, the framework may be more or less appropriate for the regularity, and the frame may have more or less empirical adequacy; but it is not appropriate to judge the frame 'true' or 'false'. Norris (1995:122) argues that the problem with defining 'true' as being relative to some conceptual frame is that we have no way of counting it false. I would argue that by defining 'true' relative to a frame, we can develop a better appreciation of the adequacy of various frames to various situations. When truth is considered relative to a frame, this does allow us to acknowledge expertise in selecting appropriate frames for particular situations. In this way scientists are not denied their own experience of what frames are the most valuable to science, and they are not denied their own 'local knowledge' by a constructivist account of scientists' activities (Baigrie, 1995).

However, I do agree that using frameworks for judgements of truth is a limited project, and best suited to science as the target context. As Dalmiya and Alcoff (1993) argue, practical knowledge can be judged as appropriate or successful relative to the situation, but not as true. Yet I would maintain that when we are interested in evaluating the effectiveness of practical knowledge for a local or a political target context, we should explicitly identify that it is the effectiveness of the knowledge that we are evaluating and not conflate this situation with an evaluation of 'truth' as socially defined, as Latour does.

## **The Influence of Context**

Limitations on knowledge need to be considered, both in terms of what can be done to minimise their influence, and in terms of sensitivity to the situations where the knowledge is more or less appropriate. This requires strong distinctions to be maintained between noumena and phenomena, and between real and preterreal; as well as attention paid to the adequacy of measurement and processing, and to the impact of the social negotiation of knowledge. We can only know 'what is' relative to a context that it is known in, and in the light of understandings reached from other contexts.

A consideration of the context of socialisation of the knower has shown that realism tends to ignore the influence that this context has on the knowledge produced. Although it is by no means always the case, there is a tendency to regard what seems obvious to us as real, without taking into account the influence that our social experience has on the way we shape knowledge. The constructivist approach, on the other hand, is very conscious of the effect of socialisation, and so tends to exaggerate the influence of social contexts on knowledge.

One consequence of the constructivist tendency to reduce all influences on knowledge to social causes is that the influence of cognitive context on the knowledge produced is ignored. Rather than projecting the preterreal distinctions that need to be imposed for us to be able to perceive anything onto the reality we are studying, which is the realist tendency, the overly sharp demarcations become projected onto a social context of the

knower. As a consequence, the social context of the knower is presented as more demarcated than it actually is.

Another consequence of the constructivist tendency to reduce all knowledge to social causes is that the influence of the observational context also tends to be downplayed. The realist tendency is to collapse aspects of the situational whole that is observed onto the object that we are interested in knowing about. The constructivist tends to project the influences of the observational context to the social contexts of knowledge production both within and beyond the observational context, so 'dematerialising' both the object and the observational situation. This not only has the effect of dismissing the influence of any nonhuman object of investigation on the knowledge produced, as noted in the last chapter, but also effectively ignores the material constraints on any observation of human activity. This, in turn produces a knowledge that tends to exaggerate the freedom of human actors.

Although constructivists are more sensitive to the way that knowledge is shaped to meet the requirements of a target context, a constructivist approach tends to emphasise the political aspects of the target context. This tends to prevent constructivists from considering how the knowledge could be improved on to become more adequate for that or other situations. Realists, on the other hand, are dedicated to improving the knowledge, but tend to ignore the way that the improvements will always be relative to differences in target context. Instead realists more typically consider that if an idea is not effective for any specific situation, then this reflects an inadequacy in the knowledge, rather than viewing the application of knowledge as inappropriate to that situation.

I have argued that those taking a realist perspective, tend to project the preterreal boundaries used to understand reality onto reality itself. This occurs, for example, when realists argue that their explanations reflect a 'structure' in reality that does exist, but is not immediately obvious to everyone, as it is situated in an underlying layer of reality. The situation is that they perceive a 'structure' that exists 'out there' in reality, rather than acknowledging that this is merely a perception based on regularities that do exist in reality. Equally the problem with dismissing preterrealities such as 'structure' has been that the regularities that do exist in reality can end up being dismissed as irrelevant along with the concept, for example class regularities. Constructivists also objectify the preterreal, but in another way. Whenever a constructivist argues that our understanding of a reality is constitutive of that reality, without also acknowledging everything else that contributes to that reality, we have a different sort of objectivation of the preterreal. Rather than projecting preterreal boundaries onto the real, they are projected onto the social position of the knower. A more helpful account would acknowledge that our understanding certainly informs our action, but that is not all that forms it.

I have argued that the limitations on knowledge are not overcome by the collapse of the distinction between reality and our knowledge of it. Limitations on knowledge can only be overcome by being aware of what the problematic areas are, and taking them into account as far as possible. This means maintaining the distinction between the real and preterreal, and between noumena and phenomena, as well as being sensitive to the social contexts of knowledge. It means, above all understanding knowledge as a

practice, a participation in what is to be known influenced by the way that both the knower and the known are constituted in that interaction.

The constructivist position take an immanent view of social phenomena. I agree that the social is primarily immanent. The social is constituted by human interactions. However, these social phenomena do precipitate socialised noumena that provide a social context that is pre-existing to individual human lives. Enduring social forms do exist, that both enable and constrain our actions. We are situated within contexts that are both maintained and changed by our actions. This does not quite equate with the realist view of the social as transcendental. Social entities do not exist in quite the same sense that biological and material entities do. As I will argue in the next chapter, there are socialised noumena that do affect our actions, but no distinctly social noumena.

Realism and constructivism are both examples of value hierarchical thinking; but they propose different regimes of order. In the case of realism, it is the structure or mechanisms which provide an order that underpins the variability that we observe. In constructivism it is the ideas that provide order that is imposed on the actual variability that we observe. Both tend to regard the 'order' that they have found as the proper focus of study. The actual is reduced to background noise, referenced to bring into focus questions about the order. Order is thus emphasised in contrast to variability or chaos, when what is needed is a model that places order and chaos at the same 'level'. One model that does this is evolution.<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> It is not enough to posit order and chaos as being at opposing ends of a continuum, so that different aspects of reality are viewed as being more or less chaotic or ordered at any given point in time. Interactions occur in a manner that is both regular and variable. If we observe the interactions between an executive, a secretary, and a wordprocessor, many of

---

the interactions we observe between these three will be similar to other interactions, and thus regular, but none will be entirely the same, and thus variable. Order and chaos are part of all reality.

## Chapter 4

### **Evolution: The Theory of the Influence of Contexts**

In the previous chapter I discussed how knowledge is influenced by the various contexts that both the knower and the known are situated in. How the contexts came to differ was not considered. I did not examine how the prior social contexts that did influence both the tour supporters and the protesters could have come to be so different, for example. Yet this is pivotal to understanding how adverse social consequences can arise when social movements introduce the understandings forged within the movement into other social contexts where other people have not had congruent social experiences. Evolutionary theory can provide us with a framework for discussing the question of how contexts change. Emile Durkheim understood human mental categories to be based in the experience of social categories. He explained how categories emerged in totemic rites. The mental categories that emerge are then projected back onto the experience. We make social categories real through our participation in them. Most sociologists agree that our understandings directly contribute to social phenomena to a much greater extent than our understandings contribute to biological or physical phenomena.<sup>1</sup> I suspect that the ongoing consequences of this process have been poorly theorised because of a contemporary

---

<sup>1</sup> This has been expressed, for example, the Thomas Theorem: that in social life, if people consider something to be real, it will become real as a consequence (Thomas, 1951; eg in Smith, 1995: 57). Those who disagree with the distinction include some constructivists who argue that our understandings constitute physical and biological phenomena in the same way as social phenomena. Some realists also consider that no distinction can be made: social reality exists as noumena in the same way as biological and physical reality.

discomfort with social evolutionary theorising. Social evolution enables us to theorise the ongoing mutual influence of experiences and understandings and how this contributes to social change. We treat our experience of social phenomena as providing insight into social noumena beyond the phenomena in the same way as our experience of physical or biological phenomena does. However, the social phenomena we experience are even more fluid than biological and physical phenomena. I argue that this is because social phenomena are stabilised only by our shared understandings and by the arrangement of things (by socialised noumena). There is no social noumena. We construct an imaginary social noumena, and we expect others to have constructed much the same social noumena as us, just as we expect them to have much the same idea of what water or grass is. We do not recognise how great the differences in social experiences are, nor how great the impact on the understandings they inform. We expect others to have similar experiences that enable congruent understandings to emerge. What happens instead is that exposure to different ideas can cause incongruent understandings to be recalled, and a (not necessarily conscious) connection made to the incongruent social experiences that they were formed in; so reinforcing the differences. The understandings, and as a consequence the social experiences, become even more divergent and antagonistic.

The fundamental tenet of evolutionary theory is that both continuity and change occurs through the same processes. This idea stands in contrast to theories of change that view continuity as normal, and significant change as requiring some sort of disturbance or intervention.<sup>2</sup> Frederick Teggart

---

<sup>2</sup> I agree with Maureen Hallinan (1997: 7) that 'continuity is a fundamental concept in Darwin's theory of evolution', but not with her contention that discontinuity is therefore not theorised. Hallinan seems to normalise discontinuity, yet refers to discontinuities as 'disruptions', which indicates that she does think that continuity occurs in the absence of

(1925), for example, provided a critique of the social evolutionary theorising popular in the nineteenth century that regarded social change as gradual and society as evolving through a series of stages. Teggart thought of social change as irregular and not necessarily progressive, the result of disturbances of social stability (Maines et al, 1996: 531).<sup>3</sup> Such theories I will refer to as 'interventionist'. In the social sciences interventionist theories are typically referred to by the means of intervention envisaged, such as revolutionary theories, or reformist theories. I am using 'interventionist' to cover both major alternatives, as they assume that the intervention of actors is necessary to implement change, and that 'success' is determined by whether or not the intervention created the desired outcome. Evolutionary theory does not deny the importance of interventions or disturbances, but argues that such disturbances are not historically significant unless some change that they produce becomes more or less stabilised over time. In the last two decades social theorists seem to have become increasingly pessimistic about the possibilities of effective, stable human intervention in social life, yet often remain reluctant to theorise social change in evolutionary terms. The reason for this may well be an outcome of the understanding that the actual history of life, whether biological or social, will always be underdetermined by evolutionary theory. It seems that many sociologists have concluded that social evolutionary theorising is therefore pointless, and it is better to concentrate on understanding what does actually happen.

---

some sort of human or natural intervention. Hallinan (1997: 2) moreover lists terrorism, revolution, computerisation, dismantling the welfare state, famine and the Spread of AIDs as disruptions; whilst from a macro perspective, at least, I would regard the spread of AIDs and computerisation as continuous change, and therefore evolutionary. Dismantling the welfare state and famine are better conceived either as continuous intervention or evolution from an intervention or series of interventions.

<sup>3</sup> Teggart's idea of periods of social equilibrium and disequilibrium influenced Robert Park's human ecology.

The reality is that there is no single, undisputed, evolutionary theory; just as there is no single undisputed interventionist theory. Arguments between evolutionists often parallel the arguments between interventionists. Should a macro perspective be stressed, or a micro perspective? Which is more important in reproducing innovations, the actions of individual innovators, or the circumstances that innovators find themselves in? There are, however, points that evolutionists agree on. One important one is that the 'successful' innovation is only successful in relation to the circumstances it is successful in. That is, the same innovation will not necessarily be successful in other circumstances. It follows from this that although the survival of an innovation is dependent on the successful reproduction of the innovation, this need not imply the survival of the innovator, nor the survival of the original innovation, nor even the continued reproduction of the innovation as it originally existed. Everything is more or less modifiable, and there are no guarantees, no rules saying that change will continue in the present direction (Whitehead, 1993: 86, 93).

Social evolution can be thought of as synonymous with macro social change. Many of the social changes we experience as individuals are much the same as those our parents and grandparents have experienced: making new friends, finding a job, having a baby. These changes in individual social relationships do not necessarily indicate any overall macro social change. Yet if people on the whole tend to have fewer children, or change jobs more often than they did a generation ago, this would indicate macro social change. It is precisely this sort of change that evolutionary theorists would point to as often difficult to theorise from an interventionist perspective, but readily theorised in evolutionary terms.

Within sociology various perspectives have been adopted to explain social change:

1. An argument for **developmental social change** focuses our attention on the way that potentials that already exist will inevitably unfold in quite predictable ways. An example of this would be the way that increasingly powerful, cheaper and smaller computers have affected production, creating some new job opportunities but making other occupations redundant. This in turn forces competitors to cut cost by utilising computers themselves, thereby spreading the use of computers. Karl Marx was the major classical theorist to take this approach. One example from Marx is the way that the use of money, once established, allowed individuals to accumulate capital, which in turn provided the basis for capitalism. Marx saw this as an unfolding potential that did produce a qualitative social shift that proved irreversible, and this was his model of social change.<sup>4</sup> There was the potential for capitalism to emerge as soon as the use of money was sufficiently established to allow for the accumulation of capital. However, the accumulation of capital was not essential for economic success before the era of capitalism. The actual historical emergence of capitalism provides its own motor, a ratchet effect that makes the social change it produces irreversible.

2. An argument for **functional social change** focuses more on the pressure to change in response to changing circumstances, be they social or physical. A social example is an increasing demand for teachers,

---

<sup>4</sup> Arno Wouters (1993) situates Marx's thinking in the context of nineteenth century evolutionary and embryological thinking.

classrooms, and other educational resources resulting from a surge in the number of babies being born a few years previously. Another may be an increase in local unemployment due to the collapse of export markets. A physical example is an increasing flow of subsistence farmers migrating to urban areas due to an extended drought . The prevailing conditions may change in unexpected ways, so that the social changes that occur are not always as predictable as for the developmental model. Yet the evolutionary trend, once started, may have local predictability. Clearly, once a baby boom has occurred we can be quite certain of what the increase in demand for educational facilities will be.<sup>5</sup> The response to the pressures tries to improve the situation, and is hence described as 'functional', regardless of its actual efficacy. Emile Durkheim emphasised this approach, particularly in explaining the increasing differentiation and interdependency in industrial societies. Functional social change is reversible, but can act as a catalyst for developmental social change. That is, potentials that previously existed but were not developed, are more likely to be exploited if there is some pressure for change.

3. An argument for **phenotypical social change** examines changing social characteristics. Evolution has not taken place until a social change is effectively reproduced over time, so evolution necessarily implies the occurrence of phenotypical social change. Irrespective of the potentials that exist for change, and the pressures that exist for change, the change must be enacted. Any differences between people in the way they act can be imitated by others, and the ideas that motivate changed behaviour can be shared. So change can occur through the everyday processes of social

---

<sup>5</sup> This is similar to the predictability of local biological evolution, such as the escalation of predator's weapons and prey's defences (Gould, 1994: 64).

reproduction. An example of this would be the rising divorce rate facilitated by the interaction between changing marital expectations and changing laws. Max Weber's postulation of the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism is a classic example of this approach. Phenotypical social change does not necessarily mean that specific individuals have changed, although this certainly may occur. It need only mean that there are changes in the life experiences of people between generations.<sup>6</sup> Social evolution is primarily about individual people in this model, as it is individuals that act according to their circumstances. Yet it is not entirely individualistic: it is only when what was unusual becomes normal, and vice-versa, that we can speak of evolution. This implies more than one person acting; it implies changes in the generalisations we can make about the way people act. This requires conditions that enable people to act in that way, but it need not imply that they were 'forced' to do so by the circumstances they were in.

4. An argument for **teleological social change** focuses attention on ideological circumstances that bring about change by reference to some ideal state. This approach has no 'classical' master, largely because sociologists have been concerned to argue against the common assumption of much nineteenth and early twentieth century thinking, that society progressed as humanity became more and more enlightened. It is, however, an argument that provides many people with their reason for being involved in social movement activity, and has certainly influenced sociological theorising about social movements (Habermas, 1981). An example of this sort of social change is blacks or women being given the vote. Clearly this sort of social

---

<sup>6</sup> This process is called 'selection' in biological evolution, but I will try to avoid using the term 'selection' in reference to social evolution as it can be confusing; seeming to imply a conscious choice. 'Selection' refers to an historically successful adaptation.

change most readily fits the interventionist model,<sup>7</sup> and can only be considered in an evolutionary perspective when it is recognised that social relationships are not affected by the change itself, but through the consequential effects on social requirements and expectations. An interventionist perspective ascribes the changing social relationships to the single dramatic act - being given the vote - but an evolutionary perspective would view the changes to social relationships as ongoing, with the single highlighted act typically being the consequence of previous changing social relationships, as well as enabling the actual changes that do occur in the wake.<sup>8</sup> Teleological social change can be considered a form of functional social change as there is a pressure to change due to the ideological environment changing. However, teleological change can be distinguished as the preterreal<sup>9</sup> influences become more critical. The preterreal constructions of reality that are made certainly mediate what options can be considered in response to environmental pressures before functional change occurs; but with teleological change the form of the preterreal constructions themselves are projected onto reality as what is to be desired in reality. Whereas functional social change can occur irrespective of our individual assessment of the possibilities, teleological social change is dependent on human assessment of the need for change.

---

<sup>7</sup> The teleological interventionist argument is also known as 'cultural creationism': an argument that cultural and social change is adequately explained by the state of mind of people initiating the change (Runciman, 1989: 179).

<sup>8</sup> I am not arguing that interventions merely speed up what would otherwise occur. Interventions can direct change by closing off some possibilities as well as enabling others. The critical concern from an evolutionary perspective is, however, the ongoing process of stabilising any changes. Clearly some social interventions are not stable, and social life reverts to something not a lot different to what it was previously; whilst other social interventions result in significant and stable change. Nevertheless, the enduring social stabilisation may be quite different to what was originally intended by the interveners, as is the case with the French revolution discussed below.

<sup>9</sup> See chapter 3 for a discussion of the term 'preterreality'.

## **A History of Evolutionary Thinking in Sociology**

Evolutionary theory has a long and varied history in sociology. The evolutionary ideas central to nineteenth century social theorising predated Darwin<sup>10</sup> (Lenski & Lenski, 1970: 21); yet in the twentieth century, social theory often borrowed concepts from biological evolution to explain social change (Abercrombie et al, 1984: 92-3).

Although social theory has been influenced by biological concepts, it has also been shaped by antagonism to them. Frederick Buttel (1986) argues that our current positioning of Marx, Durkheim and Weber as classical authorities reflects our desire to present social theory as gaining increasing distance from biological analogies. Indeed, today it would be barely credible that the generation of sociologists that Parsons belonged to recognised a completely different genealogy:

‘...a new type of approach, which was definitely sociological, began in a systematic way with Auguste Comte and developed directly through the writings of Spencer, Ward, and the sociologists of the present generation’ (Harry Elmer Barnes, 1948: 75).

The comparatively recent elevation of Marx, Durkheim and Weber to the status of ‘classical’ authorities, and the concomitant pedagogical silencing of others, seems to be the consequence of an epistemological

---

<sup>10</sup> The term ‘evolution’ (unrolling) was coined in 1744 by Albert von Haller to describe a now discredited theory in embryology. In everyday use it meant an orderly unfolding from simple to complex, a progressive development (Gould, 1973: 34-5).

ambition to project sociology as a progressive enlightenment. This 'enlightenment' not only rejects biologisms, but more subliminally perhaps, materialistic and deterministic explanations.<sup>11</sup> Sociological thought is displayed as progressing in the order Marx, Durkheim, Weber to a more proper emphasis on ideal explanation. This developmental schema cannot include Comte, who coined the word 'sociology', because Comte's synthesis included opportunistic as well as deterministic elements. Instead sociology begins with Marx, who considered himself to be an economist rather than a sociologist, but was firmly convinced of the inevitability of certain social outcomes.<sup>12</sup> Parsons does not appear in the schema at all, as Parsons emphasises systems and functions somewhat at the expense of agency (Abercrombie et al: 1984: 178), which would be more appropriate for someone located at the beginning of the schema. The likes of Herbert Spencer, Lewis Henry Morgan, Lester Ward, Ferdinand Tönnies, and Leonard Hobhouse, who did identify strongly with evolutionary thinking, are more representative of our sociological inheritance before World War II, precisely because evolutionary history was predominant in sociological theorising (Banks, 1989).

We do indeed have sociological ancestors, such as Ward and Hobhouse, who used teleological arguments in an evolutionary approach. They argued, in reaction to Spencer, that social evolution can be brought under conscious social and mental control, and the growth of conscious control over the conditions of life is the essential element of social evolution. Yet not all our forgotten heroes were advocates of teleological

---

<sup>11</sup> Not that the hegemony has gone unchallenged. Stephen Sanderson (1990) presents many more theorists and in greater detail than can be dealt with here.

<sup>12</sup> This in itself would be certain proof that he was an economist and not a sociologist if he was living today!

theorising. Tönnies, for example, regarded the economic sphere as the motive force of social change, but unlike Marx or Morgan, emphasised trade rather than technology. Morgan's view, that technological change enabled people to more effectively exploit the environment, picked up on the more deterministic elements of Comte's ideas, as did Spencer, who regarded social life as changing to meet the threat of wars, population growth, and economic factors. Weber, by contrast, emphasised the opportunistic elements that had been all but forgotten in the intervening time. The irony is that determinism was linked to social evolutionary thought because of the immense popularity of Spencer's highly deterministic writing. By this century's understandings, it is Weber who would be considered the evolutionary thinker, not Spencer, precisely because his approach emphasises the contingent,<sup>13</sup> fortuitous nature of change. Given that there is such a rich and varied heritage of evolutionary thinking in sociology to draw on, the reluctance by many sociologists to explicitly engage in evolutionary theorising needs some explanation.

---

<sup>13</sup> Greg McLennan (1996: 67) asks 'how can one theorise contingency - does not the very idea amount to explanatory capitulation in the face of happenstance?' Contingency does not mean that causality and necessity are abandoned; it means that the outcome cannot be predetermined either because what happens depends on factors that are themselves unknown or indeterminable, or what happens depends on whether or not something else happens, which cannot be predetermined. By using the word 'contingent' I do not mean to imply anything happens that is uncaused. I take the position that if we do not know the causes of an event, then this is a reflection of the state of our knowledge, and not that there were no causes. To take the case of winning a national lottery: if I win next weekend, it will be because the numbers I have chosen come up. My winning is contingent on those numbers being drawn, and which numbers will be drawn is, as yet, unknown.

## **Sociological Critiques of Evolution**

Many sociologists are dismissive of evolutionary theory. Undoubtedly this has been fostered by the connections between social evolutionary theory and the eugenics movement (see Crippen, 1994). Proponents of eugenics used terms popularised by evolutionists to legitimate killing groups of people that they deemed inferior. Nazi Germany has provided an example of this ideology in practise. Even though this brand of social theory is commonly subsumed under the broader rubric of 'social Darwinism', it should be noted that it directly contradicts Darwin's argument that 'inferior' members of the species die off naturally.

The eugenics movement, in fact, argued that social evolution was not desirable. For supporters of the movement, 'fitness' was seen as the intrinsic property of certain individuals and groups, and not as context dependent, as it is in evolutionary theory (Gould, 1973). The eugenics argument was that 'social selection' has replaced 'natural selection' for human beings, and that this has the effects of reversing the consequences of 'natural selection'. The best are eliminated. A favourite example given in the past was the way that modern warfare eliminates the 'most fit', while the 'least fit' (by which was meant invalids and variously disabled people) survive and breed (Hawkins, 1995: 58-62). Although the eugenics movement as such has long since passed its zenith, there are still remnants of this line of reasoning that finds its way into contemporary discourses. One example is the way that the welfare state has been portrayed as giving the 'unfit' an unfair advantage, by giving 'hand-outs' to 'dole-bludgers', and 'encouraging' solo mothers to 'breed'. These arguments show no understanding of evolutionary process at all. They merely repeat a few key

words such as 'fitness' from Darwinian discourse and associate them with an altogether different project. As Raymond Murphy (1994: 966) comments, 'social Darwinism is not a theory of the relationship between social action and biological processes, but rather borrows terms from Darwinist evolution as metaphors in a theory of social progress'. I agree with Ted Benton (1991) that it is no longer possible to adequately theorise social continuity and social change whilst still continuing to totally ignore our human embodiment and our ecological embeddedness; thus it is important to theorise the relationship between social action and natural processes. However, that is not the project of 'social Darwinism'.

Another contemporary distaste for evolution has developed from the way that the common sense assumptions of the last century became incorporated into the theory of evolution, as it was understood last century. Grosz and de Lepervanche (1988:11), for example, query 'how much the problematic notions of sexual difference form an essential part of the theory of evolution and the doctrine of the survival of the fittest'. Grosz and de Lepervanche here seem to be assuming that the theory of evolution is a 'thing' that has an underlying 'essence' that cannot be changed. I find it surprising that these authors are promoting essentialist thinking. In another article in the same book one of the authors (Grosz 1988: 92) claims that 'feminist theory is now mature enough to effect radical ruptures and displacements in socially dominant knowledges...'; but this attitude is not applied to evolution. There is no acknowledgement that the theory of evolution has itself evolved, quite dramatically, since the nineteenth century.<sup>14</sup> Instead the theory of evolution is dismissed on the grounds that

---

<sup>14</sup> Peter Bowler (1990) provides an excellent brief introduction to the relationship between scientific and social thought with respect to 'social Darwinism' and eugenics. He concludes

its nineteenth and early twentieth century expositions failed to incorporate late twentieth century feminist insights. I would argue that evolutionary theory need not refer to Spencer's 'survival of the fittest' (Bowler, 1990: 274), yet alone the doctrine of the inferiority of women. Any dictionary will give the standard definition of evolution as being concerned with gradual change or development. A theory of evolution elaborates how such change occurs. The consensus of evolutionary theorists in both biological and social sciences is that evolutionary theory accounts for continuity and change by the same processes, as distinct from other explanations which invoke intervention of some form as the only cause of change. In biological evolution an intervention is typically an 'act of God', whether creation, or more scientifically accepted interventions such as volcanoes, floods, or meteor strikes. Such events certainly have had an impact on the history of life at specific times in the past (Gould, 1994: 63), but they are not the concern of evolutionary theory per se. In human social life an intervention has more typically been viewed as an 'act of man', to use an equally arcane term, usually an intervention in political or legal processes.

In a similar vein, many sociologists are alienated by the terms used such as 'natural selection'. Obviously 'nature' does not select anything in the same sense that I may select a new pair of shoes. I'm sure everyone is well aware that no attribution of conscious purpose is intended, it is merely literary convention that allows for succinct expression (Gould, 1973: 269). However, I do agree that we should not perpetuate labels that suggest something quite different to what is meant: it would be better to develop more suitable conventions that do express what is intended.

---

that '(t)heories do have social values - but they acquire them through a historical process, not through connections that are built into the concepts themselves' (Bowler, 1990: 278).

Sociologists have critiqued the assumption of a linear, unidirectional model of change evident in much of the historic social evolutionary theory. Certainly nineteenth century anthropological models of evolution consider there to be a necessary sequence from hunter-gathering to agricultural to industrial societies, but the idea has been discredited more than half a century ago. The assertion that social evolutionists typically represent Western society as the pinnacle of evolutionary success is also quite true historically, but also no longer remains the case. It may be that critics infer these assumptions whenever an evolutionist focuses on change as the unfolding of potentialities, and argues that this is goal-directed. Theorists like Robert Wesson (1991: 291, 294) who ascribe an 'inner direction' to evolution are not usually arguing from an ignorance of anthropology, but argue for some sort of design or 'mental' direction on the basis of recent evidence in biology and physics (eg White et al, 1997: 1390).<sup>15</sup> My position is that it is not pre-determined that any potential will actually 'unfold'. I agree with Halton (1992: 134) that 'biological evolution and cultural development are not the progressive casting off of shackles toward a greater and unrestrained freedom, but involve trade-offs of one kind for another'. The trade-offs are successful when what we lose is not as important as what we gain, given the circumstances that we are in.

---

<sup>15</sup> I agree with Bateson who distinguishes his understanding of 'mind' from this position. 'I do not agree with Samuel Butler, Whitehead or Teilhard de Chardin that it follows from this mental character of the macroscopic world that the single anatomies must have mental character or potentiality. I see the mental as a function only of complex *relationship*' (Bateson, 1972: 465, emphasis in original). It often is difficult to sort out exactly what people are referring to when they use the term 'mind', and so I have tried to be more explicit by being more specific: using 'form', 'interaction' and 'preterreality' as appropriate.

A more salient critique is that evolution underrates human agency. This critique is targeted more at the explanations offered by particular evolutionary theorists rather than an evolutionary perspective per se. Certainly theorists that focus on developmental or functional explanations often fail to deal with human agency by default. The same criticism cannot be as readily made against those focusing on phenotypical or teleological explanations. Using a phenotypical framework, for example, I would argue that the conscious and purposive actions of individuals can produce a great variety of different consequences, some more effective than others in the circumstances that the actors find themselves in. From the point of view of a single actor, their action is by no means 'random'. Yet, in some situations, the particular action that turned out to be most successful in the circumstances, could not have been known beforehand. What was successful only becomes obvious in retrospect, and then that action is more likely to be repeated as it was successful. In other words, the action is reproduced. Individual differences abound, but only a minuscule proportion of these differences ever become significant from an evolutionary perspective. The prevailing circumstances determine which differences are important, which actions will tend to get repeated in similar situations. Thus a phenotypical framework would encourage us to perceive social relations slowly changing because of an open-ended interaction between what may initially be 'random' differences in social relationships and the historical circumstances that these differences occur in. One advantage of this particular focus is that it provides a framework that links macro and micro phenomena. Historical processes act on social relations through the media of social relationships, as social relations do not exist independently of the social relationships that constitute them. One disadvantage is that it implicitly allows for the idea of the 'survival of the fittest', which in turn

can be taken to deny power differentials in social life, and so 'blame the victim for the crime'. This is undoubtedly the most vehement critique sociologists present against evolution. Biologists, too, have difficulty in disentangling ideas such as 'survival of the fittest', which have long since defined populist understandings of evolution, from more central scientific concerns:

'The clichés of struggle and survival, even for the professional biologist, have focused attention on secondary aspects of the historical process whereby genetic information accumulates. They have focused it on individuals - and it should be on populations; they have focused it on the avoidance of death (perpetuation of the individual) - and it should be on reproduction (perpetuation of the genotype) (Pittendrigh, 1985; quoted in Buckley, 1967: 12).

Evolution does not favour the survival of the fittest as such, but the survival of the line that reproduces the most 'fit'. The line that fails to reproduce dies out regardless of how 'fit' the individual may be. When evolutionists talk of 'fitness' they mean reproductive fitness, and it is always relative to the immediate local environment (Gould, 1973). For a population to survive an adverse circumstance there needs to be more than one individual surviving the circumstance. The necessary attribute must already be distributed in the population. 'Natural selection' does not simply refer to the relative success of a particular difference in a given context, but to the reproduction of successful difference that continues to be successful over time. Similarly in social evolution, if a behavioural difference remains an individual quirk, it can only change social relationships by changing the context that other people have to deal with. If the behaviour can be copied

by other people, then the behaviour can evolve socially, and somewhat independently of any physiological evolution.

It is this 'somewhat independently' that is the bone of contention between sociology and biology. For many sociologists physiological evolution may have given us pre-Neolithic society, but that is of precious little use when it comes to examining modern industrial society. For biologists, we remain animals. The more extreme sociological position may reply that the social is increasingly disembodied; but this overlooks that even at a fairly extreme disembodiment, such as e-mail or internet, these connections can only be considered social because they are acted on by, and in turn impact on, embodied social actors. Equally the extreme biological position that attempts to find a gene for every imaginable social situation, overlooks the flexibility of our embodiment; an adaptiveness that is biologically given, but also socially malleable.

Current anthropological theories are not particularly helpful in overcoming the liability of our heritage of cleavage between the biological and the social. Anthropological approaches can be divided into those models that argue for the primacy of the biological, also known as sociobiology; and those that address the co-evolution of the physiological and cultural through some sort of dualistic approach. The dualistic theories can be further divided into those who approach culture primarily through some concept of behavioural units (cultural traits) and those who approach culture in terms of ideas (ideational units, or memes after Dawkins) (Mulder & Mitchell, 1994: 481-2). Both approaches reduce the complex of material and ideal reality that constitute social institutions to behaviour or ideas, so that the evolution of relatively enduring social forms is not

theorised as such. In this way the alternatives of biological reductionism or dualistic thinking tend to ignore much of the social that they attempt to explain. What can be effectively explained using these models is therefore quite limited.

The epistemological debates discussed above have shown the need to question such dualisms as biological and social, but also show that collapsing one side of the dualism onto the other in some form of reductionism limits what can be known. Nor can dualisms be seriously undermined merely by pointing out their constructed nature. Pointing to any sort of cleavage across a boundary only serves to draw attention to that boundary and reinforce its salience in people's minds. The only way to diminish the significance of a boundary is to show how whatever is salient is positioned on both sides of the boundary, so that the boundary then becomes less significant as a construction. The concept of preterreality therefore positions information on both sides of the disciplinary divide that we have constructed between biological and social. What we find in both biological and social reality is that information comes in many forms. Chromosomes are the material or physical basis of what we call genes, the biological basis of hereditary. Chromosomes carry biological information from one generation to the next. Although chromosomes can be considered as information units, the correspondence between chromosomes and genes is by no means straightforward. Furthermore, not all biological information that does impact on hereditary can be as easily segregated into 'units' as chromosomes can. Other forms of biological information, such as that associated with hormonal or nervous control, are not as readily converted into units as chromosomes. Yet concepts such as cultural traits or memes assume that some sort of unit-like entity is involved in social evolution.

Why is there a need for a social equivalent of biological genes? This imports quite unnecessary biological notions into social theorising, whilst continuing to reinforce a dualistic distinction of the social and the biological that is unhelpful in understanding evolutionary processes. The continuity between the social and the biological is more adequately theorised as recognising that social life has emerged from the biological life, and continues to be constrained and enabled by the biological. However, once the social has emerged, the social, in turn impacts on the biological and increasingly constrains as well as enables biological existence. As sociologists we are primarily interested in the social, but if our conception of the social means ignoring biological reality completely, then our analysis is impoverished as a consequence.<sup>16</sup>

### **Physiological Reductionism**

The success of the neo-Darwinian synthesis in linking evolutionary theory to modern genetics has meant that biological evolutionary theorists are no longer armchair philosophers, but are able to utilise laboratory evidence. One unfortunate effect has been to focus biologists attention on

---

<sup>16</sup> Richard Udry (1995: 1267) presents a similar argument: sociology explains social behaviour from social facts, and sociologists tend to deny that there may be causes of social behaviour that are not social. Sociologists tend to deny that human social behaviour is an evolutionary product; preferring to regard human social behaviour as a product of socialisation, without recognising that socialisation is also an evolutionary product. Udry (1995: 1269) argues that 'to be theoretically consistent, sociologists ought to choose between applying evolutionary theory to human social behaviour and postulating a special creation for humans. Either our social behaviour is genetically involved, or God created us *de novo*'. This stark dualism overstates the case. We should recognise that human interventions have affected social life, removing human behaviour from genetic givens to a much greater extent than in any other animal; yet we should not overstate the impact of human intervention merely because it is more obvious to us than the impact of genetic givens.

physiological adaptation in controlled circumstances.<sup>17</sup> For many biologists social behaviour should be treated by reductionist models that argue that social behaviour, learned as well as innate, is ultimately reducible to physiological causes, and therefore to genetics (Hinde, 1987, in King, 1995).<sup>18</sup> Until recently there has been relatively little acknowledgement that social behaviour, once it has evolved, may impact on biological evolution. The environment that 'natural selection' operates within is taken to be an ecological, geological and geographical environment rather than a social one. In this way the social causes of physiological adaptations are often overlooked.

Taking an example pertinent to the epistemological arguments considered in the previous chapter, variability in perception has been important in evolution, particularly human evolution. Perception is not simply reducible to the social environment, as individuals in the same social environment can have different perceptions of the same phenomena. Nor is perception reducible to physiological constitution, as differences can be learnt. In some situations we can treat physiological evolution as relatively distinct to preterreal evolution, but preterreal evolution is much more dependent upon the physiological context. An example of a physiological adaptation with comparatively limited preterreal causes or consequences is

---

<sup>17</sup> An adaptation is any structure, process or behavioural pattern that makes an organism more likely to survive and reproduce when compared with other organisms in its population (Shoemaker, 1996: 39).

<sup>18</sup> Wilson (1978), for example argues that unless the mind is reduced to the brain, social science is limited to descriptions of surface phenomena, like astronomy without physics. My argument is that social science is the science of 'surface phenomena'; attempting to 'reduce' social interactions inevitably results in a failure to explain what it is that social scientists are most interested in explaining: the social interactions. However, even Wilson (1989) recognises that cultural evolution, once it emerges, does affect biological evolution; and perhaps it is precisely because the social does become permanently inscribed on human bodies that such changes are seen as 'reducible' to biology.

the much longer necks that giraffes have than horses. This adaptation does have important physiological consequences, such as the evolution of a stronger heart which can pump the blood the greater distance up the neck to the head, but comparatively little preterreal significance. By contrast, a bat's capacity for sonar 'vision' produces a perception of the environment that is different to most other mammals. A bat's 'vision' thus supports a distinctive preterreality as well as demanding a different physiological adaptation. The differing preterrealities that develop within animal groups can only develop within the context of physiological adaptations that enable the preterreality to develop in that way. It is the continuing advantage of improved perception that drives the increasing physiological adaptation, so that once a form of preterreality is established, it tends to become more developed, and its very success mitigates against the physiological development of alternative faculties. Comparing different forms of communication, such as bees 'dance' to monkeys 'chatter', it is not inconceivable that monkeys could have come to communicate more by movement or bees more by noise. Yet once a common form of preterreality is socially established, from that point on the continuing physiological development contributes relatively little to the developing content of the preterreality, and the physiological development itself comes to be driven by the success of the preterreal form. An evolutionary theory that attempts to reduce the social to the biological thus does not even explain the biological adequately. What is needed is an understanding of how biological and social phenomena co-evolve.

## **The Social 'Layer'**

As I have indicated, sociologists have not found the model of physiological reductionism favoured by many biologists at all helpful in examining social behaviour. Sociologists more typically prefer to take the position that social reality, once it emerges, continues to develop independently of biological evolution. In reaction to biological reduction, the social has often been thought of as a separate layer to the biological. This position has been critiqued within sociology by sociologists who find it more productive to examine the interaction between biological and social. This critique is particularly evident in disciplinary specialities of environmental sociology (Catton and Dunlap, 1978), and the sociology of emotions (Burkitt, 1997). These critiques also bring the separation of the biological and the social in evolutionary theory under scrutiny.

Dyke's (1988) study of evolutionary dynamics is one that encompasses both biological and social evolution, but exposes the limits of thinking in terms of stages, layers, or levels. Dyke (1988: 26-7) argues that each evolutionary stage, such as from atoms to molecules, or from unicellular to multicellular organisms, involves the emergence of structured structuring structures, a term he takes from Bourdieu. These structures allow processes to occur that previously could not. Such a structure cannot be reduced to a more 'basic' phenomena (synchronous reduction), but can only be explained in natural history terms (diachronic explanation). Dyke (1998: 60) proffers the LIMA model, a level interactive modular array, which is a nest of structures with each level imposing constraints at that level in addition to prior levels; and gives a hierarchy as an example of a LIMA. Dyke (1998: 63-4) then argues that although in evolutionary

emergence the constraints are diachronically hierarchical, synchronically they do not necessarily 'nest' hierarchically. A diachronic hierarchy results because each new module of evolution means that the material conditions for the next module become available. The constraints that emerge, however, interpenetrate at many levels: 'pathways through the possible...are determined by a plurality of interpenetrating constraints deriving from many recognisable 'levels' looping back around one another' (Dyke, 1988: 64).

However, having used this terminology, Dyke (1988: 65-6) goes on to qualify this by quoting John Junk, that any specification of a 'level' has to be simultaneously a specification of structures at that level, and of observation and measurement conditions determining your investigative pathway at that level. Any pictured hierarchy, Dyke concedes, is thus an artefact of limited access, either necessitated by experimental design, or by prior ontological commitments. Dyke then goes on to discuss phase separations and explains how phase separations become reified as 'levels', with 'levels' of high, medium and low frequency processes then being lined up on a hierarchy. Descriptions of parameters from a 'lower' 'level' become 'initiating conditions', and from the 'higher' 'level' become 'boundary conditions'. Yet Dyke does not provide us with a way of talking about evolution that eliminates references to levels of layers. He seems to be implying that this is an inherent limitation in an evolutionary model. I would argue that evolutionary theory can provide us with a way of avoiding talk of 'levels'. One such theorisation has been provided by William Harms.

### **William Harms' Acquired Behavioural Traits Model**

William Harms (1996) argues for a population approach to social evolution, which stresses phenotypical social change. I agree that a population approach provides a useful methodological basis that allows a consideration of the continuum between biological and social. The population approach to biological evolution examines the shifts in the relative frequencies of characteristics or traits in a population. These shifts come about when some characteristic that is variable in the population effectively produces a differential for success in the environment that the population is located in. Those who can swim may be better able to make it to safety during a flood, for example. Applying the population approach to the social, Harms (1996: 369) defines cultural evolution:

‘Cultural evolution is the dynamics of the distribution of acquired behavioural traits among human beings, with the emphasis on the role that imitation plays in governing this dynamics (sic)’

Although I certainly agree with Harms that social evolution implies changes in the relative frequency of social phenomena, I do not agree that our enquiries are limited to behavioural traits or the role of imitation. Long term shifts in the relative frequency of any behaviour are certainly an indication that evolution has occurred. Yet relying on behavioural traits reduces social interactions to individual agency, and denies the way that social realities both constrain and enable individual actions (Benton, 1992). The extent to which any behaviour can be considered a ‘trait’ of the individual concerned is open to question. I agree with Bateson (1972) that we tend to attribute the cause of whatever results from an interactive process

to one object that is involved in the interaction.<sup>19</sup> Behaviour is not the 'property' of the person, it is the consequence of an interaction that occurs within a context. Harms' approach attributes what is social, what occurs in interactions between people (and/or things) to the individuals concerned.

If we examine the 1981 Springbok tours protests with this model, it suggests that the significance of the protests to social evolution can only be located in the extent to which the distribution of individual behavioural traits are changed. Furthermore, we should look for opportunities to copy the behaviour of others. Certainly some of the protesters learnt new behaviours during the course of the protest, such as resisting arrest; but few would have any continuing use for such behaviours beyond the demonstrations. The supporters may have been more likely to have found some subsequent use for the violent behaviour they displayed, but the behaviour was more likely to have been already in their repertoire. Perhaps the Police riot squads were the only people that learnt some new behaviour that could be made use of subsequently. So what this model points to is a legacy of violence that always has existed in our national repertoire that was reinforced by the protests. Yet what this model does is associate the violence with the supporters and Police, and the non-violent strategies with the protesters. Violence is seen as the 'trait' of people more likely to be located in particular groups that are exposed to violence, rather than recognised as an option already available to everyone, but more likely to be expressed in some situations than others. What has been enlarged is the

---

<sup>19</sup> Bateson (1972) gives the example from Moliere, where a doctoral candidate is asked why opium puts people to sleep, and the candidate replies: 'because there is in it a dormative principle'.

likelihood that in any given situation violence will be an acceptable response.

The difficulty with Harms' approach is that although Harms is critical of Richard Dawkins' (1976) concept of 'memes', his understanding of social evolution remains tied to Dawkins. For Dawkins, evolution is considered to be a theory of the dynamics of self-replicating entities. Social evolution is considered to be distinct from biological evolution. The 'replicator', the entity that is relatively stable over successive replications, is different in each case. In biological evolution, the replicator is considered to be the gene, and in cultural evolution the replicator is referred to as a 'meme'. A 'meme' is anything that can be copied or transmitted in culture, 'viruses of the mind' that leap from brain to brain. Dawkins pursues a close parallel between gene and meme, understanding evolution to be a particular sort of systemic copying process. This misunderstanding is enforced with his assertion that 'selection' pressures are only exerted on entities that are relatively stable over generations. This certainly is at odds with thinking in evolutionary biology. In biology 'selective pressure' operates irrespective of history, on what is considered to be 'stable' and 'unstable' alike. What makes any entity relatively stable over successive generations is that they have proved successful in the circumstances. Success is contingent on the events of the time and place. Stability occurs when the attributes of an entity are not under pressure to change.

Harms (1996) critiques the concept of memes, arguing that it is not at all clear what kind of entity replicators and memes are supposed to be.<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup> Joseph Whitmeyer (1998) presents a discussion of the relationship between memes and genes that is not as critical. Whitmeyer (1998: 190) claims that about two thirds of reliable

Memes are taken to be some sort of informational entity, but this leads to problems in that changes may occur across different types of informational entities having different structures. Memes have no discrete physical structure whereas genes can be physically located in chromosomal fragments. Neither is there any discrete code that enables us to distinguish between memes as we can between chromosomes. Harms argues that the idea of memes makes unreasonable demands on our ontology of cultural entities. The concept requires cultural entities such as ideas or theories to be a particular kind of 'thing' that they are not. Yet Harms, in viewing an individual's behaviour as a trait, or a property of the individual rather than the outcome of a situation, also makes individual people a particular kind of thing that they are not.

For Harms to speak of 'behavioural traits' invites a comparison to genetic traits, leaving an impression that social evolution is indeed intended to be distinguished from biological evolution. Certainly to specify a mechanism, imitation, as the primary mechanism of social evolution reinforces that impression. As biologists dispute the relative importance of various mechanisms in biological evolution (Benton, 1991; Lennox and Wilson, 1994; Gould, 1973), it seems rather premature to single out any particular mechanism as being of paramount importance in social evolution because it parallels what is thought to be paramount in biological evolution. We have every reason to suspect that matters get more complex during the course of evolution.

---

variance in measured personality traits is due to genetic influence. He also argues that morality can be accounted for via rewards and punishments that fluctuate according to the environment, depending on innate processes and conditioning, especially the ability to think about our 'selves' and associate rewarding and punishing properties with those selves (1998: 198-9).

The value of Harms' approach is in specifying that changes in the relative frequencies of microsocial differences over successive generations as the benchmark test of social evolution. There is, for example, little difference to the social activities of a peasant's daily life if he pays tithes to one lord or another. Certainly there may well be a considerable emotional difference if one lord is a native and the other a foreigner, and this difference may well have social consequences. Yet the overall rhythm of life could be little different, in contrast to the massive disruption if the peasant is forced off his land to work in a factory. Legal, political and institutional change does not necessarily produce changed behaviour or relationships (Marx, 1846: 7). The population approach rightly emphasises that evolution has not occurred unless there are significant changes for individuals. Nevertheless, macrosocial change can be a significant factor in microsocial change, as well as an effect of microsocial changes.

### **William Runciman's Competitive Selection Model**

The criticism made of Dawkin's theorisation of social evolution, that the causal basis of biological evolution developed in the neo-Darwinian synthesis has been generalised and applied to social evolution, also applies to Runciman's model of social evolution. Runciman's (1998: 169) description of the 'selectionist paradigm' is that qualitative change occurs because an 'object of selection' has a capacity for modification. According to Runciman, it is copying error that sets in train an evolutionary process. Thus Runciman's position necessitates some 'object of selection', a social equivalent to the gene, and copying error in the process of reproduction, a

social equivalent to gene mutation. The outcome of the process of evolution is again attributed to an object in the process. William Runciman (1989: 28) defines social evolution as:

‘the process of competitive selection whereby certain roles and institutions came to replace or supersede others; that the units of selection are not roles or institutions but the practices of which classes, status groups, orders, factions, sects, communities, age-sets, and so forth are the carriers; that their function lies in maintaining or augmenting the power which attaches to the roles and thereby institutions which they constitute and thus in preserving or changing the mode of distribution of power in societies (or ‘social aggregates’ or ‘social formations’) taken as a whole; and that the direction which evolution has thus far taken has in consequence been one of both increasing and decreasing variation - increasing as mutant recombinant practices create new roles and institutions, and decreasing as the competitive advantages which they confer on their carriers compel pre-existing ones to adapt to them’

In Runciman’s case the holy grail of the social equivalent of genes is not to be found in symbols<sup>21</sup> or memes, but in practices.<sup>22</sup> Practices, like genes, can become ‘mutant’. This happens when people change their own practice by imitating others who are successful. Yet this means that the successful practice must already be in existence for someone else to copy.

---

<sup>21</sup> Lenski and Lenski (1970) argue that symbols are the social analogue of genetic systems.

<sup>22</sup> Runciman (1998: 179) has more recently changed his position slightly, and now refers to both memes and practices, using memes to refer to ‘cultural selection’, and practices to refer to ‘social selection’. The distinction seems to be that ‘cultural selection’ operates on thoughts, whereas ‘social selection’ operates on actions. This is in spite of elsewhere (1989) identifying the social with the ideological, as one distinctive type of power.

Runciman's only explanation of how someone arrives at a new practice that is successful is through 'copying error'. The more obvious explanation, that the original successful practice may have been the result of personal idiosyncrasies, is disallowed by Runciman, as he differentiates between activities that are 'personal' and those done in the social role, and argues that only what is done in terms of the role affects social evolution. It is not clear to me how practices that remain separated in the role that they support and attached to the social group that are the 'carriers' of the practice, could then ever manage to recombine into another role. It seems that Runciman is aiming to combine some of the insights of the phenotypical approach to social change with a functional approach that situates individuals in social groups, which compete for power in a larger institutional context.

Runciman argues that the evolution at this macro level of the forms of social organisation is generated by competition for sources of power - economic, ideological and coercive - within and between states. An adaptation is seen as an increase, retention, or augmentation of economic, ideological and coercive power relative to others in competition. The critical question for Runciman is the form of power that can be mobilised to the greatest effect. I would argue that the augmentation of power is not always adaptive, and evolution does not always proceed in the direction of increasing power differentials. Decentralisation of power can be adaptive. This occurred in the evolution of Moriori society on Rekohu as discussed below. The assumption of an ever increasing polarisation of power is far from historically accurate, even in European societies. A more accurate theorisation would acknowledge the contemporaneous existence of various social forms that are dynamically interrelated. What at one point in time is a subdominant form may become more dominant. At the point in time that

such a form becomes widespread enough to epitomise the changed social constellation, it may well be more egalitarian than what it will be as it evolves from that point on. Yet it may also be, at that point in time, more egalitarian than the form it is replacing. One form of social organisation is not necessarily more polarised than the form it replaces.

The evolutionary significance of the 1981 Tour protests are difficult to analyse with this model, as the model directs us to find roles or institutions that have been replaced. Certainly new roles were created in the Police force and the protest movement, but it would be difficult to identify any roles or institutions that have been replaced as a consequence. This would seem to suggest that, for Runciman, the Springbok protests have had no evolutionary significance. Yet the new practices developed within the Police force certainly did augment their power. The major effect of this seems to have been that many middle class New Zealanders developed a deep distrust of the Police, and were more inclined to contest any increase in Police powers. The most significant change engendered in terms of the distribution of power, was that the supporters aligned with the conservative government, and so won them another term in power when they would have otherwise been certain to lose. This could be explained as the practices of a group, the supporters, in their role as voters aiming to secure increased power so that their leisure options are not curtailed by protesters. However there is a crossover between roles of voter and rugby consumer that is not allowed in the model. Yet I would argue that the 1981 tour protests did both make visible and exacerbate cleavages within the nation that now make a consensus on just about anything very difficult to achieve. Furthermore, the protesters view of the government's double standards leading up to and during the tour marked the beginnings of a new era of distrust of

government actions which both enabled major economic change to a more market approach, and enabled a continuing distrust of government actions as these changes were introduced without a mandate. This did eventually result in major political institutional change. The system of representation in New Zealand was changed from first-past-the-post to mixed-member proportional representation. Runciman may well contend that it is this institutional change that signifies an evolutionary change, yet his model bypasses the most significant causes: the widely shared feelings that they were being hard done by. For a fair proportion of the population these feelings were either first felt or reinforced during the Springbok tour protests.

Runciman ignores the impact of feelings altogether. His economic, social/ideological and political/coercive trichotomy seems to me to be an extended dualism, a holy trinity, where a third category is theorised to hold all that can not be conveniently placed in the dualism proper. If we want to discuss how emotions may have affected the evolution of social institutions then we would probably reason that emotions could not, of themselves, be considered economic or coercive, so therefore they must be categorised as ideological. I would argue that to reduce emotions to ideology is no advance on reducing them to biology. Certainly drawing distinctions between economic, political and ideological phenomena can be useful to remind us to examine areas that we may otherwise overlook; but drawing sharp ideal boundaries can also serve to obscure phenomena that may be important to consider. I agree with Durkheim that emotions have been critical in the evolution of human social institutions. Although I think that social evolution needs to explain more than power, Runciman's focus is nevertheless valuable in drawing attention to the importance of explaining

changes in social institutions.<sup>23</sup> Not all microsocial changes do matter from the point of view of ongoing evolution of social institutions, and we do need to pinpoint what it is that makes some social changes critical to ongoing social forms, while other social changes turn out to be fashions that come and go.

### **Jurgen Habermas' Learning Model**

Another influential theorist of social evolution who approaches evolution from the macro-sociological viewpoint of evolving social institutions, is Jürgen Habermas (1981). Habermas has developed historical materialism<sup>24</sup> into a theory of social evolution by arguing that society is centred on communicative action, where actors negotiate and agree on norms. The symbolic structures of society are reproduced through this communicative action (Habermas, 1992). For Habermas, macro-social structures are mechanisms of social integration and these evolve in response to control problems inherent in the existing form of social order. The mechanism of change is a learning process. What is initially the moral consciousness of marginal individuals that drives their own practical action proceeds from the margins of society to the centre and becomes institutionally embodied in the macro order through social movement action. Habermas uses Piaget's stages of moral consciousness to differentiate levels of social integration in the evolutionary history of humanity.<sup>25</sup> Thus for

---

<sup>23</sup> See McLennan (1995a) for an assessment of Runciman's contribution.

<sup>24</sup> Historical materialism refers to Karl Marx's thesis that the history of social phenomena is determined by the mode of production of material things (Abercrombie et al, 1984: 113).

<sup>25</sup> Strydom (1992) reviews the literature that critiques Habermas' use of developmental logic in human evolution.

Habermas it is learning, and not material reality as Marx would have it, that defines the stage of evolution achieved by the social order. This is clearly a model that emphasises teleological and developmental social change. Habermas' model begs the question of how individuals learn a new moral consciousness. Habermas (1981: 269) argues that individuals 'acquire their competence, not as isolated monads, but by growing into the symbolic structure of their social world'. Yet this only explains how the individual comes to repeat the forms of moral consciousness that they are exposed to, not how they can develop new forms that can be socially generalised and institutionalised.

The difficulties that Runciman's model presented in analysing the evolutionary significance of the 1981 Springbok tour protests are more readily resolved with Habermas' model. Certainly the growing distrust of government actions can be construed to be a 'control problem' that was resolved by changing the form of representation within parliament. Also the challenge to the prevalent ideas of what it meant to be a New Zealander by the tour protesters can be seen as a 'learning process' proceeding from the margins to the centre. The sensitivity of government bureaucrats to issues such as sexism and racism certainly did increase in the 1980s, as is evident in the promotion of EEO (equal employment opportunities) programmes. However the tour protesters were largely middle class citizens, and hardly marginally located. More importantly, the connection between the 'learning' that the tour protesters promoted about issues such as racism, and the 'control problem' inherent in the social order is not as straightforward as Habermas' model would seem to suggest. Indeed, many New Zealanders have been critical of the government policies that included EEO and Treaty claims with a monetarist economic policy. The package can also be seen as

the cause of a 'control problem' which contributed to the distrust of government as much as a response. This means we should not only question the extent to which 'learning' did occur, but the extent to which we can argue that the 'control problem' has been overcome by the 'learning'. The problem seems to be that the model is purposive: all change that occurs is assumed to be intended, and there is no allowance for unintended consequences, or the way that any action needs to be considered in the context of the opportunities available. Certainly people voting for MMP (mixed-member proportional representation) did so with the intention of having MMP introduced, but this says nothing about their reasons for wanting MMP, or what other changes they may have preferred.

The purposiveness of Habermas' model is evident in his discussion of Marx's historical materialism (1981: 262). His difficulty with Marx is that Marx's conception of social labour can apply to other species, and does not grasp what it is that makes human unique. Habermas' argument seems not far removed from the view that regards the evolution of humanity as the 'purpose' of evolution. Habermas (1981: 261) argues: 'I find in the human anatomy the key to the anatomy of the ape'. This line of reasoning does not acknowledge that different ape species do have a distinctive, ongoing evolutionary history. Instead apes are viewed as 'past stages' of humanity. It may well be the case that similarities between today's female physiological characteristics in both human and bonobo species,<sup>26</sup> for example, reflect the emergence of a sociality<sup>27</sup> similar to that of today's bonobo before human ancestors left the trees. Yet, without further evidence,

---

<sup>26</sup> See De Waal (1995) for a discussion of bonobo characteristics.

<sup>27</sup> Michel Maffesoli uses sociality to refer to the social vitality we all share in as people, as distinct from the social that is institutionalised, referred to as society (Evans, 1997: 227).

we should acknowledge that the similarities could also be accounted for by parallel evolution. That is, both bonobo and human populations could have evolved similar female physiological characteristics in distinctive environments. Habermas locates human uniqueness in the emergence of kinship structures that overcome the one-dimensional status order of other primates. This ignores the considerable diversity in social organisation between primate species. It is now recognised that the hierarchical characterisation often given in the past tended to oversimplify the complex interactions present (De Waal, 1995). If we are unique as a species, that uniqueness has proved difficult to locate.<sup>28</sup> We have certainly evolved some extremely specialised faculties that make us different in degree to other species. Yet, even if we take degree of specialisation as the measure of our uniqueness, many other species are equally highly evolved in their own way. It is the presumption of the uniqueness of humanity that has underwritten the efforts of sociologists to theorise a 'social layer' that is distinct from biological evolution. The continuity and overlap between biological and social evolution needs to be recognised and theorised.

Habermas' model does present similar difficulties to Runciman's in theorising the connection between individual and institutional social change. Habermas does underline the importance of changing ideas for human social evolution, yet the interplay between ideas and actions in promoting social change remains inadequately articulated. Possible discontinuities between ideas and their consequences have not been taken into account.

---

<sup>28</sup> As Lopreato (1989) argues, how do we know we are unique unless we first compare ourselves with other species. Few sociologists seem willing to compare. Furthermore, as Wenger (1994) argues, communicative acts have evolved from presymbolic communication among animals that socially co-ordinated their activities. If human uniqueness is to be located it can only be located in the content of the preterreality and not the form.

### **Klaus Eder's Social Contradictions Model**

Klaus Eder (1993: 17-41) agrees with Habermas that learning processes have been critical to the evolution of modern society, but argues that class conflicts have also contributed to the social changes that have enabled evolution to occur. For Eder (1993: 24, 27), learning processes alone will not suffice. Cultural change is not only the result of learning processes, but also of the symbolic practices of specific classes. Discursive communication cannot control its institutional environment, but the symbolic universe produced by discursive information is used to legitimate the institutional framework. Rationalisation produces the symbolic resources to continue reproducing differentiation (Eder, 1993: 21). Eder (1993: 40) argues:

'Collective learning processes function like the mechanism of mutation, offering varying patterns of social reality produced in various social groups. Class conflict functions like the mechanism of selection, favouring the patterns of social distinctions that will be integrated into the institutional system of society. Differentiation and rationalisation function as a mechanism of reproductive isolation, stabilising the system of society.'<sup>29</sup>

Eder resolves the problem of explaining how learning processes can produce new ideas that will change what becomes socially real for members

---

<sup>29</sup> Eder (1993: 40) goes on to note the evolutionary processes that these mechanisms serve are interchangeable in social evolution.

of that group by arguing that 'contradictions' generate these changes. For Eder, 'contradictions' are the basic mechanism of evolution of social systems. Eder (1993: 36) defines a 'contradiction' as a social event where someone opposes what someone else says or does, thus a contradiction presupposes communication. It is quite true that contradiction does literally mean to speak against a claim, to assert that the opposite is true. However, when one person verbally contradicts what another person says, this does not necessarily reflect differences in the world view of two people differently positioned in society, as Eder takes to be the case. I would argue that verbal contradictions more typically correct misinformation. This occurs when someone copies down a phone number incorrectly, repeats it back to check it, and is corrected. A social contradiction, on the other hand, usually refers to a situation that cannot be readily resolved, a situation where someone is simultaneously exposed to incompatible pressures. One example of a social contradiction is the way a young women who has had sexual intercourse with several partners is described as a slut, but one who has not is described as frigid. The contradiction is that there is no way that adverse labelling can be avoided. This need not involve anyone actually opposing the labelling given. Another example is a doctor advising someone to give up their job because it is putting their health at risk, but there is no alternative employment available, and their family needs the money. Again, no-one need oppose anything that anyone has said or done, but the person is still left in an impossible predicament. Such examples do not fit Eder's definition, and so must seriously undermine Eder's (1993: 37) claim that 'without communication, contradiction is a meaningless category'. Yet Eder does recognise that 'contradiction' has not always been understood in the way that he is defining it, as he claims that for Darwinists evolution is seen as the resolution of a contradiction between system and

environment, and for progressivists (or social Darwinists) the resolution of the general contradiction underlying the history of humanity. Neither postulated 'contradiction' necessarily refers to communication.

Eder's concept of 'contradiction' certainly can be applied to the 1981 Springbok tour protests, as both sides were arguing about what the significance of the tour was. The effect was not only to reinforce the prevalent ideology of what it meant to be a New Zealander for the tour supporters, but to familiarise the tour protesters with concepts and arguments that could be used to reinforce their 'new middle class' position. As I will argue in chapter 5, one effect of the discourse that was familiar to tour protesters has been to reduce the possibility of working class mobility into middle class positions. Yet this begs the question of how the new middle class came to have the power to enforce their views. They were already in positions that enabled them to influence recruitment procedures, for example. Eder's model glosses over the differential opportunities available; the way that the context people are located in both constrains and enables the emergence of new social forms.

In this Eder's position differs markedly from Marx. Not only did Marx wish to resolve the general contradiction underlying the history of humanity, but for Marx contradictions were located in both social and material reality, and provoked an intervention rather than evolution. Even though Eder does consider class conflict crucial to the actual social processes involved in evolution, 'contradictions' are defined by Eder within a communication theory that divorces the analysis of social reality from material reality by focusing on the preterreal influences. I would argue that Eder overemphasises teleological change, even though he does locate

evolutionary change in an interactive context, which allows for phenotypical change. He is, however, too quick to dismiss functional and developmental insights into social change. It may be important to consider both the potential for change and the pressures for change in a social situation, and these are not always reducible to what is articulated.

However, I do think that Eder is quite right to assert that attempts to resolve contradictions can provide us with a social process that is quite distinct from biological evolution, as long as we understand social contradictions as contradictory experience that is not necessarily directly related to contradictory communication.

### **Stephen Sanderson's Competitive Interaction Model**

Sanderson (1990, 1994) differs quite markedly from the other social evolutionists that I have been considering in that he argues that there is an essential human nature: we are all essentially selfish. This position is unusual in contemporary social evolutionary thought, as most social evolutionists strenuously distance themselves from any assumptions that can be taken to be contaminated with social Darwinism. Sanderson's insistence on this premise seems to be the result of an emphasis on competition as the motor of evolution. Sanderson, like the others discussed above, is considering social evolution as a parallel process to biological evolution, even though he finds this parallel in competitive interaction rather than in some social equivalent of genes. The emphasis on competitive interaction makes it difficult to find any evolutionary significance in the 1981 Tour protests, as it is difficult to locate how the tour protesters actions were

'intensely selfish'. Certainly, the tour supporters could be considered selfish in their desire for a game of rugby, and we could consider these two groups to be in competition over whether or not the successive rugby games would be held. However, Sanderson's focus on the 'selection' of successful individual action restricts the analysis to whether or not the protests were successful. It discourages us from asking whether or not the protests had any wider ramifications for social life in New Zealand. The emphasis is on phenotypical social change to the exclusion of all else.

Sanderson's characterisation of humans as essentially selfish is particularly evident in his argument against 'group selection' (1994: 56). Neither the biological nor the social 'struggle for survival' is as 'intensely selfish' as he imagines. There is nothing 'intensely selfish' about nurturing young, but evolution selects those who reproduce, not those who fail to reproduce. There is nothing 'intensely selfish' about primate females protecting an alpha male, but females will, to a certain extent, protect an older, established alpha male from a fight against a younger, stronger challenger. There is nothing 'intensely selfish' about passing a ball so that someone else can shoot a certain goal rather than trying a risky shot yourself. Certainly 'group selection' can be overstated, but in all of these cases it is the group that is successful due to the action, not the individual concerned. This does not deny Sanderson's point that the evolution of the state, or the evolution of reciprocity in hunter-gathering societies is a long term historical process. It is to acknowledge that advantages and disadvantages can accrue to a group as a whole in comparison to other groups, and that this sort of successful adaptation needs to be taken into account.

Sanderson (1994: 56) regards 'selection' at any level above the organism as incomprehensible within a 'natural selection' framework that regards the 'intensely selfish' 'struggle for survival' as the driving force of evolution. Sanderson seems to be stressing competition more than is necessary. Within ecology there are certainly those that view interactions with the environment as more significant than competitive interactions (Cooper, 1993).<sup>30</sup> It hardly seems helpful to deny the constraints human society has placed on competition. Robert Park (1936), for example, argued that human customs and consensus limits competition and complicates the social process. I do not agree with Park's identification of competition with the biotic 'substructure' and consensus with the cultural 'superstructure', however. We need to understand the way that both biological mechanisms and social institutions enable and constrain co-ordinated action as well as individual and group competition. If we take ants or bees as an example, I'm sure that most people would agree that one of the reasons for the evolutionary success of these animals has been their remarkable social organisation. The success of each new colony does not depend on the fitness of each individual ant or bee, but on the fitness of the colony as a whole. A particular individual ant or bee may not even survive in the environment that it finds itself in if it was left on its own, even though it does survive as part of a colony. This is because the social organisation as a whole can take advantage of what would count as suboptimal activity for the individual on its own. Furthermore, what may be suboptimal in one context

---

<sup>30</sup> It is important, however, not to treat the 'environment' as an independent variable causing the action observed. That is no advance on treating individual 'traits' as the cause. As Bateson (1972: 338) argues, the action is itself part of the context that we view. It is precisely the view of environment as 'cause' that gives rise to the overemphasis on functional change that denies the dynamics of populations adjusting to their environment (Duncan, 1959).

may well be optimal in another.<sup>31</sup> Thus social organisation can allow traits that would be quickly eliminated if success depended on strictly individual achievement more chance of survival into a somewhat different environment where it may prove to be more effective. By allowing for the survival of a greater diversity of traits, the chances of a new colony succeeding in a previously marginal environment are enhanced.<sup>32</sup>

Some erstwhile state institutions in New Zealand, such as Telecom, can be considered as an example of a social organisation carrying suboptimal activity that has nevertheless been successful in the longer term. These entities were instituted as state monopolies that could only be established and maintained with substantial subsidisation. Nevertheless, despite their 'suboptimal' gestation, they were sustained as institutions, and thus enabled to enter a competitive environment where they now count amongst the most profitable private sector corporations in New Zealand. Social organisation thus underwrites the survival of a greater diversity of characteristics, which has a huge evolutionary advantage as we have no way of knowing ahead of time which characteristics thought of as suboptimal now may be important to survival in the future. Sanderson's failure to take 'group selection' into account effectively restricts his consideration of social institutions to their impact as part of the environment that individuals find themselves in. As a consequence institutional change can only be explained in terms of the effects of actions of those individuals that constitute the

---

<sup>31</sup> Whitehead (1993: 78-9) argues that genetic diversity in itself helps maintain suboptimal traits, but gives other reasons, including that they may be beneficial in tandem with other genes.

<sup>32</sup> As Dobzhansky argued, evolution by 'natural selection' is most effective when it finds ways to store variation for changing environments, rather than use it up (Weber and Depew, 1996: 55). This applies equally to individuals. As Harms (1996: 369) argues, humans are 'variable phenotypes' (have some characteristics that are changeable depending on the circumstances).

institutions. Many sociologists would consider that institutional change cannot always be explained by reduction to the actions of atomised individuals, even though it is the actions of individuals that constitute the institution. As theorists of social movement organisations would acknowledge, institutions also operate within an environment in which they can be more or less effective. The actions taken by individuals are instrumental to organisational success, but these actions alone do not determine whether or not the organisation will succeed in its agenda.

The 'struggle for survival', or more correctly the 'struggle for existence', was intended by Darwin (1859: 58) 'in a large and metaphorical sense, including dependence of one being on another, and including (which is more important) not only the life of the individual but success in leaving progeny'. Anthropomorphisms such as 'intensely selfish' can be put into perspective by applying them to plants. In what sense can we describe a plant as 'intensely selfish'? Any cabbage living in my vege patch may well fail to thrive because I fail to eliminate the weeds that grow more vigorously; but in what sense can we call this a 'struggle'? At times it certainly does seem that the weeds do actually throw all the snails, slugs and caterpillars that they can locate at my languishing cabbages; but it is simply the case that these garden pests prefer the cabbages to the weeds in much the same way that I do. The weeds are no more 'selfish' than the cabbages, they just happen to have the advantage of not being the preferred consumption option of the not inconsiderable invertebrate population of my garden.

I disagree with Sanderson's (1994: 68) assertion: 'that the individual organism is highly self-oriented should be obvious to any parent undertaking

the socialisation of a child'.<sup>33</sup> I'm sure many other parents would not agree. I have often seen young children, barely able to aim correctly at their own mouth, trying to feed Mum or Dad, wanting very much to share. Yet their attempts to share are often dismissed as 'cute', unrecognised, undesired and rejected as inappropriate. We seem to do everything in our power to ensure that youngsters get the message that sharing is not approved of. We tell youngsters that they are not to touch anything that they are interested in exploring, as it doesn't belong to them. We buy them toys instead, which we hasten to assure them, do belong to them, and they can play with. Then we wonder why they don't want other children playing with the precious few things that they are allowed to play with, even though, according to the logic that we have been at such pains to instil in them, these are things that quite clearly do not belong to the other children, so they should not be playing with them. Is it that they are 'intensely selfish' and so cannot share, or is it that they have learnt to share our own social rules of individualism all too well? I would have thought it more obvious, at least in Western societies where the benefits of having children are largely socialised, but the costs largely borne by the parents, that the willingness of people to become parents is ample proof that the human individual is typically not highly self-oriented. This exposition of the essential nature of humanity as selfish betrays a common enough but misperceived notion of how evolution proceeds in biology. Sanderson's contention that biological features are randomly distributed rather than normally distributed is equally erroneous.

---

<sup>33</sup> There is considerable evidence that a fundamental 'need to belong' is an innate feature of human behaviour, and that interdependent relationships are characterised by mutual concern for the interests and outcomes of the other ( Brewer and Gardner, 1996: 83, 86).

Sanderson argues that social evolution does not arise randomly because there is no strict equivalent to the gene in social evolution. Rather, 'variations in human thought and action on which social evolutionary selection operates arise primarily in a deliberate and purposive manner' (1994: 5). I consider Sanderson's belief in the primacy of genetic mutation in the course of biological evolution to be misplaced. Certainly genetic mutation has influenced biological evolution. Yet this is only to say that at times genetic information is imperfectly copied, and that the results are not always as disastrous as they usually are. Much the same could be said of social communications. An action can be deliberately and purposively chosen on the basis of a misunderstanding, and the result is not always as disastrous as it usually is. The communication of information may have been deliberately misleading, but it is more likely to have been innocently intended, and the misunderstanding therefore was quite 'accidental'. Fortuitous results from such 'accidental' conjunctions are 'random' in precisely the same sense that genetic mutation is 'random'. I certainly agree with Sanderson (1994: 54) that there are structural limits on the randomness of social variation, but equally there are structural limitations on the randomness of biological variation.

Sanderson (1994: 61) argues that sociological variation tends to be normally distributed, whereas biological evolution is premised on the random distribution of variation. On the contrary, biological variation is typically also normally distributed, and the neo-Darwinian synthesis recognises the normal biological evolutionary process occurring when changing environmental circumstances or changing patterns of interspecific relationships shifts the distribution of an attribute of members of a species

over time.<sup>34</sup> For evolution to occur, what is most typical of the population must be less successful than an unusual characteristic or combination of characteristics. The process whereby what was, at one point in time, unusual, over successive reproductive generations, at another point in time, becomes usual, is called 'natural selection' in biology. The textbook example of 'natural selection' in operation is that of the peppered moths in Manchester in England (Whitehead, 1993: 76). These moths were predominantly light coloured in the 1850's, but became predominantly dark coloured over the next century, as the bark of the trees that they were resting on became progressively darker, due to industrial pollution. With regard to social evolution, a parallel example of 'selection' could be the rising divorce rates in Western societies in the past few decades. For divorce to be an option that can be pursued, something like it must already exist in some form. Changes in the divorce law, like changes in the bark colour, change the environment that serves to make divorce a more or less feasible option.

These very simple examples can be misleading, however. Evolution more typically involves a combination of characteristics. Doubtless some people in feudal Europe were more hard-working than others; doubtless some were more eager to achieve some measure of respect or recognition than others, some would have been more methodical than others, and some certainly renounced wealth, pleasure and luxury while others did not. Yet these social characteristics would rarely have been well developed in the same person. The person who renounced wealth may have been drawn to monastic orders, whilst the person seeking advancement may have thought

---

<sup>34</sup> Darwin's cousin Galton was the first to treat deviation from an expected statistical distribution as a key to successful evolutionary explanations, and this was the basis of the fusion between Mendelism and Darwinism, the neo-Darwinian evolutionary synthesis (Weber and Depew, 1996: 36).

of the courts, or the army. Yet this highly atypical combination of social characteristics in feudal terms, did come to be developed by Protestants. No-one living in the fourteenth century would have pointed to such an oddball and said that this sort of person would be instrumental in founding a New Age. Protestantism, in turn, successfully stabilised as a social form, and this was in some part due to the way that the Protestant ethic enabled capitalist entrepreneurs to develop a distinctive, successful, social niche in which they thrived. The combination of characteristics that ultimately proves successful is only known in retrospect, and this is true both of biological and social evolution.

Evolution is not a consequence of 'random change', whatever that might be.<sup>35</sup> It is a consequence of difference that matters, difference in a context in which the difference does result in a difference in outcome. There needs to be not only difference, but some context in which one alternative is more successful than another. Evolution is the consequence of contextually significant difference. Sanderson's contention that biological evolution is about the random mutation of genetic information is substantially misplaced. Mutation, whether we consider it to be 'random' or 'directed', is significant biologically because it is a source of contextually significant difference.

---

<sup>35</sup> For example, Lewontin argues that natural selection refers to non-random processes that result in differential reproduction (Lennox and Wilson, 1994). Wesson (1991) also argues that evolutionary change is not random, but argues that evolution typically postulates humanity as a chance product, whereas he understands evolution to be goal directed, the result of purposeful design. The evidence that he cites is that the chance of stable galaxies forming out of a Big Bang are 1 in  $10^{60}$ . I would argue that the chance of winning a big lottery is similarly astronomical, but that does not mean that the winner is purposively chosen. Much of the difficulty seems to be with what is meant by 'chance', 'random', 'accidental' or 'contingent', discussed in footnote 13 above.

Although Sanderson posits a fundamental difference between biological and social evolution that does not exist, he does otherwise recognise that evolution merely requires variation, including some source of variation, and some context in which those variations do make a difference. Sanderson is the only social evolutionist that I have come across that does recognise that a specific mechanism that produces social variation is not essential. For social evolution to occur there need only be variability and a social context in which difference does matter.

### **Starting with Humans**

All the social evolutionary theorists discussed have, to varying extents, treat culture as a separate layer to biology. This seems to be the case irrespective of whether they take a macro or a micro approach to social evolution. The micro approach to social evolution that centres on the individual can view social evolution as a continuation of physiological evolution, as Harms and Sanderson do. In the micro view the evolution of social institutions can be related to the evolution of the individual as the context of that evolutionary process and evolving in much the same way as specific ecological habitats. The evolution of human social institutions can also be considered relatively independently, as more or less successful in a larger context, in which the institutions can continue to evolve, or become extinct, in their own right, as Runciman, Habermas and Eder do. Social institutions are generally treated as evolutionary 'context' in evolutionary models that emphasise phenotypical social change, and as evolutionary 'objects' in other models; although most contemporary models do try to bridge the gap, incorporating elements of more than one approach to social

change. Centering attention on the individual runs into difficulties in justifying a strong distinction between biological and social evolution. The implication of Darwin's theory is that we are not unique, differences between humans and other animals are a matter of degree rather than kind (Gould, 1973: 50). Thus any theorisation of social evolution based on the individual should also be applicable to other biological organisms, to the extent that they also have a social life. Yet most sociologists theorising social evolution based on the individual seem to be theorising something that is uniquely human. The approach to evolution that centres on human social institutions is, of course, dealing with something that is uniquely human, but runs into difficulties in adequately accounting for social change without referring to the individuals whose actions and beliefs maintain the institution, and the influences of contexts outside the institution on those individuals' actions within the institution. Certainly social organisations can be considered relatively independently, but to focus specifically on social organisations reduces what can be theorised about social life to what is contained in social organisations.

One problem with starting with humans is that ideas have become so important to human social life, that it is tempting to theorise social evolution in terms of the evolution of ideas, and to view social change as the result of ideas changing, as Habermas does. There is a difficulty in fitting this approach into an evolutionary model, however, as we cannot explain ruptures in thinking in evolutionary terms without reference to something beyond ideas. We cannot experience an epiphany<sup>36</sup> unless we have had experiences that are better explained by an alternative framework to the one

---

<sup>36</sup> See Denzin (1989a & b) for a discussion of epiphany.

we had used previously. The rupture occurs as we begin to understand some of our experiences in relation to the new framework. Once we admit that there is something more to the evolution of ideas than ideas alone, then treating ideas as the basis of social evolution is no longer adequate. Once we admit that new experiences can affect a change in our ideas, as it can become easier to make sense of those experiences in a different frame, then we need to examine how we can bring experiences into an evolutionary model. The alternative that has been developed is to theorise about behaviour, rather than ideas, as the basis of social evolution, as Harms, Runciman and Eder do. Treating behaviour as the basis of social evolution does mean that material as well as ideal phenomena are included, but this requires some way of distinguishing biological behaviour from social behaviour if social evolution is to be distinguished from biological evolution. Hence Harm's 'acquired behaviour traits', which presumably refers to behaviour that is not genetically acquired, but acquired through processes such as socialisation. Again, Runciman's 'practices' could be both biological or social, except that he specifies them as being embedded in roles and institutions. So it would appear that what distinguishes social from biological behaviour is not inherent in the behaviour itself, but rather in the context that it is acquired and/or practised in. These theorisations thus depend on the social being understood as being some sort of 'layer' of reality distinct from the biological 'layer'.

All these theorists have made pertinent and valuable points. Harms has emphasised that the change in relative frequencies of micro social differences is the benchmark of social evolution; we cannot treat social evolution as somehow occurring independently of the actions of people which form our social institutions. Runciman is also quite correct to assert

that not all microsocial changes matter in evolutionary terms; only those that do affect change in social institutions.<sup>37</sup> Habermas draws attention to the importance of the changing ideas people hold to human social evolution, and Eder puts this in the context of contradictions that people try to resolve. This means that we do not need to specify a specific social equivalent to the genetic material of biological evolution, such as memes, behavioural traits, or practices, as Sanderson recognises. We need only understand social evolution as some sort of cumulative change in our everyday interactions in which we are influenced by the situation that we find ourselves in even as we attempt to influence that situation. Evolution is the influence of context. We affect the context that we are in, and we are affected by it.<sup>38</sup>

Within this context, material and ideal phenomena do co-evolve socially, but clearly this is not the same process as physiological co-evolution. In the giraffe neck example referred to above, the length of the neck and the size of the heart evolve together as the length of the neck could not continually increase without the heart also continually enlarging to supporting increased circulation demands (Bateson, 1972: 360). We can regard social phenomena as analogous in that particular ideologies begin and grow in a specific context; and, if successful, may at least partially transform those circumstances to a condition that ensures the further success of the

---

<sup>37</sup> Nicos Mouzelis (1993) makes a stronger argument, that social structures are not an aggregation of micro events, because a single encounter can be a macro event. He gives the example of signing a peace treaty. However, this ignores the micro events that cause and result from the 'macro event'. Certainly, if the treaty is broken the next day, the supposedly macro event will have very little ongoing significance for the micro actors that would otherwise have been affected. There is much more that supports the 'macro event' than a few men signing papers.

<sup>38</sup> This applies to biological as well as social environments. Lewontin has critiqued the neo-Darwinian concept of a static environment. He argues that living things reconstruct their habitat. Habitats are made as much as found (Allen, 1997: 237). See also footnote 32 above.

ideology. Yet there is an important distinction to make between strictly physiological evolution, and social evolution. In physiological evolution, an evolutionary process such as the co-evolution of giraffe neck length and heart size does reach a more or less stable end point. In social evolution, the concrete changes facilitated by ideal changes can overtake the adaptive capacity of the ideology that promoted those changes. Thus while Protestantism as an ideology facilitated the growth of capitalism as a social and material reality, this in turn allowed for the emergence of a new ideology, Secularism. The circumstances may have changed relatively slowly, but the ideology seems to have jumped in a way that is difficult to describe as 'evolution' if we are considering competing ideologies in isolation. Our understandings jump from one framework to another in a way that is difficult to reconcile to the idea of a smooth progression. As I argued in the previous chapter, we certainly can and do use different frameworks. We can make comparisons between the knowledge that emerges from the different framework and so judge the suitability of the framework for the use we have in mind; but we cannot merge the frameworks. It is simply not the case that Protestantism, as a whole, slowly evolved into Secularism. To be sure, we can consider the relative frequency of each ideology as evolving, but we cannot explain the emergence of one from the other with reference only to ideology. Something similar has been happening in New Zealand. There is a discontinuity between the ideas that the rugby supporters expressed and those expressed by the tour protesters, one ideology does not simply evolve into another. Furthermore, the social cleavages between the proponents of the two ideologies tends to reinforce the perception of both groups that their own view provides a more adequate explanation of social reality. Yet these divergent ideologies not only serve to maintain the social cleavages they expose, they also affect the way that

available opportunities will be exploited, and so can have a direct impact on social change.

The problem here lies in attempting to consider the evolution of ideologies in isolation from the social contexts that they refer to. Considering anything in isolation is antithetical to evolutionary thinking. Certainly, an idea can become detached from one concrete reference and attached to another, which makes it possible to trace the 'development' of an idea; but this is, in itself, a meaningless exercise. It only becomes meaningful because of the social changes that these attachments and detachments invoke; the trade-offs that can be made as a consequence.

### **Trade-offs**

Trade-offs may seem to imply situations of compromise, but it should be stressed that this is not necessarily the case. As Niklas Luhmann (1997) indicates, much social life evolves as what is done in one place alters the conditions, or the circumstances surrounding what may be done in another. Political decision makers do not directly control what economic decision makers (such as manufacturers) do, but their policies can critically affect the decisions that manufacturers make, so that any particular option is more or less viable than what it would otherwise have been. Equally, manufacturers actions indirectly affect the options politicians have available to them. Yet we often seem to assume that politicians can directly affect the economic decisions of private enterprise corporations. As Luhman indicates, this betrays the way we often fail to carefully differentiate between what can be controlled within the social situation we are

examining, and what are influences beyond immediate control. It is the circumstances that decide the viability of any option, and thus changing circumstances provide a context in which options that previously would not succeed, may now become successful. Compromise implies a situation of equitable interaction against a stable background situation. Social change more typically involves changing circumstances. This occurs when one action affects a change in circumstance for another participant, who reacts in a way that changes the circumstances for the original actor, and so on. The outcome of such manoeuvring may be far removed from the original intentions of either party, but may nevertheless result in a trade-off that both parties are willing to live with.

John Markoff's (1997) examination of the French revolution provides an example of this. Markoff emphasises the way in which the action of legislators and protesters involved in rural mobilisation during the years 1788-93 acted and reacted in a way that eventually stabilised at a position that was not simply a compromise between the desires of the two groups, nor did it correspond to the starting point of either group. Markoff discusses the interaction between the insurrectionary process, with peaks and troughs of collective rural action, and the legislative process, with moments of relatively minor legal refinements and moments of major revisions in the law, during the French revolution. Markoff argues that the convergence of these processes occurred as each provided the context for the others' actions over a relatively brief period. The rural conflicts were originally over subsistence and taxation issues, and only became focused on seigneurial privileges in the course of the interaction. The bourgeois legislators, on the other hand, opposed seigneurial privileges, but favoured implementing some form of compensation. They only came to favour

outright abolition in the period of interaction with rural agitation. The abolition of seigneurial privileges was not, Markoff argues, a compromise, but a convergent radicalisation (1997: 1138). Clearly, although the outcome was not a compromise in the sense of finding some sort of midway position that both would agree to, the outcome did involve trade-offs for both groups. The position of both groups that in varying ways wanted changes to the situation as it existed at the time changed to take advantage of the other group's position. This ultimately resulted in a critical transformation. The material reality so obvious to the rural poor - hunger - was initially linked to immediate causes - too much tax to pay - and not to more distant causes such as seigneurial privileges. The bourgeois definition of the problem changed as the political realities of the rural situation impinged upon them. The material reality of rural unrest continued to provide the bourgeois with the grounds for justifying their political project (1997: 1135), and thus increasingly prescribed the options available politically that could be ideologically defended. Peasant mobilisation, on the other hand, resulted in concessions on seigneurial rights, even when the peasants themselves had other targets (1997: 1136). This encouraged peasants to push for the abolition of those rights, such as taxation rights, that would make a material difference to them; even though this was not initially on the agenda of bourgeois legislators.

Markoff (1997: 1115-1117) is surely correct to question the way that the French Revolution has been portrayed as involving an alliance between peasants and bourgeois against the lords which resulted from their common interest in dismantling the seigneurial regime. Markoff (1997: 1138) is careful not to underestimate the importance of long term structural change in understanding the changing concerns and options available, but does

contend that 'some very important things sometimes come together in a very short span of time that are not adequately accounted for by long term processes' (1997: 1114-1115). Yet any claim that contingencies may be more important than long run processes (1997: 1123), is altogether more difficult to prove. Whether or not the politics of France today would be significantly different to what it is, had there been a phase-out of seigneurial rights, as the bourgeois planned, and the peasants' subsistence crisis was met by means other than the abolition of seigneurial rights, is doubtful, even though it is an unanswerable question. What Markoff fails to consider is the importance of long term changes in interests in the ongoing viability of the options taken. Certainly the alliance between bourgeois and peasants was forged over a relatively short period of time - it evolved very rapidly - but what made it successful is that the trade-off was in the interests of both sides. The trade-off gave both sides more than they lost. Although I would agree with Markoff that the alliance between bourgeois and peasants was a consequence rather than a cause of the events; nevertheless this consequence was supported by the long term shifts: the rising political power of the bourgeoisie, and the increasing difficulties in peasant subsistence. An evolutionary perspective provides the possibility of theorising the relationship of both short-term and long-term influences, rather than merely weighing in on one side or the other. The contingencies of the moment are what determines the success of the immediate action: the fortuitous element of what is successful in a particular place at a particular time. Even though in each single instance the contingencies of the moment decides the efficacy of the particular action, the overall effect is that whether or not something can be sustained or reproduced in some stable form over time is determined by the longer term changes taking place that form the context of those actions.

What is immediately advantageous, and what is viable long-term, are both integral aspects of an evolutionary approach. History abounds with opportunists, but few actually establish a New Age. Equally, by the time that we are sufficiently confident of the stability of a new regime to proclaim it a 'New Age', it is quite impossible to catalogue the entire range of fortuitous adaptations that facilitated its emergence. We usually settle for some symbolic event. Markoff is surely correct to note the inadequacies of this gesture. As Markoff (1997: 1131) notes, the bourgeois legislation influenced the type of action peasants used: when the onus of evidence was placed on the peasants, peasants forced lords to denounce their seigneurial rights. When the onus of evidence was placed on the lords, peasants destroyed the property of the lords in an attempt to destroy any relevant papers. In both cases the peasants actions meant that the bourgeois legislators had to reconsider their legislation. The initial adaptation made by the bourgeois did not lead to a stable settlement: it produced unfavourable consequences in rural areas. Peasant reaction pushed bourgeois action further, until a relatively stable 'end point' was reached, which was radically different to the starting point of either peasants or bourgeois. There is directionality in the evolution of a stable 'end-point', a directionality maintained by a ratchet effect of reactions to previous decisions. Neither the bourgeois nor the peasants interests would be served by returning to the seigneurial regime. Once the radical convergence occurred, there was no going back.

## **The Ratchet of Social Change**

Even though evolution can be defined simply as slow, gradual change, it is often distinguished from the sort of slow change of long wave business cycles, or of ecological succession. Certainly such cycles can be important in evolutionary terms because some changes will be more successful at one part of the cycle than another. Evolution is more typically associated with change that survives far beyond the length of such cycles, and, unlike cyclical change, it is relatively irreversible. In biological evolution relative irreversibility is quite evident. The kiwi is a flightless bird; but it is still a bird, and not a pre-avian vertebrate. Some theorists of social evolution have thought that social organisation also became locked into a 'basic plan'. For example, anthropologists at first classified the Moriori society of Rekohu (Chatham Islands) as a huntergathering society not only on the basis of its economy, but also because it displays social features common among foraging communities, such as a more decentralised leadership than is common in agricultural societies (Sutton, 1985). These early anthropologists argued that Moriori society was a much more primitive society than the Maori, so their ancestors must have become isolated relatively early in the evolution of the human species, and never evolved to the level of an agricultural society, as the Maori had. Thus for many of the educated nineteenth century European settlers in New Zealand, the Maori was potentially a 'civilisable' race, whereas the Moriori were not. Later research has established that Moriori shared a common, agricultural, tropical East Polynesian ancestry with the Maori, betrayed by common language characteristics and the archaeological record of artefacts in both communities (Sutton, 1985; King 1989). Clearly the evolution of social organisation has proved reversible. If we go far enough back, the ancestors

of the people of tropical East Polynesia changed from foraging to agriculture, and their Moriori descendants changed back again, albeit in a distinctive form. This story is, however, exceptional. The more common story is of social changes that are not, in practise, reversible. The Luddites who broke textile machines between 1811 and 1816 in the hope of forestalling the technological changes that left them unemployed, do seem to have set themselves against an irreversible process of change. Yet the example of the Moriori of Rekohu, shows us that social organisation is not as irreversible as physiological organisation, given a suitable, relatively isolated, context. Thus when we seek to explain what it is that not only maintains a style of social organisation, but generally favours 'development' from that point over 'regression', we cannot speak of the irreversibility from a certain 'level' or 'basic plan'. We need to consider instead how the circumstances present a 'ratchet'. How it is that there is, generally, 'no going back'.

Michael Hammond (1996) provides an analysis of a social ratchet: the transition from foraging to agricultural societies. Hammond argues that the minimal inequality in foraging cultures was maintained as the efforts necessary to access leadership positions rarely paid off in terms of disproportionate returns to leaders. This was because attempts to increase dominance were met with an effective response: walking away and establishing a new community. When the population growth filled the available foraging niche in the world, an alternative to foraging emerged. Horticulture escalates the cost of walking away, which provides leaders with a window of opportunity to effectively increase returns to themselves at the expense of others. Hammond argues that leaders were likely to exploit this opportunity for physiological reasons. Furthermore, the magnified positive

affective returns from inequality predisposed leaders to embrace an ideological justification for their special positions. The same physiological processes render resistance unlikely, then as now. Resistance requires a high degree of repetitive activity and little in the way of available arousers to sustain efforts.<sup>39</sup> So the ratchet of social organisation for horticulture was maintained by the interaction of both ecological and physiological constraints in a context with few alternatives.

Against this we should note that the people of Rekohu did not have the option of walking away either, and yet the social organisation on Rekohu did change to a more decentralised type of leadership, much closer to the foraging style of community than an agricultural community. Perhaps the degree of inequality prevalent in tropical East Polynesia could not be sustained in Rekohu because the necessary surplus could not be effectively produced in the longer term without critically endangering the survival of such a small population base during lean times. The environment was ill suited to horticulture, given the cultivars available to the people at the time; and became increasingly so during the onset of an 'Ice Age'. Decentralisation minimised the 'cost of separation' between the people and the most economic resource, the fur seal. The geographic distribution of Moriori after 1500 AD closely resembled that of the seals (Sutton, 1985: 8). By contrast, horticulture and trading were possibilities available to the Maori. I would suggest that the long term ability to produce a surplus may also be a critical factor in transitions between foraging and agricultural societies. Hammond seems to assume this capacity always existed in

---

<sup>39</sup> For a contemporary example, the new media image of self-confident women pits pleasure and desire in the forms of fashionable, sexy appearances against the effort and boredom of the womens movement (Haug, 1995: 137-8).

communities producing agricultural products. There are doubtless other factors in the emergence of Moriori society. The isolation of Rekohu meant that the Moriori did not have to maintain defences against outsiders, which became increasingly important to the social organisation of Maori iwi. This would mean that there was little in the way of a material justification for the ideologies that supported central organisation for the Moriori. Furthermore, the ideologies of tropical East Polynesia were being retold within a very different geographical context, so that the meaning of references would have to be maintained differently to tropical East Polynesia, or, indeed, to mainland Aotearoa (New Zealand). The long term evolution of Maori and Moriori societies produced quite different forms of social organisation, yet each moved towards a form of social organisation that made the most of the possibilities available in their respective social and ecological contexts.

We have no idea of the specific contingencies of the moment that actually drove the social changes involved,<sup>40</sup> but we can note that the overall trend was to forms of social organisation that were more effective in utilising existing resources in the prevailing circumstances. It would seem that the long term viability of the form of social organisation for its environment has not been without influence on the divergence between Maori and Moriori social organisation. Furthermore, the changing environment, including the changing social context can also be shown to have influenced the development of Maori social organisation. The most

---

<sup>40</sup> I am arguing that ecological contingencies certainly do impact on social processes, but it is useful to maintain the distinction between what is happening socially and the ecological context that it is happening in, so that social change is a change in what is happening socially. Thus the immediate causes of social change are social, irrespective of what the wider influences may be. The social response to environmental events is the direct cause of any social change that results; the indirect cause, the environmental event, is mediated by the idiosyncrasies of the specific response.

obvious example is the development of defensive pa, which suggests that defence became increasingly important for Maori. An earlier example could be the abandonment of taro production in the far North. The reason is not known, and could be related both to ecological and demographic stresses. The production from the extensive drained and reticulated taro plantations was replaced with smaller, more widely dispersed kumara plots on slopes. There is no oral record of an ecological disaster, even though there is oral record of taro production (Barber, 1989). This seems to suggest demographic reasons were more significant. Indeed, the timing does coincide with an era of increasing population growth, when such an extensive resource would certainly be an obvious target for raids. Kumara growing would certainly seem to be a more effective in utilisation of existing resources in the prevailing circumstances. Again, we do not know what drove the actual decisions which resulted in more kumara growing, or the construction of defensive pa for the Maori, or living near the seals for the Moriori; but we do know that those consequences were viable long term options in the changing circumstances. Hence it is the changing circumstances that provide the ratchet of change, what prevents a 'regression' and encourages the further development of the option taken.

As I have noted, evolutionists would argue that evolution has not occurred with phenotypical change, but only when what proved to be effective continues to be successful, so that the proportion of the population with the trait increases and stabilises. The short term contingencies are pivotal for immediate success of an option, but it is only when this coincides with a longer term realignment that we can speak of evolution rather than 'random' opportunistic events. It is only when there is a stable reproduction, so that what was an unusual phenomena becomes normal, that

evolution has occurred. This is most likely to occur when the environment has changed somewhat so that the change continues to be more successful. Social evolution does not require a distinctive model of evolution, but an acknowledgement of the much greater complexity of influences than has been typically considered by biologists. Social evolutionists need to be particularly cognisant of the vastly increased capacity humans have to affect the social environment in which others operate. The hegemony of neo-Darwinian theory in biology has meant that a phenotypical focus has tended to dominate discussion of biological evolution. As discussed in the previous chapters, there are inherent limitations in any focus, and the limitation of a phenotypical focus is the tendency to focus on the 'object of selection' and how the object changes, rather than the environment, the circumstances in which the change proved successful, and how changes in the environment can affect long-term viability. It is important, then to acknowledge both the short term contingencies that contribute to the change, and the long term viability that facilitates the maintenance of the change.

### **The Mutual Emergence of Social and Preterreal Institutions**

If the argument is made that evolution proceeds with changes in the relative frequencies of different relationships, rather than different characteristics, we can more closely convey the interactive situation that is at the centre of evolutionary explanations. I would like to suggest that we can distinguish between the biological and social in such an interactive context. In chemical interactions, the form of the entities involved changes in any interaction. The biological emerges with the capacity of an entity to act on other entities without having to change its own form. All entities can

react to changes in the environment; but preterreality emerges when the reaction is not automatic. When the processes involved have content or information that the organism acts on, the content or information is preterreal. The organisation of the information becomes a perception or understanding that is a preterreal reflection of reality. The social emerges with the capacity of an entity to affect some change in another entity without changing the form of that entity either. This can be done by directly acting on the environment of the other, changing the circumstances that the other entity operates in. It can also be done indirectly, by influencing another organism's preterreality, so affecting the organism's perception of its environment. Providing information, such as warning of an approaching predator, is an example of indirect action. Human social capacities quite clearly do both, very effectively. What is unusual about the human species is the extent to which we have inscribed each other's minds and our shared environment with the products of our social capacities. These material products - buildings, clothes, plantations, tools, toys weapons, drains, records, and so forth, as well as pathways in the brain - provide material constraints that facilitate the mutual construction of social institutions and preterreal understandings in social interaction.

As I argued in the last chapter, knowing is inseparable from being. Knowledge is a participation in what is to be known, and it is shaped by whatever is involved in that participation. Our mental capacities evolved with our physiological capabilities, both shaped by the context that people found themselves in and expanding on the preterreal capacities that already existed. As a social species, the context pre-humans lived in is not only a geological and ecological environment, but also a social situation.

Durkheim (1912) has provided an explanation of how human knowledge co-evolves with early human social institutions from that context.

Durkheim argues that all animals share a capacity to perceive similarities and difference, and social systems of classification or 'cosmologies' have evolved from these capacities. These cosmologies are patterned on social relationships. For cosmologies to come into existence, the mental category of classification must be developed. Other animals can perceive things as being of different types, but the idea of a hierarchy is specific to humans. Durkheim argues that humans developed the ability to classify through participation in totemic rites in which the classifications are socially real. This means that there is a direct correspondence between the social reality and the mental classifications. The rites or practices are social facts which create categories that are collective ideas that explain and represent the rites. The categories are empirically valid as they do correspond exactly to what exists socially, but the cosmologies elaborated from them are not empirically valid (Rawls, 1996: 453,457, 462).

Categories enable us to understand the world, but constrain us to understand it along certain axes (Schervish et al, 1996: 161). For Kant, it was categories of understanding that stand between things and the knowing self. Kant understood categories to be prior to experience and applied by the mind to the world. Durkheim, on the other hand, rejected the prior existence of categories, arguing that they reflected the earliest forms of social organisation (Schervish et al, 1996: 162, 163). Durkheim (in Lee, 1994: 402) argued: 'our minds... "interpenetrate one another". We find "collective ways of acting and thinking...already formed", making it difficult for

individuals to “modify them in direct proportion to...the material and moral supremacy of society over its members”. As David Lee (1994: 403) notes:

‘by classification [Durkheim] clearly did not mean reflective conceptualisation but schemata controlling individual’s experience of the physical and social cosmos *and prescribing their joint activity within it*. Collective ways of acting and thinking are, therefore, simultaneously ideal and material...Just as material tools mediate between human activity and a material object,... symbolic collective representations are ‘psychological tools which direct the mental processes and behaviour of individuals’.<sup>41</sup>

I would argue that both Kant and Durkheim can be right, if we accept that the social impacts on biological evolution. We do not even need to accept that there are ‘fundamental categories’ as such; but that there is some sort of direct empirical relationship between pre-human and early human social organisation and the physiological organisation of mental capacities, that is a long-term, two-way evolutionary process.

James Jones (1998) discussion of American race issues provides evidence for Durkheim’s description of the mutual emergence of social institutions and preterreal categories. The same cognitive capacities that allow people to collectively identify with their totemic symbol in the totemic rites also inform our assessment of social groups today. Jones argues that race is not only socially constructed but also psychologically constructed

---

<sup>41</sup> Lee (1994: 403) notes that many sociologists today still regard both symbols and ‘forms of consciousness’ either as arbitrary discourse or as passive reflections of ‘real relations’. For Durkheim ‘collective representations’ and the symbols which give them physical presence are neither arbitrary nor passive but the basis of the external constraint of collective existence.

from available social information. In this way power and authority is instantiated in cognitive structures as well as in institutional relationships. He quotes evidence that people have a tendency to ascribe essential qualities to observable categories, and can apply essential ideas to racial categories as early as four years of age. Knowledge of cultural stereotypes is not only similar across levels of racial prejudice, but knowledge of stereotypes has automatic influences on perceptions, judgements and behaviours irrespective of our level of prejudice. Bias in judgement occurs without awareness, even if people are convinced that race has no effect on their judgement. Bias emerges at the very point that people feel that they are becoming more objective, basing their knowledge in what they themselves have seen and heard. It is not the case that people merely see what they want to see in a situation. Our cognitive structures influence our perceptions regardless of what we want to see, and at the very time that when we think we are viewing the evidence objectively. This is known as the 'objectivity fallacy'. When we try to repress racial influences on our judgements, this only serves to make race even more salient in our cognitive processes. If we divide our protesters and our supporters into two groups, and characterise one as non-violent and the other as violent, our theorising has fallen prey to an 'objectivity fallacy'.

Durkheim argued that the empirical details of enacted practices enabled categories of understanding to emerge (Rawls, 1996: 430).<sup>42</sup> Durkheim rejected empiricism, that there is a direct relationship between perception and reality; but he also rejected apriorism, that categories exist in

---

<sup>42</sup> A cultural or social constructivist interpretation of Durkheim argues that he highlights the beliefs and collective representations of totemic rituals as the social basis of early human understanding; whereas Durkheim directly links social and mental categories.

the mind as a biological given. Durkheim argued that people do have a shared common conceptual basis that is socially based (Rawls, 1996: 432-3). Durkheim's epistemology posits a direct relation between categories (including space, time, classification, force, causality) and social reality (Rawls, 1996: 439). For example, the category of causality is formed as a result of experiencing a relationship and understanding the relationship in terms of the effect of one on another. As a result the category of causality is formed which understands causality is a necessary or efficient force. Durkheim argues that this can be immediately perceived as a general phenomenon in a single instance. He argues that this did occur when participating in totemic rites (Rawls, 1996: 441-5). The totemic rites do provide a real experience of the category of causality, because the involvement in the rite does cause individuals to experience the social reproduction of the totemic species, as the totemic species is reproduced in them as the social group that identifies with and is identified with that totem (Rawls, 1996: 447-451). Durkheim distinguishes between the social force that exist within and beyond the rite, and the empirical perception of that social reality that enable cosmologies of ideas to develop that become forces in their own right. These ideas are responsive to structural changes, but also have an inertia. As a consequence ideas generated by the interpretation of social processes can lose their relation to social practice. Therefore there is no continuing necessary relation between the ideas and the social reality (Rawls, 1996: 438,9). However, the needs of intelligibility still place demands on the development of forms of social practice (Rawls, 1996: 452).

## **Emotions and Evolution**

For Durkheim, emotions structured primordial religious life which is then institutionalised and rationalised. Weber argued that emotional or religious experience is of little consequence for social evolution unless professional leadership transforms ecstasy into regulated behaviour (Evans, 1997: 235). My position is that 'primordial religious life', such as totemic rites, already enabled the structuring of emotions that aligned social and psychological processes. Against Weber, I argue that repression is more typically the aim of political rather than religious leadership. Past repressions, whatever has been sublimated, can be accessed and released in ritual without being made conscious, if the ritual is appropriate. Regulation in religion has more to do with standardisation and control that attempts to maintain an alignment of the social and psychological. Both Durkheim and Weber seem to conceive of human evolution as a progression towards increasing intellect and away from emotions. They underestimate the continuing significance of emotions for our social experience.

J. Barbalet (1996) argues that as the future is unknown, this limits the extent that rational and cognitive processes are able to deal with the future. An emotional apprehension of circumstances can help us deal with the future. Emotion evaluates external or environmental events and processes through bodily and non-deliberative reactions to them. Confidence, trust and loyalty are future oriented emotions, and they are central emotions to social situations. Lack of confidence leads to uncertainty which curtails action; it also leads to isolation which limits access to resources and opportunities to act. Confidence is the emotion of

assured expectation. Trust is a particular form of confidence: a confident expectation of benign intentions of others, or confidence that another's actions will correspond with one's expectations. Trust is an affective or emotional acceptance of dependence on others. Loyalty maintains relations even in the absence of confidence and trust, it is a broader trust in the face of local disappointments. Barbalet argues that forced options are characteristic of social life, and require emotional rather than logical choice. He quotes Luhmann arguing that trust is 'rational', in the sense of being socially effective. Trust is an 'orienting rationality' rather than calculative rationality of rational choice. Certainly we need to consider emotion as a form of information processing that incorporates a bodily mediated response, and that is vital to human survival and social organisation.

Ian Burkitt (1997:37,40) makes a stronger case, that emotion is a mode of communication within relationships. Emotions arise within relationships, but are corporeal or embodied as well as sociocultural. Emotions are the result of what is happening in relationships, not what is happening inside of people. Leontyer argues that there is nothing that pre-exists the emotive action that could then be called the emotion proper, which is then expressed through action (Burkitt, 1997: 41). I disagree. Emotion can exist in the absence of action, such as sleepless nights over a lost lover, or being made redundant. Nevertheless these examples do demonstrate that emotions are the product of a social situation provoking the bodily response. Burkitt (1997: 50) is surely correct to argue that precepts and regulations that govern emotions are enabling us as much as constraining.

Paul Schervish, Raymond Halnon and Karen Halnon (1996) have provided a way of linking emotional experience to social contradictions. This provides us with a way of enhancing Eder's model of evolution. Eder posited contradiction as the basic mechanism of human social evolution, but understood contradiction in terms of individual speech events rather than in terms of social contradictions. Schervish et al argue that people know what brings happiness and what brings distress. Both emerge from the same reality. Many of the symbols, events and relations of the world are not simply opposed to one another, but in themselves produce contradictory emotions. It is not simply a question of choosing good, but rather of acknowledging both good and evil; and enhancing what is good, winning good from evil (Schervish et al, 1996: 148).

Their understanding derives from Durkheim, who saw emotions as having psychoevolutionary history shared by many species. His thesis was that the physiological capability to generate emotions allowed shared cognitive categories to emerge based in emotionally charged interactions (Tenhouten, 1996: 3,4). Pre-human emotions allowed for bodily mediated responses to social situations without a highly developed intellect. Schervish et al (1996: 161) consider contradiction to be a universal category that emerged along with space, time, number and cause. Contradiction is the recognition of mutually constitutive, imperialistically impinging, radically opposed aspects of reality. The good and the bad are not always separable, neither for us as individuals, nor for our social institutions. For example, the free market is an example of anarchy, which allows individuals considerable liberty, but also allows exploitation and so produces considerable inequity. This can be overcome by bureaucratic organisation,

an example of rationalism, which provides security but stifles creativity and freedom (Sayer, 1997: 479).

Schervish et al (1996: 147) define the basic contradictions of life in general as 'mysterium' and 'onus'. Mysterium are life-giving ideas, sentiments and behaviours, whereas onus are debilitating ideas, sentiments and behaviours. They argue that vigilance is needed to advance mysterium and ward off onus (Schervish & Halnon, 1996: 153). 'At every moment of conscious agency people navigate the contradiction between mysterium and onus, just as at every moment they navigate space, time and causation' (Schervish & Halnon, 1996: 165). Against Freud, they argue that desire mobilises people toward mysterium and away from onus.

Schervish et al (1996: 154) argue that mysterium and onus exist only as material incarnations, so we cannot abandon the material aspects of the situation, only transform our relationship to them. Against Freud they argue that the pleasure drive can lead to mysterium or onus within the material mediums of institution and culture (Schervish et al, 1996: 159). The fundamental conflict is not between pleasure and prohibition, but between alternative pleasure/prohibition sets of mysterium and onus. What is good for me is not necessarily burdensome for others; and vice-versa. Agency is thus a navigation, trying to maximise authenticity (mysterium) and minimise debilitation (onus) (Schervish et al, 1996: 160). The superego is also dual; it provides potential as well as constraint in social prohibitions, it can be a source of both onus and mysterium.

For Schervish et al (1996: 164-5), categories exist in the nature of human cognition where intellect and emotion coexist. Contradiction is

socially specified as sacred (mysterium) and profane (onus), so that sacred and profane originated from experientially validated emotional knowledge about mysterium and onus. I agree that the sacred and profane could well have originated in this way, but would only remain so to the extent that it remains socially constituted in this way. This necessitates a fairly totalising social experience to work, yet it also allows for criticism to emerge from the experience of empirical invalidation of an ideological claim. What is identified as good, may not in fact turn out to be mysterium; and equally that what is identified as evil may not be onus for the individual.

### **The Emergence of the Symbolic**

Durkheim does not account for the origins of the symbols used in totemic rites, but Eugene Halton (1992) has suggested that dreams may have provided the origin of human symbolic activity. Totems themselves may have originated in and been reinforced by juxtapositions in dreams, for example.<sup>43</sup> As rites occur in space, there could also be an element of more or less accidental juxtaposition in the social antecedents as well.<sup>44</sup> For Halton the 'cultic' is a living impulse to meaning that remains an essential ingredient of culture. The symbol is not unmotivated or arbitrary, it is the sign most dependent on lived experience for its development.

---

<sup>43</sup> Dream juxtaposition may have evolved as a way of enlarging subconscious experience, which enlarges our capacity to deal with events that may occur but we have not previously experienced. An example of dream juxtaposition is dreaming of someone with the same first name rather than the actual person that the dream related to. Baudrillard (1982: 287-8) gives a real life example of two disappearances connected by the same first name; which enabled him to render the conjunction of events intelligible without the secret of either being penetrated. This parallels the logic underlying the totemic experience.

<sup>44</sup> As Massey (1992) argues, space is both ordered in the sense of being socially caused, and a juxtaposition of different causes with unintended consequences.

Halton provides a complementary account to Durkheim of emerging symbolic intelligence. Both accounts imply a mental capacity to project aspects of ourselves onto an 'other'. Durkheim begins with the totemic rite, which he argues in itself creates the social forces that in turn create the moral unity of the participants, strengthening the group and hence the group's symbol, the totem. The identification with the totem thus creates what Schervish et al (1996) would identify as the mysterium (good) which is its own effect. Mysterium is projected onto the totem in much the same way that in later times the scapegoat becomes the despised other, the repository of onus (trouble), allowing what remains, mysterium, to be identified with our self. Such processes of identification and projection may have emerged before our ancestors became distinctly human. Halton (1992) argues that the key aspect to emerging symbolic intelligence is the ability to learn from the instinctual intelligence of other biological organisms: to read a sign of the changing seasons from a particular plant species flowering, for example. This recognition is not instinctive, and so requires at least an intuitive identification of what is happening with what was happening in similar circumstances in the past, and at least an intuitive grasp of the impact on us. The process of projection-identification always was socially negotiated, and the processes of dreaming and of demarcation-recognition became increasingly so, defining both our individual mental processes and our social institutions, constituting ourselves in relationship to other people and entities. What emerged with the process of projection-identification was a projection of preterreal information that was already shaped by the social circumstances back out into reality, onto the social circumstances, enabling

a process of mutual inherence to emerge.<sup>45</sup> The very mental processes that enable us to build a coherent picture of our physical world and situate ourselves and other entities in it, also serve to process information that enables us to build a coherent picture of the social world we share with others.<sup>46</sup> Neither 'picture' is innate. The mental construction of such 'pictures' is influenced by the factors I outlined in the previous chapter: the specifics of our actual interaction in a situation - we experience phenomena, not noumena - and the limitations of our processing procedures - our information is preterreal. We act on the basis of the information we have, so we assume that the social world is like the physical world, and that the phenomena that we experience and label as social have a social substance to them, a social noumena similar to physical noumena. Baudrillard argues that perhaps the social has never existed, there has only ever been the simulation of the social (Holmwood, 1996: 79); but I would argue that the social exists as phenomenal interactions and also in the form or arrangement of noumena. Perhaps Latour is correct to conceive of society primarily in performative terms, as a product of incessant negotiation and transaction, and to attribute social stabilities largely to those which issue from things

---

<sup>45</sup> 'Mutual inherence' is a term used by Cornelius Castoriadis (Curtis, 1991: 50). Castoriadis contrasts society and the psyche, arguing that they are both inherent in each other. I do not, however, agree with Lacan (see Hollinger, 1994: 91) that the society is the source of our psychological makeup, in direct antipathy to positing our biological makeup as the determining factor, as Freud does. It should be clear that I consider it important to give due regard to both biological and social factors. Thus I disagree with the premise of Lacan's assertion that we must transgress social norms that structure the unconscious to avoid becoming a unified self. Social norms are more typically transgressed to preserve some sort of continuity in identity, as Mandelbaum (1973: 181) has shown in his classical study of Ghandi. It seems to me that Lacan, in calling for a multiplicity of transitory selves, is identifying the self more with the persona than with the id-ego complex. The mistake, I think, is to regard the self as an entity or entities, rather than a flow, a continuous negotiation: the self *is* the life journey, the way we navigate mystery and onus. The self is not usually 'multiple' in the same way that the persona needs to be, as it is linked via the id to our biological embeddedness in one body. Lacan, it would seem, is still enthralled by the Enlightenment hope that we can escape our embodiment.

<sup>46</sup> Margaret Archer has made the same point, arguing that our capacity to distinguish between objects in the natural world enabled us to develop the ability to distinguish between and classify objects in the social world (Shilling, 1997: 744).

(Pels, 1995: 135). Such a position denies that the social world is an ordered realm subject to laws that are real and accessible to human reason in the same way that the physical world is. It also denies the alternative view of the social as non-systematic and underdetermined, where the appearance of order is imposed by relations of power and domination within society (Bendle, 1996). I argue that order is imposed, and not merely the appearance of order, by the arrangement of things that become part of phenomenal social reality as well as by the understandings of others. There is no social noumena per se, only the social shaping or arrangement of material reality, including our own biological embodiment.<sup>47</sup>

### **Anchored in Objects**

Social phenomena are interactions in which we participate, so we ourselves have helped create the social phenomena by our actions. Our symbolic order and our social institutions exist as phenomena by virtue of our actions that maintain shared preterreal projections. Yet our shared preterreality is not all that holds them in place. They are maintained not only by the constraints that the actions of others impose on us, but also by the material realities that both constitute us physiologically, and constitute the environment in which we are embedded, which is already shaped by the actions of others.<sup>48</sup> As Nancy Fraser (1998) argues, the symbolic order is

---

<sup>47</sup> Bhaskar (1979) argues that social objects are not reducible to natural ones, but emergent from them. I would argue that the social is emergent from the biological, but there are no social objects, only socialised objects. I do not consider there to be any advantage in considering social institutions or social organisations as social objects; this move merely serves to imply that social boundaries are more strongly demarcated in reality than they actually are.

<sup>48</sup> One example of the way that material realities affect our social options is through the use of tools. Barry Allen (1997) argues that knowledge is adaptive because it entails a reliable

materially anchored in the social arrangement of material reality that situates and prescribes institutions and practices. As I have already suggested, social activity is best conceived in terms of activity that impinges on others by acting in a shared environment. As material limitations are far less malleable than ideological limitations, a tightening ratchet ensures that material reality increasingly prescribes ideological possibilities.

Durkheim argued that over time the fundamental ideal categories were still learnt, but no longer corresponded directly to social categories. Therefore the mental categories which we base our knowledge on no longer remained empirically valid. Mental and social categories diverged in much the same way that spelling and pronunciation have diverged over time. Once upon a time our spelling matched our pronunciation, so 'their' and 'there' were pronounced differently; and 'deserts' pronounced the same, whether we are referring to someone who left abruptly or vast sandy expanses. There is no longer any one to one correspondence. With the emergence of 'organic solidarity' society no longer provides rituals that are enacted practices of basic categories; at least not in the same totalising manner that occurred to some extent with any form of mechanical solidarity. If our sense of self was tied exclusively to language this shift could never have happened.<sup>49</sup> The social and the preterreal would have remained indistinguishable, the phenomenal interaction that constitutes our experience

---

capacity to perform effectively with artefacts. Artefacts are worthless without the knowledge that attends and reproduces their use. Knowledge and artefacts evolved together (Allen, 1997: 239, 240). Our propensity to view 'things' is not only located in our biological need to understand our physical environment, but is maintained and elaborated in the increasingly socialised need to use tools. For Allen, the continuity between knowledge and other biological adaptations is that living entails the production and reproduction of our environment, and knowledge provides a way of doing that.

<sup>49</sup> Poststructuralists often deny the prediscursive elements of identity, but I agree with Mead that a physiological capacity and suitable social circumstances are also necessary (Dunn 1997: 695).

would only provide us evidence of the totalising preterreal-social situation. Yet rifts in the unified preterreal-social interactions did emerge, and our ability to objectify our own experience as well as the actions of others were surely crucial to understanding the advantage to be gained from consciously exploiting any rifts in the social-preterreal complex. From these rifts emerged the potential for social institutions to polarise. Some social institutions operate through their influence on the circumstances that people live in, acting directly on the environment of the individual. Other social institutions act on our preterreality, on our knowledge or understandings. This is true of established social institutions: economic institutions act more on the environment, and can affect us irrespective of what we happen to think of them; whilst religious institutions act more on our understandings and may make little impact on our actual circumstances.<sup>50</sup> This divergence is also apparent in organisations that are critical of the status quo. Some do aim to be totalising - such as alternative lifestyle communities - but more typically it is a choice between influencing other people through changing the circumstances that people make decisions within, or through influencing the way that they look at the world, and hence take those decisions.

The symbolic order can absorb social changes within limitations. The apparent 'inertia' of the symbolic order is not only due to vested social interests, such as the priests may have, but is also due to the limitations of

---

<sup>50</sup> I do acknowledge that most social institutions use both social as well as preterreal influence. For example, Glasner and Bennett (1977) argue that scientific elites utilise influential communication (social influence) as well as research communication (preterreal influence). This is the difference that Laue (1978) refers to within sociology as a 'truth orientation' (preterreal influence) versus 'change orientation' (social influence); and perhaps Abell (1977) as 'influence' or 'rational persuasion' (preterreal influence) versus 'manipulation' or 'irrational persuasion' (social influence). 'Hegemony', is of course the accepted term for pervasive preterreal influence, but it is usually used in a way that ties symbolic meaning to social power through a prevalent ideology (McLennan, 1991).

concrete references: the very buildings, clothes, plantations, tools, toys, weapons, drains, records, and so forth not only enable preterreal constructions to be made, but pose limitations on the feasible reconstructions that can be made. This will be explored in more detail in the later chapter on Sacrament. The emergence of Protestantism is an 'absorption' of social change in this sense, whereas the emergence of Atheism is a more complete break in which fundamental categories are reconstituted so that they become more coherent with the emerging social order. For example, with the emergence of Atheism the sacred-profane distinction is collapsed onto the male-female distinction, which comes to be seen as a more fundamental category by its adherents. As a symbolic order develops, it in turn facilitates social changes. In the next chapter on Displacement, I will be examining this sort of change.

A consequence of emerging social capacities is that evolutionary change can become extremely rapid. Social capabilities that act on another organism's preterreality potentially increase the rate of interaction between organisms. Social capabilities that act to produce changes in the circumstances another entity operates in act directly on the environment, and may directly change the environment in some way. As it is long term change in the environment that drives the ratchet effect, the increased potential for environmental change increases the likelihood of evolutionary change. Increased interactions and a changeable environment affect stability. Kauffman (1993) argues that where interactions are low, external perturbations are likely to disappear with little effect, but where they are high small external perturbations can dramatically impact on a system and change it. At intermediate levels of interactions external perturbations can

cause various rippings, and occasionally a large cascade of massive changes (Weber & Depew, 1996: 54).

At the core of the evolutionary history is the seeming contradiction between simultaneously increasing and decreasing regularity, the ultimate trade-off that drives the ratchet of evolution. When we compare the situation at two points in time, such as the pre-biological chemical soup with the later biosphere, or if we compare mechanical and organic solidarity, we find that in one sense regularity has decreased as there is less uniformity, more difference. Yet in another sense regularity has also increased as there are more systematic interrelationships, and the variability that does exist is more controlled. These changes provide the basis of the increased complexity of form and the directionality typically evident in evolution.<sup>51</sup> They arise out of the way that diversity is utilised in evolution. Typically, not all the diversity that exists at any point in time actually survives to another, and yet new diversities have arisen by the subsequent point in time. Although diversity is continually constrained in this process, particular variations that allow more effective use of available resources are more likely to be retained. The trade-off is that, in changeable environments, variations that allow for more internally controlled variability, that is, more flexibility in self organisation, will be at an advantage as they will have an increased ability to respond to changing circumstances. This flexibility has entailed specialised control mechanisms, which requires increasing complexity, but also constrains the direction of subsequent viable changes. These changes are apparent in social as in physiological organisation, I would argue, precisely because social organisation is an extension of

---

<sup>51</sup> Lewin (1994) argues that the evidence for increased complexity is questionable, but this depends on what evidence you are examining.

physiological organisation and the same evolutionary processes apply. If we treat the social as distinct from biological, inhabiting a separate 'layer' of life with distinct mechanisms of evolution, then such processes that appear to be common to social and biological evolution must also be distinct, and the emergence of parallel processes within the distinctive mechanisms also needs to be explained.

### **Conclusion**

Evolutionary theory is not a fixed entity with any 'essential' features. Evolutionary theory can, however, be distinguished from interventionist perspectives that highlight disruptions as the cause of change, and assume an unchanging continuity in absence of disruption. Evolutionary theory recognises that disruptions do occur, and are significant in constraining or enabling particular changes. This means that evolutionary theory underdetermines actual history. Evolutionary theorists argue that disruptions do not determine actual history either. Actual historical outcomes are contingent, but that does not mean that no generalisations can be made. Evolutionary theory seeks to explain the increasing complexity evident in the earth's history not by disturbances that force change, but rather by the interactions of local contingencies. Most social theorists who argue for social evolution take the position that the social has emerged from the biological, but then has continued to evolve relatively separately, and so postulate social mechanisms that operate in a parallel fashion to biological mechanisms of evolution. My argument is that the social has emerged from the biological, but that it has not formed a distinctive 'layer' to the biological. There is no 'substance' to the social. Social phenomena are real,

but there is no corresponding social noumena. Instead social phenomena are constituted through social interactions in a given context. Although there are distinctive human interactions, these are not essentially different to the interactions of other biological organisms, but only differ in the extent of their pervasiveness for us and for our environment. This means that social evolution does not require a distinctive process to the biological, but does require considerable elaboration of the complexities introduced by human embeddedness in such totalising social construction. The human embeddedness in social construction is precisely what is ignored by biological reductionism.

Evolution is best conceived as the influence of context. The emergence of the social from the biological allows for preterreal capacities to develop. This means that social influence can extend to influencing others' preterreal perceptions of the environment, as well as directly influencing the environment that others operate in. For humans, the navigation of contradictions allows us the possibility of influencing context through our own deliberate choice. However, social options can also be materially prescribed within the context. Ideal prescriptions can be invalidated when they do not match experience; when the claim of good or sacred does not correspond to an experience of mystery; or the claim of evil to onus.

The framework of evolution can allow us to theorise the way that ongoing interdependencies between social, biological and physical realities and our own preterreal understandings of them simultaneously maintain continuities in our experience and enable changes to occur.

From the point of view of the individual, the biological refers primarily to bodily influences, the social to contextual influences and the preterreal to ideal influences on thought and action. These distinctions are by no means clear cut. Our bodies are not only socialised, but also inscribed by our preterreal formations. Social life is similarly preterrealised, through the effects of mutual understandings on our actions. The preterrealised social is further reinforced by prescriptions for action contained in the arrangement of material things as well as by our bodily requisites and ecological dependency. Our preterreality is similarly circumscribed by the need to optimise the degree of alignment with reality.

Social institutions seek to influence individual action by influencing both the preterreal and the social. Influencing the preterreal works only to the extent that the individual's understanding is improved by a more successful alignment of the preterreal with those aspects of the real that are accessible to the individual. Directly influencing the social environment is achieved primarily by the rearrangement of things. This is more immediately effective, but tends to undermine and destabilise the alignment between the preterreal and social for individuals in that environment. This in turn means that an individual in that environment is more susceptible to preterreal influences that optimise the degree of alignment between preterreality and reality. The individual begins to utilise an alternative frame. There is no guarantee that the frame chosen will be one that makes the individual's thoughts and actions more congruent with others in the environment. The congruence being sought is between the individual's own experiences and understandings. The new frame may serve to increase the divergence in social experiences and understandings between people.

## Chapter 5

# Displacement

In the previous chapter I argued that the framework of evolution can allow us to theorise the way that ongoing interdependencies between social, biological and physical realities, and our own preterreal understandings of them, simultaneously maintain continuities in our experience and enable changes to occur. Using this framework enables us to track the social consequences of people acting on the basis of different understandings, derived from prior experiences in quite different social contexts. In this chapter I examine one example of the adverse social consequences arising when social movements introduce the understandings forged within the movement into other social contexts where other people have not had congruent social experiences.

The different understandings that people bring to a situation can result in them highlighting different aspects of that situation as more important. As I discussed in the last chapter, what we can call 'good' and 'evil', what Schervish et al (1996) refer to as 'mysterium' and 'onus', coexist in all social situations. There is thus the potential for people with different understandings to identify different aspects of the situation as mysterium or onus. As discussed in the previous chapters, there is also a tendency to attribute the outcome of a situation, the result of the interactions in that context, to an object in the situation as a property of the object. The 'object' is likely to be a person in a social situation. One consequence of this is that, as I argued in the last chapter, we tend to treat people's

behaviour as the property of the individual, as a behavioural 'trait', if not a 'personality trait', rather than the outcome of the situation that they were in. Thus there is a tendency to blame someone in the situation for whatever is perceived to be 'wrong' with the outcome of the situation. When we combine these two tendencies, what we have is people with different understandings attributing blame to different people in the situation.

'Displacement' is used to refer to the social consequences of an understanding of a social situation that attributes blame for that situation to particular people in that situation. In this way the contradictions of a social order are displaced onto an 'other'. This happens when crises generated by competing factions within the dominant groupings are displaced onto subordinate causes of disruption (Dollimore, 1991: 42, 221). Dollimore refers to displacement as attributing evil, or onus, to something we are against, in both sense of the word. Displacement makes the proximate radically 'other'; labelling difference as onus. The onus that did exist in the contradiction that generated both mysterium and onus is then projected onto the 'other'. The proximity of the difference engenders fear, which facilitates the displacement of social contradictions onto an 'other'.

The example that Dollimore refers to, the displacement of crises and anxiety onto the homosexual is one where the despised other, the recipient of the onus of us all, the sacrificial lamb, the scapegoat, is marked not by bodily attributes such as skin colour or sexual characteristics, but by a mode of behaviour. My argument is that social categories that attribute mysterium and onus can also be demarcated according to beliefs, on the basis of ideological preferences. The example that concerns me here is the mutual displacement of current anxieties onto the 'other' side, the cleavage

designated by the beliefs expressed in and consolidated by the two sides of the 1981 Springbok tour conflict. Thus the disparagement of 'politically correct' attitudes displaces anxieties about social changes in New Zealand onto those who continue the heritage of the tour protesters. This is expressed, for example, in concerns about what is viewed as excessive Maori claims to the Waitangi tribunal; and contempt for white 'bleeding heart' intellectuals that encourage these excesses. On the other side, the catch-cry of 'racist' is applied to those who continue to be more strongly attuned to the more traditional beliefs of New Zealanders of European descent irrespective of their actual behaviour.<sup>1</sup> They equally displace anxieties about social change onto the 'other' side, demonising the other side as 'culturally unsafe'. This is expressed, for example, in concerns about racial conflict being fuelled by continuing racism that end up little short of claiming that cultural safety will somehow overcome entrenched racial inequalities which exclude racial minorities from full participation in society.

The social consequences of this displacement is apparent in the affect of promoting anti-racism had on solidarity with the working class. As Chris Trotter (1995: 102) argued, the 1981 Springbok tour undermined the middle class left's sense of solidarity with the working class. Doubtless, the anti-apartheid protesters thought that one cancelled game was a small price

---

<sup>1</sup> As discussed in the last chapter, racial categories affect our judgements even if we do not wish them to; so in that sense we are all racist. Those who are more likely to identify themselves as 'Kiwi' than 'Pakeha' usually do favour equal treatment of racial minorities, and are not overtly racist. The actual difference in behaviour between the two groups originally defined by Springbok tour commitments may not be very large at all. This is not to deny that there are overtly racist people and groups in New Zealand, but to argue that the differences are exaggerated by those who do identify as 'Pakeha'. I would suggest that the demarcation is likely to be exaggerated for reasons outlined in chapter 3; that there has been a failure to take into account the way that our cognitive limitations shape our understandings by making our categories more distinct than the differences are in reality.

to pay in the war against apartheid. However, the working class people that were affected by the game being cancelled were excluded from one of the comparatively few resources that they customarily did have access to: a rugby game, and this was done by invoking a 'higher cause', antiracism. Not only were they denied access to a resource on that occasion, but Chris Trotter indicates that through such episodes the groundwork was laid for the justification of a more extensive denial of vital resources to the working class, such as jobs and social security, when the 'New Left' achieved power with the incoming Labour government of 1984. What happened was that championing causes such as anti-racism, anti-apartheid, Maori rights, women's rights, gay rights, or ecological sustainability had, at best, unintended class consequences when enshrined in legislation. As Chris Trotter indicates, there was no determination to limit any unintended class consequences of reform, so the working class was effectively made to disproportionately bear the material cost of ideal or ideological struggles about gender, race, sexuality, disability, or the environment. One result has been that middle class radicalism has helped ensure that, during a period of declining employment opportunities, the working class are more effectively excluded from the very middle class positions that previously were a route of upward mobility for people from working class backgrounds.

The question of just how 'unintended' the class consequences of the 1984 Labour government's legislation are could be debated. When officials informed the Labour Minister of Social Welfare that its proposed 1990 benefit cuts would affect almost a quarter of all Maori families, compared to only 9 percent of Pakeha, their advice was dismissed, saying that it was inevitable that some would be better and others worse off in any reform (Kelsey, 1997: 284). It would seem that the antiracist policies of the Labour

government were not designed to significantly extend the resources and opportunities available to those most disadvantaged by race. Clearly, the antiracist policies were not intended to improve the lot of those disadvantaged by race at the bottom of the pile. The benefits of enforcing middle class radicalism through legislation accrue further up the pile,<sup>2</sup> and not only to those previously racially disadvantaged.

### **Social Closure**

Even with the best of intentions, when social movement members attempt to enforce their perspective through legislation the social movement loses control over the consequences. Merely enacting corrective legislation will not, in itself, ensure that people judge the legislation to be worthy or necessary, and act to sustain the spirit of the legislation. People need not intentionally act to undermine the legislation for it to have very different consequences to what was intended. A social movement's own internal codes are derived from understandings that necessarily either grow and develop in ways coherent to the experience and insight of participants or die out. The same codes, when generalised to the nation state comprised largely of non-participants will not continue to develop in the same manner. Furthermore, it may be difficult for a social movement to exert any influence over the unintended consequences of codes implemented in legislation, even if the results are recognised as being sub-optimal. In this chapter I am particularly concerned with one unintended consequence of attempting to

---

<sup>2</sup> This is by no means unique to New Zealand. As Zelle (1997: 80) notes: 'the civil rights revolution has done much more to increase the opportunities for minorities who have already achieved middle class status than those who haven't'.

generalise social movement codes to the nation state by means of legislation; the impact on social closure. To recap from Chapter 1, social closure is a term first used by Max Weber to describe the way in which social groups tend to become closed to others, so that others do not have the same access that group members do to any resources and opportunities that the group controls. Frank Parkin (1968, 1979) developed this concept by discussing two forms of closure: exclusion and usurpation. Exclusion refers to actions that restrict the access of others to resources and opportunities that the group has some control over. In this sense, women with cervical cancer that were being experimented on without their consent were excluded from access to medical resources to treat their condition, and so denied the opportunity to enjoy full health. Usurpation refers to action directed at enhancing the access of members to resources and opportunities that others have control over. The establishment of the marae at Pakaitore enhanced the access of Maori to Whanganuitanga, and so can be taken to be an example of usurpation by Maori of Pakeha control over Moutoa Gardens for as long as it lasted. The alienation of Maori land through sharp legal practices, such as defining Pakaitore as a market rather than a marae, is a more obvious example of usurpation, but this is of Pakeha usurpation of Maori resources. Parkin brought these ideas together to develop the concept of a third form of closure, dual closure, where a group practices both exclusion and usurpation with respect to different groups. When the French removed the owners of Moruroa from their land and resettled them at Tureia, this is an example of usurpation. The establishment of a twelve mile exclusion zone by the French, denying not only yachties their right of innocent passage, but also the Tureians from even visiting their homeland, is an example of exclusion. This is not quite what is meant by dual closure, however, as there was usurpation, and then once French control of Moruroa

was established, exclusion, which is, of course, identical to the experience of Maori people in their own land. Dual closure refers to a simultaneous practice of usurpation towards one group and exclusion of another. An example of dual closure would be the early second-wave feminist movement, which was effectively usurping male privilege, but simultaneously excluding women from ethnic minorities by projecting Pakeha women's experience as the experience of all women (Novitz, 1989: 63).

I am drawing attention to another form of social closure, which also encompasses both exclusion and usurpation. Social closure can involve what I will call 'displacement closure', where a social group maintains its access to resources and opportunities despite effective usurpation by another group, through the more rigorous exclusion of a third group, who previously enjoyed some access to resources or opportunities. Displacement closure differs from dual closure. With dual closure the group practices both exclusion and usurpation with respect to different groups using different justifications for each. With displacement the usurpation is directed against the group, and is conceded to, but the ideas that are used against it are also used by it to draw attention away from the more effective exclusion of others, making the process more opaque. Such a situation occurred in Victorian England, when upwardly mobile parvenu displaced downwardly mobile younger sons and daughters that failed to marry into money. Primogeniture guaranteed upper class membership to the eldest son, so that similar levels of access to financial resources could be maintained across generations despite the encroachment of the upwardly mobile on the total financial resources in circulation, by more strictly limiting the informal access of younger sons and daughters to family finance.

In a more contemporary displacement closure, the ethnic usurpation in the Roman Catholic Church, which includes the election of the first non-Italian pope for centuries, is linked to a more entrenched gender exclusion, including positions on contraception and abortion, at the very time that other Christian churches are becoming more gender inclusive. The sensitivity to cultural difference forges a link between the more radical members of the Roman Catholic Church, who regard this as a fight against neo-colonialism, with traditionalists, who are pleased to see cultural traditions upheld. Traditionally all cultures have repressed women, so the celebration of cultural difference simultaneously becomes the celebration of gendered difference which reinforces gendered exclusions in the Church, at a time when gendered usurpation is taking place elsewhere.

This chapter will focus on the displacement closure facilitated by recent social movement ideology. My argument is that Pakeha males from a middle class background have maintained access to a dwindling supply of professional and managerial positions in spite of increased access to these positions by both women and ethnic minorities, through the increased exclusion of people from the working class. Social closure is often taken to refer to distinct social groups and their active control of resources and opportunities (Bottero, 1998: 479-80). I should stress that I am not implying that members of the middle class actively got together and decided how they would exclude working class people from professional or managerial jobs. Certainly Weber himself (1916: 405) refers to social groups as open or closed, so this approach should not be taken to limit sociological interest to

those few people who are entirely enclosed in a group 'for itself'.<sup>3</sup> Considering 'open' groups means considering not only the permeability of the group boundary, but also the permeability of any other social boundaries that may be pertinent to group members. Social closure should be considered more in terms of relative access to resources and opportunities afforded by positioning relative to a social boundary. Indeed, social boundaries need not refer directly to social groups for us to be able to consider how effective they are in making distinctions between people, and thus exploring in what ways they may be affecting the access people have to resources and opportunities. For example, one boundary that has attracted a good deal of interest is the distinction between 'high culture' and 'popular culture'. It would be difficult to argue that the distinction marks a group 'for itself', but not at all implausible to argue that the distinction does mark considerable differences people have in access to resources and opportunities, even though the material references, such as the art productions that may be referred to in making distinctions between 'high culture' and 'popular culture', may not be as distinctive as was once

---

<sup>3</sup> There does seem to be a notion about that social closure means 100% closure, or it isn't closure. For example, Paul Kingston (1996: 323, 325) argues that Mark Western's (1994a) data, which shows 70% mobility across a single generation proves that the classes that Western uses are not socially closed. I agree that classes are relatively permeable when compared to caste or gender or ethnicity, for example; but would dispute whether the permeability of class boundaries is of central concern to class theory. Contrary to Kingston's (1996: 324) assertion, class theory is not premised upon the assumption that classes actually exist as relatively cohesive social entities with common life experiences, but rather on the premise that economic factors (whether considered in terms of production or of distribution) advantage some people and disadvantage others; and that people similarly positioned relative to others have a capacity to influence social conditions to their mutual benefit, irrespective of whether or not they do consciously act to do so (see Abercrombie et al, 1984: 35). Whether or not intergenerational class inheritance occurs is irrelevant given this premise, social change through class action could occur whether there was 100% closure or 0% closure (See also Lee, 1994: 411). Mobility typically becomes of interest when the liberal contention of equality of life chances is being disputed and intergenerational effects thus becomes a defence of the continuing efficacy of class analysis (Crompton, 1996: 60). As Kingston (1996: 326) admits, life chances are not equally distributed, so it is unsurprising that some sociologists become interested in the mechanisms involved in class reproduction.

assumed. The relationship between symbolic boundaries and social groupings is an important aspect of social closure then, and the displacement effect that I am considering here is one form that a relationship between symbolic boundaries and social groupings can take.

The view that social movement members have of social reality, their preterreal assessment of that reality, is enacted in struggles over social boundaries. It is ironic that the claim that in social life, if people consider something to be real, it will become real as a consequence (Thomas, 1951; eg in Smith, 1995: 57), holds for social differences that people are trying to reduce as much as it does for difference people accept as normal and inevitable. Yet, as we have seen in the last chapter, our ongoing socialisation informs our preterreal categories of understanding that shape our assessments of a situation, whether we want them to or not. Social movements serve to draw attention to particular categories, and so increase the saliency of that social category for everyone. In this way the movement for homosexual rights in Germany before World War II, fed the reactionary movement against homosexuals (Dollimore, 1991: 245). Action taken by social movement members to change one aspect of reality can serve to reinforce that aspect, whilst simultaneously changing others. Thus whilst feminists may seek to diminish social difference between males and females, the total effect of the enacted legislation which they supported may not only have increased gendered difference, but may also have increased other differentials such as class.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> The reactionary 'backlash' to feminist 'gains' has been noted by Faludi (1992). This term has been critiqued by Greer (1992) who argues that there has not been an increasing erosion of male privilege to react to.

Minority group members have been successful in obtaining an increasing proportion of the more rewarding supervisory and management positions (Table 5.1 and 5.2 below):

**Table 5.1 Percentage of ethnic group in each class category, 1984 & 1993**

Ethnic Group	Owners		Managers and Supervisors		Workers		Total	
	1984 %	1993 %	1984 %	1993 %	1984 %	1993 %	1984 %	1993 %
Pakeha (n)	22	18	40	35	38	47	100 (855)	100 (627)
Maori (n)	5	11	35	46	60	44	100 (65)	101 (57)

[Source: NZ Class Survey, 1984; ISSP Survey, 1993 ]<sup>5</sup>

Yet this does not necessarily mean that the preterreal boundary between Maori and Pakeha, or similarly between men and women, has changed one iota. We may still be just as likely to perceive people as Maori and Pakeha, men and women, and define social attitudes and tasks as masculine and feminine, Maori and Pakeha. What has changed is the

---

<sup>5</sup> The 1984 New Zealand Class Survey (Wilkes et al, 1985) interviewed 1000 households (1663 respondents over 18 years old) with a 81.1% response rate, using Erik Olin Wright's (1977, 1978, 1985) class schema. The other major alternative class schema, John Goldthorpe's (1980) has never been used in New Zealand. (For the relative merits of each approach, see Savage, 1994: 536). No detailed study of New Zealand using Wright's schema has taken place since 1984, but the International Social Survey Programme (Gendell et al, 1993), a postal survey of New Zealanders' attitudes to environmental issues, did question whether or not respondents were self-employed, and if employed by others, whether they had responsibility for other people's work. This allows a very general comparison between the two surveys. Government statistics are not collected on authority at work, but managerial occupational categories can be used to approximate this. However, occupational categories were reclassified in 1991, so government occupational data before and after this date cannot readily be compared. A comparison with Census data that distinguishes self-employed from wage and salary earners shows that the 1984 survey over represents the owning classes (by about 3%), and the 1993 survey under represents them (by about 2%). The 1993 survey also over represents the number of women, and under represents ethnic minorities. A comparison of owner/earner by gender indicates that the class distribution by gender repeats the owner/earner error above within the gender categories, so this has been corrected for.

differential location of Maori and Pakeha, men and women across class boundaries.

**Table 5.2 Percentage of each gender in each class category, 1984 & 1993**

Gender	Owners		Managers and Supervisors		Workers		Total	
	1984 %	1993 %	1984 %	1993 %	1984 %	1993 %	1984 %	1993 %
Male (n)	20	26	47	38	33	36	100 (629)	100 (347)
Female (n)	10	13	32	32	58	56	100 (388)	101 (344)

[Source: NZ Class Survey, 1984; ISSP Survey, 1993; corrected by comparison to Census data, see footnote 5]

Class boundaries may even have become significantly less permeable if women from a middle class background are increasingly located in middle class positions at the expense of males from a working class background who previously may have made it, and women from a working class background still have very little chance at all.

The public sector is an interesting site to examine these changes, as in New Zealand the public sector is an important source of middle class<sup>6</sup> jobs. As Table 6.3 shows, just over one third of the middle class jobs in 1984 were in the public sector, but by 1993 nearly half the jobs were in the public sector. Public sector middle class jobs are all the more important as there has been an overall decline in the proportion of middle class positions in the same period,<sup>7</sup> which serves to substantially increase competition for

<sup>6</sup> I am defining middle class by the neo-Marxist criterion of having something of the authority of capital (particularly authority over workers on behalf of capital), without themselves being owners of the means of production.

<sup>7</sup> From 39.2% of those employed in the 1984 NZ Class Survey to 35.5% in the 1993 ISSP

middle class positions when coupled with a shrinking labour force due and increasing unemployment experienced in the same period.

**Table 5.3 Percentage of each class category by sector, 1984 & 1993**

Sector	Owners		Managers and Supervisors		Workers	
	1984 %	1993 %	1984 %	1993 %	1984 %	1993 %
Public	0	0	38	47	27	39
Private	100	100	62	53	73	61
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
(n)	(203)	(126)	(398)	(246)	(416)	(320)

[Source: NZ Class Survey, 1984; ISSP Survey, 1993]

Women constitute over half of the people in professional occupations in New Zealand, compared to about a third of those in managerial positions (See Tables 5.4 and 5.5). Although women are not being effectively excluded from entry into professions as into managerial positions, they are being more effectively excluded from advancement within the occupational grouping. The proportion of women earning more than 70K within the professional group is 26% of their proportion within the professional group as a whole, but 41% for the managerial group. Within both of those groups, women constitute about 20% of those earning more

---

Survey. Bill Martin (1998) has examined Australian data on professional and managerial occupations, and found that those in private sector, market oriented occupations experienced rising employment levels and relative earnings, but for those whose earnings were state funded, the opposite was true. Regardless of sector, the upper level managers fared better than lower managers, and the earnings of professionals declined. A growing gender gap in earnings was identified. I would expect similar changes in New Zealand; but the effects of a weaker economic performance also needs to be taken into account. New Zealand data is not available to make the same comparisons, because the classification of occupational categories has changed. Fiona Devine (1997: 143) also quotes support for the argument that the managerial middle class has grown in the 1980s and 1990s in Britain and America to the detriment of the professional middle class with the advent of the new managerialism which has undermined professional autonomy in the state sector.

than 50K, 15% of those earning more than 70K and 10% of those earning more than 100K, suggesting that the basic issue for women is advancement rather than entry; and the lower entry rate of women into managerial positions can best be viewed as exclusion surrounding the advancement into managerial positions.<sup>8</sup>

**Table 5.4 Managerial Occupational Category by Selected Income Bracket, 1991 and 1996 Census.**

	Total	50,000+	70,000+	100,000+
1991				
Female	52395	3768	..	..
All	162291	35586	..	..
% Female	32.3	10.6	..	..
1996				
Female	67677	9291	3687	1407
All	188979	57291	25380	13677
% Female	35.8	19.4	14.5	10.3

**Table 5.5 Professional Occupational Category by Selected Income Bracket, 1991 and 1996 Census.**

	Total	50,000+	70,000+	100,000+
1991				
Female	89763	3870	..	..
All	167562	28449	..	..
% Female	53.6	13.6	..	..
1996				
Female	104343	8346	2625	945
All	191466	40839	18816	9150
% Female	54.5	20.4	14.0	10.3

Source: 1991 and 1996 Census Data. Occupation (NZCO95 Major Groups, Table A-1: Legislators, Administrators and Managers, Table A-2: Professionals) by Sex and Income for Resident Population aged 15 years and over.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Devine (1997: 160) notes the same trend in both Britain and America. Small numbers of relatively advantaged ethnic minorities and women have entered the professions, but have not made progress into managerial positions of power.

<sup>9</sup> Comparative figures are not available from earlier Survey or Census data, as there was a

As it seems that inequalities within the managerial occupational grouping can be used to represent the first stages of advancement exclusion, the proportion of people in differing ethnic and gender categories that make it into managerial occupations is of interest.

**Table 5.6 Proportion of people employed who are in a managerial occupation by gender and ethnicity, 1991 and 1996 Census.**

		<b>1991</b>	<b>1996</b>
		<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Pakeha	Female	9.0	9.8
	All	12.3	12.6
NZ Maori	Female	5.5	6.1
	All	5.6	6.2
Pacific Island	Female	3.0	3.4
	All	3.3	3.7
Asian	Female	12.8	11.6
	All	15.8	15.2
Total	Female	8.7	9.1
	All	11.6	11.6

Overall, the proportion of people employed who are in managerial occupations has remained the same for both Census dates at 11.6%. Within every ethnic group, women are not as strongly represented in managerial occupations as men; and Maori and Pacific Island ethnic groups are very poorly represented in managerial occupations, whether male or female. Gains have been made by these groups between 1991 and 1996, but not at the expense of Pakeha men, who are also increasingly employed as managers. The loss has been in the proportion of Asian employed in managerial occupations, which has declined. Overall, a declining proportion

of those in managerial occupations are employed by the central government.

**Table 5.7 The proportion of people in managerial occupations employed by central government by gender and ethnicity, 1991 and 1996 Census.**

		<b>1991</b>	<b>1996</b>
		<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Pakeha	Female	9.1	9.5
	All	8.7	7.6
NZ Maori	Female	15.7	12.4
	All	15.1	10.6
Pacific Island	Female	15.8	11.2
	All	13.7	9.0
Asian	Female	2.9	3.1
	All	2.9	2.8
Total	Female	9.3	9.4
	All	8.7	7.6

The proportion of women and Maori and Pacific Islanders in managerial occupations that are employed by the central government is higher, and for Asians lower than average. None of the minority groups are heavily dependent on central government managerial jobs.

**Table 5.8 Proportion of people employed in the central government sector who are in a managerial occupation by gender and ethnicity, 1991 and 1996 Census**

		1991	1996
		%	%
Pakeha	Female	3.5	4.8
	All	6.0	6.8
NZ Maori	Female	3.2	4.1
	All	4.0	4.7
Pacific Island	Female	1.8	2.6
	All	2.5	3.1
Asian	Female	2.4	3.2
	All	3.5	4.6
Total	Female	3.4	4.6
	All	5.6	6.4

The proportion of people in the central government sector who are employed in management occupations is lower than the proportion generally in New Zealand (6.4% compared to 11.6% for 1996), but has increased between 1991 and 1996. The pattern for minority groups within central government is similar to the general pattern (Table 5-6), with the exception of Asian ethnic groups. The table below examines the differentials between minority group proportions and the total proportion to see how the government sector compares with the total of New Zealand sectors.

**Table 5.9** Minority Group Differentials for Location in Managerial Occupations

<b>1991</b>	<b>Female %</b>	<b>Maori %</b>	<b>Pacific %</b>	<b>Asian %</b>
New Zealand	75	48	28	136
Central Government	61	71	45	63
<b>1996</b>	<b>Female %</b>	<b>Maori %</b>	<b>Pacific %</b>	<b>Asian %</b>
New Zealand	84	53	32	131
Central Government	72	73	48	72
<b>1991-1996 Improvement</b>	<b>Female %</b>	<b>Maori %</b>	<b>Pacific %</b>	<b>Asian %</b>
New Zealand	36	10	6	(14)
Central Government	28	7	6	25

All the differentials<sup>10</sup> improved in the period 1991-1996, but the patterns remain the same. Maori and Pacific Islanders have much better differentials in the central government sector than in the New Zealand generally, but the reverse is true for women and Asian minorities.

The Asian category shows that using managerial occupations as a proxy for advancement exclusion is questionable. The adverse differentials in the government sector are similar to the other minority groups, but Asian people have positive differentials generally, doubtless reflecting greater numbers of small self-employed business managers rather than large numbers of corporate executives. However, the point remains that the central government sector by no means advances minority groups into managerial positions at the same rate as their majority counterpart. For some groups the central government sector does not even achieve what is being achieved elsewhere in New Zealand, as evidenced by the statistics for women and Asian ethnicity above.

The improvement figures<sup>11</sup> confirm that central government EEO policies have not even enabled the central government sector to achieve the same improvement in appointing minority group members to management

---

<sup>10</sup> The differentials express the proportion of the minority group that actually is employed in managerial occupations compared to what would be expected if minority group location made no difference. So the number of female managers in New Zealand is 75% of what we would expect, and in central government is 61% of what we would expect. The differentials are calculated by dividing the minority group percentages in Table 5.6 and Table 5.8 by the total percentage in the last row of the respective tables, and expressing the result as a percentage.

<sup>11</sup> The improvement figure expresses the improvement in the differentials between 1991 and 1996 as the proportion of the gap between actual and expected numbers of minority group members employed in 1991 that has been bridged by 1996. It has been calculated by subtracting the number in each cell of the differentials from 100, dividing the resulting 1996 figure by the 1991 figure and expressing it as a percentage to find the proportion of the differential gap in 1991 that remains in 1996. Subtracting this from 100 gives the proportion of the differential bridged between 1991 and 1996.

positions that has been achieved in New Zealand as a whole. Not only are women under represented in central government management positions, not only is their under representation more severe than what is average in New Zealand, but the pace of change is also slower in the central government sector. How has this happened, given the central government commitment to equal employment opportunities (EEO)? EEO reforms were introduced at the same time as other reforms of the public sector, so changes in employment prospects have been affected by a number of simultaneous changes, and are not simply the consequence of the strengths and weaknesses of EEO policies.

### **Public Sector Reform**

The reform of the public sector in New Zealand has been driven by the twin concerns of accountability and efficiency. It occurred in the context of the rise of new right policies that emphasised deregulated markets.<sup>12</sup> The Labour Party, which became the government in July 1984, was concerned that its policy intentions had not been achieved while it was in government from 1972-5, and blamed senior public sector servants for obstructing them. It intended to reshape the management of the state to make it more accountable to the politicians it served. At the same time, the Labour government perceived the need to reorganise the economy to improve economic growth, lower inflation, curb overseas borrowing and deal with rising unemployment (Easton, 1989: 7). The state sector accounted for one quarter of GDP, so the reorganisation of the state was an essential part of

---

<sup>12</sup> See Boston et al, 1991; Boston et al, 1996 Kelsey 1993, 1997; O'Brien & Wilkes, 1993; Rudd and Roper, 1977 for further information.

reorganising the economy (Martin, 1990: 125). In particular the Labour Government was troubled by the increasing size of the budget deficit and the level of public expenditure, and felt that these fiscal trends needed to be reversed (Boston et al, 1991: 338)

The Labour government's economic advisors, the Treasury, were influential in supplying convincing economic arguments in favour of restructuring. Treasury officials were disillusioned with their traditional method of analysis, cost-benefit analysis (Easton, 1989: 116). The fashionable Chicago school of economics, which argued for commercialisation and liberalisation, gave Treasury an alternative to reworking cost-benefit analysis.

It would appear that the politicians who were initially only in favour of restructuring, were drawn into commercialisation by their economic advisors. Senior cabinet ministers were rejecting privatisation as late as 1987 (Easton, 1989: 8). What started politically as a liberalisation strategy, of opening government monopolies to competition, also became a commercialisation strategy. The 'success' of transforming major departmental commercial activities into public corporations under the State Owned Enterprises Act 1986 encouraged the Labour government to seek to improve efficiency and accountability in the rest of the Public Service by applying the private enterprise model to it under the State Sector Act 1988 (Holland and Boston, 1990: 125). As a result, personnel policy in the Public Service changed from the administration of established procedures to one of considerable managerial discretion.

The reform of the public sector was underpinned by an ideological shift to the 'right'. Political enthusiasm for commercialisation and privatisation appeared in various political parties in the 1980's. Treasury was influenced by theories of the right: Public Choice theory, Managerialism, and the new economics of organisation, agency theory and transaction-cost analysis (Boston, 1991: 1).

The shift to the 'right' captured key concerns of the 'left'. State sector reforms captured the 'left' disillusionment with a large, overly bureaucratic Welfare State by merging 'left' social objectives of equal employment opportunities, biculturalism, and increased client responsiveness into the 'right' managerialist framework that emphasised efficiency, accountability, the reduction of producer or bureaucratic capture, and the reduction of the size of the bureaucracy (Boston et al, 1991:388-9). Devolution or decentralisation and client responsiveness have a broad appeal, but for different reasons (Spoonley, 1988: 78-80). With the ideological shift to the 'right' came a shift in the belief in the primacy of social goals to the primacy of economic goals (Easton, 1989: 9). Opponents of the changes lacked specific economic knowledge to tackle economic protagonists on their own ground. The language of economics mystified the issues.

The ideological preconditions for change are well documented in the literature, but these ideological changes are often presented as being divorced from any material reality. The material conditions for change most often cited are the adverse economic indicators that the incoming government and their economic advisors faced. This, however, begs the question of whether the labelling of certain 'economic indicators' as

'adverse' does reflect structural features, or whether it is, in itself, an ideological exercise. For example, the connotation of the term 'inflation' was transformed in this period from a benign fairy godmother who eased the debt burden of farmers, businessmen and house owners; to an ogre that was public enemy number one, undermining the growth and stability of the economy.

Yet there were material changes that needed to take place before substantial changes to the structure of public sector institutions could occur. There needed to be technological changes that would allow a reduced size of workforce involved in menial processing tasks. There also needed to be a level of unemployment that would attract personnel capable of working with the new technology to the lower levels of the hierarchy. The changes could not have taken place under conditions of labour shortage, when the small birth cohorts from war and depression years predominated in the labour force.

One public sector reform that was strongly supported by the feminist movement was the introduction of EEO (Equal Employment Opportunities) policies. These policies were aimed at discouraging discrimination on the basis of gender, ethnicity, age, or any grounds other than a person's ability to do the job in question. This policy seeks to widen the employment prospects of people in the public sector who belong to minority groups. Yet in some respects, the reverse seems to have occurred. Women, for example, are losing ground in pay relativity with men as a result of restructuring (Tremaine, 1991; 364). How is it that minorities remain excluded, in spite of reforms that try to control discrimination?

The aim of public sector reform in New Zealand since 1985 has been to provide those working in the public sector with clear, consistent objectives, to make them accountable, and to use resources economically and efficiently. To this end, public sector organisations have been restructured to separate potentially conflicting functions, and to put complementary functions together. The reforms sought to bring public sector employment in line with employment conditions in the private sector.

Between 1984 and 1990 fifteen government departments were abolished, corporatised or privatised, and twenty new departments were established (Boston, 1991: 248). Since 1984 departments have undergone restructuring (as a consequence of gaining or losing functions), decentralisation, and have been subject to the drive to make fiscal savings (Boston, 1991: 249). Separate business units or agencies have been established, and policy advice functions have been separated from operational activities. Senior positions have been put on contract, and personnel functions have been decentralised to encourage flexibility (Walsh, 1991: 117).

I held a clerical position in an branch office of a core public sector organisation in 1989, in a town that was experiencing high unemployment. I joined shortly after one round of restructuring had finished, and left during the period in which the next round of restructuring was being put into place. Before the earlier round of restructuring, the top job in the branch was held by a woman, and the second in charge was a man of Maori descent. As a result of the earlier round of restructuring these two people were displaced by Pakeha males, the women moving from first to second position, the Maori male from second to third equal. With the next round of

restructuring, only one of the Pakeha males remained in a management position at the branch; the woman was being moved to another branch to a position with fewer responsibilities, and the Maori male was being moved to second tier, a senior clerical position. It seemed somewhat ironic to me, given the sheer volume of material that we received from Head Office extolling the virtues of EEO, that the very opposite should be happening in practice. It would seem that my experience was by no means unique. Tremaine (1991: 363) has found that increasing numbers of departments were overtly discriminating against health-impaired employees and those with disabilities. One result that demonstrated the discrepancy between EEO policy and practice was that the pay gap between men and women became wider in the public sector than in the private sector for the first time in history (Tremaine, 1991: 364).<sup>13</sup> The discrepancy has not been as apparent as it might have been, due to the visibility of a few women at the top of public sector organisations (Lewis, 1991). However, the overall representation of minority groups in senior public sector jobs has changed little (Whitcombe, 1990: 93; Boston, 1991: 108).

There are many ways in which individuals are effectively excluded from jobs that they are otherwise eligible for. My concern here is to examine patterns of exclusion against groups of people, which is the concern of closure theory, and relate this to social movement ideology.

---

<sup>13</sup> In 1989 the average total weekly earnings for men in the central government sector was \$685.04 and for women \$491.16, women thus earning, on average, 71.7% of what men earn in the government sector. The average total weekly earnings for men in the private sector was \$539.74 and for women \$392.03, the pay relativity thus being 72.6% in the private sector. The pay relativity declined in the government sector between 1993 and 1996, being 74.1%, 73.7%, 73.3% and 72.8% in successive years. There was a slight increase to 73.3% in 1997, so the long term implications are difficult to gauge; but this would seem to represent, at best, a levelling of relativity in the 1990's compared to relativity gains experienced in previous decades. [Source: Quarterly Employment Survey].

The changing forms of exclusion in the New Zealand public service sector can by no means be all subsumed under the rubric of displacement. Minority group members have been increasingly disadvantaged by public sector reform, both in spite of and because of EEO policies aimed at redressing imbalances in employment opportunities. My argument is that the material realities of a competitive job market and public sector restructuring have provided a context which has not only closed down old possibilities that once existed, but provides the possibilities of new pathways of opportunity to emerge and be exploited. A consequence is that new possibilities of controlling movement along the pathways also emerges, and thus of excluding people in new ways.

### **1. The Creation of Marginal Jobs**

Jobs that monitor EEO and bicultural requirements divert minority group members of considerable ability from mainstream management into jobs where there is little prospect for advancement. As Tremaine (1991: 362) comments with regard to EEO co-ordinators: 'they tend to be marginal people within organisations and in danger of losing their position if restructuring occurs'. Yet, as the advertisements below show, applicants for these positions are required to have had significant experience in management; that is, they must have been in the mainstream management career pathway.

8 NZ Herald, Wednesday, February 20, 1991 ★ SECTION 4

## SITUATIONS VACANT

## MAORI POLICY & PLANNING MANAGER

A Maori Policy and Planning Manager is sought to assist the National Library set and implement its policies relating to the Treaty of Waitangi.

A key role will be to enable Maori views and opinions to directly inform National Library's policy and programme development and its service delivery.

The Maori Policy and Planning Manager will be a member of the National Library Management Board and will report to the National Librarian.

The National Library is a government department charged with collecting, preserving and making available the documentary heritage of New Zealand, and with coordinating the availability of information resources.

This position will suit someone who can meet the challenge of defining and developing the relationship between the National Library and the Maori Community.

Essential requirements are knowledge and commitment to Tikanga Maori, proficiency in Te Reo Maori, excellent communication skills, and experience in management at senior level.

For further information contact: Liz McLean, General Manager Access, Phone 743-058.

## HE KAIWHAKAHAERE mō ngā Āhuatanga Māori

E rapua ana te Kaiwhakahaere mō ngā Āhuatanga Māori hei whakatakoto kaupapa kia hāngai ki Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Ko te mea e tino whāia ana, ko te whakauru mai i ngā tikanga Māori ki ngā kaupapa, me ngā whakaritenga mō te tuku i ngā taonga o te whare nei ki te ao mārama - kia kitea, kia mōhiotia, kia pānuihia e ngā uri o te hunga nō rātou ngā kōrero, e te katoa anō hoki.

Kotahi atu ki te Tumuaki o Te Puna Mātauranga o Aotearoa te haere o ngā mahi a te Kaiwhakahaere nei. Āpiti atu hoki, ka tū ia hei mema mō te Poari Whakahaere i Te Puna Mātauranga o Aotearoa.

Kei raro i te mana kāwanatanga Te Puna Mātauranga o Aotearoa. Ko te mahi tuatahi a Te Puna Mātauranga, he kohikohi, he whakaemi, ka tiaki mō ake tonu atu, i ngā pukapuka, i ngā tuhituhi a ngā iwi katoa o Aotearoa mai o nehera. A, māna anō hoki e pānui, e whakaauatu, e tukutuku haere rānei ēnei kōrero ki ngā hunga e kohikohi, e whakaemi, e rangahau kōrero ana; e rapu ana i te māramatanga.

Ko tēnei tūranga, mo te tangata e pakari ana; e tuwhera ana te hūngaro me te ngākau ki te ārahi mai i te iwi Māori ki ngā taonga kei konei e tohuangia ana.

Nā reira, me tino mātau, me pono hoki ia ki ngā Tikanga Māori; me mōhiotia ki te reo Māori; me kakama rawaatu hoki ia ki te kawhe kōrero o ēnei taonga ki ngā tōpito katoa o te motu.

Ko te painga atu mehemea kua tū kē anō ia ki ngā tūnga whakahaere tikanga.

Pātia ngā pātai ki a: Liz McLean, General Manager Access, Ko tana waea: 743-058.

*National Library of New Zealand has an Equal Employment Opportunity policy.  
Ōrite tonu ngā tikanga katoa mō ngā kaimahi o Te Puna Mātauranga o Aotearoa - tēne, wāhine rānei.*



National Library of New Zealand

Te Puna Mātauranga O Aotearoa

**28 THE DOMINION WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 27 1991**

**SITUATIONS VACANT**

**SITUATIONS VACANT**

**SITUATIONS VACANT**



**Housing Corporation**  
**Te Kaporeihana Whare**

## **EEO Co-ordinator**

In the past two years the Corporation has actively supported the establishment of a framework for the promotion of Equal Employment Opportunities. The Corporation believes it is now entering a new phase where these initiatives can be consolidated with the emphasis on establishing a monitoring mechanism to assess progress and recommend interventions to ensure it continues to promote an EEO environment.

We are now seeking to appoint an EEO Co-ordinator to assist with the development of, and co-ordinate the implementation and review of the Corporation's EEO Plan and to facilitate EEO action in the Corporation. The appointee will provide advice to management on EEO issues.

If this describes you, and if you can also show that you:

- understand and are committed to EEO in the Corporation environment;
- have negotiating skills;
- can relate to and work effectively with a wide range of people;
- understand institutional and organisational structures, and are willing to work within these as a change agent;
- have good organisational skills, sound judgement and initiative and a flexible approach, combined with the ability to meet deadlines and determine priorities;
- have had experience in setting up an operating a monitoring system;
- are able to facilitate and/or lead groups;
- are committed to the philosophy of biculturalism.

And you are looking for the opportunity to help implement EEO in an organisation where EEO is a management commitment, we would like to hear from you.

For a copy of the job description and application form, contact Graeme Eills, Human Resource Management Division, Head Office, Housing Corporation of NZ, PO Box 5009, Lambton Quay, Wellington, Phone (04) 721-294.

Applications close on Wednesday 13 March 1991.

**HOUSING CORPORATION OF NEW ZEALAND**

people applying for these jobs may well be aware that they may risk their prospects of future promotion by taking a vulnerable, poorly resourced position where they are virtually guaranteed to fail their managerial objectives through no fault of their own. Nevertheless, as minority group members they may find the prospect of doing something to help other minority group members appealing. The consequence of having jobs that are appealing to minority group members is that it takes a proportion of the more talented of these people out of circulation in mainstream management, and limits their ability to re-enter; so leaving more opportunities there for others.

## **2 Redefinition of Jobs**

Another aspect of restructuring has been a redefinition of jobs, both increasing the actual managerial responsibility and redefining professionalism and leadership ability in the process. The sort of personal image that fits a leadership position has changed, from what was once an image that resonated well with minority group identity, to one that is more consonant with privileged status. Certainly minority group members who have managerial skills and orientations will be selected for leadership positions in an EEO environment, but the relative proportion of people with the requisite attitude is likely to be less in minority groups than in privileged groups.

Teaching is one profession that has been affected in this way. In the past there was a centralised system of administration in education, which relieved teachers and Principals of some administrative concerns, so that the

bulk of their work was directly related to classroom teaching. Under the new system, the responsibility for administration is decentralised. The overall responsibility for the administration of a school now belongs to its Board of Trustees. The Board appoints the school Principal, who is responsible for the day to day administration. In this situation, the Board of Trustees will be looking for Principal who is a good manager. The person's teaching ability, and their ability to provide support and inspiration to other teachers can easily become a secondary consideration, especially when there is a tight budget to be met. Success in administration and management tends to be identified with Pakeha culture and with masculinity, so a board is more likely to identify a member of the dominant group as being the most appropriate for the job.<sup>14</sup> The idealistic, intuitive, people-oriented personality that is identified with the caring professions such as teaching, is also identified with Polynesian culture and femininity. Characteristics that are associated with the dominant group have thus become essential to secure a leadership position in a profession that previously stressed traits that are identified with minority group membership. Thus the change in criteria of selection is not as neutral with regard to ethnicity and gender as it may appear to be.

A similar situation has occurred in nursing. In the past there was a career path for nurses from Charge Nurse, in charge of a ward, to Supervisors, in charge of a particular shift, to the Matron, who with the Medical Superintendent and the Hospital Administrator, ran the hospital. Now there is a Chief Executive Officer in charge, supported by hospital managers in charge of surgical, medical and support services. As with

---

<sup>14</sup> The comments about 'objectivity fallacy' in the previous chapter apply.

teaching, administrative responsibilities have come further down the line, so that Charge Nurse positions are no longer considered real hands-on nursing positions by the nurses themselves, but as administrative and managerial positions. A career path still exists as it is possible for a nurse to be promoted all the way to Chief Executive Officer, but it is a different career path requiring different attributes for success.

The redefinition of senior jobs in the caring professions as administrative or managerial positions denies them to the very people who most closely identify with the profession. Minority group members make up the bulk of the caring professions precisely because the ethos of the caring professions complements their own self identity and orientation to life.

12 NZ Herald, Monday, February 24, 1986 \* SECTION 3  
SITUATIONS VACANT SITUATIONS VACANT



**EMPLOYMENT CENTRE  
STAFF**

Vacancies exist in various Employment Centres for staff to interview, assist and advise clients seeking employment and employees seeking staff.

Applicants should have effective communication skills, presence and confidence, ability to relate effectively with clients from differing backgrounds, a knowledge of work and occupations, plus report writing and correspondence skills.

A driver's licence is essential.

The commencing salary ranges from \$16,950 to \$23,122 per annum dependent upon the work references supporting the applicant's claims of relevant experience.

There is a central office in the city, and suburban centres located at Penrose, Grey Lynn, Mt Roskill, Avondale, Henderson and Symonds Street.

Applicants location preferences will be considered.

Applications quoting "Employment Officer Vacancy No 1814" must be forwarded to the Secretary of Labour, Private Bag, Wellington, on form PS17A (obtainable from any Post Office). Applications must be received by midday March 5, 1986. Further information is available by telephoning Mr V. W. Ballance, Auckland.

24 The Hawke's Bay Herald-Tribune, Saturday, May 12, 1980

New Zealand  
**EMPLOYMENT SERVICE**

**EMPLOYMENT  
ADVISER**

We have a vacancy for an Employment Adviser in our Hastings Centre.

The work includes interviewing, advising and assisting clients seeking employment, and employers seeking staff. Employment advisers interview a wide range of clients and regularly visit employers throughout the district.

The successful applicant will need to relate to all kinds of clients and employers and should have experience in industry or community work. Also a background in sales and/or marketing would be preferred. Study towards a qualification in Marketing/Promotion would be an advantage.

The job is demanding and yet gives considerable personal satisfaction. There is scope for initiative and personal development.

Applications should be forwarded to: The Personnel Officer, New Zealand Employment Service, PO Box 1343, Rotorua, on Form PS 17A (obtained from any Government Department) and should be accompanied by a full Curriculum Vitae.

Applications must be received by Wednesday, May 16, 1980.

New Zealand Employment Service is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Although the same or a similar career path may exist on paper as it did before, it no longer exists as a future possibility in the minds of many minority group members because their whole personality would have to change to pursue it.

While devolution has pushed managerial skills further down the hierarchy so that those in caring professions feel that there is no longer any career path available to them, commercialisation has had a similar affect in the core public sector. Not only those units directly affected by commercialisation, but job requirements at all levels and across the public sector have been affected by the desire to look commercial. As the advertisements below show, some of the qualities desired in Employment Officers have not changed, as they relate to the job, but in the more recent advertisement a preference for people with marketing skills and/or qualifications has been inserted. As these skills are amongst those perceived as being more likely to possessed by a member of the dominant group, this gives them a competitive edge.

### **3 Credential Inflation**

Public sector reform has exacerbated the demand for higher educational qualifications.<sup>15</sup> Increasing the level of educational qualifications needed for any particular job inevitably decreases the likelihood of people from a working class background competing successfully for that job against those from the middle class. Not only are

---

<sup>15</sup> For a discussion of credential inflation see Dore, 1976; Brown, 1995.

middle class families better able to finance longer periods of education, but the education system itself tends to disproportionately accredit middle class people in preference to working class people (Harker, 1990: 199).

For these reasons, any movement away from paid, work based training to unpaid, institution based training will inevitably affect the availability of these jobs to the working class. The change from hospital based training for nurses, to training based at Technical Institutes, is an example of such a change. In teaching, the process of reducing work based training and increasing institution based training and reducing the income of trainees has been drawn out over decades. The movement from work based to institution based training is not a new phenomenon, but has accelerated, with new manifestations, such as pre-apprenticeship courses.

14 NZ Herald, Monday, February 24, 1986 \* SECTION 3

SITUATIONS VACANT

SITUATIONS VACANT

### **Johnson WAX** LABORATORY TECHNICIAN

Johnson Wax is a well-established and highly successful manufacturer of household and industrial cleaning products.

We seek a young person to join our quality assurance laboratory, to assist in the testing of work in progress and finished products to ensure quality standards are met.

The successful applicant may be a school leaver, who has SC in maths and science or a person with some previous laboratory experience.

Our plant is situated at Mangere Bridge and own transport is essential.

Hours are 7.30 am to 4 pm, with some overtime. We offer good wages, plus many benefits that will be discussed at an interview.

Please phone:

THE PERSONNEL MANAGER,  
JOHNSON WAX (NZ) LTD.  
PH 641-259.

18 NZ Herald, Friday, February 8, 1991 \* SECTION 2

SITUATIONS VACANT



New Zealand Milk  
Corporation Limited

### **LABORATORY TECHNICIAN** (AFTERNOON SHIFT)

NZ Milk Corporation manufactures and distributes many well-known dairy products. Such names as Swiss Maid and Fresh n Fruity yoghurt, plus other products such as Anchor Fresh milk are some of the many products we are proud to be market leaders with.

The main thrust of this position is to accurately carry out routine analysis on products, once adequately trained in the chemical and microbiological areas by a senior technician. Training will be on a day-shift system initially.

Applicants must have the following attributes:

- At least 8th Form Certificate.
- Experience in a food-testing laboratory desirable.
- Reliable transport due to roster commitments.
- Excellent communicative and calculative skills (an ability test will be given to short-listed applicants).
- Physically fit and healthy.
- Employer references signifying stable employment.

Please submit your written application, with copies of references, to:

The Personnel Officer (Confidential),

**NZ MILK CORPORATION,**

Private Bag, Manurewa.

Applications close February 13, 1991.

Credential inflation applies to ongoing job opportunities as much as it applies to labour force entrance. The gap between credential expectations for the clerical and junior management bands of the public service will be considered below; but here it is important to note that whilst the gap may be bridged by part-time study, it is people from dominant groups who are more likely to have the resources, such as a supportive family, to undertake the training that will give them the competitive edge.

#### **4. Changes to the Structure of Public Sector Organisations**

One of the 'problems identified with the traditional approach to public sector management and organisation' has been the 'excessive layers and volumes of administrative paper work in some government departments' (Report of the State Services Commission, 1987:5). Restructuring has brought about a flatter structure in public sector organisations by the removal of 'superfluous' management layers, and by doing so it has effectively ended a promotional structure in which managerial skills can be learnt in small increments. With the new structure there is a distance between the basic clerical band, which requires successful secondary education, and the junior management band, which requires successful tertiary education. Minority group members and members of the working class have lower levels of education, and are thus less likely to meet the requirements of successive management layers. The opportunity of

gradually acquiring management skills as you climb the ladder is disappearing.<sup>16</sup>

Opportunities for advancement have also disappeared as departments such as the Post Office and Railways, that in the past gave people from less privileged groups a chance to rise to the top, have now been broken up by devolution, corporatisation and privatisation. In 1985 the three top paying public service jobs were the permanent heads of the Post Office, the Railways, and the Treasury (Higher Salaries Commission General Review, 1985: 66). By 1990 the only one to remain was the Treasury. The 'new' top jobs were the Chief Executive Officers of the National Provident Fund, the Police Department, and the State Services Commission (Report of the State Services Commission, 1990: 55).

The Department of Maori Affairs has been replaced by a policy agency, the Ministry of Maori Affairs, and the Iwi Transition Agency. Once administrative functions are fully devolved to iwi, this will reduce the chance Maori people have to learn senior management skills as part of a large department that utilised and built on the knowledge and skills that they already had as Maori people.<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> Mark Western (1994b: 315) has noted in his study of Australian data, that although there was intergenerational immobility in propertied and expert classes, this did not extend to managerial classes. Western (1994a: 104) argues that 'because managers do not legally own corporate assets they have only a limited ability to mobilise organisational resources in their children's interests. Organisational control is also typically acquired on the job, rather than independently of paid employment, as is the case with both property and skills'. However, Western (1994a: 126) goes on to note that 'if entry into managerial jobs should become extensively governed by credentials, organisational resources may become the basis for immobility in the same manner as skills currently are'. Western's data was based on 1986 data; so it will be interesting to discover whether the absence of intergenerational immobility will still hold in the future, or whether management roles are increasingly defined as an area of expertise.

<sup>17</sup> Certainly, it can be argued that the devolution of Department of Maori Affairs to local iwi (tribes) may increase opportunities available to Maori managers as local, indigenous

## 5. Moral Prerequisites

People are excluded by cultural expectations as well as by educational qualifications. There has always been a class bias in selection and promotion, but the way that this bias operates has changed significantly over the last couple of decades. The public sector response to Maori demands is one example of the change that has taken place. A middle class understanding of the issues at stake prevails. The 'middle-class' understanding has important origins in the largely academic 'expert' definition of Maori culture, which has little connection to the actual life of the majority of contemporary Maori (Webster, 1989: 48),<sup>18</sup> and is thus alienated from an understanding based in life experience connected with the majority grouping of contemporary Maori. People who do not have the 'expert' understanding are classified as ignorant of biculturalism, and thus

---

power bases will not be as easily usurped by Pakeha managers. It remains to be seen whether sufficient funding or enterprise opportunities are made available to provide for Maori self-determination (*tino rangatiratanga*) as guaranteed under the Treaty of Waitangi.

<sup>18</sup> As Roy Nash (1990: 117) notes: 'misgivings about "blame the victim" theories have inhibited a whole generation of young scholars from studying (or even adequately conceptualising) social processes of profound importance. The consequences of this...deserve to be carefully assessed. Is it not possible that for every student who accepts the standard race relations line there are two or three others who learn only to bite their tongues and, having been presented with no serious analysis whatsoever (and no one will convince me that this whole area is not an appalling intellectual muddle), merely revert to uneducated prejudice once freed from the institutional pressures of the academic environment?' Like Nash, I do not wish to decry the efforts made by activists to get issues like racism and sexism on the agenda; indeed I can only assume that if it were not for their efforts racial and sexual inequities would be worse than they now are. My point is rather that racial and gendered exclusions do not exist somehow entirely independently of class, and class exclusions have been changing and increasing at the very time that class inequities have become academically unfashionable to study (Nash, 1987: 80). These new forms of class exclusion should be studied, because if they are avoided out of fear of offending certain sensibilities, our understanding of present social processes will be at best partial, and at worst, so biased as to offer those affected few points of entry that make sense of their own experience. In this way academic sociology may actually be fostering an increasing racism in our society, a result I for one would not want.

are deemed ineligible for jobs that are considered to require bicultural sensitivity. In that way people from a working class background may be excluded from these jobs, even though they may have more actual experience of interaction with Maori than other applicants.

This relatively new cultural exclusion is coded by reference to the Treaty of Waitangi. In some positions, such as an Advisory Officer for the Ministry of Maori Affairs, or an investigating Officer for the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment, the need for actual knowledge of the Treaty of Waitangi is quite obvious. It is important for people in these jobs to know which resources are affected by the Treaty, which are not, which are ambiguously defined, and something of the history of interpretation of the Treaty. In other positions, such as the Charge Physiotherapist position (see advertisement below), an understanding of the actual Treaty is not so obvious; presumably it is regarded as important for bicultural understanding, and does not refer to a need to understand the Treaty in the technical or legal sense that the two previous positions would require. My argument is that generally a requirement of 'an understanding of the Treaty of Waitangi' has a symbolic significance rather than a literal or legal one. An 'understanding of the Treaty of Waitangi' serves to differentiate between people. When people are asked about their understanding of the Treaty of Waitangi, some people may, for example, argue that the Treaty of Waitangi was a somewhat bungled attempt to legitimate the rule of British law in Aotearoa/New Zealand, and express their doubt that it can ever be put on an adequate legal footing. They may be able to offer legal and historical arguments to demonstrate that they do have 'an' understanding of the Treaty of Waitangi, only to find that they have given the 'wrong' answer. It is not enough to have 'an understanding of the Treaty of Waitangi', you need to have the

'right' understanding (Jones, 1996: 33). Thus it is an issue of right or wrong, good or bad; in short a moral issue. Furthermore, it is not a single moral issue. Under the auspices of EEO an entire middle class morality package has become embedded into public sector job requisites. The moral stance required includes particular understandings that relate to anti-sexism, anti-racism and discrimination. Associated with it are stances on issues related to violence and health. These are all areas where there is a considerable divergence in understandings amongst New Zealanders.

Although New Zealand Values Today does not specifically explore class attitudes, it does demonstrate significant differences in some attitudes between groupings associated with class. For example, amongst the university educated there is 52% support for the Treaty of Waitangi, whereas amongst those who have left school with School Certificate only, there is only 35% support (Gold and Webster, 1990: Table 5.3). While such data does not enable us to adequately picture the different understandings of the Treaty of Waitangi that different people have, it does indicate that some basic differences in values around the issue exists. The middle class moral code adopted by the EEO reforms may not be congruent with working class experience, but if a working class person calls the middle class code 'unreal' or 'irrelevant' they put at risk the possibility of obtaining a job in an EEO organisation.

It is ironic that in our informally segregated society, which tends to locate Maori and other Polynesian minorities disproportionately in the working class, it is an individual from a working class background that is more likely to have experienced cultural differences between Maori and Pakeha, and more likely to have learnt ways of dealing with these

differences. There is no evidence as to whether or not working class Maori do actually feel more comfortable with the approach taken by a middle class Pakeha social worker than that taken by a Pakeha work mate, even where the social worker does meet the 'cultural safety' requisites, and the work mate does not. What is known is that our care professionals are not tested on their actual ability to put their client at ease and take cultural considerations into account in a cross-cultural situation. What they are exposed to, and tested on, is a theoretical knowledge based on the concerns articulated by the middle class 'expert' definitions of the important issues, and become certified as being 'culturally safe' on that basis.

THE DOMINION SATURDAY JANUARY 28 1991 29

SITUATIONS VACANT

SITUATIONS VACANT

SITUATIONS VACANT

## Charge Physiotherapist

Join an enthusiastic Health Care Team that provides acute and re-habilitation care for the Communities in the Taupo and Tokoroa areas.

This is a full time position based at Taupo which provides professional services at the Tokoroa Department. The Taupo Department provides physiotherapy services for general surgical, medical, orthopaedic, maternity, rehabilitation and assessment specialties.

Working conditions are excellent. Salary: \$31,117 - \$32,567 dependent on qualification and experience.

The successful applicant must be a New Zealand registered physiotherapist with a minimum of two years post graduate experience. In addition, a broad working knowledge of the above specialties, additional post-graduate studies in appropriate areas, some management experience, good communication skills and the ability to maintain good interpersonal relations is desirable. Applicants should be culturally sensitive and demonstrate an understanding of the Treaty of Waitangi.

Application forms and further details are available from Mrs Burdett, Acting Manager, Taupo Hospital, PO Box 841, Taupo. Closing date: Open.

Waikato has a smoke free work environment, also an EEO policy.



Waikato

The way that such issues have been defined and implemented have made them tests of middle class morality. Middle class morality has become a prerequisite for entrance and advancement in career paths that previously allowed working class people to become socially mobile. Such tests effectively deny the advantage of a working class location: more exposure to actual lived Maori lives and the lives of other Polynesian minority group members. Such tests instead favour those with a theoretical understanding of 'expert' definitions.<sup>19</sup> It is, of course, impossible to show that opportunities for those from the working class are more or less available than they would otherwise have been, as we do not know what would have happened otherwise. We can, nevertheless, note that we do know that 'cultural equity' requirements of courses in the caring professions are perceived as totally irrelevant by many of those who are compelled to comply with them (Massey and Jesson, in Nash, 1990: 117). These people argue that they are not antagonistic to the needs of people from other cultures: indeed, they would find it valuable to learn something about what people from other cultures may prefer in situations that they are likely to encounter. What really matters in terms of cultural equity, to their mind, is competency in actual, professional, cross-cultural situations. They are surprised that this is not taught, nor is it tested; it is apparently irrelevant to the gatekeepers.<sup>20</sup> They not only find their concerns dismissed, but they find

---

<sup>19</sup> This matter also broaches on another concern. Perhaps I should have written another section on the class impact of credential theorisation: increasing the abstract, theoretical content of qualifications and decreasing the practical; thereby increasing the 'cultural capital' required to be successful. This seems to be occurring across the range of credentials, especially at Technical Institutes where the emphasis was once on practical learning for practical jobs and has now become more academic. See Western (1994a: 116; 1994b: 312) on intergenerational transmission of expertise.

<sup>20</sup> I would like to make it quite clear that I do fully endorse compulsory cultural safety courses. I certainly don't want learning 'something about what people from other cultures may prefer in situations that they are likely to encounter' to result in our future nurses, teachers, social workers and the like ordering people about on the assumption that they know what they want 'because they're Maori'. My point is rather that courses on cultural

themselves dismissed as 'culturally unsafe' for voicing their concerns.<sup>21</sup> The most troublesome aspect of this is that those who are adversely affected by the tests of middle class morality do not recognise those tests as the class based exclusionary practice that they are. The hegemony of the 'expert' definition is taken as evidence of hijacking by minority group interests, evidence of minority group 'privilege' at the expense of New Zealanders of European descent. Thus the new moral requisites serve to heighten racial tensions by deflecting or displacing class antagonisms onto them.

## Conclusion

Public Sector reform demonstrates processes of usurpation and exclusion. The implementation of EEO and biculturalist reforms sought to underwrite an agenda for minority group usurpation. Certainly, it may well be the case that the proportion of people from minority groups in middle class positions may have been considerably less if it was not for the support of EEO and bicultural policies. Yet these reforms were implemented in conjunction with other reforms involving restructuring and commercialisation. The result has been ambivalent with respect to minority group exclusion. EEO and bicultural employment positions may be hailed

---

safety should include plenty of examples of actual incidents that were culturally unsafe, so that students become quite clear in their own minds about practical ways of practising cultural safety, rather than dealing with issues of colonialism, patriarchy and the like in entirely abstract, theoretical terms. When I read comments such as: 'Many students complained that they just did not understand where I was coming from. To many I did not appear to be articulating 'a Maori perspective' on social work' (Matahaere-Atariki, 1988: 72), I begin to wonder what such students are actually learning from the course?

<sup>21</sup> As Deborah Jones (1996: 39) argues in relation to public servants who are 'resistant' to EEO discourse, 'we cannot assume that resistance to EEO discourse is necessarily resistance to equality... Perhaps the discourse of EEO limit the type of discussion of inequality that can take place in the Public Service'.

as usurpatory, giving people from minority groups 'a foot in the door', but it remains to be seen whether the subsequent career trajectory of people in these jobs justifies that tag. I have argued that the jobs are marginal, so it serves to exclude talented minority group members from mainstream management experience. Restructuring and the redefinition of jobs would seem to have quite strong exclusionary affects for minority group members, whereas the exclusionary effect of credential inflation and moral prerequisites are more strongly mediated by class situation.

Class exclusion is certainly more strongly supported by these changes. Yet it is by no means clear that the increasing prevalence of minority group members in middle class positions has been at the expense of the upward mobility of Pakeha working class people. It is more likely to be the case that, in the context of declining employment opportunities in general, and declining opportunities for professional and lower ranked managerial middle class positions in particular, working class people would have been more effectively excluded by mechanisms that already existed, such as credential inflation, irrespective of what was happening to minority group members. What I am arguing is important to note, then, is not so much that the forms of social closure are changing, but that the ideologies used to justify closure are expanding beyond meritocratic justifications of middle class tenure, to include a more direct ideological testing of moral predisposition.

Taking changing gender discrimination as an example of the displacement process, the gender boundary has generally been a marker of discrimination across more permeable boundaries such as occupation. Traditionally, women have been able to cross class boundaries by marriage,

but have not been as readily able to become upwardly mobile through career paths. Social changes, whether economically or culturally driven, have resulted in more women in middle class occupations, displacing the men who otherwise may have been there. This need have no impact whatsoever on upward mobility out of the working class and into middle class occupations; yet it is also quite compatible with a reduced upward mobility, a decline in the proportion of people from working class backgrounds finding their way into middle class occupations. It could even be the case that the proportion of men from middle class backgrounds in middle class occupations increases, and the increasing number of women in middle class occupations comes at the expense of the upward mobility of men from working class origins. In other words, the displacement may serve to make the class boundary more impermeable than it once was. The attention given to removing the gender marker in occupations can serve to deflect attention from changes in social mobility, without necessarily reducing the impermeability of the actual gender boundary at all. Whether or not this has actually happened can only be established with social mobility research. What I have shown is that changes that have been taking place in the New Zealand public sector would facilitate such exclusions.

This chapter has been concerned with challenges to social boundaries that have received little attention in the literature on social closure. Theorising on social closure has been more concerned with the type of challenge to social closure that comes about through direct challenges to a social boundary. For example, the result of a war may be to replace one ethnic elite with another. The challenging elite usurps the position of the original elite, and then practices exclusion, perhaps much the same sort of exclusion that the previous elite practised. On the face of it, the sort of

boundary challenge discussed in this chapter is similar, in that one group usurps the position of another group, and then practices exclusion; but it is dissimilar in that the challenging group does not replace the old, it displaces a proportion of them, and that proportion is marked by another boundary, so at least two boundaries are involved in the process. It should be noted, in both cases, the actual boundaries between groups need not change at all, only the relative positioning of the groups.

Changes in symbolic boundaries are often posited as an effect of changing social boundaries. Thus in ancient Egypt when one ethnic group replaced another as the ruling elite, the tribal god of the victorious group thereby proved his superiority to the tribal god of the replaced group. However, that was not the end of the conquered god. The tribal god of the replaced group became recognised as a manifestation of the tribal god of the newly dominant group; which did not disrupt the continuing loyalty of the conquered to their tribal god. Their tribal god was no longer rendered oppositional to the reigning god, but in hierarchical relationship to it. The displacement form of closure discussed in this chapter differs. The changing symbolic boundaries around the Treaty of Waitangi can not be considered as necessary effects of the displacement process, but are implicated within the form of closure. The displacement itself is facilitated by the change in the symbolic boundary. In other words, change does not always proceed unilaterally from material to ideological contexts; but material realities and ideological preterreality both form the context that inform the possibilities for social change.

A consideration of displacement effects also underlines the need for social movements that seek equity to engage in ways of making boundaries

more permeable, rather than in moves that exacerbate existing cleavages and displace inequities onto other social boundaries.

If we take the lesbian-feminist analysis of sexuality as an example, one key difference that is pointed to by lesbian-feminists is the contrast between the dominant-subordinate relationship of heterosexuality, and the more equitable relationship that exists within homosexuality. While homosexual relationships are doubtless more equitable than heterosexual relationships, lesbian-feminists do not always come to terms with the evidence that homosexuality does, at times, involve dominant-subordinate relationships (see Ricketts, 1985: 84), nor can they provide proof that heterosexual relationships necessarily involve dominant-subordinate relationships (see, for example, Leed Revolutionary Feminist Group, 1981). By lining up the dualisms, the cleavage of heterosexual and homosexual is preserved and entrenched. If what is sought is to undermine the legitimisation of dominant-subordinate relationships against more mutual relationships, then this is the axis of difference that needs to be stressed. Sexuality needs to be redefined in terms of the mutuality of the relationship, and not in terms of the gender of the partner. The most avidly homophobic males often fail to realise their own homophilia, their own desire for sameness in sexuality, which they only achieve by the imposition of their own comfort zone to the discomfort of their partner. Defining differences in sexuality as differences in the mutuality of relationships makes the boundaries that exist more permeable, and thus less effective as a marker of social difference.

The displacement of social inequalities from one social boundary to another is therefore by no means an inevitable consequence of social

movement activity. Displacement is the consequence of the political opportunity presented by what remains hidden when another feature of social reality is highlighted. Displacement can work for social movements when they highlight important differences that have not previously been acknowledged, and linking existing social cleavages to both sides of the difference. In this way the cleavage about the existing boundary is not exacerbated, but the boundary itself becomes more permeable.

## Chapter 6

### **Sacrament: Creating a Stable Material Context of Knowing**

In the previous chapter I noted that unintended social consequences can be produced by people acting on the basis of an understanding derived from a different social context. Action intended to reduce social inequalities can end up displacing those social inequalities from one social boundary to another. I suggested that this is by no means an inevitable consequence of social movement activity, and could be avoided by paying more attention to the way that social boundaries are made more salient through movement claims. In this chapter I consider another way in which social movements can retain more control over the way that their ideas get used outside the movement. This can be achieved by paying attention to the arrangement of things within their arguments.

In Chapter 3 I argued that our difficulties in knowing do not stem from any refusal of nature to be known. It is not the case, as the realists argue, that some aspects of material, biological and/or social reality are hidden from us in the depths of empirically inaccessible structure. Neither is it the case, as constructivists argue, that our descriptions of reality refer only to other signs, and not to any reality beyond the signs. This chapter acknowledges the intimate ongoing connection between signs and reality. What I have emphasised in Chapter 3 is that the process of gathering knowledge shapes the knowledge in ways that are not immediately obvious to us, but nevertheless distort our perceptions of reality. The quantum

debate drew attention to the material context of knowledge as shaping knowledge, and I am arguing that this important insight needs to be extended to material contexts beyond the laboratory, beyond those that we are consciously involved with in forming knowledge, to those that form what we usually think of as the social context of the knowledge. My argument is that discussions of knowing usually emphasise symbols and ideas, as the constructivist position does, and in doing so overlooks the material context of the social formation of knowledge. The process of knowing involves a mutual inherence between ideas and experience that is mediated by the arrangement of objects in the contexts we find ourselves located in. Ideas and experience are interdependent, and it is because of this interdependence that epistemologists have been able to ignore experiential processes of knowing in the same way that economists are able to focus on production and ignore reproduction, and sociologists are able to focus on culture and ignore nature, without being aware of what has been ignored by their representations.<sup>1</sup>

My argument has been that knowledge processes within the body do not somehow hook onto some sort of neutral reality 'out there'. This is the basic argument of SSK (sociology of scientific knowledge), discussed in Chapter 2, but the burden of the SSK argument is that what scientists perceive to be a neutral reflection of a neutral reality 'out there' is already

---

<sup>1</sup> Bruno Latour (1988) makes a similar point discussing sociologism and technologism. Latour defines technologism as reading off the scripts that human actors have to play from the competencies and preinscriptions of nonhuman actors. For example, the 'crude' Marxist positions that the modes of production determines the society is technologist, reading off human agency from nonhuman requirements. Latour defines sociologism symmetrically, reading off the scripts that nonhuman actors have to play from the competencies and preinscriptions of human actors; and Latour chastises sociologists for precisely this willingness to ignore the agency of nonhuman actors. My point is similar. Our knowledge reflects the restrictions that objects place on our 'free' associations. New knowledge is not anarchic, it is contextual; it is socialised by association with objects.

highly socialised, and thus not entirely 'neutral'. My argument is that we need to recognise knowledge processes that take place outside the body as knowledge processes, and not simply as social processes. It is not only a matter of understanding how social, cognitive, and observational processes shape knowledge. It is also of concern that we understand how these processes are influenced and shaped, so that the understandings developed within social movements can be made more stable and less susceptible to the difficulties encountered in the last chapter. The mutual inherence between 'psyche' and 'society' flows from the way that both intra- and extra-somatic processes are shaped so that they can influence the reciprocal process. Thus when I recall how many days are in this month by repeating to myself a little verse that I know, I am using an extrasomatic resource that has been internalised. The verse is shaped, it has the rhyme and metre that it does, to assist our mental processes, so that we can more easily recall the number of days in each month. Yet in memorising this verse my mind is also shaped by the knowledge that months have given, but differing numbers of days, so that when I come across a document dated 30 February, my suspicions are immediately aroused. When sociologists have examined extra-somatic knowledge processes, they have been primarily concerned with establishing the affect of social interactions on knowledge produced. My concern is more in exploring the extra-somatic knowledge processes themselves so as to understand what makes them successful as knowledge processes. So, in the example I have just used, the verse I use to remember the number of days in the month is successful because its rhyme and metre make it easy enough to remember. This sort of knowledge processes is primarily oriented to information. Within the body such processes involve repetition and replication. Outside the body, they can take forms such as chants or written records. The knowledge processes that I am now turning

my attention to are not primarily concerned with information per se, but with the organisation of knowledge. Within the body such knowledge processes are mediative and transformative. An example is the processes involved in what we refer to as meditation, or focused thinking, which may be termed analytic for the sort of knowledge we call understanding, or strategic for the sort of knowledge we call judgmental. Outside the body they can take forms such as myths or sacraments. I am particularly interested in sacraments, as they quite clearly shows the influence of things, rather than merely ideas and symbols on knowledge.

The term 'sacrament' has come into sociology from a theological term denoting specific Christian rituals which have traditionally been considered to be the outward and visible sign of an inward, spiritual grace, or action of God. Weber (1948: 278) retained the religious context in referring to sacraments, arguing that rationalised religions have sublimated the orgy into the sacrament. Sacrament, can in this sense be considered as ritual promoting group solidarity through sublimated libidinal ties.<sup>2</sup> Gregory Bateson (1972) has also taken the term 'sacrament' from the religious context, and used the term to refer to the fusion of several realities; a combining of material and ideal, symbolic and actual, into a single meaning. Bateson used the example of experiencing a 'swan' at the ballet to show this fusion.

'The swan is not a real swan but a pretend swan. It is also a pretend-not human being. It is also 'really' a young lady wearing a white dress. And a real swan would resemble a young lady in certain

---

<sup>2</sup> See Jeff Goodwin (1997) for a discussion of Freud's term 'libidinal constitution' as it relates to social movements.

ways...it is not one of these statements but their combination which constitutes a sacrament...[they] somehow get fused together in a single meaning (Bateson, 1972: 37).

I would like to join the two ideas by suggesting that sacrament can be thought of as a four dimensional (space-time) metaphor that is able to carry unconscious as well as conscious meaning. The important distinction between sacrament and rules, from the point of view of learning, is that rules deal solely with conscious mental processes; whereas sacrament includes both conscious and unconscious, thinking and doing, symbols and objects, self and others, in a more fluid process in which meaning evolves, both for the individual and for the group(s) involved in the sacrament.

Rugby is another example of a sacrament. The material context of the game, evident in the field and the goal posts and the ball, influences what can happen by inhibiting some moves and facilitating others. There are special clothes, special roles or positions to be assigned to, special moves to be made, special gestures and signals meaningful to those in the know. There is knowledge to be gained that will increase your status to those in the know, even if meaningless to outsiders. The actual game, which is more likely to be watched rather than played, is an experience that is participated in through its juxtaposition with other games. Games that have been played and watched are remembered, and positions and moves are identified. The history and mythology of rugby can be recalled, and the ideals of mateship and the frontier values evoked are thereby reinforced. The mysterium derived from the game depends not only on factors within the game itself, such as how closely the teams are matched, or how efficiently the moves are made; but also on the spectator-participant's

competence in realising the game's excitement. This presupposes having mastered the fusion of all these realities into one complex of meaning.

In Western Europe, after the Protestant Reformation, church practices which had previously coexisted within the one church became polarised between Protestant and Reformation churches. One of the central disputes between Roman Catholic and Protestant churches since the Reformation has been the meaning of the Eucharist. The metaphor: 'this is my body, this is my blood' became a point of dispute. The Protestant interpretation became that it was a simile; the bread and wine are symbols of the body and blood of the Christ. The Roman Catholic interpretation became that it was an actuality; the bread and the wine are the real body and blood of the Christ. In the process, the sacrament became detached from its spiritual and cultural significance of psychic union with God and became a point of theological contention.

The concept of sacrament never entered secular reasoning. Secular reasoning largely lost any appreciation of the significance of metaphor in action, and became focused instead on simile and actuality; the distinction between symbol, language, mind on the one hand, and reality, action, matter on the other, that underpins much of our intellectual dualistic thinking. The erasure of any acknowledgement of this conduit of mutual inherence takes its most extreme form in postmodern theorising, where it is claimed that the symbol or signifier has become detached from the reality that it refers to, that signs refer only to other signs, and not to any reality beyond the signs. I claim that, on the contrary, signs carry meaning by virtue of their entanglement in some form of sacramental encounter which position both signifier and signified in a context that is limited by prescription. Bruno

Latour (1988) uses Madeline Akrich's (1987) term 'prescription' for a behaviour imposed back onto the human by nonhuman agents. Latour uses the example of a door-closer, which closes the door for us, but, for the door closer to do this, we are obliged to give it more of a push than a normal door to open the door in the first place. Sacraments also contain objects, not the ordinary 'technical' objects that Latour refers to, but rather 'special-ordinary' objects. These objects ground the sacrament.<sup>3</sup> These object-symbols act a stabiliser that puts limits to the meaning that can be attached to the sacrament. As discussed above, we have a variety of understandings of what the bread and wine used in the sacrament of the Eucharist means. The understandings that people have of the same sacrament within and between various Christian churches is more diverse than the legal statements given in various church laws would suggest. Yet the fact that bread and wine are central to the sacrament also places limitations on the meanings that can be attached, as any meaning we come up with must be able to acknowledge the centrality of bread and wine if it is to be an understanding that remains 'within' the sacrament, and not a deconstruction that situates itself outside of the sacrament. The bread and wine thus prescribe meaning to the sacrament. In this way a sacramental context is able to withstand the dislocation and relocation of more peripheral signifiers and signified, as a nonhuman agent places limitations on the degree of flexibility that can be contained within the interaction. The meaning of a sacrament can and does change; the sacrament is the means by

---

<sup>3</sup> Latour makes the important point that 'what counts as holding society together is mostly extrasomatic' (1986: 275, quoted in Lloyd, 1998: 12). Callon and Latour (1981) use the difference between human and baboon society to show the importance of extrasomatic resources in holding together large social groupings. Baboons can only act on each others bodies, whereas humans have durable materials: armies with weapons to enforce, scribes to record. Ambiguity can be removed by tools, regulations, walls, objects. What is critical is the solidity and durability of different sorts of materials.

which a signifier can become attached to or detached from the signified; but the sign is still located in the mutual inherence of the constellation of signifiers and signified that a sacrament engages, or it ceases to exist as a sign. A sacrament in this sense is an event that has the potential to collapse networks of signifiers and signifieds into each other, which is capable of producing an implosion of meaning, an epiphanic moment<sup>4</sup> in the psyche.

The major difference between a sacrament and other rituals is that the central symbol is an object, which makes the ritual a lived metaphor.<sup>5</sup> A metaphor connects an image to a material reality. As a statement, 'this is my bread, this is my body' is a metaphor connecting the material reality, the bread, to the image of the body that the bread represents. In the sacrament it is the enactment that is the material reality. The sacrament is like a metaphor in that there is a material reality, the action, that is connected to an image, the historical or mythical precedent(s). Like the metaphor, the sacrament takes on meaning only in so far as we are able to put together what is common between the reality and the image. The sacrament differs from the metaphor in that it involves not merely a figure of speech, but an activity. It is not merely one image that must be more or less correctly matched to one reality, but several images and realities that must be sorted,

---

<sup>4</sup> Norman Denzin (1989), uses the term 'epiphany' to describe a moment of revelation in a person's life. Denzin's interpretive interactionism focuses on particular life experiences that are interactional moments which radically alter and shape the meanings that people give to themselves and their life projects. As a sacrament is an 'interactive moment', and can engender epiphanies, it could be studied using Denzin's methodology. However, Denzin (1989:17) assumes that a person confronts and experiences a crisis within a particular problematic interactional situation. While many epiphanic moments that we experience do fit this description, revelation also often comes in more gentle moments, and the sacramental experience is usually a more gradual process that has its seasons of deepening understanding.

<sup>5</sup> It should be noted that not all rituals that are known as sacraments in the Christian tradition fit this definition; for example, the Roman Catholic sacrament of Reconciliation or Confession does not involve any symbolic object.

focused and fused to enable us to fully enter into the sacrament. Thus it is not only the quality of that particular instance of the sacrament that facilitates the engagement, but the capacity of the participant to bring together the various images and realities presented.

A sacrament fuses the real and the preterreal, and in doing so can maintain and/or change the juxtaposition of real and preterreal boundaries between groups of people. A sacrament, by virtue of its links with the libidinal economy, is the expression of social tension that drives the process of constructing and maintaining social closure. A sacrament is both evidence of the social tension in the libidinal economy that constructs and maintains the sacrament; and provides the rationale for boundaries that indicate social closure, which the sacrament constructs and maintains.

The sacrament draws together many different experiences. A sacrament can be conservative, a spiritual or mental anchor when changing material circumstances threaten to undermine our means of knowing, our way of life, or our very existence. A sacrament can also propel us to make changes in our lives. Participation in a sacrament can facilitate a conversion experience - the point at which we understand the sacrament's meaning - but other epiphanic moments occur beyond conversion as a sacrament continually provides both a mediating object and the experiential context for extrasomatic knowledge processes. The significance that a sacrament has for our lives is that it acts as a conduit of mutual inherence.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> 'It seems to me that an essential purpose of all the great spiritual traditions is to help us to be more whole, both within ourselves, and within the society we live in' (Robin Skynner in Skynner and Cleese, 1994: 307).

Perhaps the most important aspect of sacramental learning for today's sociologists to consider is the capacity of a sacrament to take us beyond the binary oppositions that we have inherited, to a more inclusive form of knowledge based on practice and process. As I discussed in Chapter 2, we have formed male-female, sacred-profane, good-evil dichotomies by taking a picture, an analytic snapshot of a ritual or myth or human interaction frozen in time. If we played the ritual, myth or human interaction out over time, we would understand them as processes, as cycles of life-death-life, summer-winter-summer, day-night-day, in which there is movement (Pinkola Estes, 1992: 135). Feminist critique has been highly successful in promoting and elaborating the myth that binary codes are structures that permeate human practices everywhere throughout history. I would argue that the universal occurrence of male-female categories does not in itself provide evidence that it is the bedrock of dualistic reasoning, from which all others emerged. Louis Dumont's argument that the distinction between pure and impure underlies the caste system in India provides contrary evidence of a fundamental binary that significantly cuts across the male-female binary (Miller, 1991). In Chapter 4 I suggested that the tendency to create dichotomies derives from our desire to advance mysterium (positive, life-giving experience) and limit onus. From this it would make more sense to argue that the sacred-profane distinction should be recognised as humanity's most fundamental social binary. We fail to recognise it as such in the West because the sacred-profane distinction has largely been collapsed onto the male-female distinction as a result of increasing secularisation. A parallel consequence of secularisation has been the tendency to replace concern with spiritual matters with concern for sexual matters. The 'optimal' knowledge solution in the secular West is to formulate knowledge in a way that enhances these projections. Endorsing

the 'depth' of the male-female dualism thus ironically endorses the increasingly phallogentric movement of Western knowledge. Thus we strive to gain the knowledge that will enable us to travel to other planets, whilst the knowledge of how to live on our own planet is being steadily eroded. What we are trying to escape is our own embeddedness. The 'other' history of Western knowledge has reflected the need to retrieve the associations with the sacred-profane distinction that have been lost, without going so far as to name them as sacred-profane distinctions. When Durkheim identifies social awe with sacred awe, he is acknowledging a lost aspect of the binary; but by inverting and displacing the binary, he has the sacred awe emerging from social reality, not social reality emerging as does psychic reality from the sacred preterreality in which they are embedded and which they sustain. 'Sacred preterreality' is sacrament. Sacrament both contains and expresses; it is both the idea and the experience, both the symbol and the object, the two in one without being the collapse of the 'other' into the one of phallogentric binary thought. Sacrament is embedded, both grounded and mutually inherent in its associations. What the sacrament achieves is not unity through emotional togetherness, the 'collective effervescence' Durkheim proposes, but mutual inherence. The Pentecostal churches are undoubtedly Christianity's most 'emotional' but they are not highly sacramental, whereas the public face of the highly sacramental churches is almost entirely unemotional. What the sacrament achieves is social integration through a shared sacramental understanding which enables a personal integration with the collective unconscious. Sacramental myths do not merely provide guiding morals, or a guiding 'metanarrative' for the lives of participants, but a practical understanding of pathways through the psyche, ways of integrating the self with the collective unconscious; and in the process integrating the individual with the evolving sacramental

collective. The form of the sacrament is the central myth, the primary path of understanding made available to the participants.

## **The Quilt**

An excellent example of a social movement sacrament is the NAMES project AIDS Memorial Quilt. The NAMES Project Foundation is an organisation that encourages those who grieve for someone that they know who has died of AIDS to express their grief through creating a quilt panel as a memorial of that person. The NAMES Project Foundation presents and preserves the panels that make up the Quilt, and schedules Quilt displays. The NAMES Quilt itself is a special-ordinary object, an object that is the central symbol of the social movement. This central object-symbol itself demands both thinking and doing from those involved with it. There are different ways of participating in the NAMES Project. The general public can participate in the public displays by coming to view the Quilt. The international display of the entire Quilt in Washington DC in 1992 was the size of 14 football fields. People who view the Quilt can also participate by leaving messages on a signature square. People can also be involved by working on a Quilt panel in tribute to someone who has died of AIDS, or by becoming actively involved in the Foundation. Each panel is both a material reality and an image of the person remembered. Lewis and Fraser (1996: 448) comment that:

‘The physical artefact, the cloth that comprises the Quilt, cannot change social arrangements’

Yet their article demonstrates that the Quilt has been a source of social change, and that this was an intention of the project. Lewis and Fraser (1996: 438) note that Quilt panels were initially made by and for gay men, but Cleve Jones actively worked to expand this to include the range of people affected by AIDS. Jones recognised that:

‘The NAMES Quilt could serve to not only relieve personal grief, it could also transform prejudice between gays and straights’ (Mueller, 1995: 7)

The NAMES Quilt thus had already undergone a significant dislocation of signifiers and signified before it became well known. Originally it expressed personal grief, uniting gay men in a way that is consistent with Weber’s understanding of a sacrament as ritual promoting group solidarity and sublimating libidinal ties. Yet it was recognised that the Quilt could be made to carry meaning that would disrupt the association between AIDS and gay men, if it involved the range of people affected by AIDS.

The unconscious meanings and associations that a quilt carries are well suited for the social movement purpose. Quilting has a history of being a medium of both social creativity and unity. The warmth that a quilt provides on a cold night represents the love and care that people have given you by working together to create this treasure for you. It evokes memories of the laughter and the bickering that went into it. Some parts of it may remind you of particular people and events. A quilt unites you with people, not only the people who helped you make it, but those who share in its

comfort. It unites you not only with all that you share together, but all that reaches you through them.

Quilting, then, has a history of intimate associations. One feature of a sacrament is its intimacy, its capacity to reach individuals where they are, within the structure of a spectacle. As Lewis and Fraser (1996: 443,4) note:

‘While the Quilt is a public spectacle, drawing thousands of visitors to each display, walking among panels is a personal, reflective and deeply moving experience. The names memorialised on the Quilt are commemorated on an individual, personal scale and fragments of individual lives are intimately displayed on each panel.’

‘Despite its public nature, the Quilt does not hamper the personal and emotional character of the responses it elicits’

The person remembered is celebrated as a ‘self’ in both the psychological and social sense, and this helps a visitor to encounter both senses of their self in the Quilt.

‘The Quilt displays provide a medium through which many micro level interactions take place. Within each of these interactions a relationship between the Quilt and the viewer is established’ (Lewis and Fraser, 1996: 447).

The Quilt, as a conduit of mutual inherence, is able to meet people with different levels of understanding of and participation in the experience:

‘the meaning of the Quilt, what it represents and how it should be used, is open to individual interpretation’ (Lewis & Fraser, 1996:442).

One such relationship between the Quilt and viewer is the outreach to those previously uninvolved:

‘the Quilt has an impact on those previously untouched by AIDS’ (Lewis and Fraser, 1996:446).

Another is a challenge to those outside, unsympathetic and unwilling to become involved:

‘the Quilt is used by visitors to challenge mainstream cultural (mis)understandings of AIDS...to challenge existing attitudes in an attempt to bring about social change (Lewis and Fraser, 1996: 449).

Another is the strengthening of fellowship within the group:

‘it also serves to enhance solidarity within the gay community’ (Lewis and Fraser, 1996: 449).

As Lewis and Fraser (1996: 449) conclude:

‘the Quilt succeeds in uniting diverse individuals in a common cause and common pledge: “we will remember”’

It is difficult to think of a social movement facing more adverse circumstances than the gay community in the 1980’s. This group faced the

stigma of being gay, the stigma of being 'AIDS carriers', the burden of continually losing activists to AIDS, and the drain on resources that this entailed. Yet it was precisely at this time that groups turned to 'cultural objects' and used them as tools or resources to dramatise, challenge and transform the stigma of AIDS. These groups thought that objects such as the Quilt would be symbols that would access familiar meanings and traditions for them (Mueller, 1995, in Lewis and Fraser, 1996: 438).

My argument is that cultural objects used in the way that the Quilt has been are more than symbols, they are sacraments that can actively fuse together different realities through involvement with them. There is nothing magical about the object itself; but the object becomes the point at which people and resources come together, which they pass through, bringing about ties which extend beyond the object itself. This outreach is facilitated by the nature of the Quilt:

'The portability of the Quilt allows for a widening of the "interactional context within which...the meaning and message of the 'Quilt' are communicated" (Lewis and Fraser, 1996: 442).

The Quilt is thus a four dimensional metaphor that quite literally moves through space and time. Through it layers of reality and symbol are fused. The Quilt is a 'thing', and the effect of the Quilt can not be isolated from the interactions it is effective through. Sacramental understanding occurs as people participate in the Quilt. Yet sacramental participation does not ensure understanding. There has to be a certain quality of participation for a successful ongoing intervention in the social context that these groups find themselves in. In the case of the NAMES Project, movement activists

quite deliberately set out to improve the quality of the intervention by incorporating people who weren't gay into the project, with the conscious aim that this would challenge the popular boundary between gays and straights.

The boundary between gays and straights had been strengthened by collapsing the AIDS-carrier - AIDS-free distinction onto it. Encouraging people to make quilt panels to those who had died of AIDS, whether they were gay or not, undermined the association of the two boundaries. The association of gay - AIDS-carrier - bad, and straight - AIDS-free - good is thereby disrupted. If the 'good' straight person can suffer from AIDS, then this allows the possibility that the gay person that suffers from AIDS may also be 'good'. People may come to the Quilt as a memorial to those who have died of AIDS, who would never have gone to a memorial for gay people. Nevertheless, they may leave with the understanding that gay people are 'good', their lives are worth celebrating. They may also come to realise the damage done by the cultural intolerance of gays. The significance of AIDS was not well understood by the straight majority, and the slow reaction to the epidemic by officialdom can be related to its perceived marginality as a minority group problem. It was the collapsing of AIDS onto the gay 'other' that made the problem less pressing for everyone else.

The sacrament of the Quilt provides a way of crossing the gay versus straight boundary by locating what is desirable in both groups. What is good, according to the sacrament of the Quilt, is eros: whatever it was in the lives of those who are remembered that evokes the love expressed by those

making the Quilt. As a visitor to the Quilt commented on a signature square (Lewis and Fraser, 1996: 442):

‘You are all my heroes! I’m so glad you lived. I don’t know any of you, but I can feel the love of your family and friends’

This is a direct statement that knowledge has not come through personal intimacy, but through the mediation of an object, and expressed as the feeling experienced in the ‘ritual’ of observing the Quilt. Not all social movement activity is so obviously centred around an object-symbol, however. I will now examine three more mainstream social movement activities as sacraments, to determine the extent to which knowledge is mediated by objects and dependent on experience, and the potentialities that exist for paying attention to the arrangement of things within their arguments.

### **Pakaitore Marae - Moutoa Gardens Occupation**

On February 28, 1995 at 5 am about 150 Maori from iwi<sup>7</sup> based further up the Wanganui River arrived at Moutoa Gardens in Wanganui to re-establish Pakaitore Marae. Their intention was to celebrate their Whanganuitanga and rangatiratanga in exercising their right to use ancestral

---

<sup>7</sup> ‘iwi’ is the Maori word for tribe.

‘Whanganuitanga’ means the precepts and practices of the Whanganui iwi.

‘rangitiratanga’ means dominion, authority.

‘rangatira’ means chief.

‘marae’ is a meeting place

‘kuia’ is a female leader

‘kaumatua’ is a male leader.

lands. They remained on the site for 79 days, leaving again at 5 am, having decided to leave peacefully as they had come.

Before European people arrived in New Zealand, Maori iwi from the upper Wanganui River used a site at the river mouth as a village in the fishing season. The site was called Pakaitore. The first 'sale' at Wanganui in 1839 was negotiated at this site. The Treaty of Waitangi was signed there by the rangatira of local iwi in 1840. After European settlement, Maori began to bring produce to sell at the site, and this continued until the late 1900s. The sale of 80,000 acres of Wanganui land in 1848 was signed there. Maori understood the site to be excluded from the sale, as all marae were specifically excluded. The site was, however, designated a marketplace by the Pakeha, and so legal ownership passed from Maori iwi. The site was renamed Moutoa Gardens, and a statue was erected there by the settlers in 1865. The settlers did this as a tribute to the 'friendly' Maori from the lower river tribes, in recognition of their efforts in fighting upper river Maori who wanted to halt European expansion. The fishing village, Pakaitore, thus came to be renamed after the battle site, Moutoa, which was an island in the Wanganui River where the lower river Maori were victorious over the upper river Maori. The statue not only expressed Pakeha gratitude to the enemy of the people whose land it was built on, but referred to the owners of the land, the upper river Maori, as barbaric and fanatic. The site has been used for Waitangi Day<sup>8</sup> celebrations since the 1970s, and has been the site of protests against the treaty. In recent years it has also been the venue of 'unity' days, which have featured stalls and displays of various ethnic and social groups. In 1990, the river iwi lodged a claim to the Waitangi Tribunal for control of

---

<sup>8</sup> Waitangi Day commemorates the first signings of the Treaty of Waitangi by local rangatira at Waitangi on February 6, 1840.

the river and the Crown land either side, including Pakaitore. In 1996 the case was still waiting to be heard.

When faced with the occupation, the legal owners of the land, the Wanganui City Council, took the position that the land was owned by the district, and that the Maori gathered there should leave. The Council did recognise that Maori grievances existed, and sought to negotiate a solution. The Council's ability to act was limited, however, as the grievances were against the Crown and central government refused to become involved.

The media presented an overwhelmingly negative image of the occupation. In the words of the Wanganui Police Commander, Alec Waugh, '...the media focused almost exclusively on two things: hype and kicking arse...(T)here has been an absolute dearth of historical or analytic journalism. That vacuum has been filled by extremists on both sides, leaving the public emotionally charged but largely uninformed' (Brett, 1995: 59). One reason for this is that the Maori position was not articulated in a way that was accessible to Pakeha (Brett, 1995: 48,57). Even though a statement from the Pakaitore media team was translated and published in a major daily paper (Dominion, 24 March 1995: 6); the gap between what the Maori activists were saying and the comprehension of the average Pakeha was not bridged. The mainstream media did not attempt to bridge the gap, but then neither did the Pakaitore media team, who may perhaps have wanted Pakeha to experience something of the alienation that Maori have been continually experiencing in their own land. If the team were attempting to proselytise, they would have used images and language familiar to Pakeha to express both their concerns and to explain and teach their viewpoint.

For the protesters, Pakaitore was seen as a classroom, a place for learning things Maori, for politicising the young people; and an experiment in Wanganui tribal tradition and culture as a form of political power (Brett, 1995: 49). Pakaitore was, for the time, a 'centre' in Latour's sense: a place where people and resources passed through. It brought together a diversity of people: respected Maori elders, young Maori gang members, sympathetic Pakeha. The leaders were equally diverse. Within the marae, the most influential person was Te Manawanui Pauro, the senior kuia. A more indirect leadership came from Sr Makareta, heading the media team, which provided the educational resources for the marae. Sr Makareta has a background in Catholic social justice networks. The main spokesman was Niko Tangaroa, a kaumatua, a Ringatu elder, with a middle -of- the-road background in union and Labour Party activity. Another spokesman, Ken Mair, was most sought after by the media, as he already had an established media profile through his involvement in Te Ahi Kaa, a radical Maori group focusing on Maori sovereignty.

Just as people came together and passed through Pakaitore marae, so too did money and other resources. The protesters spent more than \$30,000 in town during the occupation (Brett, 1995: 47). Gifts included food and other resources as well as money. The bringing together of people and resources was made manifest, as it so often is, in the meals: full sit-down meals for everyone with tablecloths and flowers over an extended period of time (Brett, 1995: 57).

Yet the purpose of Pakaitore was not merely to bring together people and resources for the cause or kaupapa. The kaupapa had already been

defined as the demand for justice; but the implications of the kaupapa were still being worked out. It seems that many of the participants were still learning the meaning of the kaupapa, and all were striving for culturally appropriate forms.

What the Pakeha media saw as different agendas operating in the same protest (Brett, 1995: 49-55; Morgan, 1996: 7); were, from the Maori perspective, different aspects of the same problem (Dominion, 24 March 1995). To Pakeha there is no automatic connection between a legal dispute over the ownership of a piece of land, political demands for autonomy, and cultural exercises in ethnic identity and problem solving. For participants, these different aspects came together in a series of interrelated symbols. The word 'te whenua' refers both to the uterine lining that sustains life before birth, and the land that sustains life afterbirth. A person's afterbirth is buried on the land of their ancestors, giving them status on that land and in the community of people who are also linked to that land. Thus te whenua links the person to both the land and the community or iwi of that land. Papatuanuku (Mother Earth) is the guardian (kaitiaki) of her people; her people are the custodians (tangata kaitiaki) of their whenua. Those who are linked to the community/land have the right to be sustained by, and the obligation to protect the community/land (Dominion, 24 March 1995).

The alienation of the actual land, Pakaitore, is thus inextricably linked to both the political power needed for an ability to be sustained by and to protect community and land, and to the practical implications of this today, its cultural expression. The actual land, Pakaitore, or Moutoa Gardens, stands for all the land it represents, all te whenua of the Whanganui iwi. Te whenua not only fuses the symbolic with the actual, but

also ideal with material, and spiritual with physical. These fusions were made evident at Pakaitore in the evening meetings on the marae, which fused spiritual and physical, ideal and material with karakia (prayer) followed by discussion of marae discipline, finances, housekeeping and Whanganuitanga. 'The whenua' as both object and symbol quite literally grounds the Maori sense of psychological and social self. Thus the reclamation of the alienated marae cannot be meaningfully distinguished from the reclamation of the alienated culture or the reclamation of the alienated identity. The significance of the marae, the meeting place, is the actuality that it provides the grounds for thinking and doing in Whanganuitanga.

The land, Pakaitore, is a historical reality that embodies many Maori grievances and thus symbolises its generalisation. The actions that developed at the marae also have their own historicity. These refer not only to pre-European antecedents and the current marae protocol of Whanganui; but also to past forms of resistance to colonisation, such as Parihaka. Parihaka was the pacifist community lead by Te Whiti-O-Rongomai in the 1880's and 1890's; which inspired the legacy of self-discipline and non-violence practised at Pakaitore.

The Moutoa Gardens occupancy was a site of sacramental activity. The symbol of te whenua linked the material reality of Pakaitore marae/Moutoa Gardens to historical and mythical precedents such as Parihaka and Papatuanuku. The demand for justice challenged the accepted Pakeha definitions of legality by contesting the boundary of the Pakeha legal system as it applies to Maori. What is most evident is that participants were not only 'learning' Whanganuitanga, they were shaping Whanganuitanga as

it applies to the marae, Pakaitore, and hence, through the participants present, beyond Pakaitore. The experience of Whanganuitanga mediated by the object, Pakaitore marae, thus amply demonstrates the social process of knowing through which the mutual inherence of society and psyche flows.

What this sacramental activity points to though, is that a sacramental understanding developed within a movement does not necessarily influence the understanding of those outside the movement in a way that is congruent with movement aims, as it did with the NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt. The Moutoa Gardens occupancy was certainly a use of ‘contentious politics’ (Tarrow, 1998: 2) to assert their claim, but the appeal to new constituencies was limited. Although it was a collective challenge that became a focal point for supporters, and did gain the attention of opponents and third parties; the creation of a constituency to represent (Tarrow, 1998: 5) disallowed a wider appeal. Indeed, the occupancy fuelled antagonisms to what are perceived to be ‘excessive’ claims by Maori. I am not arguing that these claims are excessive, but that the contentious action did reinforce the perception of such claims as excessive, which serves to reinforce existing social categorisations and to feed reactionary movements. Developing a sacramentality that meaningful for the movement sympathisers, by no means guarantees that it will be meaningful beyond the movement.

### **Cervical Cancer Controversy**

‘An “Unfortunate Experiment”’ was the title of an article written by Phillida Bunkle and Sandra Coney in Metro magazine of June 1987. The article discussed the research Dr G. H. Green had conducted into carcinoma

in situ (CIS) of the cervix at National Women's Hospital since 1966. The aim of the research was to establish that CIS did not lead to invasive cervical cancer. The research followed the progress of women with CIS without treating them to eliminate the disease. The women were not informed that they were part of the research programme, they were not asked for their consent, no-one explained the nature of the disease or the treatment options to the women. They were not told that the treatment of the disease that they received was unorthodox, and based on minority views (Coney, 1993: 10; Report 1988: 94-99; Coney & Bunkle: 1987; Corbett, 1990: 69).

As a result of the article and the subsequent publicity, the Minister of Health set up the Committee of Inquiry Into Allegations Concerning the Treatment of Cervical Cancer at National Women's Hospital, headed by District Court Judge Silvia Cartwright. The Cartwright Inquiry found that Dr Green monitored the patients rather than treating them, and ignored or downplayed the evidence suggesting the presence of invasive cancer. The Inquiry found that a working party set up by National Women's to investigate the cervical cancer cases had failed to act on the issue, even though they had evidence from Dr McIndoe, the cytologist and colposcopist, and Dr McLean, the head pathologist, that some women in the trial were developing invasive cancer. Judge Cartwright found that there had been a failure to adequately treat a number of patients with cervical CIS at national Women's Hospital, resulting in persisting disease and the development of invasive cancer for some of the women, and in several cases, death. Judge Cartwright found that despite opposition to the research, both at National Women's and internationally, there was no person or body with the power or responsibility to intervene. Some women had been subjected to multiple

experiments in cervical cancer, without their knowledge or consent (Coney, 1993: 22-3; Bunkle, 1993: 52; Report 1988: 74-5, 88, 101, 201-218).

The authors of the original Metro article were writing from a feminist perspective. Sandra Coney was a journalist, and had been editor of the feminist magazine Broadsheet from 1972 to 1985. Phillida Bunkle was a lecturer in Women's Studies at Victoria University and had been active in the Women's Health movement for many years. The perspective that Coney and Bunkle took was that the CIS experiment was not a freak phenomena, a medical misadventure that, due to unusual circumstances, got completely out of control. Nor did they take the position that there was a deliberate conspiracy afoot. Their position was that power was abused, but it was normal rather than exceptional, and routine rather than premeditated. In the everyday conduct of the medical relationship, routine, unexceptional violation of human beings had become normal: '...abuse was so routine that the staff could not perceive that it existed' (Bunkle, 1993: 52). For the authors, the experiment was an extreme example of the affects of an environment 'in which women become things, and in which patients become objects'. The authors were very much concerned with the research as a 'centre' in Latour's terms. They were determined to unravel some of the taken for granted assumptions that this research had relied on. The public reaction to their article resulted in the establishment of a new centre: the Inquiry. People, and the resources that they brought with them, passed through the Inquiry as it did at Moutoa Gardens; but by contrast, the Inquiry was legitimated by government sponsorship. The Inquiry also legitimated a release of repressions. The very purpose of an inquiry is to have it all out, even if the means are somewhat constrained by court etiquette. At Moutoa

Gardens there was a constant effort to remind occupants of the need for restraint, to keep the kaupapa paramount, not to lose it all by having it out.

‘Te whenua’ is a sacramental nexus that has a history and potency before and beyond Pakaitore. ‘The Unfortunate Experiment’ had no symbolic history, but nevertheless captured a multi-layered significance. In real terms ‘the unfortunate experiment’ refers to a considerable number of actual consultations, examinations and operations done. The word ‘experiment’ merges with real experiments that we have experienced. For many people this connects to memories of school experiments where we didn’t understand what was happening, but did it because the teacher said that we had to. A feeling of being mystified, ignorant, and powerless is the experience remembered and projected onto the ‘Unfortunate Experiment’. Equally ‘unfortunate’, as a clear understatement, evokes the patronising attitude of the powerful. To describe others as ‘unfortunate’ avoids highlighting the social inequities that place the powerful at an advantage, whilst also allowing the powerful to see themselves as magnanimous in avoiding blaming the powerless themselves for their situation. For a doctor to describe the death of at least 26 women, and the impaired health of hundreds of others as ‘unfortunate’ reinforces the image of an arrogant and callous indifference amongst the medical profession (Coney, 1988: 37, 197; Corbett 1990: 69).

Many New Zealand women do have experience of the routine abuse of power by medical professionals in the area of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, as most New Zealand women at the time of the controversy gave birth in hospitals. Many women would empathise with Sandra Coney’s own comments about her own birth experience; that ‘I had never

before felt so helpless, so at the mercy of people whom I could not trust'. The issue of methods of treatment of CIS may have raised little concern in itself; but it became linked to public revelations of other practices in Obstetrics and Gynaecology, such as vaginal examinations of anaesthetised women without seeking their consent, and without their knowledge; the practice of teaching the fitting of IUD's on anaesthetised women admitted for other operations without their knowledge or consent; and the taking of cervical smears from over 2,000 new-born baby girls without consent. These revelations did shift public opinion, as these were issues that many more people could easily identify with (Coney, 1988: 202, 204-5, 208, 209, 212; Corbett 1990: 69).

The sacramental activity in the cervical cancer controversy is of quite a different nature to Moutoa Gardens. The Moutoa Gardens occupancy was a very focused protest, the site of protest easily located, and the form that the protest took allowed for the development of sacrament on that site. The location of the cervical cancer controversy was more dispersed, so it is questionable whether the forms of protest can be considered to have revolved around sacramental activity. Certainly the symbol of 'the unfortunate experiment' linked the material reality of thousands of individual consultations, examinations and operations done on women both with historical precedents of individual experiences of routine medical assumptions, and with other experiences of experiments, such as school science programmes. The demand for informed consent challenged the accepted definitions of medical authority by contesting the boundary of the doctor-patient relationship. The symbolic boundary of the ownership of women's sex organs was identified with the actual boundary between doctor and patient through a largely self reflective participation in the controversy;

which was made evident, for example, in the rapid increase in the demand for smear tests. That the decision to have smear tests done passed from doctors to women demonstrates a dislocation of authority within the medical examination. What the term 'experiment' signified for New Zealanders was relocated in the process. Jane Kelsey uses the title The New Zealand Experiment in her book outlining the process of economic reform since 1984, and its economic and social outcomes. The title is enough to signal to most New Zealanders that the outcomes will be found to be largely negative. A century ago exactly the same title would have referred to positive outcomes of the reforms introduced by the Liberal government. The term 'experiment' thus carries an entirely reversed signification due to its dislocation and relocation in different material contexts.<sup>9</sup>

Publishing the story in a high profile magazine ensured that the message was broadcast to a much wider audience than those that would more typically hear of issues from the women's health movement. It was clearly a success, not only in terms of precipitating the Inquiry, but in terms of raising women's' consciousness and awareness of women's health issues. The outrage that the article precipitated enabled women to vent their own frustrations at experiences of maltreatment and routine, systematic abuse. However, this outrage was largely a private, individualised dissipation when compared to the Moutoa/Pakaitore occupancy. Direct experience of a social movement ritual was limited. The individualised dissipation did not physically connect most women experiencing it to the women's health movement, so it cannot be understood in Weber's terms of a sacrament. Yet it certainly meets Bateson's understanding of fusing layers of reality into a

---

<sup>9</sup> Another example is the use of 'Unfortunate Experiment' in reference to MMP.

single meaning, and also succeeded in carrying both conscious and unconscious meaning. Developing a sacramentality that is meaningful beyond the movement requires not only the arrangement of things in an argument, but the connection of those who find the argument meaningful back to the organisational expression of the sacrament.

### **1995 Moruroa Protests**

Early in June 1995, the French government decided to resume nuclear tests to keep its nuclear deterrent credible, breaking the nuclear testing moratorium that France joined in 1992. There was an immediate international outcry against the decision from people and governments expressing concern at the harm that could be caused to people and to the environment. The Greenpeace organisation, which has a considerable history of campaigning on environmental issues in general, and against French nuclear testing in the Pacific in particular, sent Rainbow Warrior II to Moruroa to protest the resumption of testing. David McTaggart called New Zealand yachties to sail to Moruroa to protest the nuclear testing on a 60 Minutes television programme. The Moruroa Pacific Peace Flotilla was formed as a result. The first boats of the flotilla left Auckland for Moruroa on Hiroshima Day, August 6. Others left from Wellington, Whitianga, Opuia, Tauranga, Warkworth and Nelson, totalling 14 private boats sailing as part of the flotilla. The New Zealand Navy research ship, the Tui, represented the New Zealand government. The Greenpeace organisation sent Rainbow Warrior II, Manutea, Vega, and Machias and the 'mother ship' of the flotilla, Greenpeace. Boats also came from Germany, Denmark,

Ukraine, Fiji, Kiribati, Rarotonga, Chile, Hawaii, San Francisco and Sydney (Eyley, 1997: 20-28, 203-207).

The timing of the French announcement shortly before the tenth anniversary of the bombing of the first Rainbow Warrior by French agents in the Auckland harbour, served to augment the environmental and anti-nuclear concerns already strong in New Zealand<sup>10</sup> with anti-French sentiment. The strength of feeling in New Zealand against French testing in particular can be shown in the New Zealand government's decision to send the Navy frigate, The Otago to the test zone in 1973, in protest at the French decision to ignore the World Court injunction to stop atmospheric tests (Szabo, 1991: 29). For many New Zealanders it had been totally unbelievable that the French government, a supposed ally, and a country that many New Zealanders had lost their lives in and for during World War II, could see fit to bomb a neutral ship in a New Zealand harbour, with blatant disregard for New Zealand law and New Zealand sovereignty. In the context of France's disregard for New Zealand sovereignty, it was seen as ironic that France could claim the sovereign right to test bombs in its colonies, as this was 'their own' land. This merely served to reinforce the image of the French as arrogant and crudely exploitative. This image was reinforced when the Rainbow Warrior II first went to Moruroa to protest the French decision to break the moratorium, and was rammed and stormed by French commandos as it approached the entrance to Moruroa lagoon, 10 years to the day that the original Rainbow Warrior was blown up in Auckland Harbour. Greenpeace emphasised the connection by having the Rainbow Warrior II return to

---

<sup>10</sup> The 1993 International Social Survey Programme (Gendell et al , 1993) found that 90% of New Zealanders supported the environmental movement and 79% supported the anti-nuclear movement. This compares with 67% support for the women's movement and 34% for the Maori Rights movement.

Moruroa with the flotilla, via Matauri Bay in Northland, the resting place of the first Rainbow Warrior, for the anniversary remembrance there. The fusion of anti-French sentiment with anti-nuclear sentiment was particularly evident in the Bastille Day protests, which saw 1,000 people march to the French Ambassador's residence in Wellington, and 1,500 people gather at a rally in Cathedral Square in Christchurch, with more joining the march to the Bridge of Remembrance (Hawkes Bay Herald Tribune, 15 July 1995).

Besides the action at Moruroa, the peace flotilla involved many land based supporters in finding boats, crew, provisions and equipment for the flotilla; and office, merchandising, advertising, artistic and media support for the campaign. Actions included a Women's Peace Flight that was refused landing rights in Tahiti by French authorities on the day they were due to leave; and a 'Major Outrage' rally organised in Auckland to coincide with the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting. France, along with Britain and the USA, announced their intention to sign the South Pacific Nuclear-Free Zone Treaty a week before the third explosion of the series at Moruroa. The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty was signed by France the following year (Eyley, 1997: 21-22, 123-131, 206).

Compared to both the Moutoa gardens occupancy and the cervical cancer controversy, the 1995 Moruroa flotilla was relatively easy to establish as a centre. Greenpeace had been established in New Zealand for over 20 years, it was part of Greenpeace International, and had been involved in three previous flotillas to the test area. The channels for resources to flow to the new centre already existed.

Unlike the Moutoa Gardens occupancy, which divided the nation, both the cervical cancer controversy and the 1995 French resumption of testing provoked widespread public outrage. The major difference between the cervical cancer furore and the Moruroa protests was in the political response to the publicity. The Cervical Cancer Inquiry resulted from a desire to have the controversy cleared up; in the sense of cleared away, out of public contention. The outrage at the French announcement of the resumption of nuclear testing was not only tied to a more popular social movement, but also tied to nationalism, so it was politically advantageous for the outrage to be fostered and nurtured. Whereas the cervical cancer controversy was legitimated by the government sponsorship of the Inquiry, the government itself was seen to be 'neutral' in terms of the outcome of the Inquiry. With the 1995 Moruroa protests, however, the New Zealand government was allied to the protest organisation, and furthermore had a history of being aligned, with the participation of HMNZS Otago in the 1973 flotilla.

Both 'Rainbow Warrior' and 'Greenpeace' as symbols have a considerable history, given the short time span of most social movements; though considerably shorter than 'te whenua'. 'Greenpeace' links very popular environmental and anti-nuclear concerns. In the context of the 1995 French resumption of nuclear testing, these concerns were also tied to nationalism via the 'Rainbow Warrior' symbol. 'Rainbow Warrior' links the rainbow, a common peace, environmental, religious and New Age symbol, with a symbol of militancy; emphasising a commitment to non-violent direct action that takes roots from the Quaker philosophy of 'bearing witness' and Gandhi's anti-British civil disobedience campaigns, more than the earlier Maori roots of Te Whiti and Parihaka. The image of a

heroic peace movement spearheaded by brave and hardy yachties has a broad appeal to New Zealander's self image, especially given that the other major international news event of the year from New Zealand also involved yachties: the America's Cup win for New Zealand.

Whilst the Moutoa Gardens occupancy was primarily aimed at nurturing the community involved with the action, and the cervical cancer controversy was clearly raising awareness for women's health issues, the 1995 Moruroa protests were aimed at engendering ongoing support from those already aligned to the cause. Most people were already aware of the issues, and did not need to have action justified for them. It only remained to harness their goodwill for the cause. The level of support engendered was far beyond that of the Moutoa Gardens occupancy or the cervical cancer controversy. Major national businesses were willing to identify with the cause. Watties advertised that it was sending its Green Peas with the flotilla. Even a conservative regional newspaper had no qualms in advising its readers that donations would be accepted at any Westpac Bank branch (Hawkes Bay Herald-Tribune, 31 July 1995: 2). Such support was not extended to the Moutoa Gardens protesters.

Like the cervical cancer controversy, the dissipative outrage was largely individualised and internalised. The opportunities for collective, external dissipation, such as the Bastille Day protests, and the political photo opportunities of farewelling the boats (Dominion, 25 August 1995:7) were similar. The 1995 Moruroa protests can thus be considered as sacramental activity only in the same more limited sense as the cervical cancer controversy. The symbols of 'Greenpeace' and 'Rainbow Warrior' linked the material reality of the 1995 series of nuclear bomb tests at Moruroa with

the historical precedents of previous nuclear bomb tests and the Rainbow Warrior bombing in Auckland harbour ten years previously. The demand for respect for people and places challenged the French definition of national sovereignty by contesting the boundary of the French nation. The symbolic boundary of the 12 mile exclusion zone around Moruroa was identified with the actual boundary between colonial France and the rest of the Pacific through participation in such protests as Bastille Day demonstrations, faxes to the French Embassy, and the supplying and farewelling of flotilla boats. This certainly meets Bateson's understanding of fusing layers of reality into a single meaning, and carrying both conscious and unconscious meaning. Yet it cannot be understood in Weber's terms of a sacrament as it was an individualised dissipation. Not only was their no connection of those who find the argument meaningful back to the organisational expression of the sacrament, but the social movement activity served to reinforce existing social antagonisms and boundaries in a way that the cervical cancer controversy did not.

### **Social Movements as Sacramental Centres**

This survey of three moments of social movement activity in different social movements has examined the extent to which sacramental activity has connected a material reality to historical or mythical precedents, allowing a fusion in identity between different aspects of reality. From a micro-social perspective these actions demonstrated how a sense of outrage on the part of participants was harnessed in the process of providing a macro-social perspective that, to differing extents, disputed and redefined the symbolic boundaries that maintained the status quo. My argument is

that the relatively stable juxtaposition between symbolic boundaries and social groupings that informs social closure can be disrupted by sacramental activity that revises boundaries by creating new associations between material and ideal realities that support a new perspective. This has been demonstrated by the NAMES Project Foundation Quilt. What the survey of three moments of social movement activity survey has shown is that social movements do not always find it easy to develop sacraments that are meaningful both within and beyond the movement, and that also succeed in connecting those who find their arguments meaningful to the movement.

Certainly all movements challenged social boundaries. In the case of the Moutoa Gardens occupancy, it was the assimilation of Maori into the Pakeha legal system on Pakeha terms that is maintained by Pakeha concepts of legality, ownership and formal equality as citizens. This was challenged by repositioning the boundary between Pakeha and Whanganui iwi. The demand was that Pakaitore marae was a site of Whanganuitanga, and that the Pakeha legal system should stay on the Pakeha side of the boundary.

The cervical cancer controversy also demands a repositioning of a boundary, this time between doctor and patient. The demand was that the doctor's area of control be reduced, and authority be transferred to the patient via informed consent. The exclusion of women from decisions affecting their bodies was maintained by assumptions of medical expertise contrasted with lay ignorance, and reinforced by gendered, racial and class prejudices; as well as the purported 'needs' of a teaching hospital.

The 1995 Moruroa protests demanded the repositioning of two boundaries. First there is the demand for the repositioning of the boundary

between French colonial Pacific, and the independent Pacific, that expected France to keep any nuclear programme in France itself, and out of the Pacific. Then there is the demand for the repositioning of national boundaries, that perceives nuclear issues as being beyond national sovereignty. The concept of national sovereignty was shown to maintain colonial exploitation, putting at risk people and places who have little or no voice in decisions adversely affecting their lives. The boundary of the nation state therefore must be moved to allow international jurisdiction on nuclear issues, as they have ramifications beyond the nation state. However, the extent of commitment to the second relocation is questionable. Many New Zealanders may have participated as they considered there to be a potential threat to our health in New Zealand. The protests certainly heightened nationalistic sentiments, which served to reinforce that boundary.

In all three protests people were no longer willing to subject their own interests to that of an established centre, and those individuals who are authorised by the centre to 'get things done'. Instead they subject themselves to a new centre, the social movement, so as to 'get things done'. Social movements considered as centres have the resource mobilisation aspect of all centres; but are typically more heavily involved in dissipative functions than established centres. It would seem that there is still an emotional aspect to simultaneously engendering new knowledge and new social forms. Existing social closure has to be challenged, and this challenge necessitates the dislocation and relocation of boundaries, which can more easily be achieved by using actually existing material reality as object symbols that in themselves demonstrate the need for such a shift to take place in a context that allows for onus to be identified with the

established and mysterium with the preferred. In the process meanings and understandings change, dislocating and relocating signifiers and signified.

Latour (1987) has developed the idea of centres as foci of activity that resources and people pass through. One of Latour's studies was of a team developing a computer. Latour found that the process of building the complex machine was simplified by drawing 'black boxes'. Inside each black box was a series of complicated instructions that would result in a given output for the particular input. Designing the machine was simplified by arranging and rearranging the sequence of black boxes. At times it happened that the particular input could not be achieved, or the output wasn't quite what was wanted; so a particular black box would have to be opened and rearranged to overcome the problem. Latour argued that established scientific facts were in some ways similar to the black boxes the designers used. A successful scientific argument lines up well established facts in such a way that the point is proved. If a well established fact is called into question, the stability of the series of scientific facts that have been used to justify the established fact then needs to be reconsidered. In effect, the scientific facts are 'rearranged' to prove your point, in the same way that the various black boxes are rearranged to produce the desired design outcome. It is possible to generalise from this to any social activity by considering any 'common sense', taken for granted, 'everybody knows' association to be like black boxes that can be used to support an argument, but some of them may need to be opened up to support a somewhat different outcome.

In the case of the cervical cancer controversy, the major 'black box' being challenged was the assumption of 'medical authority' that was lined

up with other arguments, such as 'intellectual freedom', to support the practices being contested. That black box was replaced by 'authority over our own body' that was lined up with other arguments such as 'abuse of power' to produce an argument for informed consent. Nevertheless both sides included many unquestioned arguments, such as the need for medical training and research, these were merely 'rearranged' to suit a different argument.<sup>11</sup>

This sort of analysis, however fails to capture the way that sacramental activity involves shifting constellations of ideas and material realities. Stacking black boxes suggests a linear sequencing or an integrated network of closed, predetermined, 'boxes'; whereas social movements exhibit overlapping alliances based on mutually compatible understandings that are not necessarily identical. The stacking of black boxes does not capture the way that the sense of outrage amongst social movement participants can allow them to gloss over deficiencies and contradictions in the arguments put forward. Contrary to Latour's argument, at the end of the day it doesn't seem to matter much which argument is 'right' in the sense of being better supported by the sequence of black boxes built up; but rather which sequence is most effective in dissipating frustrations, which is the more effective conduit of mutual inherece processes.

In the case of the cervical cancer controversy, there was well justified anger at the abuse of women's bodies; but the sense of outrage that the controversy inspired also seems to have been heightened by other experiences that women have had of being physically, socially or spiritually

---

<sup>11</sup> See Dew & Lloyd, 1997 for an example of an analysis using Latour's framework.

violated in some way. As one of the authors of the original article herself admits, this was informed by her own feelings during childbirth. For many women childbirth is their first conscious experience of things happening to them that they have no control over, and this lack of conscious control is a biological reality that exists quite irrespective of whether the social environment is totally supportive and responsive to the needs and desires of the mother, or whether it normalises routine abuse. Certainly everyone does experience situations that are far from supportive and responsive to their needs, and the anguish that evokes may be repressed and later projected onto other situations. I am arguing that sacraments are able to legitimate the dissipation of such frustrations, because they involve a complex of associations between ideals and material realities that can allow congruent conscious and unconscious associations to be triggered and collapsed into the implosion of meaning that the sacrament represents for the individual.

In the Pakaitore marae the associated frustrations were often highlighted by the news media at the expense of the sacramental kernel that was being established and communicated within the marae. Confrontations outside the marae featured on national television news, typically involving young Maori with a wealth of experience of being marginalised by Pakeha, but relatively inexperienced in Whanganuitanga. That the Pakaitore marae provided a highly conducive conduit for alienated young Maori does not, however, mean that the same conduit is equally conducive to all New Zealanders. The news media doubtless fostered an emotionally charged racist response from the majority of Pakeha listeners precisely because hooking into the sequence of Maori as whining, trouble-making, dole bludgers is generally more effective in dissipating Pakeha frustrations. This serves to reinforce both a racist psyche and racist social processes.

## Objects in Knowledge

The special-ordinary objects of a social movement sacrament are objects of knowledge in a rather different sense to the nuclear physicist studying quarks or the microbiologist studying *Euglena*. Quarks and *Euglena* are objects that we become interested in knowing about, in the sense of obtaining information about them.<sup>12</sup> These objects are both the means and the ends of knowledge processes. Sacramental objects are similarly central to the means of knowledge; but at the end we come to know something other than something about the object. The object mediates the knowledge process, but typically does not become an end of knowledge in itself. Thus when we view the Quilt, we leave with an enlarged understanding of our connection to all humanity by sharing in the lives celebrated, not simply with a better understanding of the Quilt itself

---

<sup>12</sup> Karin Knorr Cetina (1997) discusses our social relationships with such objects of knowledge. She argues that objects are increasingly either displacing human beings in our relationships, or mediating relationships between human beings, so that we are increasingly dependent on objects. Knorr Cetina (1997: 9) argues that in our knowledge society, 'object relations substitute for and become constitutive of social relations'. I consider that objects, especially in the form of tools, have always been critical to human relationships. Callon and Latour (1981) have argued that the difference between human society and that of other apes, is our incorporation of material objects into our relationships. Knorr Cetina (1997: 25), however, argues that there has been a shift from social and normative integration towards objects as relationship partners or embedding environments. Integration in the form of human bonds forged through normative consensus and shared values has become increasingly problematic according to Knorr Cetina (1977: 24), as we lack the shared traditions that promote common values, and these cannot be imposed by some authority. I would argue that the integration of social and normative contexts nevertheless remains the goal of mutual inherence processes, and this goal is sought in shared practices and values. It is true that everyone no longer shares the same practices and values, but this situation is hardly new. My argument is that the arrangement of things can help stabilise certain values and practices, and objects have always mediated human social relationships in this way. Certainly the way that objects mediate relationships changes, but Knorr Cetina's approach obscures the way that objects continue to prescribe human relationships and are themselves maintained as social objects by virtue of their capacity to prescribe. Therefore, although I agree that 'objectual integration' can in a sense create 'communities of thought' (1997: 24), this is as true of instruments and commodities as it is of objects of knowledge.

and its features. Equally, those at Pakaitore marae lived Whanganuitanga, their understanding of Whanganuitanga cannot fail to have been considerably enlarged, far beyond any change in feeling for the actual land, Pakaitore. Certainly women hearing about cervical cancer for the first time in the aftermath of the publication of 'The Unfortunate Experiment' knew a lot more about cervical cancer; but the important insight, the important change in understanding was not about cervical cancer per se, but about the way that women lacked authority over their own bodies. The protests over French testing at Moruroa is an even more pertinent example of the central object mediating rather than being an end in knowledge. It is doubtful whether most New Zealanders actually knew any more about exploding nuclear bombs after these protests than they did before, yet the issue has done more to shift our understanding of nationhood and our understanding of our location in the world than anything else since World War II.

The importance of objects mediating these shifts in understanding and judgement lies in the way that the object shapes the shift, the way that the object prescribes what understanding or what judgement is possible. The dislocation is not open-ended, as it would be if the shift in thinking was that we are not tied to Europe, we are not dependent on doctor's orders, or we are not dependent on the Pakeha legal system. The relocation is already signalled in the context of the object: we are part of the Pacific, we need to know what our options are, the way we did it at Pakaitore was... Given different contexts an alternative relocation might have been: we are part of South East Asia, we need better access to alternative forms of healing, the way our ancestors did it was... These alternatives do not 'make sense', they are not congruent with the way the central object is situated in the process of the relocation of understanding. In this way the objects that become the

focus of attention in social movements are critical to the understanding or judgement induced. 'We are part of Asia' is not an option available to New Zealanders in response to the affects of French nuclear testing, precisely because the testing was in the Pacific, not in Asia. The shifts in understanding that are mediated by object symbols are not only dependent on the symbolic value of the object, but limited by the actual existence of the object as a material object in reality. Hence the constructivist argument that our descriptions of reality refer only to signs, and not to any reality beyond the signs is one 'black box' that can not be included in this argument. We cannot dislocate and relocate signs in any which way that takes our fancy; the shift must be congruent with the position of mediating objects in reality. In this way, signs do invariably refer to reality beyond the signs, no matter what shifts they undergo. Signs become detached from one context and relocated in others, but nevertheless the objects in the context continue to prescribe the possibilities of meaning that can be attached.

## **Conclusion**

Wittgenstein argued that the meaning of words changes through being used in different ways in a changed context (Kitching, 1994: 114). The acknowledgement that words or signs are not stable, and can not be understood as having any one to one correspondence with reality, can be taken to support the constructivist argument that our descriptions of reality refer only to other signs, and not to any reality beyond the signs. Yet Wittgenstein is clearly indicating that words do not have a life of their own that is quite independent of any context. The basic premise of evolution is that any change is dependent on the context that it occurs in; change is to a

considerable extent prescribed by whatever is relatively durable in that context. It is whatever is most resistant to change that redirects change elsewhere, and so influences what will be the most effective pathway through the various possibilities for change that are present. What is most durable in most contexts is some form of material reality. As Callon and Latour (1981) have argued, the social is materialised to make it durable.

Research has shown that our socio-cultural experience is more important than exposure to ideas in forming values that underpin our understanding and judgement (Miller, 1991). Yet we have very little understanding of these experiential processes involved in forming knowledge. Sacramental experience suggests that the juxtaposition between material reality and image may be of fundamental importance to the development of meaning, as being able to participate in a sacrament requires the fusion of layers of reality into a meaning. To be able to do this of itself requires some stretching of previous associations, some dislocation and relocation of signifiers and signified for those becoming involved. This is simultaneously the process of belonging, being stretched out towards the people that represent the sacrament, that make up the social context of the sacrament. So as meaning changes within a sacramental context, the self in both psychological and social senses changes, and with it the social context that the self is located in. In this way processes of mutual inherence are made more stable within and beyond social movements through incorporating material referents that limit the negotiability of ideas. All social movements are likely to have a tendency to sacrament.

Sacramental activity of various types was found in the three moments of social movement activity examined, The Pakaitore Marae or

Moutoa Gardens Occupancy, the Cervical Cancer Controversy and the 1995 Moruroa Protests. Each protest was centred around a material reality: the land of the Pakaitore marae, the cervix with cancer, the nuclear detonations at Moruroa. The specific material reality symbolised a larger material reality: te whenua, women's bodies, nuclear warfare. The material reality was also linked to historical and mythical precedents: Papatuanuku, Parihaka, land thefts; school science experiments, experience of routine abuse from medical practitioners; previous nuclear explosions. These social movement sacraments also demonstrated the process of sacramental change. Each moment of social movement activity contested established boundaries. At Pakaitore marae it was the boundary of the Pakeha legal system that was challenged by challenging accepted definition of legality and ownership. The demand for justice was focused on the symbolic-material boundary of the obligations of tangata tiaka. For the Cervical Cancer Controversy the doctor-patient boundary was challenged by challenging accepted definition of medical authority. The demand for informed consent was focused on the symbolic-material boundary around the ownership of a woman's own sex organs. During the 1995 Moruroa Protests the boundary of the French nation was challenged by challenging the accepted definition of national sovereignty. The demand for respect (for people and places) was focused on the symbolic-material boundary of the 12 mile exclusion zone around Moruroa. The participation of people in these various moments of social movement activity is in itself evidence of a more or less widespread shift in understanding mediated by the material realities that constituted the context of social movement activity.

A sacramental approach to social movements also highlights features of social movements glossed by the contemporary sociological theories

presented above. In contrast to the new social movement approach, an examination of the sacramental activity of social movements position social movements in a form of strategic action that has a lengthy history, predating the rise of capital and the secularisation of society. In contrast to resource management theory, a sacramental approach acknowledges that social movements are more significantly dissipative centres as well as a resource centres. In contrast to the social construction approach, object-symbols rather than ideas are the central, durable features of a social movement context. In contrast to closure theory, the effect of social movements on existing social boundaries may not always be what the social movement made explicit in sacramental activity, but nevertheless becomes a consequence of the changing understandings through the process of mutual inherece which affects a displacement across social boundaries.

## Chapter 7

### **The Mutual Impact of Social and Preterreal Contexts**

When New Zealand sociologists ask 'what are likely to be the agents of change within our society' (Thorns, 1995: 71) new social movement theory seems to provide a ready made answer. Certainly New Zealand has experienced the same shift in the nature of movements since the 1960's that has been noted in Europe. As in Europe, there has been a decline in the size of the working class, if this is understood as the manual workers in industrial production which provided the muscle of the union movement. This movement was not only class based, but also formally instituted, and intervened directly in the political economy of the nation state through ties to the Labour Party. From the 1960's another form of social movement became prominent in New Zealand, as in Europe. Although there is relatively little research into these movements in New Zealand, it is evident that they do, in broad terms, parallel the 'new' social movements that have emerged in Europe. These 'new' movements address a similar diversity of issues: 'equality between the sexes, peace, racial harmony, and the environment' (Thorns, 1995: 71). One consequence of such diversity is that although the critiques that these groups present of the 'restructuring' that has gone on in New Zealand since 1984 have been more or less well received by New Zealanders, a possible alternative pathway has not been clearly articulated. Indeed, like their European counterparts, articulations of movement aims are not necessarily intended to facilitate direct intervention in political processes. These movements do not prioritise politics; they did

not aim to become formal institutions in the political economy. They typically operate more as informal networks of activists, interested in raising awareness of issues and challenging the ideological perspectives that underwrite inequalities; rather than capturing conventional power structures. This has had the consequence of fragmenting opposition and weakening the ability of groups to mount resistance to political initiatives (Thorns, 1995: 71). In the terms that I have developed above, these movements target preterreal change, and so seek to influence the social indirectly, through people's perceptions. Certainly these movements have been agents of social change, but perhaps not quite the sort of change envisaged by new social movement theorists when they speculated that new social movements were replacing class based movements as the agents of social change.

Yet it seems that other approaches to social movement activity are no more helpful in understanding why there was no effective opposition to the economic restructuring imposed on New Zealand by a political elite, against the will of the majority of New Zealanders (Gold and Webster, 1990: 16). The resource mobilisation approach has been concerned with how social movements work within the political system, but the key questions that this approach explores shed little light on how and why they fail to mobilise. The focus tends to be on internal factors rather than external. Although there is interest in understanding mobilisation in terms of the opportunities for collective action, there does not seem to be any clear theorisation of interrelationships between macro actors. This is even more true of the social construction approach, which is largely concerned with the development of ideas within a movement.

Thus the approaches to social movement activity available in the literature fail to provide anything salient to understanding the role of social movements in the ongoing social changes in New Zealand. Even closure theory, which does situate social movements within a broader social context, seems better suited to analysing what movements achieve rather than what they fail to achieve. Closure theory argues that social groups become closed to others, seeking to maximise the advantages of members by maximising their access to resources and opportunities for the group at the expense of others outside the group. Social movements are considered to be opposing specific forms of closure, verbalising issues that are otherwise excluded from decision making. Yet little is said about the contingencies involved: what doesn't get verbalised, what does get verbalised but fails to make the agenda, what makes the agenda but gets sidelined, what gets acted on but only partially, and the 'unintended' consequences of what actually happens as a result of whatever eventuates.

It seemed that all the approaches touched on something of interest, but even taken together more was left unsaid. Several commentators recognised that in many ways these approaches are complementary, and that one approach can illuminate aspects of social movements ignored by others. Yet there didn't seem to be any simple way of extending any of the approaches to get at what had been happening to social movements in New Zealand, what has happened as a consequence of social movement activity, or to begin to understand how social movements in New Zealand could be more effective.

My dissatisfaction with what remained unsaid in the various approaches paralleled the way that the silences and simplifications of the

various theoretical approaches were critiqued within the literature. All the theoretical approaches have been critiqued for their tendency to oversimplify. The resource mobilisation use of the rational actor model, or the social construction concern with framing activities both provide particularly narrow explanatory power. All of the approaches have been critiqued for failing to acknowledge and explain social movement diversity. Social movements are reduced to features of interest for that particular theoretical approach, and so it was understandable that if my interests were different, I may not find much that was salient in the literature. Yet this admits that what is studied is reduced in some way, and the way it is reduced accords with the interests of the person doing the studying.

The way that what is studied is affected by the interests of the person doing the studying is also apparent in the critiques in the literature that specific theoretical approaches attend to one side of a dualism and ignore another. Several pertinent dualisms - including macro (new social movement) versus micro (social construction); structure (closure theory) versus agency (social construction); and formal (resource mobilisation) versus informal (new social movements) - are recognised in the literature. Whatever is salient is located in one category of the dualism. Whatever is in the other category is ignored. Yet this understanding assumes that everything fits neatly into one category or another. It does not take into account the way that we can actively locate things in one category and prevent them from being located in the other, ignored category. An obvious example here is the difficulties in defining the boundary that distinguishes those that participate in the movement from those who don't. The boundary that suffices for research purposes is typically arbitrary, such as whoever turned up to a meeting, or whoever is on the mailing list at a

particular point in time. We have no way of knowing how critical the boundary used is to the results obtained, how this distorts the analysis, whether it really matters or not. When we come to theoretical categories, the extent to which the boundaries we use distort the reality to be known becomes even more unknowable. For example, new social movement theoretical definitions of what is 'new' about 'new social movements' are hotly debated, and the way 'new' is distinguished from 'old' does affect what is included in the category. One definition excludes the feminist movement from 'new' social movements, for example. Social construction references to 'frame' are another example of a rather fuzzy and shifting reality that seems to defy rigorous description. The problem is that we necessarily distort reality in some way whenever we try to make what is 'fuzzy' more clear cut; but we don't really know how we are distorting it, or to what extent it is a problem.

Although commentators agreed that there was something to be learnt from all the approaches, the attempts to synthesise theories that I came across in the literature amounted to little more than reiterations of the strengths and weaknesses of each approach (Buechler, 1993; Canel, 1992) or a focus on the strengths of each in separate chapters (Melucci, 1996; Tarrow, 1998). Although each of the various approaches to social movements do highlight particular features of interest in the movements being studied, that does not mean that these various features can be fitted together like a jigsaw puzzle to make a complete picture. Each view does not add together to get a complete coverage. Each view introduces distortions, and although each distortion considered on its own seems relatively minor and inconsequential, they each pull or tweak our perception of reality in some way, and the overall effect of the multiple 'tweaking'

presented by a theory is difficult to gauge. The interests of the various researchers decided what would be articulated and what would be ignored, but this comes to be presented as the reality, making it difficult to grasp what has been left unarticulated. Few people will be able to recall the ideas that were suggested in passing, but were not really discussed as a serious option, for example, precisely because the aim is to arrive at an action and to enthruse everyone to support it. What might have been is soon forgotten, unless there was a lengthy debate about that particular option. It seems that the difficulty in identifying 'gaps' in knowledge has to do with the way we know: what we pick up on and what we ignore, for example.

## **Knowledge**

I examined four epistemological debates: in quantum physics, feminist epistemology, the sociology of scientific knowledge, and ecocentric sociology. All these debates to varying extents acknowledge that the process of knowing involves instituting more or less arbitrary boundaries to mark a difference, as what we actually sense is difference. The information about the differences we have sensed is used to construct a 'picture' or an understanding of what we have observed in our mind. What we actually see and hear are events that occur in situations, but we have learnt to pick things out from the jumble, just as we can pick out our own children in a crowd and keep an eye on what they're doing; or New Zealanders overseas report that a capital 'Z' will stand out when they read the papers, as that often indicates that something is being reported about New Zealand. Our mind co-ordinates our senses, making everything appear to be more ordered and static than it actually is. What we actually sense are 'phenomena'. We do

not experience any one thing by itself, even though our mind enables us to focus on one thing, giving us the illusion that we do experience the thing as an entity. The reality is that we can only note difference within an event or situation. This means that the 'one thing' we are interested in can only be accessed in interaction with other 'things'. We can try to minimise the interactions with other things, but we cannot get rid of them altogether. We ourselves are in some way involved in the event or situation. We construct knowledge from the information that results from our experience of accessing the event or situation. We attribute aspects of our experience to whatever it is that we were interested in knowing about. We have difficulty taking into account the extent to which anything else involved in the interactions we experienced contributed to that event or situation. There are two distinct sets of interactions involved. The first set of interactions is between the object and the context that it is in, forming the phenomena observed. The second set is between the phenomena observed and the means of knowing, which includes both the physiology and the mental structures of the knower, as well as any orientation of the knower to the object, and any aids to measurement employed. As a result of these interactions a 'picture' emerges, usually of an object, which is our understanding of the situation. This understanding is, as far as we are concerned, the reality. The interactive processes are reduced to the object, oversimplifying the reality that actually exists. Other possible constructions are silenced as a result of successfully reducing the reality to the object in some way.

The reduction to the object not only oversimplifies reality, but also imposes more or less arbitrary boundaries demarcating the object from the context, when what was known was only known in a context, and accessed

through a series of further interactions. This process can be seen quite clearly in the decisions about boundaries of a social movement. In one social movement I have been involved with, we had regular monthly meetings which between ten and twenty people would attend, yet we never had exactly the same group at any meeting. Each meeting would have a few newcomers who may or may not come again, and a few of the regulars who did make major contributions would be absent for some reason such as a sick child, work commitments, or holidays. If I had chosen to base a study on whoever turned up to one meeting, it would not only be a rather arbitrary demarcation of who belonged to the movement, but it would entirely ignore the interactive context in which decisions are made about attending the meetings. Whether or not particular people attended meetings was affected by what else was happening in their life, and this situation is silenced by focusing on whoever happens to be there.

Part of the problem is that there is no easy way of simplifying the interactions involved in social situations. It is not only that unicellular organisms are more easily kept at constant temperature and pressure in a stable nutrient regime, for example; it is rather that to set up such a regime would mean missing out on the very interactions that do interest us. This not only means that the social sciences cannot 'simplify' research by holding variables constant as in the physical sciences. It means that all social actors tend to 'simplify' by ignoring some of the profusion of variables; and may be quite unaware that they are doing so, because they are focusing on the variables that do interest them. Certainly this has been the case in the past when the 'head of the household' (read: male 'breadwinner') was the object of interest for research that purported to be about the whole family. Such silences have formed the basis of feminist epistemological critiques.

Feminists can find some support for their arguments in the quantum debates, where some experiments produce results that appear to contradict those produced in other experiments because the different interactive situations produced events that 'tweak' perceptions of reality in different ways.

This gives some insight into why the different approaches to social movements don't seem to gel together particularly well. It's not simply that the different approaches feature different aspects of reality, in the same way that two students may read the same article but highlight different passages in their essay. It is more that the approaches can also 'tweak' the same aspects of reality that they represent differently, rather like the same quote being used in different ways to support quite different arguments in two different essays.

All four epistemological debates were based in issues that provided evidence for aspects of this understanding of the limitations that the way we access reality imposes on our knowledge. The very act of observing, or knowing, interferes in the situation that we are interested in. First of all there is the difference between the understanding derived from information that we have of an event or situation and the actual phenomenal event or situation. Then there is the difference between the phenomena that we observe in some sort of interactive context, and the noumena that we wish to know about independently of the context. What happens is that we objectify our understandings, and ascribe that to a noumena involved in the phenomenal situation.

If we look at the approaches to social movements that have been taken we can easily spot ways in which this has been done. With the social

construction approach, for example, movement meetings are observed, and certain actual interactions between people come to be understood as 'framing activities'. From the actual phenomena observed, a 'frame', a noumena is postulated to exist, and the aim of the movement is then conceived of as being to align people to the movement 'frame'. It is doubtful that any such 'frame' actually exists in the social movements being studied. A 'noumena' that does not actually exist in reality is being used to describe the phenomena observed. Few movements actually have a creed, and even if they do have some sort of mission statement, that does not mean that all members attach the same meaning to their common vision as would seem to be implied by a term like 'alignment'. If this 'frame' does not actually exist 'out there', then what was actually happening 'out there' has been 'tweaked' in some way to provide us with an understanding of what was happening.

Another less obvious example is the way that new social movement theory describes social movements as having changed from class based to identity based movements. Certainly if we examine the phenomena of what those movements that have succeeded in getting media attention have been articulating in the public domain, we would note that there has been a decline in the prominence of labour movements and workplace issues, and an increase in the activities of other movements with a much greater emphasis on access and equity to a broader range of social institutions. Yet to what extent does this reflect an actual change from 'class' appeal to 'identity' appeal within the 'noumena', the movements? There is certainly a considerable literature that claims that the 'new' social movements also have a class base; and we could equally make the case that the 'old' labour movement also inspired action based on identification. Perhaps all that has

changed is what people identify with, and the class that more popular movements appeal to, rather than a change from class to identity per se.

It may be relatively easy to spot the slippage between phenomena and noumena, but it is more difficult to grasp the slippage between phenomena and the understandings constructed from information about that phenomena. All the debates, quantum physics, feminist epistemology, the sociology of scientific knowledge, and ecocentric sociology, point to the relativity of knowledge. Reality is always known relative to some means of knowing. 'Truth' or 'validity' rests on our agreement as to the value and usefulness of that means of knowing.

## **Reality**

Although there was agreement within the debates about the relativity of knowledge, there was considerable disagreement in the debates about what is meant by 'reality'. In contrast to positions such as Luce Irigaray's, that there are 'multiple realities', I take the position that it is important to acknowledge that there is a reality that exists beyond what we know of it, and it continues to exist irrespective of whether I know about it or not. I would argue that I can be affected by realities that I am not aware of. Someone can murder me while I am asleep, and I may not be aware that it is happening, but I would be affected by it nonetheless.

Less dramatically, many New Zealanders are quite unaware of the legal status of the Treaty of Waitangi. The Treaty is a legal document, with standing in international law, and Maori who feel that the New Zealand

government have not upheld their responsibilities under the Treaty are entitled to take action in international law courts. Yet the 1989 New Zealand Values study found that 28% of New Zealanders wanted the Treaty of Waitangi abolished (Gold and Webster, 1990: Table 5.2, 5.3). Another 32% wanted greater limits on Maori claims under the Treaty. That is, more than half of the people in New Zealand are unhappy with the current status of the Treaty and want it more or less removed. Interestingly, more than a quarter of those who identify as Maori, 28%, also feel this way. Yet the reality is that the Treaty cannot be 'abolished', nor is any action by the New Zealand government to limit claims under the Treaty of Waitangi likely to be upheld in an international court of law. Even though the majority of New Zealanders may be ignorant of these realities, they still impinge upon them.

Having affirmed the existence of a reality beyond our knowledge of it, it remains important to acknowledge that there may be different ways of knowing reality. I also think it is important to acknowledge that sometimes one way of knowing reality can be shown to be more accurate, to better represent reality than another. The social scientists who interview all members of a family will doubtless produce a more accurate understanding than those who only interview the 'head of the house', for example. However, we can also demonstrate that, at times, it is simply not the case that one representation is more accurate than another. As the quantum debates have shown, it can be the case that two representations do represent reality differently, but neither one is a better representation overall than the other.

One representation of recent social changes in New Zealand is that Maori have been given 'privileges' such as unlimited access to seafood

collection, or better access to scholarships and places in tertiary education, at the expense of the Pakeha majority. There is evidence that the attitude that Maori have an unfair advantage over Pakeha is fairly widespread. A 1989 survey asked New Zealanders how various groups in society fare in comparison to others. It was found that Maori are perceived as generally faring less well than people of European descent, but not as poorly as people of Pacific Island descent, the unemployed, superannuitants or solo mothers. However, when government assistance is taken into account, Maori are perceived as being advantaged to the extent that they fare significantly better than Europeans, whereas solo mothers are perceived to break even, and the other groups mentioned are perceived to remain disadvantaged relative to Europeans in general even after government assistance (Gold and Webster, 1990: Table 4.3). This representation of reality can be shown to be far from accurate. The reality is that Maori by no means 'break even': the median income for all men employed full-time at the time of the 1991 Census was \$27,279, but for Maori men it was \$22,750. The equivalent figures for women were \$21,461 and \$18,572 respectively (Waldegrave et al, 1997: 232). Furthermore, an alternative representation of the social changes that have been taking place in New Zealand society can be shown to be more accurate. This representation is that in New Zealand society there is a widening gap between rich and poor (for example, Bedggood, 1996: 143-4). Evidence to support that contention includes:

**Table 7.1 Real disposable incomes, full-time wage and salary earners, 1984 and 1990.**

	first quintile	third quintile	fifth quintile
June 1984	973	974	1052
June 1990	937	952	1081
% change	-3.69	-2.26	+2.76

Base: March 1981=1000

[Source: J. Kelsey, 1997: 257]

This data indicates that there has been a decline in real incomes for those on middle and lower incomes during the 1980s. Financial pressure has increased significantly as a result not only of declining real income, but also of increasing demands on income. Thus women who previously would have preferred to remain at home and contribute to the economy through domestic and voluntary work now find themselves obliged to use their contacts to secure scarce paid employment, so contributing to the increasing polarity between households with no members in paid employment, and households with more than one member in paid employment. Those who prefer a career, and could previously have expected to earn sufficient income to make this alternative comfortable, find themselves under increasing financial pressure from some combination of new demands - to pay back student loans, to meet their own medical costs, to support their children through tertiary education, to support their own parents needing care, and to save for their own retirement - as the diminishing State funds to these areas are increasingly targeted to the 'poor' (Briar & Cheyne, 1998: 211). These pressures are evident in the changing labour force participation rates.

**Table 7.2** Change in percentage points in the labour force participation rates, 1987-1997

Age Group	Male	Female
15-19	-10.0	-4.1
20-24	-7.6	-2.1
25-29	-3.9	+8.5
30-34	-3.9	+2.6
35-39	-3.5	+0.5
40-44	-4.2	-2.8
45-49	-3.2	+6.0
50-54	-4.0	+13.8
55-59	-4.4	+12.5
60-64	+8.4	+7.0
65+	-3.7	-0.9

[Source: Household Labour Force Survey]

Clearly there is a reduced young mother exit and an increased female re-entry, in spite of the decreasing availability of work, evident in the male figures. The effect of changing age requirements for superannuation eligibility is apparent in the 60-64 age group.

I would argue that we can clearly demonstrate that the 'widening gap' thesis is a more accurate representation of reality than the 'Maori privilege' thesis. Yet it not always the case that one understanding of the social change is more accurate than another. For example, much of the discussion of the changes locates the changes introduced by New Zealand governments since 1984 as a major cause of the widening gap (O'Brien & Wilkes, 1993; Kelsey, 1995; Briar & Cheyne, 1998: 209). Against this it has been argued that changes were already taking place, and the contribution of economic reforms may have been relatively minor (Bedggood, 1996; Easton, 1995). Whilst the figures in Table 7.1 do show that the changes between the base year 1981 and 1984 were in the same direction, and it is possible to tease out the impacts of some specific policies like benefit cuts, there is no way that we can know exactly what would have happened if a

different economic strategy had been chosen in 1984. Thus we cannot demonstrate that one representation of the specific political interventions ('minor impact') is more accurate than the other ('major impact') as we can with the 'widening gap' versus 'Maori privilege' arguments.

My argument has been that social realities exist irrespective of whether I know about it or not, but there can be different knowledges of reality, which can be more or less accurate. Differences in knowledge become important because people act on the basis of their understandings of reality, whether this understanding is accurate or not. When people act, their understandings of reality can affect me through their actions.

Obviously the understandings of political decision makers have a bearing on the decisions that they make, and this can have an impact on everyone in their nation state when their decisions are made into law. In New Zealand the political elite has been heavily influenced by 'new right' economic ideology since 1984, in which government is seen as a business, and needing to be run along the lines of a business. One of the consequences of this is that it has facilitated viewing the Treaty as similar to a business contract, one dealing with the ownership of property. The advantage for Maori is that the Treaty is seen as needing to be upheld and enforced if either party fails to act in accordance with the provisions. However, it also means that the Treaty can be seen as negotiable, in the same way that a business contract is open to renegotiation if both parties are agreeable.

Such negotiations have been an ongoing feature of Maori politics since the powers of the Waitangi Tribunal were strengthened in 1985. The

existing situation whereby traditional Maori rights were largely ignored was changed to one where there is a legal requirement to consider the Treaty in policy and legislation (Spoonley, 1988: 97-8). One example of extensive negotiations between the Crown and Maori interests has been over the introduction of Individual Transferable Quotas by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fishing, which gave fishers the right to catch a specified amount of fish, and thus create individual ownership of what was previously a common resource (Walker, 1992: 108-9; Sullivan, 1995: 53). It does, however, seem that the Treaty was never intended to be a business contract by any of its signatories. It was understood by the Maori signatories as a covenant, in the same sense as biblical covenants (Levine, 1989:18). The 'business' orientation of the political elite has facilitated an understanding of the Treaty that may not be entirely accurate, but this understanding certainly has had impact on the lives of many New Zealanders through the consequences of negotiations over Treaty claims.

The understandings that other people have, whether accurate or not, can affect me through their actions. Other people's ideas can also influence my ideas, and so influence the implications that I draw from any information I receive. The way we get from 'information' to the 'ideas' that make sense of the information can be another source of bias in our understanding, a way that our perception of reality may be 'tweaked' without our being aware of it.

The distinction between 'information' and 'ideas' can be made evident in the way that each of the approaches to social movements can be located at a particular juncture in terms of the phenomena it observes and the intellectual heritage that it is observing that phenomena from. The new

social movement approach observes European social movements from a perspective of dissatisfaction with a Marxist heritage, wondering why class no longer seems to be as salient as Marxist theory supposes. Resource mobilisation observes USA movements from a perspective of dissatisfaction with the explanations of collective behaviour that understood movement activity as irrational and anomic. The intellectual heritage predisposed theorists to a particular focus, but this was also aided by differences in the phenomena being theorised: European and USA movements operate in somewhat different political contexts. So the 'information' being 'processed' was different in Europe and USA, as was the 'ideas' being used to process that information. The distinction between 'information' and 'ideas' is equally evident in my dissatisfaction with the leverage that 'ideas' about social movements available in the sociological literature can have on 'information' about social movements and social change here in New Zealand.

Consider an example of an idea already referred to, the idea of 'Maori privilege': majority group members who feel that they are increasingly excluded from opportunities and resources have associated their exclusion with belonging to the 'wrong' ethnic group, rather than the 'wrong' class. 'Information', such as that of a differential access to seafood collection, or to scholarship and training course places exists between Maori and Pakeha; or that minority group members are becoming more prevalent in managerial positions is understood in terms of ideas of 'Maori privilege'. As a consequence, that the information becomes evidence of an unjust and inequitable privileging of minority groups. As I have argued above the 'information' is by no means a neutral reflection of social reality 'out there'

to start with; but the 'ideas' used to make sense of the reality 'tweak' those perceptions of reality further.

### **Preterreality**

I have found it helpful to begin to disentangle the social and physiological processes involved in knowing by distinguishing the process of knowing (including seeing, hearing) from the content of knowing (information), and have used the term 'preterreality' to describe the content of knowing. Preterreality is not restricted to human perceptions, but includes the content of any information process where there is content that is acted on. Any such 'content' has potential to be elaborated upon further. Our ideas are an elaboration of our perceptions, and thus also preterreal. We act and react not merely according to the circumstances that we find ourselves in, but as these circumstances are defined by our perceptions and interpreted by our ideas.

People influenced by ideas of 'Maori privilege' perceive the social changes in New Zealand as due to the 'preferential' treatment of Maori in particular, and minority groups in general. These people act differently to those who think that the major social change has been a widening gap between rich and poor. The two groups will vote for a different set of political options, for example. Even though the actual circumstances being considered are the same, quite different actions can result, because the same information is related to different ideas, forming different understandings.

What we know is part of our individual preterreality; mine is different to yours. This does not deny that there is any reality independent of our knowledge of it, but only highlights the need to pay attention to the interrelationships involved in accessing that reality. These interrelationships not only arise from the way that reality is physically, biologically and socially constituted and embedded in interactions we call phenomenon. There is also the interactions between reality as it exists phenomenally and our means of knowing that accesses that reality to consider, as well as the ideas that we have that are used to make sense of the reality we have accessed through some means of knowing. Our preterreality presents us with an understanding of reality that has been 'tweaked' in all these ways.

Ideas of 'Maori privilege' tie in to a particular understanding of the Treaty of Waitangi, that understands the Maori as having ceded their authority (sovereignty) to the Crown. Another understanding of the Treaty is that there were to be two jurisdictions, one controlled by Maori authority and another by Pakeha. The Treaty guaranteed that the Crown would not encroach on Maori authority, and that Maori would have the same entitlements as Pakeha citizens when dealing with Pakeha authority. This divergence in understandings reflects differences between the English and Maori language text of the Treaty. One significant difference between the Maori and the English texts is that the missionary Maori word 'kawanatanga', which means the authority of the governor, was used to translate the word 'sovereignty' in the English text. It was 'kawanatanga' that Maori ceded to the British government in the first paragraph. In the second paragraph, the British government guaranteed that the Maori would retain their rangatiratanga. That is, Maori would retain their authority over their lands, villages, and all that they valued; and would have the rights of

British subjects. What the Maori ceded to the British government, according to this understanding, was the right to establish a Pakeha authority alongside the existing Maori authority. Maori did not cede their own authority to the British government as the English language text suggests (Walker, 1992: 98-100). This demonstrates that the Treaty, even as it exists as a material artefact contains an inherent ambiguity. Written documents are usually somewhat more purged of the ambiguities that always exist in an interactive context. We know that Maori signatories were more influenced by the meaning elaborated in discussion, that framed the Treaty as a covenant, rather than the actual words on paper (Levine, 1989: 20). Nevertheless, even in the written form of the Treaty, enough ambiguities survive to make evident the complex interactions which make up any social phenomena as it exists 'out there' before we even begin to access it.

How we understand the Treaty is not only dependent on how much of this interactive social phenomena we are able to access, but can also depend on other factors. For example, under international law, the Maori language version of the Treaty will be upheld against the English language version. This is because, in international law, the *contra preferentum* principle applies in cases of ambiguity. When a provision is ambiguously stated, it is interpreted against the party who drafted it; the indigenous language text is given precedence (Walker, 1992: 100). The prospect of Maori taking grievances to international courts, and having their understanding upheld, has certainly influenced how many Pakeha interpret the Treaty. This understanding encourages Pakeha to reassess a 'sovereignty was ceded' view. The information thus obtained has been channelled through a rather different means of knowing not only from those who retain a 'sovereignty was ceded' view, but also from Maori interpretations. Few

Pakeha are fluent enough in Maori to interpret the Maori text for themselves, yet alone access Maori understandings of the oral context beyond the text. The three distinctive processes of 'tweaking' our view of reality - picking out what is of interest, the usage of a particular means of knowing, and usage of particular ideas to interpret information - are evident when we compare the 'dual jurisdiction' understanding to the 'sovereignty was ceded' understanding.

Since we act on our perceptions, we introduce our preterreality back into the world 'out there'. Our preterreality becomes part of phenomena 'out there' through our interactions. As preterreality is implicated in phenomenal interactions, preterreality becomes part of reality and is not simply some abstract 'content'. Preterreality only exists 'out there' by virtue of the interactions we are involved in. Preterreality does not exist 'out there' as noumena, something with substance, which can be taken to be implied by the argument of multiple realities. The extent to which preterreality actually exists as noumena in the brain is quite beyond my competence as a sociologist. As a sociologist my primary concern is with social interactions that take place, and in these interactions the preterreal exists only by virtue of informing actions within these phenomenal interactions. Everything else taking part in social interactions has existence as noumena and so has substance.

Quite clearly, although the Treaty of Waitangi exists as a material artefact, the various understandings that people have of the Treaty have no material existence, and only have an effect on material reality through the actions of people acting on those understandings.

## **Social Evolution**

I agree with Durkheim that social institutions and cosmologies evolved together, and I argue that they evolved from pre-existing social and preterreal phenomena. The social, I argue, emerges when an entity influences another by acting on their environment, rather than directly acting on another entity, as occurs with biological phenomena. The social involves interactive phenomena, and although there must be noumena acting, the social is not located in the noumena, but rather in the phenomena that they produce by interacting. As a consequence, social institutions exist in reality as phenomena but not as noumena, as arrangements, not substance. Social phenomena have become relatively stable without existing as noumena in their own right. This is, I would argue, the heart of the disagreement between realists and constructivists. Whether or not realists actually do think that social institutions have 'substance', constructivists certainly characterise them as arguing that social institutions are realities in the much the same way that biological organisms are. Equally, whether or not constructivists actually do think that social institutions have no phenomenal existence, realists portray them as arguing that social institutions do not exist outside our minds. My argument is that social institutions exist outside our minds, in the interactions between people and materials that constitute them, but they do not exist as noumena, they have no substance to them. The constructivist argument is usually that social phenomena are only stable because we act to make them stable, through our shared ideas. I, however, agree with Bruno Latour that although our shared ideas do contribute to stability, social institutions have a much stronger source of stability through being tied to noumena, bodies or objects with substance, that serves to

reinforce their reality by making relatively enduring arrangements of substance through these ties.

If the Waitangi Tribunal was dependent on the shared ideas of New Zealanders for its stability, it would not be very stable. As I have already noted, the majority of New Zealanders are not happy with the status quo with respect to the Treaty of Waitangi, and would like to see its significance diminished. Yet the Tribunal is a social institution that does have a degree of stability. People are employed to service the needs of the Tribunal, and many more people address themselves to the Tribunal with respect to particular claims. It is a centre in Latour's sense of the term: a site that people and resources pass through. These people and resources lend their substance to the Tribunal, so that it appears substantial: there are not only officers of the Tribunal but offices they use. Yet all this substance only 'belongs' to the Tribunal through a legal fiction, the Tribunal itself is the meeting rather than either the meeting place or the group of people meeting. The Tribunal consists primarily of the interactions of people, and includes all that supports those interactions: paper, furniture, land; and in these interactions extends its concern to the material realities being referred to in claims, which therefore also supports those interactions more indirectly, as do the understandings that various people bring to the Tribunal.

As both the symbolic order and social institutions do have a phenomenal existence, they have continued to evolve, and this happens relatively independently of any biological evolution. Thus models that reduce the social to the biological are not helpful when it comes to developing an understanding of the social. Although biological knowledge is necessary for understanding the physiological influences on the social,

and can be useful for understanding the origins of the social, the social is underdetermined by the biological. Social institutions become established in their environment by the way that organisms and physical objects are arranged so that they become tied to servicing the social. Yet this arrangement does not give these social institutions substance, only the appearance of substance. As the social has no distinctive substance, there cannot be a social 'objects of selection', in the same sense that chromosomes become the biological object of selection. Further more, as the social has no substance, there is no separate 'layer' to which a distinctive mechanism of social evolution can apply. Rather we need to understand how the social and the preterreal interact with the biological and physical to maintain and change social institutions.

The Waitangi Tribunal is stabilised as a social institution through the officers and offices, supported by the government, that constitute it as a centre; but also by the claims made to it that give content to its operations, which necessitates a willingness of Maori to present claims to the Tribunal. Urban Maori without links to their iwi (tribe) have little to gain from Treaty settlements (Rei, 1998: 207). Treaty claims are justified according to Maori ownership as at 1840, the date of the signing of the Treaty. This in effect gives South Island iwi claim to a much greater area of land and coast than iwi in the North, as the South Island was sparsely populated in 1840. The weather was too cold for gardens given the cultivars available before Europeans arrived. Treaty claims will effectively produce a far from equitable outcome between Maori, but this is not a problem for the Pakeha political elite, as they view inequality as necessary and desirable. Neither does it appear to be a problem for the Maori elite who stand to benefit from this arrangement. Supporting Maori mobilisation about Treaty

claims is thus consistent with the world view of the Pakeha political elite, in a way that urban Maori mobilisation would not be. Urban Maori mobilisation would have to be on the grounds of justice and equity conceived in more universal terms; whereas the thrust of the reforms of the political elite since 1984 has been to undermine universal provision, and to attempt to target particular outcomes.

Thus the establishment of the Waitangi Tribunal, with power to consider claims to 1840, has come about with the realignment of Pakeha and Maori political elites. The situation is not dissimilar to that discussed in Chapter 5, when the bourgeois legislators of the French revolution used the continuing peasant unrest to justify their own political agendas. The peasants, in return, pushed the bourgeois legislators to make reforms that they would not have otherwise enacted, but would at least address some of their concerns. In both situations specific elite economic (or class) interests have been furthered through the rhetorical interpretation of movement demands. As various minority group movements assert their right for a place in the sun, they make their appeals in an already existing political site, where other groups already have their own agendas, and their own material and ideal resources to call on. To understand social change is to understand how these contingencies pan out in the course of social interaction; how the material and ideal resources of various groups come to be aligned to produce ongoing social arrangements.

The understanding that social phenomena leaves its marks not only on our minds, but also on the physical and ecological environment that these phenomena occur in, can be incorporated into a social construction perspective. This can be done by extending social construction to

encompass an understanding of how the social movement frames that become developed are embedded in the circumstances that they are developed in. I have attempted to do this by developing an understanding of social movement sacramentality, understanding how the social movement use material references that symbolise some important aspect of their message. These references, in their material incarnation, provide an anchor for the ideals of the movement. They serve to orient people in a particular way, they provide something tangible and concrete that facilitates an understanding of what the movement is about.

## **Sacrament**

The term 'sacrament' comes from Bateson's use of the term to refer to the fusion of several layers of reality and meaning into a single experience. It is a four dimensional metaphor that is able to sublimate social tensions. The sacrament draws together many different experiences, both ideal and material, physical and spiritual. Participation in a sacrament can be conservative, an anchor when changing circumstances threaten to undermine us in some way. It can also facilitate a conversion experience that extends or rearranges our frames of knowing. Participation can also be unsettling, when you don't quite understand; or completely alienating, when some of the references have different meanings for you than for other participants.

I examined three different moments of social movement activity as sites of sacramental activity. In quite different ways the Pakaitore marae occupancy, the Cervical Cancer controversy and the 1995 Moruroa protests

all connect a material reality to historical or mythical precedents through the use of symbols that provide the focus for movement activity. The demands made challenged widely held understandings, making the same type of epistemological critiques that I have already noted are common in the literature about social movement theories. Prevailing understandings were critiqued as oversimplifying reality by the Pakaitore marae protesters asserting that Pakeha concepts of legality and ownership were inadequate for Maori people. Similarly, the French concept of national sovereignty oversimplified the colonial reality to the Moruroa protesters. Boundaries were contested: the boundary of the French nation in the Moruroa protests, or between doctor and patient in the case of the Cervical Cancer controversy. Even more critically, for the social movement protesters, was the way that reality that remains hidden and even repressed by the hegemonic definitions, needs to be exposed, and a preferred alternative encouraged and developed. The reality that medical practices exclude a patient's authority over her own body was exposed in the cervical cancer controversy, and an effort was made to change that situation. Maori processes of law and order were practised at Pakaitore. Yet these challenges to more or less hegemonic definitions did not proceed simply on an intellectual plane, but were tied to material realities in a way that either encouraged or hindered other people identifying with the social movement. In the case of the Moruroa protests, the fact that nuclear bombs were being detonated in the Pacific helped New Zealanders identify with the protest. It was something close to home not only geographically but socially. New Zealanders have had plenty of experience of various forms of colonialism and neo-colonialism. Even Pakeha New Zealanders have had experience of the arrogance of overseas 'experts' with no knowledge of New Zealand telling us what we should do, and of local elites implementing their

experiments against the wishes of the majority of New Zealanders. The Pakaitore protest, however, was not as sympathetically received by the majority of Pakeha. The difficulty was that reference to the land ties in to a different set of meanings for many Pakeha. Most Pakeha do not know Maori, and trying to express Maori perspectives in English is difficult because the only words that can be used carry quite different connotations to many Pakeha. What is being said may not make a lot of sense. The protest did have rather different purposes than trying to 'make sense' to Pakeha, but the effect was that the protest exacerbated existing cleavages, whether that was intended or not.

Yet these three moments of social movement activity all lacked something in comparison to the NAMES Project Foundation AIDS Memorial Quilt. The NAMES Project developed a sacrament that was meaningful both within and beyond the movement, and that also succeeded in connecting those who found their arguments meaningful to the movement. For the Pakaitore marae occupancy there were understandings developed within the movement that can be understood as sacramental, but these did not translate well outside the movement. Many people outside the movement were not enlightened by the action, but only became more antagonistic. The understandings developed within both the cervical cancer controversy and the Moruroa protests were better received outside the movement, but they also had limited success in connecting people to their respective movements. The dissipation of frustrations was more individualised, and occurred largely outside the movement. The Moruroa protests also exacerbated some social boundaries for its supporters, even while challenging others. Thus the use of sacrament was limited in the activities examined. It may be more helpful to think of a tendency to

sacrament within social movements, which stabilises and strengthens ideas by incorporating material referents that are not as negotiable as abstract elements.

The post-structuralist turn in sociology stresses not only the significance of identity, but deconstructs 'identity' to an effect of discourse. Discourse, in turn, is constituted by language that lacks any certain reference to any material reality. Post-structuralism tends to reduce meaning and behaviour to the cultural effects of linguistic or 'textual' practices, to the exclusion of any material reality (Dunn, 1997: 688, 690, 694). This privileging of ideal above material reality is a familiar enough strategy that ecofeminists in particular have often critiqued. It has been much more difficult to arrive at a general understanding of not only how both material and ideal come to be tied together in the social, but how the material influences social change without resorting to some form of technological determinism. A consideration of sacrament, however, shows that material reality can prescribe meaning. The immensely popular protests against nuclear testing in the Pacific prescribed an identity with the Pacific for New Zealanders identifying with the cause; its very popularity demonstrating that a significant shift in New Zealanders identity (away from Europe) has taken place since World War II, but not towards Asia, as some in the business community may have preferred. The material reality was that nuclear detonations were being made in the Pacific, and this fact limits the feasible options available in meaning that can be attached to protest movement discourse, and hence what identities are made available and celebrated through that discourse. The fact that material constraints can adversely affect a movements ability to articulate a popular identity is amply demonstrated by the Pakaitore marae protest. 'Te whenua' does not capture

the identification priorities of most New Zealanders, even though it is salient for a significant minority.

This points to the strength and the weakness of social movement sacramentality. Developing social movement sacraments helps bring the ideas and experiences of social movement members together. Sacraments generate a compatibility between ideas and experience that social movement members can share, so facilitating social movement cohesiveness. Yet there is no guarantee that people outside the movement will be able to share in this, they may well have quite different ideas and experiences that they have brought together in quite a different and even antagonistic package. As these 'packages' contain experiences, they contain more than clearly articulated ideas; they contain feelings that express a compressed response to 'information' obtained from experience. This compressed response often needs to be unpacked and teased out to adequately articulate the underlying insights. This is both a strength and a weakness, because feelings can be harnessed within the movement for the 'good' of the movement. What tends to happen, however, is the feelings of those outside the movement get ignored or denied. Interactions with people outside the movement seem to proceed on the basis that if people do not share the sacramentality of the movement, this must be because their ideas are wrong. If you show them that their ideas are wrong, and they still fail to 'believe', then they must be morally incompetent. The only way to proceed is to force them to obey through legislative fiat. No attempt has been made to access what lies behind the feelings that have been poorly articulated in 'wrong' ideas. The very rejection of what is 'good' should alert us to the possibility that something has been silenced in the movement sacramentality, something that people who do not agree are trying to express. This silencing is

particularly ironic because social movements are themselves challenging the silences of hegemonic understandings.

To begin to address the silence of social movement ideologies, we first need to acknowledge the part that feelings and emotions play in developing understandings. In developing such an understanding the resource mobilisation approach can be extended by contending that more than resources are mobilised in the course of social movement activity. Certainly social movements are resource centres in Latour's sense of the term centre. Movements are nodes of activity where people and resources pass through. What is not often so readily acknowledged is the extent to which emotions are engaged in social movements. Social movements do deal with emotions, and not always simply by repressing emotions. Social movements become dissipative centres, where at least some human tensions and longings (*onus and mysterium*) can be projected and dissipated. Organised social movements develop both as resource and dissipative centres. These aspects develop together, and become apparent in sacramental activity. Social movements are typically more involved in sacramental activity than most centres, as challenging social boundaries means changing peoples' understandings. This requires them to make new linkages between experiences, so that the new-found commonalties between material references can be expressed with the new ideas.

If there is one moment of new social movement activity in New Zealand that clearly underlines the way that tensions and longings are tied up with social movement activity, it must surely be the Springbok tour protests. One of the longings that protesters expressed was for a world free from racism. For many New Zealanders this longing dovetailed with their

national identity, having been brought up to think of New Zealand as a racially harmonious society, where everyone got a fair go. If cracks in that mythology were becoming evident by the time of the Tour protests, their longing was to make the myth a reality. Their opponents, rugby supporters, were brought up with the same mythology, but viewed it as a fairly accurate statement of reality, of the way things have been. If anyone failed to make it, then that was their problem, they were either lazy, or had bad luck, and should pick themselves up and have another go. Their longings were for the myths to hold, for any tensions, whether racial or otherwise, to be sublimated in rugby, racing and beer; as they had been in the past. These longings quite clearly put these people who saw themselves as 'ordinary Kiwis' at odds with the protesters.

Clearly it is not enough to concentrate on the developments within the movement. We also need to understand what happens to the understandings developed in the social movement when they are taken 'out there', and exposed to the experiences of people outside the movement. That this can be problematic is evident in the fact that the cleavage exposed by the Springbok Tours protests still exists and now provides the political 'left' with insurmountable difficulties in crafting alliances. The 'ordinary Kiwi' understood that getting into the All Blacks<sup>1</sup> required commitment, but it didn't require you to be rich. Furthermore, being an All Black gave you contacts and a standing that enabled many ex-All Blacks to become successful businessmen. Perhaps Team New Zealand<sup>2</sup> offers a suitable contrast in this respect. To take up yachting as a child you need to come from a family with a reasonable income. To be sure, the All Black path to

---

<sup>1</sup> The New Zealand mens' rugby team

<sup>2</sup> A yachting team with national status

success excludes women, but to the extent that women did identify with this mythology, they predominantly understood 'women's role' in the same domestic terms that men did. A more recent alternative articulation has been to promote similar understandings of the All Blacks for the Silver Ferns.<sup>3</sup> Be this as it may, people articulating the 'ordinary Kiwi' position are quite correct in asserting that something has been lost. Although peoples' chances have always been far from equal, the chances of upward social mobility were much better in the past than they are today. I would argue that they may be equally correct in asserting that the changes are not entirely unlinked to claims made by minority groups for what are perceived to be 'special privileges'.

## **Displacement**

The need to situate social movements within a broader political site where groups have competing agendas brings me to closure theory. Social closure theory typically refers to social groups and their relative control of access to resources and opportunities. The focus is on the material aspects of social closure, whereas work that addresses the ideational aspects has usually focused on social boundaries, especially symbolic boundaries. I seek to integrate these approaches by arguing that the preterreal assessments used are made explicit in ideological struggles over the permeability of social boundaries, or the closure of social groups. By constantly referring to a particular boundary, a social movement can actually serve to reinforce that boundary, making it less permeable, and more sharply differentiated. The

---

<sup>3</sup> The New Zealand womens netball team

social changes that take place are actually across other boundaries that are not emphasised, but are implicated in the ideology and action of the social movements. Thus there is a displacement between boundaries: the boundary most affected is not necessarily the one that the social movement seeks to draw attention to.

The feminist movement provides an example of this displacement across boundaries. The macrosocial consequences of the feminist interventions cannot be 'read off' from the aims of the movement, that males and females should have a more equitable access to resources and opportunities. Despite some convergence between the actual tasks assigned to males and females, the male-female social boundary remains intact and highly impermeable. The implicated boundary, class, has become more impermeable. Women from middle class backgrounds are increasingly located in middle class positions, while both men and women from a working class background are less likely to be upwardly mobile into those positions.

I examined recent changes in the public sector in New Zealand to tease out some of the factors involved in the increasing social closure evident over the last decade. The public sector is a source of middle class jobs in New Zealand. Changes to social closure within the public sector have taken place in the context of public sector reform in New Zealand, which was influenced far more by an enthusiasm amongst political advisors for commercialisation and 'new right' managerialist theories than by social movement objectives. Yet there was a resonance between some of the concerns of both 'left' and 'right', a radical convergence of ideas that seemed to be the only way out politically for those wanting to address

inequalities (Wilson, 1998: 227). The ideology of social movements thus became implicated in the reconstitution of the public sector, which, in turn, had important implications for social closure in New Zealand. This shows that the silences of social movement ideology can have important implications beyond the movement itself. Displacement is the consequence of the political opportunity presented by what remains hidden by the social movement agenda when another feature is highlighted.

It may have suited both Pakeha and Maori elites that Treaty of Waitangi claims are made against a reference to the situation at 1840 rather than in universal terms, but this is by no means the only social reform that received support from a 'new social movement' that has targeted particular beneficiaries. EEO (equal employment opportunities) legislation is another example. The fact that equity reforms have not been framed in universal terms shows that movement activists, if they were not deliberately acting to antagonise their adversaries from the Springbok tour, then can only plead ignorance of the consequences of transferring social movement sentiment into legal codes. Either way, the current difficulties of the political left in New Zealand are directly related to the antagonisms sustained by this process. The perception many people who see themselves as 'ordinary Kiwis'<sup>4</sup> have is that targeting positive outcomes for minority groups serves to significantly disadvantage 'ordinary Kiwis' relative to minority groups. The perception is that these outcomes are real and, furthermore, that the antagonism to them is quite clearly intended by the middle class 'left'. The 'bleeding-heart intellectual' thus becomes the scape-goat for new right reforms, while any economic reform is seen as driven by international

---

<sup>4</sup> 'Kiwi' is an informal expression for a New Zealander, the usage can imply a Pakeha New Zealander, but not necessarily.

realities that New Zealanders have no control over, thus inevitable. There is no equivalent perception that the Treaty of Waitangi is also a reality with standing under international law, and New Zealanders can not wish it out of existence. The failure of the 'new left' to frame issues in ways that make sense to 'ordinary Kiwis' in itself demonstrates the reality of the antagonisms engendered by the cleavage made visible in the Springbok tour protests.

Whether or not an outcome of declining working class opportunities was intended by those of the 'new left' supporting reform, the actual effect of enforcing reform through legislation has not been to create a society celebrating difference and delivering equity; but one in which the very reforms supposedly supporting more equitable social outcomes are perceived as being inherently unjust and inequitable. Closure theory needs to be extended to consider forms of closure that the movement's rhetoric may exacerbate. This would result in a broader understanding of the contribution of social movements to social change. Social movements are not merely 'successful' or 'unsuccessful' in terms of getting their agenda considered; they are also implicated in establishing what will not be considered, what remains hidden. Social movements are thus implicated in what interests will be repressed to enable their interests to be considered. Social movements have consequences beyond those we celebrate. We are presenting a very biased 'picture' of reality indeed if we fail to acknowledge that the consequences of moving a social movement ideology into a broader political process can be far from what is intended.

## Agendas

The mobilisations against sports with South Africa is an example of a social movement that exacerbated social cleavages. The HART social movement which co-ordinated protests against the Springbok tour initially prioritised education. The belief of those social movement activists was that once they had established the immorality and indefensibility of sporting contacts with South Africa, they would be well on the way to success (Richards, 1975: 209). When they failed to stop the 1972 All Black Tour of South Africa, they came to the conclusion that: 'we lost because we had played the game according to the rules' (Richards, 1975: 211). Appealing to reason, morality, common sense, and a sense of concern would achieve nothing because of the commercial and political interests that wanted links to South Africa to be maintained. What is ignored here, is that many New Zealanders were far from convinced that cutting sporting contacts would achieve anything positive. As a consequence of the perceived failure of attempts to educate, a change of tactic to non-violent disruption was announced, as this had been successful in Britain. There was a perception that there was no alternative, as normal channels of change were perceived to be closed to them. Whether or not they had the support of the majority of New Zealanders and so could claim to speak and act for them, and thus rightly insist that the 'channels of change' be opened to them is ignored. In fact, their claim of 'no alternative' was to become a familiar cry in the 1980s when the Labour government embarked on an agenda of economic reform that the overwhelming majority of citizens were opposed to. James Brock's (1975) survey of Christchurch CARE<sup>5</sup> members, found that the members

---

<sup>5</sup> CARE was an anti-apartheid group aligned to HART that was officially opposed to disruption, but nevertheless Brock's 1972 survey found members would be prepared to take

were deeply committed to their ideals and prepared to take action to see their beliefs implemented. Brock (1975: 223) considered that the members were reacting to a discrepancy between their ideals and the reality of society. One such ideal is for democracy - surely that is what they were fighting for in South Africa - and yet the members were willing to abandon the democratic frame to achieve their ends by disruption. Surely this could be judged as a discrepancy between their ideals and their actions (reality)? The undeniable consequence of imposing their ideals on everybody else in this way was that the social cleavages in New Zealand were exacerbated.

I would suggest that social movements can enhance consensus not only within the movement, but also beyond the movement itself. One way of achieving this is by creating social movement sacraments, like the NAMES project AIDS Memorial Quilt, that do effectively reduce the saliency of social cleavages while still promoting the understandings arrived at within the social movement to a broader public. There may yet be a need for militancy at times, but that is certainly not the only option available when people aren't impressed with our arguments. Whatever course of action is decided on, serious consideration needs to be given to the adverse social consequences that result from fuelling antagonisms, and to ways that this can be avoided. Social movement activists can no longer argue with credibility that if people don't agree with our ideas, our only alternative is to force them to practice what we preach. The lesson of our century has been that you can arrange things to suit your purposes for an extended length of time, but if you haven't won people's hearts, even the most extensive arrangement of things can fail. People have different experiences of social

---

disruptive action.

reality that are better matched by different preterrealities. These preterreal differences cannot be overcome by 'education' that consists of putting our point of view forward without considering how it matches the experience of others. They can only be overcome with a commitment to recognising the truth that others know, that our own position has ignored. Processes of mutual inherence ensure that we always strive to match our preterreality and our social reality, and social movements need to harness these processes to work for their movement, rather than dismissing other people's preterreality that is based in their own, somewhat different, social experience.

## **Conclusion**

I have argued that harm is not done by social movements calling attention to a particular boundary. Indeed, a great deal of good has been done by drawing attention to neglected or hegemonically hidden aspects of reality. Harm is done by ontologically privileging the features of reality that are exposed by an analysis, so that we fail to acknowledge that what remains hidden may also be important.

There does seem to be a glissade that critical voices are particularly susceptible to, whether they be social movements or social theorists challenging the silences of hegemonic understandings. This glissade involves the supposition that as we are opposed to a hegemonic understanding, any understanding opposed to ours supports the hegemonic understanding that we are opposed to. If the people articulating an opposing understanding themselves have no evident self interest in maintaining that hegemony, then they must be victims of 'false consciousness'. This feeling

of 'they're wrong' is bolstered when the evidence they call on can be refuted, according to our standards of evidence. The glissade is made, discounting the whole picture they present as nothing but a figment of 'false consciousness', on the basis of our being able to discount one or two aspects of their representation of reality. The conclusion is then drawn that there is nothing of value in the entire package, there is no insight into the silences of our own package that could be retrieved.

For example, a perception of 'Maori privilege' can be discounted as having very limited empirical validity, based only on what can be conceived of as relatively minor redistributions, such as differential access to seafood resources. The decline of opportunity for social mobility has much stronger empirical validity, but enters the discourse of 'ordinary Kiwis' by way of contrast with the improving opportunities for mobility for minority group members. As a claim of unfair advantage accruing to minority group members can also be dismissed by pointing to the far from equal outcomes for minority groups, we have avoided recognising that the egalitarian demands that are made by the middle class 'left' on the grounds of gender, ethnicity, sexuality, and indeed every conceivable grounds except class, also lack credibility given a context of starkly increasing income disparities. The dismissal of the understandings of 'ordinary Kiwis' as racist, sexist, homophobic and so on, neatly glissades over the fact that the representation of social reality presented by the middle class 'left' also has silences that have had significant implications for the well being of many New Zealanders.

Clearly both representations of reality present a 'tweaked' view of reality by picking out what is of interest and ignoring everything else that

goes to make up the social context that is being represented. The middle class 'left' focus on equity manages to ignore class based inequalities while the 'ordinary Kiwi' focus on formal equality disparages formal sources of inequality regardless of their purpose, and in the process ignores other sources of inequality. Not only the features of reality to be considered, but the way that features that are accessed are related to ideas, 'tweak' the representation of reality differently. For the middle class left a differential between Maori and Pakeha access to seafood resources can be understood as a relatively minor redistribution - as can be evidenced by the fact that Maori income remains below Pakeha - that nevertheless needs to be maintained in deference to Treaty obligations. For the 'ordinary Kiwi' this differential access represents a gross infringement of formal equality. In bridging context and ideas, the features to be known are also accessed differently: the middle class 'left' means of knowing includes access to aggregate statistics and international discourses that pertain to the situation, the 'ordinary Kiwi' is more likely to depend to a greater extent on media images and personal experiences.

Of course, the same critiques can also be made against the position that I am expressing. Although we can be sure that the social change that New Zealand has experienced in the 80s and 90s has increased the inequalities between New Zealanders, we cannot be sure of the extent to which social movements are implicated in that widening gap, and we cannot know what the extent of the inequalities would be if different strategies were adopted by social movements.

In New Zealand social movements interested in preterreal change, (influencing the social indirectly through changing the perceptions people

have), also engage in political action. Social movement agendas were included in political agendas that were aligned with the new economic agenda. Social movement activists who targeted political change, such as introducing EEO, may have done more in the way of education, but equally decided to use regulative force to achieve their ends. What is also quite clear, however, is that the longer term social stability of the political changes made is questionable. Social stability only eventuates when there is some sort of compatibility between social institutions and ideologies. Enforcing social change on others through legislative fiat is problematic; and not only because so many purportedly well meaning people push their agendas through without fully considering the implications of the trade-offs involved. There is also a limit to how far anyone can 'reconstruct' the experiences of others for them. The political elite may be able to persuade themselves that no-one is hungry, but it is altogether more difficult to persuade food bank customers of that. People cannot deny their own experience, even if they are not able to articulate it in a manner that readily connects to the ideologies of other groups. The very intransigence of others should serve as a reminder that there may well be other features of reality that we have failed to take into account, and not simply other ways of 'constructing reality' (read: 'false consciousness' or 'ignorance'). However, we do need to recognise that although shared ideas do contribute to stability, social institutions have a much stronger source of stability through being tied to noumena, bodies or objects with substance, that serves to reinforce their reality by making relatively enduring arrangements of substance through these ties. To 'destruct' these institutions requires something more than 'deconstructing' the ideologies that support them. We also have to devise ways of realigning the material realities that support the status quo to support a more just and equitable society.

## References

Abell, Peter, 1977. 'The Many Faces of Power and Liberty. Revealed Preference, Autonomy and Teleological Explanation', Sociology, 11(1): 3-24.

Abercrombie, Nicholas, Stephen Hill and Bryan S. Turner, 1984. Dictionary of Sociology. London: Penguin Books.

Adam, Barry D., 1993. 'Post-Marxism and the New Social Movements', Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology, 30(3): 316-336.

Akrich, Madeline, 1987. 'Comment decrite les objets techniques' Technique et Culture, 5: 49-63.

Albert, David Z., 1994. 'Bohm's Alternative to Quantum Mechanics', Scientific American, May 1994: 32-39.

Alcoff, Linda, and Elizabeth Potter, 1993. 'Introduction: When Feminisms Intersect Epistemology'. Pp 1-14 in Linda Alcoff and Elizabeth Potter (eds) Feminist Epistemologies. New York: Routledge.

Allen, Barry, 1997. 'Knowledge and Adaptation', Biology

Amin, Samir, 1990. 'The Social Movements in the Periphery: An End to National Liberation?', in Samir Amin, Giovanni Arrighi, Andre Gunder Frank and Immanuel Wallerstein Transforming the Revolution: Social Movements and the World System. New York: Monthly Review Press.

Aranowitz, Stanley, 1996. 'The Politics of the Science Wars: Introduction' Social Text, 14(1&2): 177-197.

Atkins, Peter, 1995. 'Science as Truth', History of the Human Sciences, 8(2): 97-102.

Baber, Zaheer, 1992. 'Sociology of scientific knowledge: Lost in the reflexive funhouse', Theory and Society, 21: 105-119.

Bagguley, Paul, 1992. 'Social change, the middle class, and the emergence of "new social movements": a critical analysis', The Sociological Review, 40(1):26-48.

Bagguley, Paul, 1997. 'Review Article: Beyond Political Sociology? Developments in the sociology of social movements', The Sociological Review, 45(1): 147-161.

Baigrie, Brian S., 1995. 'Fuller's Civic Republicanism and the Question of Scientific Expertise', Philosophy of the Social Sciences, 25(4): 502-511.

- Banks, J. A., 1989. 'From universal history to historical sociology', British Journal of Sociology, 40(4): 521-543.
- Barbalet, J. M., 1996. 'Social Emotions: Confidence, Trust and Loyalty', International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy 16(9/10): 75-96.
- Barber, Ian, 1989. 'Of Boundaries, Drains and Crops: A Classification System for Traditional Maori Horticultural Ditches', New Zealand Journal of Archaeology, 11: 23-50.
- Barnes, Harry Elmer, 1948 [1966]. An Introduction to the History of Sociology. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Bassett, Michael, 1971. Confrontation '51: The 1951 Waterfront Dispute. Wellington: A. H. & A. W. Reed.
- Bateson, Gregory, 1972. Steps to an Ecology of the Mind. New York: Ballantine Books.
- Bateson, Gregory, 1977. 'Afterword'. Pp 235-247 in John Brokman (ed) About Bateson. London: Wildwood House.
- Bartholomew, Amy, and Margit Mayer, 1992. 'Review Article: Nomads of the Present: Melucci's Contribution to New Social Movement Theory', Theory, Culture and Society, 9: 141-159.
- Baudrillard, Jean, 1982. 'Fatality or Reversible Imminence: Beyond the Uncertainty Principle', Social Research, 49: 272-293.
- Bedgood, David, 1996. 'From The Cradle to The Grave? The New Zealand Welfare State', New Zealand Sociology, 11(2): 143-182.
- Bendle, Mervyn Fredrick, 1996. 'Logics of integration and disintegration in contemporary social theory', Australia New Zealand Journal of Sociology, 32(3): 70-84.
- Benford, Robert D., 1993. ' "You could be the hundredth monkey": Collective Action Frames and Vocabularies of Motive Within the Nuclear Disarmament Movement', The Sociological Quarterly, 34(2): 195-216.
- Benton, Ted, 1989. 'Marxism and Natural Limits: An Ecological Critique and Reconstruction', New Left Review, 178: 51-86.
- Benton, Ted, 1991. 'Biology and Social Science: Why the Return of the Repressed Should be Given a (Cautious) Welcome', Sociology, 25(1): 1-29.
- Benton, Ted, 1992. 'Why the Welcome Needs to be Cautious: A Reply to Keith Sharp', Sociology, 26(2): 225-232.
- Buechler, Steven M., 1993. 'Beyond Resource Mobilization? Emerging Trends in Social Movement Theory' The Sociological Quarterly, 34(2): 217-235.

Bhaskar, Roy, 1975. A Realist Theory of Science. Leeds: Leeds Books Ltd.

Bloor, David, 1981. 'The Strengths of the Strong Programme', Philosophy of the Social Sciences, 11: 199-213.

Boston, Jonathan, 1991. 'Chief executives and the Senior Executive Service'. Pp 81-113 in Jonathan Boston, John Martin, June Pallot, and Pat Walsh (eds), Reshaping the State. Auckland: Oxford University Press.

Blumer, Herbert, 1939. 'Collective Behaviour'. Pp 221-280 in Robert E. Park (ed) An Outline of the Principles of Sociology. New York: Barnes & Noble.

Boggs, Carl, 1986. Social Movements and Political Power: Emerging Forms of Radicalism in the West. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Boston, Jonathan, John Martin, and Pat Walsh, 1991. 'Conclusion'. Pp 388-400 in Jonathan Boston, John Martin, June Pallot, and Pat Walsh (eds), Reshaping the State. Auckland: Oxford University Press.

Boston, Jonathan, John Martin, June Pallot and Pat Walsh, 1996. Public Management: The New Zealand Model. Auckland: Oxford University Press.

Bottero, Wendy, 1998. 'Clinging to the Wreckage? Gender and the Legacy of Class', Sociology, 32(3): 469-490.

Bowler, Peter J., 1990. 'The role of the history of science in the understanding of Social Darwinism and Eugenics', Impact of Science on Society, 159: 273-278.

Brennan, Teresa, 1997. 'Two Forms of Consciousness', Theory, Culture and Society, 14(4): 89-96.

Brett, Cate, 1995. 'Wanganui: Beyond the Comfort Zone', North and South, June 1995: 44-59.

Brewer, Marilyn B., and Wendi Gardner, 1996. 'Who is This "We"? Levels of Collective Identity and Self Representations', Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 71(1): 83-93.

Briar, Celia, and Christine Cheyne, 1998. 'Women and Social/Economic Policy: New Feminist Agendas For Changing Times?' Pp 208- 215 in Rosemary Du Plessis & Lynne Alice (eds) Feminist Thought in Aotearoa New Zealand. Auckland: Oxford University Press.

Brock, James F., 1975. 'Christchurch CARE: An Analysis of Middle-Class Radicalism'. Pp 213-224 in Stephen Levine (ed) New Zealand Politics: A Reader. Melbourne: Cheshire Publishing.

Brown, Phillip, 1995. 'Cultural Capital and Social Exclusion: Some Observations on Recent Trends in Education, Employment and the Labour Market' Work, Employment and Society 9(1): 29-51.

Buckley, Walter, 1967. Sociology and Modern System Theory. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Buechler, Steven M., 1993. 'Beyond Resource Mobilization? Emerging Trends in Social Movement Theory' The Sociological Quarterly, 34(2): 217-235.

Buechler, Steven M., 1995. 'New Social Movement Theories' The Sociological Quarterly, 34(2): 217-235.

Burningham, Kate, and Martin O'Brien, 1994. 'Global Environmental Values and Local Contexts of Action', Sociology, 28(4): 913-932.

Bunkle, Phillida, 1993. 'Side-stepping Cartwright. The Cartwright recommendations five years on', in Sandra Cooney (ed), Unfinished Business. Auckland, Penguin Books.

Burkitt, Ian, 1997. 'Social Relationships and Emotions', Sociology, 31(1): 37-55.

Buttel, Fredrick H., 1986. 'Sociology and the environment: the winding road toward human ecology'. International Social Science Journal, 38(3): 337-356.

Calhoun, Craig, 1993. 'Postmodernism as Pseudohistory', Theory, Culture and Society, 10: 75-96.

Callon, Michel and Bruno Latour, 1981. 'Unscrewing the big Leviathan: how actors macro-structure reality and how sociologists help them do so' Pp 277-303 in K Knorr-Cetina and A V Cicourel (eds), Advances in Social Theory and Methodology. Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Canel, Eduardo, 1992. 'New Social Movement Theory and Resource Mobilization: The Need For Integration' in William Carroll (ed) Organising Dissent: Contemporary Social Movements in Theory and Practice. Canada: Garamond Press.

Carroll, William K., and R. S. Ratner, 1994. 'Between Leninism and Radical Pluralism: Gramscian Reflections on Counter-Hegemony and the New Social Movements', Critical Sociology, 20(2): 3-26.

Catton, William R. Jr, and Riley E. Dunlap, 1978. 'Environmental Sociology: A New Paradigm', The American Sociologist, 13: 41-49.

Chapple, Geoff, 1984. 1981: The Tour. Wellington: AH & AW Reed.

Cleveland, Les, 1972. The Anatomy of Influence. Auckland: Hicks Smith.

Code, Lorraine, 1993. 'Taking Subjectivity into Account'. Pp 15-48 in Linda Alcoff and Elizabeth Potter (eds) Feminist Epistemologies. New York: Routledge.

Coney, Sandra, 1998. The Unfortunate Experiment. Auckland, Penguin Books.

Cohen, Jean L., 1983. 'Rethinking Social Movements', Berkeley Journal of Sociology, 28: 97-117.

Cohen, Jean L., 1985. 'Strategy or Identity: New Theoretical Paradigms and Contemporary Social Movements' Social Research, 52(4): 663-716.

Cohen, Jean and Andrew Arato, 1992. Civil Society and Political Theory. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Collins, R., 1979. The Credential Society: An Historical Sociology of Education and Stratification. New York: Academic Press.

Coney, Sandra, 1993. 'Unfinished Business. The Cartwright Report five years on', in Sandra Coney (ed), Unfinished Business. Auckland: Women's Health Action.

Coney, Sandra, and Phillida Bunkle, 1987. 'An "Unfortunate Experiment" At National Women's', Metro, June 1987: 47-65.

Cooper, David E., 1995. 'Science, society and rationality', History of the Human Sciences, 8(2): 109-115.

Cooper, Gregory, 1993. 'The Competition Controversy in Community Ecology', Biology and Philosophy, 8: 359-384.

Corbett, Jan, 1990. 'Second Thoughts on the Unfortunate Experiment', Metro, 109: 54-73.

Corsten, Michael, 1998. 'Between Constructivism and Realism - Searle's Theory of the Construction of Social Reality', Philosophy of the Social Sciences, 28(1): 102-121.

Costall, Alan, 1997. 'The Meaning of Things', Social Analysis, 41(1): 76-85.

Craib, Ian, 1984. Modern Social Theory. Brighton: Harvester.

Crippen, Timothy, 1994. 'Neo-Darwinian Approaches in the Social Sciences: Unwarranted Concerns and Misconceptions' Sociological Perspectives, 37(3): 391-401.

Crompton, Rosemary, 1996. 'The fragmentation of class analysis', British Journal of Sociology, 47(1): 56-67.

Crothers, Charles and George Pavlich, 1995. 'Directions in Sociology for New Zealand/ Aotearoa', New Zealand Sociology, 19(1): 63-66.

Curtis, David Ames, 1991. 'Cornelius Sastoriadis'. Pp 46-53 in Peter Beilharz (ed), Social Theory: A Guide. St Leonards, NSW: Allen and Unwin.

Dahrendorf, Ralph, 1959. Class and Class Conflict in an Industrial Society. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Dalton, Russell J., Manfred Kuechler, and Wilhelm Burklin, 1990. 'The Challenge of New Movements'. Pp 3-20 in Russell J. Dalton and Manfred Kuechler (eds) Challenging the Political Order: New Social and Political Movements in Western Democracies. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Dalmiya, Vrinda and Linda Alcoff, 1993. 'Are "Old Wives Tales" Justified?'. Pp 217-244 in Linda Alcoff and Elizabeth Potter (eds) Feminist Epistemologies. New York: Routledge.

Darnovsky, Marcy, Barbara Epstein, and Richard Flacks (eds), 1995. Cultural Politics and Social Movements. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Darwin, Charles, 1859 [1923]. On the Origins of the Species by Means of Natural Selection. London: Oxford University Press.

Davies, Sonja, 1984[1988]. Bread and Roses: Sonja Davies - Her Story. Auckland: Penguin Books.

Dawkins, Richard, 1976. The Selfish Gene. New York: Oxford University Press.

De Laet, Marianne, 1995. 'Confronting the War Machine: A Response to Fuller', Philosophy of the Social Sciences, 25(4): 497-501.

Denzin, Norman K., 1989a. Interpretive Biography. Newbury Park: Sage Publications.

Denzin, Norman K., 1989b. Interpretive Interactionism. Newbury Park: Sage Publications.

Dew, Kevin, and Mike Lloyd, 1997. 'Accounting for the ICI fire: partial connections between lay and expert knowledge' Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology

De Waal, Frans B. M., 1995. 'Bonobo Sex and Society', Scientific American, March 1995: 58-64.

Devine, Fiona, 1997. Social Class in America and Britain. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Dollimore, Jonathan, 1991. Sexual Dissidence: Augustine to Wilde, Freud to Foucault. Clarendon Press: Oxford.

The Dominion 'Moaris explain 'sovereignty' claim', 24 March, 1995: 6.

The Dominion 'Mururoa radiation fear unfounded', 25 August, 1995.

Dore, R., 1976. The Diploma Disease. London: Allen and Unwin.

Duncan, Otis Dudley, 1959. 'Human Ecology and Population Studies'. Pp 678-716 in P. M. Hauser and O. D. Duncan (eds), The Study of Population. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Dunn, Robert G., 1997. 'Self, Identity, & Difference: Mead and the Poststructuralists', The Sociological Quarterly, 38(4): 687-705.

Durkheim, Emile, 1912 [1954]. The Elementary Forms of Religious Life. London: Allen & Unwin.

Dyke, C. 1988. The Evolutionary Dynamics of Complex Systems: A Study of Biosocial Complexity. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.

Easton, Brian, 1989. Rogernomics. Auckland: Auckland University Press.

Easton, Brian, 1995. 'Poverty in New Zealand', New Zealand Sociology, 10(2): 182-213.

Eckersley, Robyn, 1992. Environmentalism and Political Theory: Towards an Ecocentric Approach. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Eder, Klaus, 1993. The New Politics of Class: Social Movements and Cultural Dynamics in Advanced Societies. London: Sage.

Edwards, Rosalind and Jane Ribbens, 1991. 'Meanderings around "Strategy": a research note on strategic discourse in the lives of women', Sociology, 25(3): 477-489.

Eichler, Margit, 1998. 'Making Sociology More Inclusive', Current Sociology, 46(2): 5-28.

Escobar, Arturo, and Sonia E. Alvarez, 1992. The Making of Social Movements in Latin America. Boulder, Colorado, Westview Press.

Evans, David, 1997. 'Michel Maffesoli's sociology of modernity and postmodernity: an introduction and critical assessment', The Sociological Review, 45(2): 220-243.

Eyley, Claudia Pond, 1997. Protest at Moruroa. North Shore, NZ: Tandem Press.

Faludi, Susan, 1992. Backlash: The Undeclared War Against Women. London: Catto & Windus.

Folse, Henry J., 1985. The Philosophy of Neils Bohr: The Framework of Complementarity. Amsterdam: Elsevier Science Publishers.

Folse, Henry J., 1993. 'The Environment and the Epistemological Lesson of Complementarity', Environmental Ethics, 15(4): 345-53.

Forrester, John, 1996. 'If p, then what? Thinking in cases', History of Human Sciences, 9(3): 1-25.

- Foss, Daniel A., and Ralph Larkin, 1986. Beyond Revolution: A New Theory of Social Movements. South Hadley, Mass.: Bergin & Garvey.
- Foucault, Michel, 1980. Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977. New York: Pantheon.
- Fougere, Geoff, 1989. "Sport, Culture and Identity: the Case of Rugby Football". Pp 110-122 in David Novitz and Bill Wilmott (eds), Culture and Identity in New Zealand. Wellington: GP Books.
- Fraser, Nancy, 1998. 'Heterosexism, Misrecognition and Capitalism: A Response to Judith Butler', New Left Review, 228: 140-149.
- Fuller, Steve, 1994. 'The reflexive politics of constructivism', History of Human Sciences, 7(1): 87-93.
- Fuller, Steve, 1995a. 'On the motives for the new sociology of science', History of Human Sciences, 8(2): 117-124.
- Fuller, Steve, 1995b. 'A tale of two cultures and other higher superstitions', History of Human Sciences, 8(1): 115-125.
- Fuller, Steve, 1996. 'Does Science Put an End to History, or History to Science?', Social Text, 46/47: 27-42.
- Gabo, Giampietro, 1995. "'Class" as Metaphor. On the Unreflective Transformation of a Concept into an Object', Philosophy of Social Sciences, 25(4): 442-467.
- Gamson, William A., 1975. The Strategy of Social Protest. Homewood, IL: Dorsey Press.
- Gendell, P., J. Hosie, and D. Russell, 1993. New Zealander's Attitudes to the Environment. International Social Survey Programme, Department of Marketing, Massey University.
- Glasner, P. E., and D. J. Bennett, 1977. 'Influential Communication in Science', Sociology, 11(1): 127-8.
- Goffman, Erving, 1974. Frame Analysis. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Gold, Hyman, and Alan Webster, 1990. New Zealand Values Today. Palmerston North: Alpha Publications.
- Goldthorpe, J. H. (in association with C. Llewellyn and G Payne), 1980. Social Mobility and Class Structure in Modern Britain. Oxford: Clarendon.
- Gould, Stephen Jay, 1973 [1977]. Ever Since Darwin: Reflections in Natural History. New York: W. W. Norton & Co.

- Goodwin, Jeff, 1997. 'The Libidinal Constitution of High-risk Social Movement: Affectual Ties and Solidarity in the Huk Rebellion', American Sociological Review 62: 53-69.
- Gould, Stephen Jay, 1994. 'The Evolution of Life on Earth', Scientific American, Oct 1994: 63-69.
- Gross, Paul R. and Norman Levitt, 1995. 'A higher superstition? A reply to Steve Fuller's review', History of Human Sciences, 8(2): 125-9.
- Groves, Julian McAllister, 1995. 'Learning to feel: the neglected sociology of social movements', The Social Review, 43(3):435-461.
- Greer, Germaine, 1992. 'The Backlash Myth', The New Republic, 5 Oct 1992. Reprinted in Broadsheet, Spring 1993: 32-3.
- Grosz, E. A., 1988. 'The in(ter)vention of feminist knowledges'. Pp 92-104 in B. Caine, E. A. Grosz and M. de Lepervanche (eds), Crossing Boundaries: Feminisms and the critiques of knowledges. Sydney: Allen & Unwin.
- Grosz, E. A., & M. de Lepervanche, 1988. 'Feminism and Science'. Pp 5-27 in B. Caine, E. A. Grosz & M. de Lepervanche (eds), Crossing Boundaries: Feminism and the Critiques of Knowledges. Sydney: Allen and Unwin.
- Gusfield, Joseph R. (ed), 1970. Protest, Reform & Revolt. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Habermas, Jurgen, 1973 [1976]. Legitimation Crisis. London: Heinemann Educational Books.
- Habermas, Jurgen, 1981. 'Toward a reconstruction of historical materialism'. Pp 259-276 in K. Knorr-Cetina and A. V. Cicourel (eds) Advances in Social Theory and Methodology: Toward an Integration of Micro- and Macro- Sociologies. Boston, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd.
- Habermas, Jurgen, 1982. 'A Reply to My Critics'. Pp 219-283 in John B. Thompson and David Held (eds), Habermas: Critical Debates. London: Macmillan Press.
- Hallinan, Maureen T., 1997. 'The Sociological Study of Social Change', American Sociological Review, 62 (1): 1-11.
- Halton, Eugene, 1992. 'The Reality of Dreaming', Theory, Culture and Society, 9: 119-139.
- Hammond, Michael, 1996. 'Emotions, Habituation, and Macro-Sociology: The case of Inequality', International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy, 16(9/10): 53-73.
- Harding, Sandra, 1987. Feminism and Methodology. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Harding, Sandra, 1996. 'Science is Good to Think With', Social Text 46/47:15-25.

Harker, R. K., 1990. 'Education and Equality'. Pp 193-212 in Paul F. Green (ed) Studies in New Zealand Social Problems. Palmerston North: Dunmore Press.

Harms, William, 1996. 'Culture, Evolution and the Variable Phenotype', Biology and Philosophy, 11: 357-375.

Haug, Frigga, 1995. 'The Quota Demand and Feminist Politics', New Left Review 209: 136-145.

Hawkes Bay Herald-Tribune 'Noisy protests Sour French Celebrations', 15 July, 1995.

Hawkes Bay Herald-Tribune 'Yacht Left Outside Embassy', 31 July, 1995.

Hawkins, M. J., 1995. 'The "struggle for existence" in 19th century social theory: three case studies', History of Human Sciences, 8(3): 47-67.

Held, Carsten, 1994. 'The Meaning of Complementarity', Studies in History and Philosophy of Science, 25(6): 871-893.

Higher Salaries Commission General Review, 1985. Wellington: Government Printer.

Hinde, Robert A., 1987. Individuals, Relationships and Culture. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hindess, Barry, 1988. Choice, Rationality and Social Theory. London: Unwin Hyman.

Hollinger, Robert, 1994. Postmodernism and the Social Sciences: A Thematic Approach. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Holland, Martin, and Jonathan Boston, (eds), 1990. The Fourth Labour Government. Auckland: Oxford University Press.

Holmwood, John, 1995. 'Feminism and Epistemology: What Kind of Successor Science?', Sociology, 29(3): 411-428.

Humphrey, C. R., and F. R. Buttel, 1982. Environment, Energy and Society. Wadsworth.

Irigaray, Luce, 1985. This Sex Which Is Not One. Translated by C. Porter with C. Burke. New York: Cornell University Press.

Jackson, Cecile, 1996. 'Still Stirred by the Promise of Modernity' New Left Review 217: 148-156.

- Johnston, Hank, Enrique Larana and Joseph R. Gusfield, 1994. New Social Movements: From Ideology to Identity. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Johnston, Patricia Maringi G., 1998. 'Maori Women and the Politics of Theorising Difference'. Pp 29-42 in Rosemary Du Plessis & Lynne Alice (eds) Feminist Thought in Aotearoa New Zealand. Auckland: Oxford University Press.
- Jones, Deborah, 1996. '“Directors of Conscience”?: Feminism, Foucault, and Equal Employment Opportunities (EEO) in the Public Service', Social Policy Journal of New Zealand 7: 29-41.
- Jones, James M., 1998. 'Psychological Knowledge and the New American Dilemma of Race', Journal of Social Issues, 54(4): 641-662.
- Kauffman, Stuart A., 1993. The Origins of Order: Self-Organisation and Selection in Evolution. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Keat, Russell and John Urry, 1982 (1975). Social Theory as Science (2nd Edition), London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Kelsey, Jane, 1993. Rolling back the State: Privatisation of Power in Aotearoa/ New Zealand. Wellington: Bridget Williams Books.
- Kelsey, Jane, 1997. The New Zealand Experiment: A World Model For Structural Adjustment? Auckland: Auckland University Press.
- King, Michael, 1989. Moriori: A People Rediscovered. Auckland: Viking Penguin Books.
- King, Peter, 1995. 'The Ecological Significance of Bourdieu's "Field" and "Habitus"', New Zealand Sociology, 10(2): 214-241.
- Kingston, Paul W., 1996. 'The Implications of Intergenerational Class Mobility for Class Theory: A Comment on Western', Social Forces, 75(1): 323-327.
- Kitching, Gavin, 1994. Marxism and Science: Analysis of an Obsession. PA: Pennsylvania State University.
- Knorr Cetina, Karin, 1997. 'Sociality with Objects: Social Relations in Postsocial Knowledge Societies', Theory, Culture and Society, 14(4): 1-30.
- Kitschelt, Herbert, 1991. 'Resource Mobilization Theory: A Critique'. Pp 323-345 in Dieter Rucht (ed), Research on Social Movements: The State of the Art in Western Europe and the USA. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.
- Klandermans, Bert, 1991. 'New Social Movements and Resource Mobilization: The European and the American Approach Revisited'. Pp 17-44 in Dieter Rucht (ed), Research on Social Movements: The State of the Art in Western Europe and the USA. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.

Kriesi, Hanspeter, 1989. 'New Social Movements and the New Class in the Netherlands', American Journal of Sociology, 94(5): 1078-1116.

Kuhn, Thomas S., 1970. The Structure of Scientific Revolutions. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Laclau, Ernesto, and Chantal Mouffe, 1985. Hegemony and Socialist Strategy. London: Verso.

Laing, Tricia, and Jenny Coleman, 1998. 'A Crack in the Imperial Text: Constructions of 'white women' at the intersection as of feminisms and colonialisms'. Pp 4-11 in Du Plessis, Rosemary & Lynne Alice (eds), Feminist Thought in Aotearoa New Zealand. Auckland: Oxford University Press.

Larana, Enrique, Hank Johnston and Joseph R. Gusfield (eds), 1994. New Social Movements: From Ideology to Identity. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Latour, Bruno, 1987. Science in Action. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Latour, Bruno, 1986. 'The Powers of Association',. Pp 264-280 in J. Law (ed) Power, Action and Belief. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Latour, Bruno, 1987. Science in Action. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Latour, Bruno, 1988. 'The Politics of Explanation: an Alternative'. Pp 155-176 in Steve Woolgar (ed), Knowledge and Reflexivity: New Frontiers in the Sociology of Knowledge. London: Sage.

Latour, Bruno, 1997. 'On actor-network theory: a few clarifications' Internet Document <http://www.keele.ac.uk/depts/stt/stt/ant/latour.htm> version 1.1. Actor Network Resource: An Annotated Bibliography. Centre for Social Theory and Technology, Keele University.

Laue, James H., 1978. 'Advocacy and Sociology', in G. H. Weber and G. J. McCall (eds), Social Scientists as Advocates: Views from the Applied Disciplines. Beverly Hills: Sage.

Lee, David J., 1994. 'Class as a Social Fact' Sociology, 28(2): 397-415.

Leeds Revolutionary Feminists, 1981. Love Your Enemy? London: Onlywomen Press.

Lenski, Gerhard and Jean Lenski, 1970. Human Societies: A Macro-level Introduction to Sociology. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Lennox, James G., and Bradley E. Wilson, 1994. 'Natural Selection and the Struggle for Existence', Studies in the History and Philosophy of Science 25(1): 65-80.

Levine, H. B., 1989. 'Constructing Treaty Rhetoric', Sites, 18: 17-22.

- Lewin, Roger, 1994. 'A Simple Matter of Complexity', New Scientist, 5 Feb 1994: 37-40.
- Lewis, Jaqueline & Michael R. Fraser, 1996. 'Patches of Grief and Rage: Visitor Responses to the NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt', Qualitative Sociology 19(4): 433-457.
- Lewis, Ngaire C., 1991. 'Prospects for Equal Employment Opportunity: A Woman's Choice?' Sites, 22: 123-141.
- Lloyd, Mike, 1998. 'The Curious Strength of Hatha Yoga: Embodied Networks and Powers of Association' Paper presented to the 1998 British Sociological Annual Conference.
- Lopreato, Joseph, 1989. 'Sociological Theory: Is the Crisis Necessary?', International Review of Sociology, 1989(3): 161-186.
- Loribond, Sabina, 1994. 'Feminism and the Crisis of Rationality', New Left Review, 207:72-86.
- Luhmann, Niklas, 1997. 'Limits of Steering', Theory, Culture and Society, 14(1): 41-57.
- Lustiger-Thater, Henri, 1992. 'New Social Movement Discourse: The Unsolved Democracy'. Pp 174-199 in William Carroll (ed), Organising Dissent: Contemporary Social movements in Theory and Practice. Canada: Garamand Press.
- McCarthy, John D., and Mark Wolfson, 1996. 'Resource Mobilization by Local Social Movement Organizations: Agency, Strategy and Organization in the Movement Against Drunk Driving', American Sociological Review, 61: 1070-1088.
- McCarthy, John D., and Mayer N. Zald, 1973. The Trend of Social Movements in America: Professionalization and Resource Mobilization. Morristown, NJ: General Learning Process.
- McLennan, Gregor, 1991. 'The End of "Ideology"?'', New Zealand Sociology, 6(1): 64-81.
- McLennan, Gregor, 1995a. 'The craft of large-scale theory: W G Runciman and the neo-traditionalist revival in sociological theory' Australia New Zealand Journal of Sociology, 31(2): 93-106.
- McLennan, Gregor, 1995b. 'Feminism, Epistemology and Postmodernism: Reflections on Current Ambivalence', Sociology, 29(2): 391-409.
- McLennan, Gregor, 1996. 'Post-Marxism and the 'Four Sins' of Modernist Theorising', New Left Review, 218: 53-74.

Maffesoli, Michel, 1993. 'The Imaginary and the Sacred in Durkheim's Sociology', Current Sociology, 41(2): 59-67.

Maines, David R., Jeffrey C. Bridger and Jeffery T. Ulmer, 1996. 'Mythic Facts and Park's Pragmatism: On Predecessor-Selection and Theorising in Human Ecology' The Sociological Quarterly, 37(3): 521-549.

Mandelbaum, David G., 1973. 'The Study of Life History: Gandhi', Current Anthropology, 14(3): 177-206.

Manicas, Peter T., 1987. A History and Philosophy of the Social Sciences. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Manning, Philip, 1994. 'Fuzzy description: discovery and invention in sociology', History of the Human Sciences, 7(1): 117-123.

Markoff, John, 1997. 'Peasants Help Destroy an Old Regime and Defy a New One: Some Lessons from (and for) the Study of Social Movements' American Journal of Sociology, 102(4): 1113-42.

Martin, Bill, 1998. 'The Australian middle class, 1986-1995: stable, declining or restructuring?', Journal of Sociology, 34(2): 135-151.

Martin, John, 1990. 'Remaking the State Services'. Pp in Holland, Martin and Jonathan Boston (eds), 1990. The Fourth Labour Government. Auckland: Oxford University Press.

Massey, L. E., and J. Jesson, 1990. A Story of Cultural Equity: Historical Introduction. Paper presented to the NZARE Conference.

Matahaere-Atariki, Donna, 1998. 'At the Gates of the Knowledge Factory: Voice, authenticity, and the limits of representation'. Pp 68-75 in Rosemary Du Plessis and Lynne Alice (eds), Feminist Thought in Aotearoa New Zealand: Connections and Differences. Auckland: Oxford University Press.

Marx, Karl, (1846). German Ideology, quoted in T. B. Bottomore and Maximilien Rubel (eds) 1956 (1963), Karl Marx: selected Writings in Sociology and Social Philosophy. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.

Mayer, Margit, 1991. 'Social Movement Research and Social Movement Practice: The US Pattern'. Pp 47-120 in Dieter Rucht (ed), Research on Social Movements: The State of the Art in Western Europe and the USA. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.

Massey, Doreen, 1992. 'Politics and Space/Time', New Left Review, 196: 65-84.

Mellor, Mary, 1996. 'Myths and Realities: A Reply to Cecile Jackson', New Left Review, 217:

Melucci, Alberto, 1989. Ed. John Keene and Paul Mier. Nomads of the Present: Social Movements and Individual Needs. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

- Melucci, Alberto, 1996. Challenging Codes. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Miller, Alan S., 1991. Gaia Connections. Savage, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Miller, Don, 1991. 'Louis Dumont'. Pp 60-69 in Beilharz, Peter, (ed), 1991. Social Theory: A Guide. St Leonards, NSW: Allen and Unwin.
- Misztal, Bronislaw, 1988. 'Social Movements of the Core and Periphery', The Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology, 24(1): 65-82.
- Mooers, Colin, and Alan Sears, 1992. 'The "New Social Movements" and the Withering Away of State Theory'. Pp 52-68 in William Carroll (ed), Organising Dissent: Contemporary Social movements in Theory and Practice. Canada: Garamand Press.
- Morgan, Jon, 1996. 'Land Tug-of-war continues'. The Dominion. 16 February, 1996: 7.
- Mouzelis, Nicos, 1993. 'The Poverty of Sociological Theory', Sociology, 27(4): 675-695.
- Mueller, M. R., 1995. 'Significant Symbols, Symbolic Boundaries, and Quilts in the Time of AIDS', Research in the Sociology of Health Care 12:3-23.
- Mulder, Monique Borgerhoff and Sandra D. Mitchell, 1994. 'Rough Water between Genes and Culture: An Anthropological and Philosophical View on Coevolution', Biology and Philosophy, 9(4): 471-487.
- Munk, Gerardo L., 1995. 'Actor Formation, Social Co-ordination, and Political Strategy: Some Conceptual Problems in the Study of Social Movements', Sociology, 29(4): 667-685.
- Murdoch, Dugald, 1987. Neils Bohr's Philosophy of Physics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Murphy, Raymond, 1988. Social Closure: The Theory of Monopolisation and Exclusion. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Murphy, Raymond, 1994. 'The Sociological Construction of Science Without Nature', Sociology, 28(4): 957-974.
- Murphy, Raymond, 1995. 'Sociology as if nature did not matter: an ecological critique', British Journal of Sociology, 46(4): 688-707.
- Nash, Roy, 1987. 'Who Gets a Choice? Some Problems with the Cultural Studies Imported from Birmingham', New Zealand Sociology 2(2): 80-97.

- Nash, Roy, 1990. 'Society and Culture in New Zealand: An Outburst for 1990', New Zealand Sociology, 5(2): 99-124.
- Neidhardt, Friedhelm and Dieter Rucht, 1991. 'The Analysis of Social Movements: The State of the Art and Some Perspectives for Further Research'. Pp 421-464 in Dieter Rucht (ed), Research on Social Movements: The State of the Art in Western Europe and the USA. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.
- Nelkin, Dorothy, 1996. 'The Science Wars: Responses to a Marriage Failed', Social Text, 14(1&2): 93-100.
- New, Caroline, 1995. 'Sociology and the case for realism', The Sociological Review, 43(4): 808-827.
- Nola, Robert, 1994. 'There are More Things in Heaven and Earth, Than are Dreamt of in Your Philosophy: A Dialogue on Realism and Constructivism', Studies in the History and Philosophy of Science 25(5): 689-727.
- Norris, Christopher, 1995. 'Truth, Science, and the Growth of Knowledge', New Left Review, 210: 105-123.
- Novitz, Rosemary, 1989. 'Women: Weaving an Identity'. Pp 53-76 in David Novitz and Bill Willmott (eds) Culture and Identity in New Zealand. Wellington: GP Books.
- Oberschall, Anthony, 1973. Social Conflicts and Social Movements. Engelwood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- O'Brien, Mike, and Chris Wilkes, 1993. The Tragedy of the Market. Palmerston North: Dunmore Press.
- Offe, Claus, 1985. Disorganised Capitalism: Contemporary Transformations of Work and Politics. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Olson, Mancur, 1965. The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Pais, Abraham, 1991. Neils Bohr's Times in Physics, Philosophy and Polity. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Pakulski, Jan, 1991. Social Movements: The Politics of Moral Protest. Melbourne: Longman Cheshire.
- Phillips, Jock, 1987. A Man's Country? The Image of the Pakeha Male. Auckland: Penguin Books.
- Park, Robert E., 1936. 'Human Ecology', American Journal of Sociology, 42: 1-15.

- Parkin, Frank, 1968. Middle Class Radicalism: The Social Bases of the British Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Parkin, Frank, 1979. Marxism and Class Theory: A Bourgeois Critique. London: Tavistock.
- Pels, Dick, 1995. 'Have we never been modern? Towards a demontage of Latour's modern constitution', History of the Human Sciences, 8(3): 129-141.
- Pinch, Trevor, 1990. 'The role of scientific communities in the development of science', Impact of Science on Society, 159: 219-225.
- Pinkola Estes, Clarissa, 1992. Women Who Run With The Wolves. London: Random House.
- Pittendrigh, Colin S., 1985. 'Adaptation, Natural Selection, and Behaviour', in Anne Roes and George Gaylord (eds) Behaviour and Evolution. Newhaven, Con.: Yale University Press.
- Pleasants, Nigel, 1996. 'A Wittgensteinian Social Theory? Introducing Reflexivity to Marxism', Philosophy of the Social Sciences, 26(3): 397-416.
- Plotkin, Henry, 1994. Darwin Machines and the Nature of Knowledge. London: Penguin.
- Rei, Tania, 1998. 'Te Tiriti o Waitangi, Maori Women and the State' Pp 198-207 in Rosemary Du Plessis & Lynne Alice (eds) Feminist Thought in Aotearoa New Zealand. Auckland: Oxford University Press.
- The Report of the Committee of Inquiry into Allegations Concerning the Treatment of Cervical Cancer at National Women's Hospital and Into Other Related Matters, 1988. Auckland: Government Printing.
- Reports of the State Services Commission, 1987 & 1990. Wellington : Government Printer.
- Richards, Trevor, 1975. 'Racism and Sport'. Pp 209-212 in Stephen Levine (ed) New Zealand Politics: A Reader. Melbourne: Cheshire Publishing.
- Ricketts, Wendell, 1985. 'Biological Research on Homosexuality: Ansell's Cow or Occam's Razor?'. Pp 65-93 in John P. De Cecco (ed), Gay Personality and Sexual Labelling. New York: Harrington Press.
- Roth, Paul A., 1994. 'What does the sociology of scientific knowledge explain?' or when the epistemological chickens come home to roost', History of Human Sciences, 7(1): 95-10.
- Rawls, Anne Warfield, 1996. 'Durkheim's Epistemology: The Neglected Argument' American Journal of Sociology, 102 (2): 430-482.

- Rudd, C., and Brian Roper, 1997 (eds). The Political Economy of New Zealand. Auckland: Oxford University Press.
- Rudig, Wolfgang, James Mitchell, Jenny Chapman and Philip D. Lowe, 1991. 'Social Movements and the Social Sciences in Britain'. Pp 121-148 in Dieter Rucht (ed), Research on Social Movements: The State of the Art in Western Europe and the USA. Boulder, Colorado: Westernview Press.
- Runciman, William G., 1989. Confessions of a Reluctant Theorist. Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Runciman, W. G., 1998. 'The selectionist paradigm and its implications for sociology', Sociology, 32(1): 163-188.
- Salleh, Ariel, 1996. 'An Ecofeminist Bio-ethic and What Post-Humanism Really Means' New Left Review, 217:
- Salmond, Anne, 1991. Two Worlds: First Meetings Between Maori and Europeans 1642-1772. New Zealand: Viking.
- Sanderson, Stephen K., 1990. Social Evolutionism: A Critical History. Cambridge, Mas: Basil Blackwell Ltd.
- Sanderson, Stephen K., 1994. 'Evolutionary Materialism: A Theoretical Strategy for the Study of Social Evolution'. Sociological Perspectives, 37(1): 47-73.
- Savage, M., 1994. 'Class Analysis and its Futures', The Sociological Review, 42(3): 531-584.
- Sayer, Andrew, 1997. 'Critical Realism and the Limits to Critical Social Science', Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour, 27(4): 473-488.
- Schervish, Paul G., Raymond J. Halnon and Karen Bettez Halnon, 1996. 'Culture and Emotion in Christmas: The Elementary Forms of the Spiritual Life', International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy 16(9/10): 144-170.
- Scott, Alan, 1990. Ideology and the New Social Movements. London: Unwin Hyman.
- Sethi, Harsh, 1988. 'Action Groups in the New Politics'. Pp 230-255 in Donna Wignaraja (ed), New Social Movements in the South: Empowering People. London: Zed Books.
- Sharp, Andrew, 1994. 'Pride, Resentment and Change in the State and the Economy'. Pp 225-249 in Andrew Sharp (ed), Leap in the Dark. Auckland: Auckland University Press.
- Shilling, Chris, 1997. 'The Undersocialised Conception of the Embodied Agent in Modern Sociology', Sociology, 31(4): 737-754.

- Shrum, Wesley, 1995. 'Philosophy, Rhetoric, and the End of Knowledge', Philosophy of the Social Sciences 25(4): 485-7.
- Shoemaker, Pamela J., 1996. 'Hardwired for News: Using Biological and Cultural Evolution to Explain the Surveillance Function', Journal of Communication, 46(3): 32-47.
- Skyenner, Robin and John Cleese, 1993 [1994]. Life and How to Survive It. London: Methuen.
- Smelser, Neil J., 1962. Theory of Collective Behavior. New York: Free Press.
- Smith, Joel, 1995. 'Emancipating Sociology: Postmodernism and Mainstream Sociological Practice', Social Forces 74(1): 53-79.
- Smith, Paul F., and Cynthia L. Darlington, 1996. 'Epistemological realism in psychology: Kant or won't?', New Zealand Journal of Psychology, 25(1): 13-20.
- Snow, David A., and Robert D. Benford, 1988. 'Ideology, Frame Resonance, and Participant Mobilization', International Social Movement Research, 1: 197-217.
- Snow, Davis A., and Robert D. Benford, 1992. 'Master Frames and Cycles of Protest'. Pp 133-155 in Aldon D. Morris & Carol McClurg Mueller (eds) Frontiers in Social Movement Theory. NewHaven and London: Yale University Press.
- Snow, David A., E. Burke Rochford Jr., Steven K. Worden, and Robert D. Benford, 1986. 'Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization, and Movement Participation', American Sociological Review, 51(4): 464-489.
- Steinmetz, George, 1994. 'Regulation Theory, PostMarxism and the New Social Movements', Comparative Studies in Society and History, 36(1): 176-221.
- Sokal, Alan D., 1996. 'Transgressing the Boundaries: Toward a Transformative Hermeneutics of Quantum Gravity', Social Text, 46/47: 217-252.
- Spaargaren, G., 1987. 'Environment and Society: Environmental Sociology in the Netherlands', The Netherlands Journal of Sociology, 23(1): 54-72.
- Spector, M., and J. Kituse, 1977. Constructing Social Problems. New York: Aldine De Gruyter.
- Spoonley, Paul, 1988. Racism and Ethnicity. Auckland: Oxford University Press.
- Stanley, Liz, and Sue Wise, 1990. 'Method, methodology and epistemology in feminist research processes'. Pp 20-60 in Liz Stanley (ed) Feminist Praxis. London: Routledge.
- Stone, Abraham D., 1994. 'Does the Bohm Theory Solve the Measurement Problem?', Philosophy of Science, 61: 250-266.

- Strydom, Piet, 1992. 'The Ontogenic Fallacy: The Immanent Critique of Habermas' Developmental Logical Theory of Evolution', Culture, Theory and Society, 9: 65-93.
- Sullivan, Anne, 1995. 'The Practice of Tribalism in Postcolonial New Zealand', Cultural Studies, 9(1): 43-60.
- Sutton, D. G., 1985. 'The Whence of the Moriori', The New Zealand Journal of History, 19(1): 3-13.
- Svallors, Stefan, 1995. 'The End of Class Politics? Structural Cleavages and Attitudes to Swedish Welfare Policies', Acta Sociologica, 38: 53-74.
- Szabo, Michael, 1991. Making Waves. Auckland: Reed Books.
- Tarrow, Sidney, 1989. Democracy and Disorder. Protest and Politics in Italy, 1965-1975. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Tarrow, Sidney, 1991. 'Comparing Social Movement Participation in Western Europe and the United States: Problems, Uses, and a proposal for Synthesis'. Pp 392-420 in Dieter Rucht (ed), Research on Social Movements: The State of the Art in Western Europe and the USA. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.
- Tarrow, Sidney, 1998. Power in Movement (2nd Ed). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Taylor, C. N., C. H. Bryan and C. G. Goodrich, 1990. Social Assessment: Theory, Process and Techniques. Studies for Resource Management No 7, Centre for Resource Management, Lincoln University.
- Teggart, Fredrick, 1925. Theory of History. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Tenhouten, Warren D., 1996. 'Introduction: Sociology of Emotions', International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy 16(9/10): 1-20.
- Thomas, William I., 1951. Social Behaviour and Personality: Contributions of W I Thomas to Theory and Social Research. Edited by Edmund H. Volhart. Social Science Research Council.
- Thorns, David C., 1995. 'Directions for New Zealand Sociology', New Zealand Sociology, 10(1): 66-75.
- Tilly, Charles, 1978. From Mobilization to Revolution. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Touraine, Alaine, 1969 [1971]. The Post-Industrial Society. New York: Random House.
- Touraine, Alaine, 1985. 'An Introduction to the Study of Social Movements', Social Research, 52: 747-87.

Touraine, Alain, 1992. 'Beyond Social Movements?', Theory, Culture and Society, 9(1): 125-145.

Tremaine, Marianne, 1991. 'Equal Employment Opportunity and State Sector Reform'. Pp 343-366 in Jonathan Boston, John Martin, June Pallot, and Pat Walsh (eds), Reshaping the State. Auckland: Oxford University Press.

Trotter, Chris, 1995. 'Who's Right? If So, What's Left?' Metro, March 1995: 100-103.

Tucker, Kenneth H., 1991. 'How New Are The New Social Movements?', Theory, Culture and Society, 8(2): 75-98.

Turner, Stephen, 1994. 'Relativism hot and cold', History of the Human Sciences, 7(1): 109-115.

Udry, J. Richard, 1995. 'Sociology and Biology: What Biology Do Sociologists Need to Know?' Social Forces, 73(4): 1267-1278.

Velody, Irving, 1994. 'Constructing the Social', History of the Human Sciences, 7(1): 81-85.

Wainwright, Hilary, 1994. Arguments for a New Left: Answering the Free Market Right. Oxford: Blackwell.

Waldegrave, Charles, Paul Frater, & Bob Stephens, 1997. 'An Overview of Research on Poverty in New Zealand', New Zealand Sociology, 12(2): 213-259.

Walker, Ranganui, 1992. 'The Treaty of Waitangi and the fishing industry'. Pp 98-112 in John Deeks and Nick Perry (eds) Controlling Interests. Auckland: Auckland University Press.

Walker, Viv, 1991. 'A Working-Class Women Meets Feminism'. Pp 101-110 in Maud Cahill and Christine Dann (eds) Changing Our Lives: Women Working in the Women's Liberation Movement 1970-90. Wellington: Bridget Williams Books Ltd.

Walsh, Pat, 1991. 'Industrial Relations and Personnel Policies under the State Sector Act'. Pp 114-139 in Jonathan Boston, John Martin, June Pallot, and Pat Walsh (eds), Reshaping the State. Auckland: Oxford University Press.

Ward, Steven C., 1994. 'In the shadow of the deconstructed metanarratives: Baudrillard, Latour and the end of realist epistemology', History of the Human Sciences, 7(4): 73-94.

Weber, Bruce H., & David J. Depew, 1996. 'Natural Selection & Self Organisation: Dynamic Models as Clues to a New Evolutionary Synthesis', Biology & Philosophy, 11: 33-65.

- Weber, Max, 1916[1948]. Ed. H. H. Gerth & C. Wright Mills. 'India: The Brahman and the Castes'. Pp 396-415 in From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology. London: Routledge & Began Paul.
- Weber, Max; ed H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, 1948. From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Webster, Steven, 1989. 'Maori Studies and the Expert Definition of Maori Culture: A Critical History' Sites, 18: 35-60.
- Weininger, S. J., 1984, 'The molecular structure conundrum: can classical chemistry be reduced to quantum chemistry', Journal of Chemical Education, 61(11): 939-944.
- Wenger, Morton G., 1994. 'Idealism Redux: The Class-Historical Truth of Post Modernism', Critical Sociology, 20(1): 51-78.
- Wesson, Robert, 1991. Beyond Natural Selection. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Western, Mark, 1994a. 'Class Structure and Intergenerational Class Mobility: A Comparative Analysis of Nation and Gender', Social Forces, 73(1): 101-34.
- Western, Mark, 1994b. 'Intergenerational Class Mobility Among Women and Men', Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology, 30(3): 303-321.
- Whitcombe, J., 1990. The Accountability Relationship between Chief Executive and Minister under the State Sector Act, MPP Thesis, Victoria University of Wellington.
- White, Michael C., Daniel B. Marin, Deborah V. Brazeal, & William H. Friedman, 1997. 'The Evolution of Organisations: Suggestions from Complexity Theory about the Interplay Between 'Natural Selection' and Adaptation', Human Relations, 50(11): 1383-1401.
- Whitehead, Philip., 1993. The Natural History of Evolution. London: Doubleday.
- Whitmeyer, Joseph M., 1998. 'On the Relationship Between Memes and Genes: A Critique of Dennett', Biology and Philosophy, 13: 187-204.
- Williams, Rhys H., 1995. 'Constructing the Public Good: Social Movements and Cultural Resources', Social Problems, 42(1): 124-144.
- Wilkes, C., P. Davis, D. Tait & P. Chrisp, 1985. The New Zealand Class Structure. Working Paper, Department of Sociology, Massey University.
- Willmott, Bill, 1989. 'Introduction: Culture and National Identity', Culture and Identity in New Zealand. Wellington: GP Books.
- Willmott, Robert, 1996. 'Resisting sex/gender conflation: a rejoinder to John Hood-Williams', The Sociological Review 44(4): 728-745.

Wilson, Edward O., 1978. On Human Nature. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Wilson, Edward O., 1989. 'The Biological Basis of Culture', International Review of Sociology, 1989(3): 35-60.

Wilson, Margaret, 1998. 'Paid Work, Policy, and the Concept of Equality'. Pp 223-228 in Rosemary Du Plessis & Lynne Alice (eds) Feminist Thought in Aotearoa New Zealand. Auckland: Oxford University Press.

Witz, A., 1992. Professions and Patriarchy. London: Routledge.

Woolgar, Steve, 1988. 'Reflexivity is the Ethnographer of the Text'. Pp 14-36 in Steve Woolgar (ed), Knowledge and Reflexivity: New Frontiers in the Sociology of Knowledge. London: Sage.

Woolgar, Steve, and Malcolm Ashmore, 1988. 'The Next Step: an Introduction to the Reflexive Project'. Pp 1-13 in Steve Woolgar (ed), Knowledge and Reflexivity: New Frontiers in the Sociology of Knowledge. London: Sage.

Wouters, Arno, 1993. 'Marx's Embryology of Society', Philosophy of the Social Sciences, 23(2): 149-79.

Wright, E. O., & L. Perrone, 1977. 'Marxist Categories and Income Inequality', American Sociological Review, 42:

Wright, E. O., 1978. Class, Crisis and the State. London: New Left Books.

Wright, E. O., 1985. Classes. London: New Left Books.

Zelley, E. Walton Jr, 1997. 'Is the "Underclass" Really a Class?', Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare, : 75-85.

## Errata

- Table of Contents, subheading 'Public Sector Reform': change page 224 to page 232.
- p.4, 4th sentence after subheading: change 'New Zealanders' to 'New Zealand'. Delete comma at the end of the sentence.
- p.6, line 2: delete 'of'
- p.8, line 5: insert 'the' before 'New Zealand.Past'
- p.11, direct quote: change '22' to '23'
- p.12, paragraph 2, line 3: change 'opponents' to 'opponent's'
- p.13, direct quote: insert '...' at the end of the quote
- p.15, paragraph 2, line 2: change 'movement' to 'movements'
- p.18, line 15, change 'was' to 'were'
- p. 21, line 1: change 'between' to 'among'
- p.24, direct quote: change 'legacy' to 'legacies'
- p.25, line 10: change the first 'the' to 'a', and 'objectives' to 'objective'
- p.26, paragraph 2: change 1998 date to 1988
- p.29, line 14: insert 'had' before 'developed'
- p.30, line 5: insert comma before 'which asks'
- p.30, line 10: change 'was' to 'were'
- p.31, footnote: change 'sport' to 'sporting'
- p.32, line 4: change 'movements' to 'movement'
- p.34, line 8: insert comma before 'and the'
- p.34, line 9: change 'that is' to 'that are'
- p.38, middle: change 'affects' to 'effects'
- p.40, 2nd sentence: delete 'lack of'
- p.41, 4th line from bottom: change 'characteristics' to 'characteristics'
- p.43, line 1: insert 'with' between 'associated' and 'rugby'
- p.67, line 3: delete second 'all' in sentence.
- p.67, 2nd line from bottom: insert comma after (Buttel, 1986)
- p.78, line 1: change 'includes' to 'include'
- p.78, line 13: change 'assigning' to 'assign'
- p.80, line 7: change 'results' to 'result'
- p.80, line 13: change 'different to' to 'different from'
- p.100, line 8: change 'bourgeois' to 'bourgeois'
- p.116, line 8: insert 'in' before 'its'
- p.141, line 4: change 'yet' to 'let'
- p.144, direct quote: change '1985' to '1958'
- p.160, line 4: change 'resulted' to 'result'
- p.160, paragraph 2, line 4: change 'is the' to 'in the'
- p.166, line 15: change 'women' to 'woman'
- p.177, second line after subheading: change 'treat' to 'treated'
- p.215, paragraph 2, line 2: change 'of' to 'that'
- p.224, last paragraph, line 3: change '6.3' to '5.3'
- p.242, line 6: insert 'a' between 'for' and 'Principal'
- p.244, paragraph 2, line 7: change 'above' to 'below'
- p.266, line 8: insert 'as' between 'act' and 'a'
- p.283, second line above subheading: insert 'is' between 'that' and 'meaningful'
- p.295, line 6: delete second 'survey' of the sentence
- p.304, line 15, insert 'the' before 'accepted'
- p.309, third line from the bottom: change 'those that' to 'those who'
- p.311, line 4: change 'unarticulated' to 'unarticulated'
- p.319, line 3: change 'this data' to 'these data'
- p.325, line 6: change 'phenomenon' to 'phenomena'
- p.325, line 7: change 'there is' to 'there are'
- p.335, 2nd to last line: change 'movements' to 'movement's'
- p.347, last sentence of first paragraph: change the last clause of the sentence so that it is a separate sentence on its own.
- p.347, 2nd to last line: delete the comma after 'change'
- p.365, Pittendrigh reference: change '1985' to '1958'
- passim: delete quotation marks around indented quotes