ANALYSING ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE.

A critical ethnography of public relations and personnel
specialists in a state bureaucracy.

IVAN LEONARD FILBY

Doctor of Philosophy

THE UNIVERSITY OF ASTON IN BIRMINGHAM.

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THESIS SUMMARY.

Following an introductory chapter, I examine (i) typologies
which have differentiated the literature on organisational
culture and symbolism (Chapter 2), (ii) the contribution of
organisation theory to organisation culture (Chapter 3), and
(iii) recent literature on organisational culture and
symbolism (Chapter 4). Within these chapters, I adopt
Habermas' (1972) notion of knowledge-constitutive interests,
assessing the contributions to understanding organisational
culture made by literature guided by technical, practical and
emancipatory cognitive interests. In doing so, I suggest
that more critical studies on organisational culture and
symbolism have been comparatively neglected.

Lamenting this neglect, I suggest that Giddens' theory of
structuration can be employed to advance the development of a
critical, emancipatory conceptualisation of organisational
culture. In particular, I argue that this Giddensian
analysis, by penetrating the existential, political and
material processes of cultural reproduction (Chapter 5), is
able to disclose some of the more contradictory features of
organisation culture.

The remainder of the thesis comprises of a critical
ethnography of the work cultures of public relations and
personnel specialists located in a state bureaucracy. I
begin the participant observation with a discussion of my
research methods (Chapter 6) and an overview of the
departments studied (Chapter 7). I then examine (i) the work
cultures of the specialists (Chapter 8), (ii) the
specialists' management of the relationships with the host
bureaucracy (Chapter 9), and, (iii) opportunities the
specialists had for developing an emancipatory praxis
(Chapter 10). Finally, in a concluding section, I offer some
critical reflections on the contributions of the thesis and
suggest areas for future research.

KEY WORDS

Organisation, Culture, Symbolism, Giddens, Ethnography

DEDICATION.

To Leonard, Mary and Alan Filby.

While I acknowledge my debt to my colleagues and friends, I declare that this thesis is entirely my own work and has not been submitted as an exercise for a degree at any other university.

Ivan L. Filby
Dublin, September, 1989.

George Paton
Internal Supervisor.

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INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER ONE: PERSPECTIVES AND PARAMETERS.

1.1. Introduction

It takes little more than a casual browse through the
organisation theory and management science literature of the
last ten years or so to ascertain that the study of
organisational culture has become a key focus of research.
Determining quite what organisational culture is and how it
should be studied takes somewhat longer, and to really get to
grips with the subject, I suspect, might well take a
lifetime's work. This thesis is the genesis of such a
project. It is more a signpost pointing the way for future
research than a destination in itself. It is a beginning
rather than an end.

Some would argue that this is a trek not worth taking.
During the last three years I have received a number of
unsolicited comments to the effect that the study of
organisational culture is not only peripheral to the central
issues of management but also is merely a passing 'fad'
within the management sciences. As such, it was not seen to
warrant the time and effort I intended to invest in its
research. While I have found little written work which
shares such views, it seems that they may be privately held
by a good number of researchers, especially those who take
for granted the importance of their own quantitative or
prescriptive orientations to organisation studies. In
response to these comments, this chapter seeks to defend
organisational culture as a valid and important focus for

research within the management sciences. In addition, it serves as an introduction to the project as a whole. It is organised into three unequal parts. The first examines the focus, history and growth of research into organisational culture and shows that it is not merely a passing 'fad' within the management sciences. The following section explores the diversity within the literature and comments on the comparative neglect of critical, emancipatory research into organisational culture. This leads into a discussion of value-freedom within the research process, together with an elaboration of the underlying values that have motivated this work. The final part outlines the organisation of the text in light of the above.

1.2. Culture as a Contribution to Organisation Studies.

While there is no particular consensus on what organisational culture is or on how it should be studied (Smircich, 1983a; Morgan et al, 1983; Allaire and Firsirotu, 1984; Filby and McHugh, 1989), most theorists tend to agree that, in some way or other, it involves the study of ideologies and myths; ceremonies and rituals; jokes and humour; sagas and stories (Pettigrew, 1979). Quite how these are theorised depends upon a number of features, but primarily upon the interests which underlie and motivate the research. For example, research motivated by a technocratic interest in prediction and control has tended to be less theoretically rigorous than more hermeneutic or critical work. Westley and Jeager (1985:15) agree, noting that the more punctilious application of the term 'organisational culture' frequently increases

their interpretative powers but at the expense of practicality. This is because an understanding of organisational culture which reveals it to be complex and contradictory suggests that it may not be as easily managed or changed as some of the 'pop culture magicians' (Ott, 1984) have tended to suggest. In consequence, writers concerned with offering prescriptions for the management and change of organisational culture have tended to concentrate on surface features to the neglect of 'deeper', more contradictory features of organisational life (Dandridge et al, 1984).

Despite these theoretical differences, much of the organisational culture literature contributes to organisation analysis by recalling, to a greater or lesser degree, that organisations are, at least in part, socially produced and not just 'given' or determined by impersonal, unchangeable forces (cf., Silverman, 1970). Accordingly, the relationship between structure and action is not theorised as one-dimensional (structure defining action) but as two-dimensional where structure guides action and action reproduces structure (see Chapter 5 for an elaboration of these themes). Sadly, much of the theoretical insight that the concept potentially offers has, as yet, not been exploited. For example, in focusing on organisational culture as a shared system of values, symbols and beliefs (Louis, 1981), much of the literature has failed to expose the relations of domination and oppression through which symbol-systems are socially negotiated and defined. This theoretical incapacity to recognise that organisational

culture is constituted and reproduced in and through asymmetrical relationships of power has effectively emasculated much of its analytical potency. Nevertheless, organisational culture research still potentially provides a valuable and penetrating means of understanding more of the richness and complexity of organisational life. The denial or marginalisation of its significance can only impoverish organisation studies.

Studies which attend to the culture of organisations are, of course, not new. In fact, they stretch right back to the founding fathers of the discipline (e.g, Barnard, 1938; Roethlisberger and Dickson, 1939). Even though the notion of organisational culture appeared only in embryonic form in much of this early work, it still provides a valuable reminder of a long-standing awareness of its relevance for understanding organisations. Having said that, foundational work guided by more emancipatory intents has provided insight that is still relevant today. Indeed, some of it points out a path for future researchers to follow. Nichols and Benyon (1976), Willis (1977) and Burawoy (1979), for example, have provided particularly penetrating analyses of the relationship between organisational culture and structure (see Chapter 3). The concern with organisational culture, therefore, cannot be dismissed as merely another fad in management theory.

What is lamentable, however, is that much of this rich foundational material (illustrated in Chapter 3) has been all but ignored in the present quest to understand organisational

culture. Had time been spent analysing the contribution that these seminal studies in organisation theory have made to the understanding of organisational culture, it would have become apparent that many of the contemporary ideas are not new, but merely a return to themes that have always had a presence within organisation studies (see Chapter 3 and 4). For example, much of the current work which examines the development of 'strong' or 'excellent' cultures (e.g., Deal and Kennedy, 1982; Peters and Waterman, 1982; White, 1984) is reminiscent of Barnard's concern to show how values and beliefs might be inculcated within organisation cultures through the executive's skilful mobilisation of incentives. An important concern of this thesis, therefore, is the appreciation of the contributions of these earlier works to the current understandings of organisational culture.

1.3. Accounting for the Interest in Culture.

Although organisational culture has had a long history within organisation studies, it is now becoming a more central and respectable focus of study. Without doubt, one of the most marked features of organisation studies during the last decade or so has been the re-emergence of this interest in organisational culture. In fact, the present growth has been remarkable (Broms and Gahmberg 1983). Most of the leading organisation studies journals have dedicated special issues to the topic or have published an array of relevant articles (see, for example: Administrative Science Quarterly, 1983; Organisation Dynamics, 1983; Journal of Management, 1985; Organisation Studies, 1986; International Studies in

Management and Organisation, 1987). In addition to these, The Standing Conference on Organisational Symbolism (SCOS) have founded 'Dragon' as a journal to focus specifically on the issues of organisational culture and symbolism. Moreover, the study of organisational culture has been legitimised to the extent that it is now widely accepted as an essential part of organisational analysis. Indeed, as Salaman noted in the early stages of the debate (1979:45): 'clearly no worthwhile analysis of organisational experience would ignore this cultural dimension'. It is therefore, without doubt, a legitimate and important focus of study within the management sciences.

This begs the question of why this interest has only recently come to be seen as a core rather than a peripheral concept within organisational analysis. The following discussion offers some explanation of this phenomenon. Inevitably it is not a full account, for the motives of researchers and practitioners are complex and cannot easily be encased within neat sociological theorisation without allowing some degree of reductionism. Nevertheless, it seeks to identify some of the main factors involved in this blossoming of interest and, in doing so, offers some explanation of why culture has been pursued along some lines rather than others.

Here the work of Alvesson (1986) proves to be useful by identifying the two general, albeit ideal-typical, explanations offered to account for the growth and acceptance of a particular theory. The first, which Alvesson labels 'internal-scientific theories,' claim that knowledge develops

autonomously through its own inner logic; the second, 'sociological' theories, maintain that scientific views are conditioned through the political, economic and social processes of their development. On their own, as Alvesson points out, these ideal-types provide inadequate explanations for the growth in interest, research and publications. The first grouping of explanations have tended to over-emphasize the autonomy of academics to the neglect of the constraining influence of dominant meta-theoretical assumptions and research ideologies which are embodied and reproduced in the key traditions of the social sciences, most notably in functionalism and rationalism (Kuhn, 1970; Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Reed, 1985). Furthermore, research cannot be understood fully outside the recognition of the historical context of its production. For example, it would be simplistic to explain current trends within management studies, such as the concern with flexibility and culture, by regarding it as an autonomous development. In addition, it would be necessary to consider the ability and desire of industry to support and fund research, the ideological concern of the Thatcher Government with 'value for money' and the 'most efficient use of assets', the apparent desire within the social science funding bodies to show the utility of social science research against strong competition from the research bodies with other interests (e.g., engineering and the sciences).

Conversely, to claim that knowledge is exclusively socially determined, as the second set of ideal-typical theories tend

to do, overstates the hold that dominant paradigms have over the development of theory (Reed, 1985) and reduces researchers to the status of 'cultural dopes' lacking the ability to choose and to act. Such a position would be difficult to hold within the management sciences. For, despite predominant trends, the management science research community, unlike other disciplines such as physics, tends to be fragmented and disconnected (Whitley, 1984) with little coordination of research strategies.

Between these two ideal-typical views lie a number of theories which broadly argue that the growth of theory is due both to the degree of scientific autonomy as well as being shaped by the material, political, social and ideological dimensions of research production. Alvesson (1986:94) succinctly summarises these arguments and writes:

> For a theory to expand rapidly during a certain period, it must be sharper, more elegant or have a greater explanation potential than earlier theories, or it must strongly appeal to the 'Zeitgeist' or to some of the predominant coalitions in society. To some degree those coalitions might also exist in the academic world. The social factors that stimulate or obstructs the discovery, acceptance and expansion of a particular theory are partly connected to society and culture in its entirety, but the subcultures in the academic world, with its fractional interest and more or less "openness" to society in general (or various elites in it), also have some independence in relationship to society and cultural change in the overall level.

Turning specifically to organisational culture and symbolism, there are four predominant factors that have facilitated this growth in interest and legitimacy (Filby, 1989a). Firstly,

the increasing problems of competition and productivity for
much of the Western industrial world has created a
receptiveness to new ideas and potentially new solutions to
the above problems. The increasingly international nature of
business has led the West to take note of the economic
success of Japanese companies, in particular, and to question
how far this is due to their distinct cultural forms. This
concern with Japanese management techniques is widely
considered to be an important contributory factor in the
growth of this concern with culture (Pascale and Athos, 1981;
Hill, 1981; Peters and Waterman, 1982). Ouchi (1981:3), for
example, quotes one vice-president from 'one of the most
respected and largest firms in the United States' as saying
'the key issue' facing American business over the 1980s 'will
not be technology or investments, nor regulation or
inflation. The key issue will be the way in which we respond
to one fact - the Japanese know how to manage better than we
do.' The close linkages between American business
organisations and universities has provided the necessary
context for managerial oriented research into the nature of
organisational culture to take place.

Next, the widespread disillusionment with quantitative
management science techniques (e.g. the Aston Studies) has
led to a shift away from precise measurement to more
qualitative analysis in an attempt to rebuild the credibility
of the practical value of management research (Hofstede,
1986; Knights and Willmott, 1987). This disillusionment has
been partly due to the fact that the increasing rate of

change of modern business organisations is difficult to accommodate in research which focuses on structure. It is hoped (by some academics and practitioners alike) that research which focuses on organisation processes rather than on structure, such as studies of organisation culture, will provide more practical insights for the management of organisations in a changing environment.

Thirdly, and relatedly, research into culture has captured the interest of both academic and pragmatic researchers, the former being partly fuelled by the publicity and public interest in culture generated by the latter. This is rather an unusual occurence within modern management theory, for as Alvesson (1986) notes, management theory is often caught in a contradictory position between the requirements of the academic community for scientific research on the one hand, and the demands from business organisations for practical management tools on the other. However, the organisational culture idea, being difficult to precisely define, forms a caveat managing to satisfy both camps, and thus adding to its popularity. (1)

Finally, it is worth noting that the fragmented nature of the academic community within the social sciences has provided a responsive environment for the growth of interest in, and the growth in diversity of, the organisational culture literature. Whitley (1984), for example, argues that the management research community is something of a 'fragmented adhocracy' characterised by a low degree of coordination between researchers and research sites together with a high

degree of task uncertainty. By this he means that management researchers do not need to convince any single dominant establishment of the importance of their research contribution. Rather, the fragmented state of the research community enables them to address a plurality of audiences without having to coordinate problems and priorities across them. Thus, in comparison to the laboratory sciences, management research has generally not produced 'visible, reproducible results and reliable outcomes which are stable under different conditions of their production' (1984:341). This fragmentation of the research community has enabled researchers of organisational culture to 'focus on distinct topics or issues which they can tackle as individuals or as small, locally based, groups without needing to incorporate the work of others' (ibid:341). The outcome of this is that the literature, like the community in which it is produced, is fragmented and disconnected. In short, the term has come to be a conceptual umbrella covering a vast range of concepts and perspectives (Filby and Willmott, 1988) with little agreement on what organisational culture 'is' and/or how it should be studied.

1.4. A Taxonomy of Culture Literature.

Attempts to make sense of this diversity of approaches to the study of organisation culture has prompted the construction of a number of typologies (see Chapter 2, below). Some theorists argue that the lack of consensus within the organisational culture literature merely reflects a similar state of affairs within the different anthropological schools

from which the term culture has been 'borrowed' (Smircich, 1983a; Allaire and Firsirotu, 1984). Others identify the cause of this fragmentation to be the different meta-theoretical assumptions which underlie the literature (Louis, 1981; Morgan et al, 1983), while a third set classify the literature according to the different cognitive-interests (Habermas, 1972) that have motivated the research (Westley and Jaeger, 1985; Stablein and Nord, 1985; Deetz, 1985b; Knights and Willmott, 1987). While each of these frameworks has something to offer, the attraction of the latter is that, in addition to differentiating approaches within the literature, it contributes to the development of a more critical, emancipatory study of culture. In brief (to be developed in the following chapter), Habermas argues that knowledge does not exist as some abstract entity but as the product of intentional human activity. Knowledge is therefore always sought with a purpose, goal or, as he terms it, 'cognitive-interest' in mind. He identifies three cognitive-interests and associated forms of knowledge: the technical, the practical and the emancipatory. With reference to organisational culture, knowledge motivated by a technical interest is concerned with exploring the relationship between culture and the regulation and efficiency of the organisation; knowledge motivated by the practical interest examines culture from the perspective of securing and expanding mutual understanding between organisational actors, while knowledge motivated by the emancipatory interest examines culture and symbolism with the intent to reveal and transcend socially unnecessary forms of

organisational restraint and control that frustrate the ontological potential of human beings for free, interdependent relationships. (2)

In the management sciences, knowledge motivated by technical and practical interests has tended to predominate. In the absence of a critical, emancipatory dimension that attends to the relations of domination and oppression through which organisations are constructed, and reproduced, much of this literature has had the effect of sustaining, reifying and legitimising existing structures of power and domination, and thus serving as 'ideologies of the status quo' (Knights and Willmott, 1987).

A number of recent publications have focused on more critical aspects of organisational culture (c.f., Linstead, 1985b; Rosen, 1985a; Stablein and Nord, 1985; Deetz, 1985b; Filby and Willmott, 1986; Knights and Willmott, 1987). Nonetheless, there is still, by and large, a comparative neglect of such perspectives within the literature (Stablein and Nord, 1985). Stablein and Nord (ibid: 20) have argued that this neglect is somewhat difficult to understand since organisational culture and symbolism 'would seem to be conducive to the development of research in the emancipatory interest.' Attention to organisation culture studies on values, beliefs and discourse etc., they suggest, allows for an examination of (and perhaps a means of transcending) the asymmetrical relationships of power through which symbol-systems are constructed and reconstituted.

This up-beat message needs to be tempered by the recognition
that the generation of emancipatory knowledge tends to be
demanding and disturbing. It is perhaps especially so for
Westerners who, since the Enlightenment, have internalised
rationalistic worldviews which have had the effect of
filtering out emotional and spiritual experiences as valid
sources of knowledge (Wimber, 1985; Burnett, 1988).
Subsequently, having few supportive traditions of critical,
emancipatory thought such as Zen Buddhism or Taoism might
offer to those in the East, the type of deep, reflective,
meditative thinking that might lead to enlightenment and
emancipation often comes as something of a shock. As Jung
(1967; quoted in Powell, 1978:8) insightfully writes,

> Wherever there is a reaching down into innermost
> experience, into the nucleus of personality, most
> people are overcome by fright and many run away...
> The risk of inner experience, the adventure of the
> spirit, is in any case, alien to most human beings. .

Such self-reflection is pre-requisite for critical social
science. A focus of critical social science is upon modes of
domination and alienation. Moreover, the uncovering of modes
of domination and subordination must be accompanied by a
desire for change (if the research is to be critical in any
true sense), and this requires reflexivity and action both at
the individual and collective level. It is not sufficient to
read a volume such as 'Learning to Labour' (Willis, 1977) and
reflect upon how working class school kids unintentionally
sustain the conditions of their own subordination and
oppression. One must take the analysis further to reflect

upon how we, as actors in our own organisations, contribute (often unwittingly) to our own exploitation. This requires an uncomfortable level of self-reflection and willingness to change (Friere, 1972; Pirsig, 1976). Moreover, should we, as researchers or practitioners, be able to reflect deeply upon our own experience of social reality we must then face the challenge of turning our newly sensitised consciousness into a liberating praxis. But, in the face of a massively reified status quo, the fear of freedom, of autonomy and of responsibility can often be both overwhelming and paralysing.

The production of emancipatory knowledge requires radically different skills, especially in the areas of self-reflection, than those needed to pursue technical and practical knowledge. However, as Stablein and Nord (1985:24) do acknowledge,

> Neither scientific institutions devoted to the study of organisations nor academic institutions to which most students of organisation are closely linked have the means to evaluate or reward such reflection and commitment to change. Moreover, the skills and talents needed are not well known and certainly are not included in the training of people in organisational science. In fact, those with activist, emancipatory inclinations may be screened out by professional training, selection, and advancement processes.

Although there has always been a liberal tradition within academe which has accommodated, and sometimes encouraged, commitment to self-reflection and change, academics are increasingly assessed primarily on the number of their

publications and their acceptability as transmitters of
received wisdom rather than on more qualitative, and perhaps
more important, criteria such as the personal liberation,
growth and change which they may have engendered in their
academic peers, students (or others). As Stablein and Nord
indicate, the difficulty of pursuing and presenting such
critical, emancipatory work in formal, written publications
is likely to frustrate a rapid growth of such work.

Finally, the demands for value-freedom within the social
sciences have had a detrimental effect on the production of
critical, emancipatory work. The dominance of research
motivated by technical or practical cognitive-interests has
resulted in the legitimisation of work that deals with
'means' by labeling it 'science' and this continues to
marginalise more critical, emancipatory research, which
questions the validity of 'ends', by dismissing it as
'ideology'. All critical research must therefore
self-consciously confront this issue of value-freedom. In
the case of this thesis, such a project is undertaken in the
following discussion.

1.5. Beyond Value-Freedom.

Since Weber's (1949) seminal work on objectivity and values
within the research process much has been written on this
subject (see Gouldner, 1973 and Riley, 1974). I do not intend
to add to this debate here save to describe the position I
take for the purpose of this thesis.

The essence of Weber's argument is that once the subject to

be researched has been identified, the social scientist should bracket his or her values during the research process so that the 'facts' relevant to the research project can be allowed to speak for themselves. What Weber fails to fully acknowledge, however, is that the process of collecting facts is not a value or interest-free activity. The suspension of deeply held values during the research process is impossible. Saying this, it is not to deny that the pursuit of truth-for-its-own-sake, which underlies his conceptualisation of value-freedom, is a noble if unattainable ideal. It is Weber's self-understanding of this ideal, rather than its motivating desire, which must be questioned. For, as Gouldner has recognised (1973:65-6),

> The pursuit of 'truth-for-its-own-sake' is always a tacit quest for something more than truth, for other values that may have been obscured, denied, and perhaps even forbidden... What are the values that lie obscured in the long shadows cast by the light of truth? In Western culture, these often enough have been freedom ... and power - to know in order to control. Underlying the conception of truth as objectivity there is, however, still another value, a faint but enduring image of the possibility of wholeness... Underlying the quest for objectivity, then, is the hope of dissolving the differences that divide and the distances that separate men by uniting them in a single, peace bringing vision of the world (emphasis added).

Here Gouldner demystifies the notion of objectivity to show how the pursuit of truth and knowledge is not an end in itself, as the traditional formulations of the value-freedom debate would have us believe (Weber, 1949; Nisbit, 1974) but is itself motivated by other interests. Gouldner identifies two interests which motivate the production of knowledge.

The first is akin to Habermas's (1972) technical knowledge -
'to know in order to control'; the second is like Habermas's
emancipatory knowledge pursuing the quest for 'wholeness'.
Gouldner goes on to argue that it is only when social
scientists give their primary commitments to values (e.g.,
'the hope of dissolving the differences that divide and the
distances that separate men') that objectivity can hope to be
reached. Having argued this, Gouldner maintains that if
social scientists can reflect upon, and make explicit the
underlying values that have motivated their research, then
their work can be more 'objectively' assessed in the light of
the value commitments that have motivated its production.
Ultimately, of course, such a value position, as Weber (1949)
points out, is a matter of 'faith' and, most often, can
neither be ultimately proved nor disproved. Nevertheless,
'faith' commitments are of such central importance to all
stages of the research process, from the choice of subject to
the writing up of the research findings, that they must not
be left unexamined. Accordingly, I will now offer a brief
overview of the value commitments, or 'faith' positions, that
underlies this work.

At the heart of this project to develop a critical,
emancipatory conceptualisation of organisational culture is
the desire to see the dissolution of 'the differences that
divide and the distances that separate men'. To this end it
seeks to disclose the socially unnecessary oppressions that
are harboured and reproduced within work organisations,
oppressions which inhibit the realisation of wholeness - the

potential to become fully human and fully alive (Friere, 1972; Powell 1976). By 'ontological potential' I mean, and this is my 'faith' position, that human beings can only experience the power of their humanity through free-interdependent relationships characterised by Shalom, the root meaning of which means to be 'whole, safe, sound' (Harris, 1970). Shalom assumes a dialectical interplay between the individual and society expressing a harmony of interdependent relationships, free from exploitation or domination. As Taylor (1977:42) poetically notes, Shalom means 'a dancing kind of inter-relationship, seeking something more free than equality, more generous that equity, the ever-shifting equipoise of a life-system.' It expresses a fundamental idea of totality, with God as the source and ground for Shalom, and where anything that contributes to this wholeness makes for Shalom and anything that stands in its way hinders Shalom. By this, I mean that the pursuit of Shalom is the desire for the liberation of human beings through the transformation of relationships of domination and dependence, rooted in asymmetrical relations of power, into relationships of genuine interdependence, or in its fullest sense, relationships of love (Fromm, 1985).

This work, however, is not a theological document, and many of the key issues affecting Shalom have had to be bracketed. From a theological perspective two of the key things that work against Shalom are mans' rebellion against God (Snyder, 1985) and the work of the Principalities and Powers (Campolo, 1984; Green, 1981), both of which raise a number of

ontological and epistemological issues and, as a result, will not be touched upon in this work. While I believe that the omission of such considerations weakens the thesis, I have, as yet, found no coherent way of incorporating such theology into my sociological analysis. As a result of this bracketing, the perspective offered in this thesis is closer to a radical humanist position (Burrell and Morgan, 1979), than a full-blown attempt to incorporate a Judao-Christian sociological analysis into the study of organisational culture. This being the case, the focus of the thesis is upon the existential, material and political (rather than spiritual) processes through which organisational culture is constructed, mediated, challenged, and defended. By uncovering the ideological content of what may appear to be shared-symbol systems, it seeks to expose the relationships of domination and oppression through which organisational cultures are produced and transformed. However, it is not my intention to prescribe or moralise on how such domination can be overcome. Rather, by unpacking the processes through which organisational personnel actively, albeit unintentionally, reproduce the very relationships of domination that oppress them, it is hoped that this work provides a spark which may ignite the deep, self-reflective thinking, necessary for the development of a liberating praxis and the attainment of free, interdependent relationships.

1.6. An Overview of the Thesis.

Having laid bare, to the best of my ability, the beliefs and values that have motivated this work, it is now appropriate to outline the thematic organisation of the text. In short, the thesis is organised into three parts, excluding this introduction and the conclusion. These are discussed in greater detail in the following paragraphs. The first part assesses how far the existing body of literature has been able to penetrate the complexities and contradictions of the existential, material and political processes through which organisational culture is produced and maintained. The second develops a critical, emancipatory conceptualisation of organisational culture that is sensitive to the above processes. The third part applies this perspective to a concrete situation (in this oase to the work cultures of groups of public relations and personnel specialists located within one geographical division of ANIP, a large state bureaucracy) in order to add empirical flesh to its theoretical bones and, in addition, to assess how far it is able to take us in the understanding of this process of cultural construction and reproduction. Finally, in the conclusions, I suggest theoretical and empirical research that could be usefully undertaken to further improve our understanding of organisational culture and symbolism.

a. Part One: The Literature Review.

It would be foolish to start any new work without an examination of past and current literature for two important reasons. Firstly, a literature review, by giving the researcher a thorough grasp of state-of-the-art theoretical and empirical research in the field, provides a means of substantiating or moderating any claims s/he intended to make about the work's contribution to existing stocks of knowledge. It is only through the process of assessing research in the light of accepted stocks of knowledge that its value, originality, or more sadly, its plagiarism can be identified. At the very least, then, a thorough literature review should prevent the researcher from losing face within the academic community by making over zealous claims that cannot be corroborated. Secondly, a literature review throws up ideas that can be usefully incorporated within current research projects. For example, this thesis has drawn upon past theoretical and empirical research to help make sense of organisational culture. Accordingly, Part One of the thesis (Chapters 2-4) has been set aside to identify and review the different perspectives on organisational culture within the literature and to measure the contribution they make to understanding the complexities of organisational culture.

In seeking to understand how organisational culture has been theorised to date, Chapter 2 identifies five key typologies which differentiate the literature according to: (i) the differences in definitions of culture found in competing

anthropological schools from where its organisational usage has been 'borrowed' (Smircich, 1983a; Allaire and Firsirotu, 1984); (ii) the different meta-theoretical assumptions that underlie the literature (Louis, 1981; Morgan et al, 1983), and (iii) the different cognitive-interests that have motivated the research (Stablein and Nord, 1985). Having acknowledged that all typologies, given their need to attenuate complexity in order to clarify it, inevitably end up concealing as much as they reveal, the Chapter examines the strengths and weaknesses of each approach. This facilitates the selection of a typology that is sensitive to the issues I want to focus on in my own literature review (see Chapters 3 and 4). In particular, this review clearly reveals that critical studies of organisational culture and symbolism have been comparatively neglected. In fact, only two of the typologies examined have incorporated any critical/radical dimension(s) into their framework (Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Stablein and Nord, 1985). The other three (Louis, 1981; Smircich, 1983; Allaire and Firsirotu, 1984) are insensitive to the more critical, emancipatory issues that I focus on. The Chapter concludes with a brief explanation on why the typology developed by Stablein and Nord (based on Habermas' notion of cognitive interests) provides the most useful framework for reviewing the literature given the purposes of this thesis to explore and develop a critical, emancipatory conceptualisation of organisational culture.

In Chapter 3, Stablein and Nord's framework is applied to

surface and examine the important contributions that
organisation theory has made to the understanding and
development of issues now classified under the generic
umbrella of 'organisational culture'. Here I demonstrate
that many of the key issues associated with organisational
culture are not new, as much of the literature tends to
implicitly suggest, but rather can be traced right back to
the founding fathers of organisation theory. In writing this
chapter a choice had to be made between covering a great deal
of literature superficially or concentrating on only a few
studies, but in more depth. The second approach was favoured
because while a number of writers have noted this connection
between organisation theory and organisational culture (e.g.
Turner, 1971; Morgan et al, 1983) there have not been any
detailed studies of the contributions that the former has
made to the latter area of study. The in-depth review of a
few texts therefore makes an original contribution as well as
uncovering details prerequisite for later discussions in the
thesis. The works of Barnard (1938), Roethlisberger and
Dickson (1939), Burns and Stalker (1961) and Ouchi (1981) are
taken as illustrative of analyses guided by a technical
interest in prediction and control; Gouldner (1954), Selznick
(1949), Becker et al (1961) and Pettigrew (1973) are reviewed
as representative of works guided by practical cognitive
interests; and to complete the overview, Silverman (1976),
Nichols and Benyon (1977), Willis (1977) and Burawoy (1979)
are examined as contributions guided by emancipatory
cognitive.

In Chapter 4 I explore contributions to the literature whose
specific focus is organisational culture and symbolism.
These texts are differentiated from those reviewed in Chapter
3 by specifically and self-consciously focusing on
organisation culture and symbolism, rather than on other
organisational phenomena (e.g., bureaucracy, informal work
groups, etc.). The chapter contributes to the overall thesis
in three ways. First, I show where themes introduced in
Chapter 3 have been adopted and/or developed in the more
recent literature on organisational culture and symbolism.
Second, I give a brief overview of the strengths and
weaknesses of literature motivated by technical, practical
and emancipatory cognitive interests. Finally, the chapter
highlights the comparative neglect of theoretical and
empirical research motivated by critical, emancipatory
cognitive interests.

b. Part Two: The Conceptualisation of Culture.

In Chapter 5, I develop the argument that a critical,
emancipatory understanding of organisational culture can
provide a rich and penetrating analysis of the important, but
comparatively neglected, existential, political and material
processes of cultural production and re-constitution. By
existential processes I mean the processes through which
organisational actors routinely secure a sense of identity
and self through what is often instrumental participation in
the social relations of cultural reproduction. A
prerequisite for examining these processes, I argue, is the
development of a theory of the subject that is sensitive to

the ways that actors come to construct, define and defend a 'solid' sense of identity within their organisational experiences. By political processes, I mean the ways in which sectional definitions of work reality become naturalised, reinforced and resisted in day-to-day organisational and occupational interaction. Finally, I examine the material process of cultural reproduction. By this, I mean the processes through which human beings organise themselves in order to transform nature and thus secure their material existence.

In order to explore the question of how meaning is mobilised within forms of power it is relevant to develop an appreciation of the organisation and control of the labour process. Actors enter into the labour process - that is, the process through which nature is transformed into useful commodities - in order to eat, be clothed, be housed. Within capitalism most people are constrained to sell their labour power in return for a wage. By selling their labour power, employees necessarily enter into the labour process as subordinate to and dependent on capitalists (or their agents). Their positioning within the labour process, dependent on such factors as the demand for, and scarcity of, their skills, determines to a large extent their degree of control over scarce material and symbolic resources. It is insufficient to examine organisational or occupational cultures without reference to these material processes through which actors, or groups of actors, come to occupy their positions within the labour process.

Recognising the interdependence of the existential, political and material processes, I adopt a broadly Giddensian perspective to examine, on the one hand, how symbol-systems, which influence action and are on-goingly influenced by action, are produced and/or appropriated by dominant groups of actors in the reproduction and legitimisation of relationships of domination. On the other hand, I explore how domination is resisted both materially and symbolically, and how it is often reproduced as an unintended consequence of action by the very subordinates who find themselves the victims of oppression. This perspective is adopted because Giddens provides a model for understanding organisational culture which is 'far more sophisticated in its detail and far more suggestive in its application' (Thompson, 1984: 149) than other formulations currently found within the literature.

c. Part Three: The Participant Observation.

In Chapter 6 I discuss the use of a Giddensian perspective to guide and interpret my ethnographic study of the work cultures of public relations and personnel specialists located within one geographical division of a large state bureaucracy. This chapter describes how I gained and maintained access to the two departments; my research methods, problems I encountered in undertaking the research; how I interpreted my field data, how I have written up my research and the status of this written account.

In Chapter 7 I begin the ethnographic section of the thesis

by offering a relatively brief overview of the history, background and policies of ANlP, the large state bureaucracy in which I undertook my field research. This is done so that my ethnographic record of the work cultures of the two specialist departments is not decontextualised from the social relations in and through which they are produced and reconstituted. I then move on to introduce the South East Division of ANIP in particular the work cultures of the Personnel and Public Relations Departments in which my research was undertaken. (3)

In Chapter 8 I develop my examination of the work culture of public relations specialists in the South East Division of ANIP. I argue that it is those groups of actors more favourably positioned within the labour process, and therefore more able to infuse meaning with forms of power, that are able to get their ideological definitions of work practices legitimised and disseminated. This is demonstrated in my study of public relations where the ex-journalists within the department have successfully drawn on interpretative schemes, norms and facilities (Giddens, 1976, 1979, 1984) to define, maintain and defend a definition of public relations that emphasises an informational rather than a promotional ideology.

In Chapter 9 I consider how the Public Relations and Personnel Departments define, defend and mediate their relationships to the host bureaucracy. In particular, I explore the specialists' mobilisation of sectional ideologies through myth and humour and examine some of the

self-defeating consequences of their action, both in terms of realising their stated occupational goals, and in fulfilling their ontological potential of attaining genuinely free, interdependent relationships.

In Chapter 10 I continue my analysis of the departments and explore the opportunities that the specialists had for developing an emancipatory praxis. In particular, I focus on the opportunities that mavericks, humour, crisis and even my own presence within the departments offered the specialists for reflecting not only on their work practices but on the very way that they constructed their subjectivities. I conclude this chapter by suggesting why these opportunities for praxis are rarely seized.

d. Conclusions: The Future for Cultural Research.

Following the ethnographic section of the thesis, I return to my opening theme: that this project is more of a signpost pointing a direction for future exploration than a destination in itself. In drawing together some conclusions from my study, I reflect upon how far the use of a Giddensian analysis has taken us in making sense of the existential, material and political processes of cultural reproduction, and where improvements might be made. Finally, I present some critical reflections on where advances in the study of organisational culture and symbolism may be made.

<u>P A R T   O N E</u>

<u>T H E   L I T E R A T U R E   R E V I E W</u>

CHAPTER TWO: TOWARDS A TYPOLOGY.

2.1 Introduction.

In Chapter 1 I outlined the content and structure of the thesis stressing the need to locate the production of a critical, emancipatory conceptualisation of organisational culture within the existing literatures. I did this to highlight its point of departure from research motivated by technical and practical interests, and thereby to provide a foil against which the depth and insight of a critical, emancipatory perspective can be set off. Such a project is undertaken in this and the following two chapters.

The purpose of this chapter is threefold. Firstly, I offer an initial overview of the diversity of the literature on organisational culture and symbolism by examining how it has been variously differentiated in five typologies. Secondly, I show that critical, emancipatory studies of organisational culture have been comparatively neglected. Finally, the examination of these typologies enables me to assess which is the more appropriate construct to frame my review of the literature in Chapters 3 and 4. To facilitate meeting these ends I have organised the remainder of this chapter into five parts. In the first four I discuss the strengths and weaknesses of typologies that have been developed to interpret this diversity of the organisation culture and symbolism literature. These typologies differentiate the literature according to (i) root anthropological conceptualisations of culture used in the literature (Allaire

and Firsirotu, 1984; Smircich, 1983a), (ii) underlying meta-theoretical assumptions (Louis, 1981; Morgan et al, 1983) and (iii) the cognitive interests that underly the production of different definitions of organisational culture (Stablein and Nord, 1985). In the final section I explain why I have adopted Stablein and Nord's typology to frame my own review of the literature in the following two chapters.

2.2. Consequences of the Fragmented Literature.

In Chapter 1 I explored some of the reasons for the growth and fragmentation of the literature. It is now appropriate to explore some of the consequences of this phenomenon. In particular, both the newcomer to the field, and established researcher, is faced with an onslaught of competing definitions all claiming to capture the essence of what organisational culture 'is'. This was certainly true of the first eighteen months of my research where, in retrospect, my experience resembled a cat and mouse game. In trying to define organisational culture, locate its position within the history of sociological and organisational concepts, and to weigh its usefulness as a tool for understanding modern work organisations, I frequently felt confused, frustrated and disillusioned by the multiplicity of definitions. At many times I thought I had it cornered, only to see it escape through my conceptual skirting board. At other times I chased it into paradigmatic boxes only to see it nibble free. Moreover, I later found that my experience was not uncommon; a discovery that was of some considerable relief to me!

Indeed, without the aid of some conceptual schema to interpret the different approaches to organisational culture, the literature can remain a confusing and contradictory body of knowledge to the reader. It was therefore of some comfort to discover a number of different typologies which classify the literature on organisational culture by reference to a number of different dimensions. At first I tended to embrace these typologies wholeheartedly. However, as my own understanding of organisational culture became clearer and more secure, I became aware of their limitations, and thus in a better position to weigh their individual contributions to making sense of the literature.

What follows is a brief overview of the key themes raised by five of these typologies. This review has been included for two distinct but interrelated reasons. Firstly, it is difficult to conceive of a typology which could offer anything more than a partial understanding of organisational culture. All typologies, regardless of the basis for their construction, tend to conceal as well as illuminate important features of the literature. For example, a typology constructed to identify the different ways that organisational culture has been linked with productivity will be unlikely to consider the more critical, emancipatory studies which tend to more concerned with the issues of freedom, alienation and domination. So, even though the typology may provide an important overview of the managerial oriented literature, it will, by its very construction, be insensitive to other important issues concerning

organisational culture. In consequence, it is useful to consider a number of typologies together in order to get a richer overview of the literature's diversity. Secondly, by reviewing a number of different typologies it is easier to assess the relative strengths and weaknesses of the typology I intend to use as a framework for my review of the literature.

Before beginning my overview it is worth saying a few words about how the following typologies were selected. While I acknowledge that many useful frameworks have been developed to classify management and organisation literature (e.g. Etzioni, 1961; Perrow, 1970), I have chosen to examine only those that directly differentiate the organisation culture and symbolism literature (e.g. Louis, 1981; Smircich, 1983a; Morgan et al, 1983; Allaire and Firsirotu, 1984; Stablein and Nord, 1985). There are two reasons for this. Firstly, in any piece of research the limitations on time and space mean that choices have to be made, and I consider an examination of the typologies that directly confront organisational culture and symbolism to be the most appropriate use of these scarce resources. Secondly, the more typologies examined the more complex and confusing the picture becomes. Had I examined more typologies it is quite possible that the important issues may have become lost in a lengthy and muddied argument. For similar reasons I have ignored typologies that touch upon the issues of culture but are not specifically related to organisational culture, such as those developed in media studies (e.g. Bennett et al, 1981), or merely repeat

the framework discussed elsewhere. For example I have not examined the frameworks of Deetz (1985) and Knights and Willmott (1987) because they are both based on the Habermasian notion of cognitive interests which I discuss in my examination of Stablein and Nord's work.

To avoid a mechanical and repetitive listing of their individual strengths and weaknesses, the following discussion has been organised around the underlying themes on which the typologies have been based. Accordingly, it will begin with an examination of the typologies developed by Allaire and Firsirotu (1984) and Smircich (1983a) who, in noting that the concept of culture has been borrowed from anthropology, seek to identify the different anthropological conceptualisations of culture that have given rise to such diverse interpretations of organisational culture within the literature. Next, the typologies which segregate the literature according to the meta-theoretical assumptions that underpin the different conceptualisations of organisational culture will be examined. This will cover the work of Louis (1981) and Morgan et al (1983). Lastly, the typology which draws upon Habermas' (1972) notion of cognitive interests will be examined. Accordingly, I discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the typology developed by Stablein and Nord (1985).

Having discussed my criteria for choosing the five typologies it is now helpful to make a few brief comments about the criteria by which the following typologies have been assessed. To do this it is necessary to state the definition

of organisational culture that is favoured within this thesis. I suggest that a richer understanding of organisational culture and symbolism can be gained if, as I argued in the previous chapter, culture is defined as:

> the study of the social processes through which actors continually construct, define, defend and mediate their organisational world. I maintain that social patterns, which can stretch over time and space, are gradually built up through the chronic routinization of these very interactions. In so doing, culture and structure are theorised as a duality; both being understood, at least in part, as the product of collective human praxis. Further, I acknowledge that actors may have competing definitions of organisational life and that the definitions that rise to the fore tend to be those held by actors, or groups of actors, who are most able to mobilise meaning with power. Accordingly, I examine the way that dominant definitions frequently become ideological, and how they are both reinforced and resisted in the day-to-day interaction of organisational life. In noting the centrality of power in the reproduction of organisational culture, I also recognise that actors, in bringing unequal power resources to the organisational forum, enter into relationships of domination and subordination which necessarily frustrate their ontological potential of realising free, interdependent relationships. Finally, I argue that it is only as actors come to realise their part in the reproduction of the very relationships of domination that oppress them that the genesis of a liberating praxis can be realised.

Having established the critical, emancipatory concerns I endorse in this project it will come as no surprise to the reader that I tend to prefer typologies that are sensitive to such dimensions of organisational life. Before beginning the overview, I wish to stress that the observations I make are not intended to be exhaustive commentaries on the five typologies, but merely pick out the important themes related to the issues discussed in the remainder of this thesis.

2.3. Typologies which Identify Root Anthropological Definitions of Culture

Both Allaire and Firsirotu (1984) and Smircich (1983a) acknowledge that many of the key understandings of organisational culture found within the literature have their roots in anthropology (1). In recognising that there is no consensus on the meaning of culture within anthropology, they do not find it surprising that a similar state of confusion exists within organisation culture literature (Smircich, ibid:339). In an attempt to clarify this situation they both develop typologies which seek to make explicit the linkages between definitions of organisational culture and a number of anthropological schools from where such interpretations of culture were borrowed. Figure 2.1. presents a comparative summary of these typologies.

FIGURE 2.1: COMPARISON BETWEEN TYPOLOGIES OF ALLAIRE AND FIRSIROTU (1984) AND SMIRCICH (1983).

ALLAIRE AND FIRSIROTU	ANTHROPOLOGICAL SCHOOL	SMIRCICH
CULTURE AS A SOCIO-TECHNICAL SYSTEM	–	CULTURE AS A CRITICAL VARIABLE
FUNCTIONALIST [1] Mayo, 1933; 1949. Roethlisberger and Dickson 1939.	FUNCTIONALIST SCHOOL Malinowski	CROSS-CULTURAL OR COMPARATIVE MGT [5] Harbinson and Myers 1939. Roberts, 1970.
STRUCTURAL -FUNCTIONALIST [2] Barnard, 1938. Crozier, 1964.	STRUCTURAL-FUNCTIONALIST Radcliffe-Brown	CORPORATE CULTURE [6] Peters and Waterman, 1982.
ECOLOGICAL-ADAPTIONIST [3] Burns and Stalker, 1961 Emery and Trist, 1965.	ECOLOGICAL-ADAPTIONIST SCHOOL White	–
HISTORICAL-DIFFUSIONIST [4] Chandler, 1962, 1977, Filley and House, 1969.	HISTORICAL-DIFFUSIONIST SCHOOL Kroeber and Kluckholm	–

ALLAIRE AND FIRSIROTU	ANTHROPOLOGICAL SCHOOL	SMIRCICH
CULTURE AS AN IDEATIONAL SYSTEM	–	CULTURE AS A ROOT METAPHOR
COGNITIVE 7	COGNITIVE SCHOOL	ORGANISATIONAL COGNITION 11
James and Jones, 1964.	Goodenough	Argyris and Schon, 1978. Weick, 1979a, 197~~~
STRUCTURALIST 8	STRUCTURALIST SCHOOL	UNCONSCIOUS PROCESSES AND ORGANISATION 12
McKenny and Keen, 1979. Mintzberg, 1976.	Levi-Strauss	Rossi, 1974. Walter, 1983.
MUTUAL-EQUIVALENCE 9	MUTUAL-EQUILALENCE SCHOOL	–
Weick, 1979 Ouchi and Jaeger, 1978.	Wallace	
SYMBOLIC 10	SYMBOLIC SCHOOL	ORGANISATIONAL SYMBOLISM 13
Brown. 1978. Turner, 1971.	Geertz	Van Maanen, 1973. Smirciich, 1983b,c. Manning, 1979.

FIGURE 2.1: NOTES.

1. The Functionalist conception culture is regarded as 'an instrumental apparatus by which a person is put in a better position to cope with the concrete specific problems faced in the course of need satisfaction' (Allaire and Firsirotu, 1984: 197).

2. In the Structural-Functionalist school, culture is regarded as 'an adaptive mechanism by which a certain number of human beings are enabled to live a social life as an ordered community in a given environment' (ibid: 197).

3. In the Ecological-Adaptionist school, culture is regarded as a 'system of socially transmitted behaviour patterns that serve to relate human communities to their ecological settings' (ibid: 197).

4. The Historical-Diffusionist School regards 'culture as consisting of temporal, interactive, superorganic and autonomous configerations or formns produced by historical circumstances and processes. (Ibid: 197).

5. In Cross Cultural or Comparative Management, Culture is regarded as 'an instrument serving human biological and psychological needs' (Smircich, 1983: 342).

6. In Corporate Culture approaches, 'Culture functions as an adaptive regulatory mechanism. It unites individuals into social structures' (ibid: 342).

7. In the Cognitive school, culture is regarded 'as a set of functional cognitions organised into a system of knowledge and containing whatever it is one has to know or believe in order to operate in a manner acceptable to the members of one's society' (Allaire and Firsirotu, 1984: 203).

8. In the Structuralist school culture is regarded as being made up of 'shared symbolic systems that are cumulative products of mind, a reflection of unconscious processes of mind that underlie cultural manifestations' (ibid: 198).

9. In the Mutual-Equivalence version, culture is regarded as 'a set of standardised cognitive processes which create the general framework for the mutual prediction of behaviour among individuals interacting in a social setting' (ibid: 198).

10. In the Symbolic school, culture is regarded as the fabric of meaning in terms of which human beings interpret their expereinces and guide their actions' (Geertz, 1973: 145 In Allaire and Firsirotu, 1984: 207).

11. In the Organisational Cognition version culture is regarded as 'a system of shared cognitions. The human mind generates culture by means of a finite number of rules' (Smircich, 1983: 342).

12. In Unconscious Processes and Organisation, 'culture is the product of mind's univerrsal unconscious infrastructure' (ibid: 342).

13. In organisational symbolism culture is defined as 'a system of shared symbols and meanings. Symbolic action needs to be interpreted, read or deciphered in order to be understood' (ibid: 342).

The important contribution that these typologies make is their distinction between culture as a socio-cultural system/critical variable and culture as an ideational system/root metaphor or, as Smircich usefully adds, between something an organisation 'has' and something it 'is'. Here Smircich quite rightly recognises that it is only possible to assess the relevance of a cultural perspective in terms of the question it sets out to answer. She notes (ibid:345) that:

> Some researchers give high priority to the principles of prediction, generalizability, causality and control; while others are concerned by what appears to them to be more fundamental issues of meaning and the processes by which organisational life is possible,

and their definitions of organisational culture will vary accordingly. This classification helps to explain why the functionalist and structural-functionalist literature on organisational culture treats the subject in a very different way to the more symbolic and ideational views.

There are, however, two limitations inherent in these typologies. Firstly, while the typologies usefully identify some of the linkages between the usage of the term 'culture' in anthropology and organisation theory, their failure to incorporate any of the more critical, dialectical anthropological literature (e.g., Cohen, 1974) inevitably makes the typologies insensitive to critical, emancipatory dimensions of organisational culture. And, as a consequence of their dualistic theorisation of culture and structure, neither typology would be able to cope with definitions of

culture, such as my own, in which culture and structure are theorised as a duality. Secondly, while the typologies usefully identify the diversity of usage of the term 'culture' they offer inadequate explanations for the manifold differences in definition. To claim that the reason for the diversity within the literature is due to the nonconformity of usage within anthropology, from where the term is borrowed, is no more than a teleology; it does not explain why such diversity exists within anthropology in the first place. To be fair, Smircich does make a few of the linkages between her categories and their underlying meta-theoretical assumptions, but even this still does not fully explain why researchers adopt such different perspectives on organisational culture. This point will be elaborated in the next section in which I discuss the typologies that distinguish between the diverse interpretations of organisational culture by identifying the differences in their underlying meta-theoretical assumptions.

2.4. Typologies which classify organisational culture research according to its underlying meta-theoretical assumptions.

Rather than distinguish between different perspectives within the literature by identifying the root anthropological understandings of culture, Louis (1981) and Morgan et al (1983) argue that an analysis of the meta-theoretical assumptions which underlie the research into organisational culture is a potentially fruitful means of classification. Accordingly, Louis (1981) utilises Ritzer's (1975)

distinction between 'social fact' and 'social definition'
paradigms, while Morgan et al draw upon Burrell and Morgan's
2x2 paradigmatic rationale for analysing social phenomena.
The overlap between these two frameworks is shown in Figure
2.2.

FIGURE 2.2: COMPARISON OF LOUIS (1981) AND MORGAN ET AL'S (1983) PARADIGMATIC FRAMEWORKS.

	SOCIAL FACT/ [1] FUNCTIONALIST [2]	SOCIAL DEFINITION /[1] INTERPRETIVE [2]
ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT SOCIAL SCIENCES:	OBJECTIVE	SUBJECTIVE
ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT SOCIETY: [3]	REGULATIVE	REGULATIVE
CONTENTS OF PARADIGMS:		
LOUIS:	TRADITIONAL APPROACHES TO ORGANISATION STUDIES. Merton, 1968. Hage and Aiken, 1967.	CULTURAL APPROACHES TO ORGANISATION STUDIES. Whole of Culture: Harrison, 1972.[4] Components of culture: Clarke, 1970. Emergence: none. Enactment: Benson, 1977. [5] Effect: Pfeffer, 1977.
MORGAN ET AL:	Theatrical metaphor: Goffman, 1959. Cybernetic approach: Rappaport,, 1971. Organisation metaphor: Morris: 1946.	Language game metaphor: Witherspoon, 1977. Sense Making metaphor: Garfinkel, 1967.

RADICAL HUMANIST 2   RADICAL STRUCTURALIST 2

**ASSUMPTIONS
ABOUT SOCIAL
SCIENCES:**   SUBJECTIVE   OBJECTIVE

**ASSUMPTIONS
ABOUT
SOCIETY:**   RADICAL CHANGE   RADICAL CHANGE

**CONTENTS OF
PARADIGMS:**

LOUIS:

MORGAN ET AL:	Psychic Prison metaphor:	Bendix, 1956.
	Marx, 1975.	Schiller, 1973.
	Lukacs, 1971.	Glasgow University media group, 1976.
	Fromm, 1942.	
	Habermas, 1977.	
	Freud, 1972.	
	Jung, 1967.	

FIGURE 2.2. NOTES.

1. Based on Ritzer's (1975) Social Fact and Social Definition Paradigms.

2. Based on Burrell and Morgan's (1979) Sociological Paradigms.

3. The assumptions about the nature of society, while made explicit in Morgan et al's work, have been implied in the case of Louis.

4. Harrison fits uneasily here. I suggest he would be more appropriately located in the social fact paradigm.

5. Benson fits uneasily here. I suggest a more radical paradigm would need to be constructed to adequately classify his work.

Having shown the similarity between Ritzer's social fact and social definition paradigms and Burrell and Morgan's Functionalist and Interpretative paradigms, it is now possible to spend a few paragraphs discussing the strengths and weaknesses of Louis and Morgan et al's frameworks for interpreting the literature on organisational culture and symbolism. Louis begins her article by maintaining that traditional approaches to organisational studies, exemplified by structural-functionalism, conflict theory and systems theory, share realist ontological assumptions. These assumptions maintain that organisations exist independently of actors' involvement. Such perspectives, she maintains, are typical of work located within the social fact paradigm. In contrast, the cultural perspective, which stresses a system of shared values, norms and symbols, is said to reflect an ontology of intersubjectivity (1981:249). In making this distinction, Louis contributes to the literature by highlighting how a cultural perspective can provide an alternative understanding of organisations by focusing on the processes through which systems of values, norms and beliefs come to convey particular images and meanings for organisational actors. Louis elaborates (ibid:249):

> A cultural perspective is oriented towards diagnosis and depth understanding of social systems: systems processes and dynamics are emphasised. This contrasts with the traditional orientation toward identification and prediction of universal elements, and emphasis on system statics and structures.

The strength of Louis' paper resides in her recognition that a cultural perspective in organisational analysis can provide

a rich and fruitful means of grasping the processes and dynamics of organisational life. There are, however, a number of theoretical problems with her typology. The first concerns the way she conceptualises the cultural perspective. To begin with, her theorisation of culture (ibid:249) as a 'shared system of values, norms and symbols' conveying 'an entire image' and 'integrated set of dimensions/characteristics and a whole beyond its parts' is insensitive to inconsistencies and contradictions within organisational cultures. For example, in my examination of the work culture of a public relations department (see Chapters 7-9) I uncover the presence of competing ideologies within the department, both of which claim to capture the essence of public relations. Louis' insistence that culture is a 'shared...integrated' phenomenon filters out of existence alternative definitions of organisational reality that often exist, but may not rise to the fore due the ability of dominant actors to naturalise their sectional ideology in terms of the organisations culture (see Chapter 8 for a discussion of this issue).

The second weakness in Louis' typology is that she has associated studies into organisational culture exclusively with the social definition paradigm. In doing so, her typology is insensitive to the literature on organisational symbolism that shares the realist ontology of the social fact paradigm. To be fair, it must be said that the majority of literature most obviously sharing the realist assumption of the social fact paradigm has been published since the writing

of her paper. Nevertheless, she cites the work of Harrison (1972) and Beer (1980) which both rest on a realist ontology rather than the interpretative ontology which her framework presupposes. The third weakness concerns the construction of her framework on two necessarily mutually exclusive paradigms. This makes it theoretically insensitive to work that overcomes the dualism of object and subject that her typology presupposes. For example, she cites the work of Benson (1977) to illustrate the work of the social definition paradigm. However, it is difficult to see how his work, which examines structural contradictions, totalities and praxis, fits into either. Rather, the dialectical approach to organisational analysis that he proposes spans both paradigms avoiding, and at the same time exposing, the dualism between the social fact and social definition paradigms. The theoretical incapacity of typological frameworks to differentiate the complexity of the literature is not exclusively Louis' problem. In fact, it is experienced by all of us who have attempted to make sense of the literature. Thus, despite its broad brush approach to the literature, and its weaknesses, Louis should not be treated too harshly: her typology does at least identify the value that an examination of culture and symbolism in organisations can offer the research community.

In contrast to Louis' adoption of Ritzer's paradigms, Morgan et al (1983) draw upon Burrell and Morgan's (1979) 2x2 paradigmatic matrix in order to make sense of the literature. Burrell and Morgan maintain that the different

traditions within organisation theory can be understood by addressing the meta-theorical assumptions that underlie its construction. In doing so, they suggest that the presence of different perspectives within organisation studies can be explained by (i) whether the researcher subscribes to an objective or subjective view of social science and (ii) whether the researcher defends regulative of radical assumptions about societal change. The intersection of these two dimensions allows for the identification of four mutually exclusive paradigms: the Functionalist, Interpretative, Radical Structuralist and Radical Humanist. In is into these boxes that Morgan et al file the organisation culture and symbolism literature.

The strength of this typology, other than its identification of the (often undisclosed) meta-theoretical assumptions that underlie the literature, is that it recognises the existence of critical, emancipatory conceptualisations . of organisational culture. Such work is located in their Radical Structuralist and Radical Humanist paradigms. The fundamental weakness of the construct is that in constructing mutually exclusive paradigms the authors deny the possibility of work that transcends the dualistic bifurcations of their typology. This is particularly true of their two radical paradigms which are incapable of satisfactorily holding works that treat the relationship between the object and subject as dialectical rather than dualistic. As a result, it would be inappropriate for me to adopt this framework for my literature review because it is insensitive to the

dialectical works, such as Willis (1977), Burawoy (1979) and Giddens (1979, 1984), that make an important contribution to this thesis.

In summary, the paradigmatic typologies of Louis and Morgan et al are both useful in differentiating the literature on organisational culture and symbolism by identifying the meta-theoretical assumptions that underlie its production. However, their adoption of mutually exclusive paradigms deny the possibility of work that is simultaneously sensitive to the existential, material and political processes of cultural reproduction.

2.5. Typologies which Classify the Literature according to the Cognitive Interests which have Guided its Production.

I have already noted (see section 2.2) that Stablein and Nord (1985), Deetz (1985) and Knights and Willmott (1987) all adopt Habermas' notion of cognitive interests · to differentiate the literature on organisational culture and symbolism. To avoid repetition I will limit my discussion to Stablein and Nord's framework because they offer a more thorough review of the literature. Before doing so, however, it is worthwhile to overview the core concepts of Habermas' theory so that the strengths and weaknesses of Stablein and Nord's typology can be more carefully assessed.

Habermas' theory of cognitive interests is an attempt to unearth the interests that underpin the production of knowledge in life. In his writing he connects different traditions within the social sciences which he labels

empirical-analytic, hermeneutic and critical, with the epistemological strategies required to pursue and produce knowledge from within these disciplines. In doing so, he recognises three distinctive cognitive interests: the technical, practical and emancipatory, each of which is understood to be conditioned by desires that arise out of being at the same time part of and apart from nature. Knowledge motivated by technical interests is understood to be concerned with the anthropologically deep-seated interest in prediction and control. Knowledge motivated by practical interests is rooted in the anthropologically deep-seated interest in securing and expanding possibilities of mutual and self-understanding. Finally, knowledge motivated by emancipatory interests is grounded in the deep-seated desire to overcome pseudonatural, or socially unnecessary constraints on human action, including constraints that actors themselves have unwittingly reproduced.

Following Habermas, Stablein and Nord (1985) distinguish between the different emphases within the organisation culture and symbolism literature by identifying the cognitive interests that have motivated its production (see Figure 2.3). Research motivated by technical interests, they contend, focuses upon how culture can be effectively manipulated to improve organisational performance. The practical interest underlies research which examines the processes through which organisational members come to construct and maintain their organisational worlds. Such research is concerned to understand the meanings that actors

give to symbols rather than an over-concern with the symbols'
functions and uses. Research motivated by an emancipatory
intent is concerned to increase the level of autonomy and
responsibility experienced by all organisational members. In
accomplishing this, it is often deemed necessary to radically
change existing social relations of power through which
domination and dependency are sustained. In doing so, an
emancipatory perspective is concerned to expose how symbols
have been infused with forms of power and mobilised as
instruments of domination.

FIGURE 2.3: STABLEIN AND NORD'S (1985) USE OF HABERMAS' THEORY OF COGNITIVE INTERESTS.

	TECHNICAL	**PRACTICAL**	**EMANCIPATORY**
CONCERN:	PREDICTION AND CONTROL	EXPANSION OF MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING	LIBERATION FROM SOCIALLY UNNECESSARY FORMS OF CONTROL AND DOMINATION
ASSOCIATED SCIENCE:	EMPIRICAL-ANALYTIC	HISTORICAL-HERMENEUTIC	CRITICAL
CONTENT OF STABLEIN AND NORD'S TYPOLOGY:	Martin, Feldman, Hatch and Sitkin, 1983. Schwaz, 1985.	Geertz, 1973. Smircich, 1983a. Gregory, 1983. Riley, 1983.	Gergen, 1982. Cummings and Frost, 1985. Boland and Hoffman, 1983. Culbert, 1974.

The strength of this typology lies in its revelation of the connection between how organisational culture is theorised and the socially organised interests of the researchers. By concentrating on the interests underlying research, rather than upon the meta-theoretical assumptions of researchers, the typology illuminates why research into organisational culture differs; a more valuable contribution by far than merely showing how it differs. A second strength, and perhaps the most important for the purposes of this thesis, is that it recognises the existence and importance of critical, emancipatory approaches to organisational culture and symbolism. In doing so, it identifies a theoretical basis on which to pursue critical emancipatory work. A third important strength of the typology is that it is (indirectly) capable of transcending the objective-subjective bifurcation inherent in the other typologies reviewed. As such, it is not insensitive to the possibility of pursuing cultural research that focuses upon both existential, material and political processes of cultural reproduction.

The weaknesses of Stablein and Nord's typology are twofold: those relating to theoretical limitations of adopting Habermas' theory of cognitive interests in the construction of a typological framework, and weaknesses in the way they have used the typology once constructed. These will be considered in turn.

While a good many limitations of Habermas' theory of cognitive interests have been identified (see for example,

Giddens 1976; and also Habermas 1975 for a bibliography of reviews and dissenting comments), I note only three here because they have a direct bearing on the literature reviews in Chapters 3 and 4. The first problem is that, in practice, the cognitive interests are not mutually exclusive but frequently intertwined in research. For example, Silverman and Jones' 'Organisational Work' (1976) can be seen to be motivated by both practical and emancipatory interests. As a result, it could be placed in either or both categories within the Habermasian typology. The difficulty comes in deciding which is the predominant cognitive interest so that the work can be accurately classified. (2)

A second problem is that the predominance of research motivated by technical and practical cognitive interests, and the comparative neglect of more critical studies, has had the effect of sustaining, reifying and legitimising existing structures of power and domination. As a result, critical studies of organisational culture and symbolism are particularly welcome at the moment (at least to me) because they help expose how more traditional studies have 'inadvertently become ideologies of the status quo' (Knights and Willmott, 1988).

The final limitation of using Habermas' theory of cognitive interests as the basis of a typological framework is that there is no guarantee that the knowledge generated by one of the interests will not be adopted and reinterpreted in the light of other interests. This, once again makes it difficult to construct a typology comprising watertight

boxes. For example, an analysis of organisational culture
guided by practical interests in exploring actors'
intersubjective psychological and emotional bonding to
symbol-sets may be appropriated by analysts whose prime aim
is to improve managerial control of organisations through the
manipulation of dominant symbols. The reader should bear
this in mind when he examines my use of this typology in
Chapters 3 and 4.

Having discussed some of the theoretical drawbacks of using
Habermas' theory of cognitive interests in the construction
of a typology, it is useful to comment briefly on Stablein
and Nord's application of the typology. As I have suggested
above, their framework is helpful. However, their contention
that 'the main thrust of research on organisational symbolism
does not seem to fit the traditional, technical mould'
(1985:19) cannot be supported. Rather, as I show in Chapter
4, there is a good deal of literature motivated by a
technical interest in prediction and control (e.g. Peters and
Waterman, 1982; Deal and Kennedy, 1982; White, 1984; Schein,
1984).

2.6. The Selection of a Typology for the Literature Review.

In the last three sections of this chapter I have outlined
the strengths and weaknesses of five typologies. In figure
2.4. I have adopted a slightly modified version of Burrell
and Morgan's paradigms to show the points of similarity
between the five frameworks. What this clearly shows is that
only Morgan et al's and Stablein and Nord's typology have any

appreciation of critical, emancipatory studies. Of these
two, only Stablein and Nord offer any way of transcending the
objective-subjective dualism inherent in much of the social
sciences. As a result, it is likely to be more sensitive to
literature that treats the relationship between object and
subject as a dialectic (of duality). As such literature
(e.g. Willis, 1977; Burawoy, 1979; Giddens, 1976, 1979, 1984)
is central to the argument of this thesis, the framework
offered by Stablein and Nord seems to be the most helpful in
differentiating the literature on organisational culture and
symbolism. This is done in the following two chapters.

FIGURE 2.4: COMPARISON BETWEEN ALL FIVE TYPOLOGIES.

R **A** **D** **I** **C** **A** **L** **C** **H** **A** **N** **G** **E**	MORGAN ET AL'S RADICAL HUMANIST PARADIGM STABLEIN AND NORD'S	MORGAN ET AL'S RADICAL STRUCTURALIST PARADIGM EMANCIPATORY COGNITIVE INTEREST
R **E** **G** **U** **L** **A** **T** **I** **O** **N** 1	MORGAN ET AL'S INTERPRETIVE PARADIGM LOUIS' SOCIAL DEFINITION PARADIGM SMIRCICH'S CULTURE AS A ROOT METAPHOR ALLAIRE AND FIRSIROTU'S CULTURE AS AN IDEATIONAL SYSTEM STABLEIN AND NORD'S PRACTICAL COGNITIVE INTEREST	MORGAN ET AL'S FUNCTIONALIST PARADIGM LOUIS' SOCIAL-FACT PARADIGM SMIRCICH'S CULTURE AS A CRITICAL VARIABLE ALLAIRE AND FIRSIROTU'S CULTURE AS A SOCIO-TECHNICAL SYSTEM STABLEIN AND NORD'S TECHNICAL COGNITIVE INTEREST.

SUBJECTIVE   OBJECTIVE 2

NOTES:

1. Assumptions about the nature of society.

2. Assumptions about the nature of the social sciences.

CHAPTER THREE: THE CONTRIBUTION OF ORGANISATION THEORY TO UNDERSTANDING ORGANISATION CULTURE.

3.1. Introduction.

In the last chapter I briefly discussed the comparative strengths and weaknesses of five typologies which differentiate the literature on organisational culture and symbolism. I then explained why, given the aims of this thesis, the typology constructed by Stablein and Nord based on Habermas' theory of cognitive interests offers the most appropriate framework for the review of the literature to be undertaken in this (and the following) chapter. The chapter is organised into five parts. In the first I outline the need for the review, as well as its organisation and content. This is followed by an examination of the contributions that key texts in organisation theory make to understanding organisational culture and symbolism. Finally, I summarise the key themes raised by each by each body of literature, and suggest which of these makes the most substantial contribution to the development of a critical, emancipatory conceptualisation of organisational culture.

a. The need for, and organisation of, a literature review.

As I noted in Chapter 1, it would be foolish to begin any academic research, regardless of its field and scope, without reference to the existing body of research and reflection on the subject. This is for two main reasons. Firstly, it provides the opportunity for researchers to substantiate or moderate the contributions claimed for their research in the

light of the state-of-the-art theoretical and empirical ideas. In addition, in the process of reviewing the literature, researchers may find useful material that can beneficially be incorporated in their own study.

While it may be possible to cover a good deal of ground in detail in the actual process of reviewing the literature, this is not always possible in the writing up of such reviews, primarily as a result of limited space. This being the case, a good literature review must be both focussed and selective. It must be focussed to avoid the trap of expending valuable time and space discussing aspects of the literature not directly related to the puzzle in question. Once focussed, it must select that research from the relevant literature which provides most clues to the puzzle's solution.

In the case of this thesis, then, the lens is focussed by using Habermas' theory of knowledge-constitutive interests to examine the contributions which comprise the literature on organisational culture and symbolism. In doing so, the strengths and weaknesses of these literatures are examined and their contribution to the development of a critical, emancipatory conceptualisation of culture and symbolism is assessed. The review is undertaken in three stages. Firstly, in this chapter, I will examine the contribution that key texts within organisation theory have made to the understanding of organisational culture and symbolism. Chapter 4 continues the review by showing how literature focussed specifically on organisational culture and symbolism

covers much the same issues and ground as the texts from organisation studies. Finally, selective literature will be discussed later in the text as an aid to interpreting the empirical data.

b. The contributions of this chapter.

Early on in my literature search I began to appreciate that many of the key themes discussed under the generic umbrella of organisational culture were not new. Rather, they could be found, at least in embryonic form, in the established body of knowledge on organisations. While other commentators have noted this in passing (see for example, Turner, 1971; Louis, 1981; Morgan et al, 1983; Westley and Jeager, 1985; Filby and Willmott, 1986), their relevance and contribution to the understanding of culture and symbolism has not been examined in depth. The purpose of this chapter is to show the value of undertaking such a review.

c. The selection of texts.

There is a wealth of material within organisation studies which makes a contribution to understanding organisational culture and symbolism. As a result, I have had to make the choice between covering a great deal of material superficially, or concentrating on a few studies in more depth. The latter course has been favoured for two reasons. Firstly, an in-depth study is preferable because a Cook's tour through a mass of material provides insufficient penetration of issues. Secondly, as 1 note in my concluding comments (see Chapter 11, below), one of the contributions

that I hope this thesis will make is to the teaching of organisation theory. In this light, I have provided twelve in-depth reviews of key texts, which can be used in classroom situations to facilitate discussion on organisation culture and symbolism.

The criteria of selection is as follows. Firstly, bearing in mind the need for detail, I decided to focus on books (in English) rather than on shorter papers. This eliminated a good deal, notably: Brown (1978), Meyer and Rowan (1981) and Roy (1954). Next, given the ethnographic dimension of this thesis, I selected only those texts which applied a qualitative research methodology. The main reason for this is that it facilitates continuity with the subsequent chapters of the thesis. For example, some of these studies are referenced again in Chapter 5 (e.g., Willis, 1977; Burawoy, 1979) in my theorisation of organisational culture, and yet again when I discuss my research methodology in Chapter 6. This criteria served to eliminate a number of important texts, for example: Goffman, (1959), Berger and Luckman (1966), Silverman (1970) and Weick (1979). Of the remaining texts, I selected the twelve (four associated with each of the cognitive interests) I felt made the most substantial contribution to the understanding organisational culture and symbolism given the focus of the review. This eliminated a number of important texts, for example: Jaques (1951); Crozier (1966); Turner (1971) and Burns (1977). The contributions made by important texts not discussed in this chapter are not lost, however, and will, where possible and

relevant, be introduced later in the thesis.

There are, of course, strengths and weaknesses in providing a review chapter of this nature. Of these, the main strength is that by offering in-depth reviews of the texts, it is possible to avoid the decontextualisations that often occur in review articles. However, by doing so, some repetition necessarily occurs in the review. However, while this may make the reading of this chapter marginally less enjoyable, the repetition does usefully serve to underline my contention that considerable contributions have been made to understanding organisation culture by established texts on organisations.

3.2. Research Guided by the Technical Knowledge- Constitutive Interest.

Unlike Louis (1980) and Stablein and Nord (1985), I recognise that there has been extensive literature attending to organisational culture from a technical standpoint. By this, I mean literature that is concerned with exploring the relationship between culture and the regulation and efficiency of the organisation. This is selectively demonstrated below (and more fully in chapter 4) by surfacing the contribution that four key texts within organisation theory, namely Barnard (1938), Roethlisberger and Dickson (1939), Burns and Stalker (1961) and Ouchi (1981), make to understanding organisation culture.

a. Barnard: The Functions of the Executive.

Before discussing the foundational contribution that Barnard's 'The Functions of the Executive' (1938) has made to understanding organisational culture and symbolism, it is necessary to justify its inclusion in this chapter, bearing in mind that the other research examined is more obviously based on some form of qualitative research while this work appears, at first glance, to be purely a theoretical text. Firstly, it needs to be stated that much of Barnard's work has been based upon his own observations as an executive, particularly with the Bell Telephone Company. As Barnard writes (1938:292)

> What has been presented is a hypothetical scheme which at present explains roughly to me what I have observed in many years of practical work with organisations of various kinds and what I have constructed from the experience of others, supplemented, of course, by a little knowledge of the social sciences. It is not the work of a scientist or a scholar, but rather of an interested · student of affairs.

In this respect, his work can be seen as being largely drawn from a life-long participant observation of the functions of the executive, and in this light it is not at odds with the other research cited in this chapter. Secondly, Barnard's appreciation of 'informal' organisation and the need for an overriding common purpose are so central to the understandings of culture held by writers motivated by a technical knowledge-constitutive interest that the chapter would be severely weakened had his work been omitted.

In 'The Functions of the Executive' Barnard is primarily

concerned to show how executives (or managers) can engender efficiency in formal organisations by recognising the importance of the more informal features of organisational life. He argues that by shaping these, through the use of incentives, a common goal, or purpose can be established. From this, it can be seen that his work is motivated by a technical concern with prediction and control rather than by practical or emancipatory interests.

Barnard lays a theoretical foundation the notion of culture in his discussion of informal organisations. This is a prerequisite to his examination of how informal organisations might be shaped to develop a common purpose. Informal organisation is defined as the frequent contact and interaction between people that affects or changes their 'experience, knowledge, attitudes or emotions', and is not part of, or governed by any formal organisation (ibid:115). As such, he argues, it is essential to formal organisations, particularly with respect to communication (1938:224). Continuing his case, Barnard argues that 'customs, mores, folklore, institutions, social norms and ideals' (ibid:116) are important elements of informal organisation. Indeed, he is of the opinion, like many contemporary writers on culture, that it is impossible to understand formal organisations without reference to informal organisation. He argues that

> one will hear repeatedly that "you can't understand
> an organisation or how it works from an
> organisational chart, its charter, rules or
> regulations, nor from looking at or even watching
> its personnel". "Learning the organisational
> ropes" in most organisations is chiefly about
> learning who's who, what's what, why's why, of the
> informal society (ibid:116).

Having laid a theoretical foundation of his work by discussing the relationship between formal and informal organisations, Barnard examines how executives should manage the organisation to establish and maintain cooperation among organisational members. However, here lies the central contradiction of the text, for, on the one hand, his definition of organisation presupposes spontaneous human cooperation, while on the other, he offers a discordant view to account for the fact that members subscribe to the organisation personality with widely varying degrees of rationality. Such deviant behaviour, according to Barnard, tends to be concentrated in the lower strata of the organisational hierarchy, and it is the executive's chief function to use training, incentives and inculcation to restore the delicate harmony of the system. Barnard goes on to list eight incentives (1938:142) which are to be employed by executives to promote cooperation among the organisational members. While he admits that these incentives may serve as an inducement for 'a man of a certain state of mind, of certain attitudes, or governed by certain motives' (1bid:141) to contribute to that organisation,

> It often is the case, however, that the organisation is unable to offer objective incentives that will serve as an inducement to that state of mind, or to those attitudes, or to one governed by those motives. The only alternative then available is to change the state of mind, or attitudes, or motives, so that the available objective incentives can become effective (ibid:141)

This concern with defining and reinforcing the overriding goal of the organisation underlies much contemporary research

into organisational culture, especially with reference to the organisation's mission (see for example, Deal and Kennedy 1982; Peters and Waterman, 1982; Martin and Nicholls, 1984). However, like much of the literature motivated by technical cognitive interests it has failed to get to grips with the complex processes of cultural reproduction. For example, no theory of the subject is presented to show the reader why the organisation should be naturally cooperative, why the individual is dominated by the general purpose or personality of the social collective (Reed, 1985) or why it is the lower strata of the organisational hierarchy that are likely to deviate from organisational norms. Equally, the insensitivities of the text to the political and material processes involved in the production and continuity of an 'official' overriding purpose are shown in his tendency to treat organisation as given rather than historically negotiated.

In summary, Barnard makes several important contributions to the study of organisation culture. His definition of informal organisation is foundational to many definitions of culture, and his concern to establish an overriding organisational goal or mission has become a central theme for much managerial oriented research on culture. Despite its failure to appreciate the more subtle processes of cultural reproduction, it is an important and fundamental work and should be regarded as such.

b. Roethlisberger and Dickson: Management And The Worker. (1)

In many respects Roethlisberger and Dickson's contribution is
similar to Barnard's in their examination of informal
organisation. For example, like Barnard they note that it is
impossible to understand organisations from their 'blueprint
plan or organisational chart' (Roethlisberger and Dickson,
1939:559) owing to the existence of strong informal
organisational cultures. They also maintain that informal
organisation are not always functional for the organisation.
Rather, informal organisational cultures may be dysfunctional
for the organisation as a total system by developing in
opposition to formal organisation (ibid:548-549). However, in
contrast to Barnard's conclusion that any lack of cooperation
is the product of people who are pathological cases, insane
and not of this world (Barnard, 1938:13), Roethlisberger and
Dickson are concerned to understand why such problematic
action should take place (ibid:548). Accordingly, they
underline the fact that workers form social groups with
elaborate norms, rituals and customs, concluding that the
determinants of working behaviour are to be found in the
structure and culture of society in general, and, in
particular, the work group (Mouzelis, 1967:99).

Furthermore, in examining behaviour within work cultures
Roethlisberger and Dickson maintain that it is not possible
to treat 'material goods, physical events, wages, and hours
of work as things in themselves' (Roethlisberger and Dickson,
1939:374). Rather, they must be understood as carriers of

social and personal values. In this respect, their work
bears a family resemblance to the 'action frame of reference'
(Silverman, 1970) by stressing that explanations must be
adequate at the level of meaning for the individuals
involved. As Roethlisberger and Dickson explain (1939:374):

> For the employee in industry, the whole working
> environment must be looked upon as being permeated
> with social significance. Apart from the social
> values inherent in his environment the meaning to
> the employee of certain objects and events cannot
> be understood.

In this respect, Roethlisberger and Dickson argue that it is
important for the researcher to understand the significance
that various symbols (i.e., hours of work, pay etc.) have
for the workers. In doing so, they maintain that man is
rarely motivated by rational facts or economic rewards but
that he is motivated by powerful sentiments or emotions that
are both formed over time through the routinised interaction
of the informal work organisation and imported in from the
local community. Sentiments therefore do not exist in a
social vacuum but are the product of 'social behaviour, of
social interaction, of the fact that man lives his life as a
member of different groups' (1939:558).

Following this line of argument, the authors develop an open
systems theory of organisational culture (as opposed to
Barnard's closed system) which acknowledges that the social
and economic climate, in which the organisation is located,
and from which workers access meaning for their daily
interaction, are important determinants of informal work
culture. For example, they admit that the effects of the

depression was one of the factors that determined the restriction of output in the Bank Wiring Observation Room (ibid:531). In doing so, they also show how the values and beliefs of informal organisation may be inconsistent with those formally legitimised by the organisation.

From this understanding of culture, Roethlisberger and Dickson suggest that if management cultivate sentiments and attend to the social and emotional needs of workers they may expect to receive increased output and good industrial relations in return. For example, they argue that one of the reasons behind the company's (Western Electric) favourable industrial relations was the skilful social processes by which individuals were integrated into the collective organisation. The ritualised events of the Hawthorne Club such as inter-branch sports events were seen as important in bridging the gaps between the separate branches.

In summary, it can be seen that Roethlisberger and Dickson make an important contribution to understanding organisational culture by demonstrating the importance of understanding the deep, often non-rational, meanings that workers infuse into organisational symbols and practices. However, by taking the status quo for granted their work, like that of Barnard, is insensitive to the political and material processes of cultural reproduction. (2)

c. Burns and Stalker: The Management of Innovation.

In their examination of the relationship between technological innovation and organisational structure Burns and Stalker (1961) conclude that effective organisation does not approximate to one ideal structure but alters in conformity to extrinsic factors. So doing, they identify two ideal-typical management systems labelled 'mechanistic' and 'organic'. The 'mechanistic' system, characterised by specialised differentiation of function and hierarchical structures of control, they maintain, is better suited to an organisation operating under stable conditions. In contrast, the 'organic' form, characterised by the continual redefinition of tasks and network structures of control, is more appropriate as a management system in conditions of change.

This analysis reveals their commitment to technically oriented research shown by their concern with organisational efficiency and control. They make their first contribution to the development of a technical perspective on organisational culture by noting that as an enterprise moves from mechanistic to organic forms of control there occurs an 'emptying out of significance from the hierarchic command systems' (Ibid:122) and a development of shared beliefs, which they term a 'common culture'. More formally, culture is defined as a

> dependably constant system of shared beliefs about
> the common interests of the working community and
> about the standards and criteria used in it to
> judge achievements, individual contributions,

expertise, and other matters by which a person or a combination of people are evaluated (ibid:119)... Non-verbal conduct, as well as objects and language, is involved in such symbol systems (ibid:118)... A system of shared beliefs of this kind is expressed and visualised in a code of conduct, a way of dealing with other people (ibid:119).

Further, they note that as institutionalised values, beliefs and conduct develop in the form of commitments, ideologies and manners around the image of the enterprise in its industrial setting it 'makes good the loss of formal structure' (ibid:122). In doing so, they suggest that culture fills the vacuum left unoccupied by the dismantling of formal structuring. Importantly, they also draw attention to the increased commitment of employees to the enterprise that develops as such values become institutionalised. It is this linkage between culture and commitment that has become central to much of the present-day research into organisational culture; the thesis being that as commitment rises so does productivity. However, while present-day writers motivated by a technical interest in organisational culture have been keen to explore this relationship, they have generally ignored Burns and Stalker's comments that such commitment to the organisation's goals over and above individual ones could be alienating to the individual.

> Developing a system of organised industrial activity capable of surviving under the competitive pressures of technical progress... is paid for by the increased constraints on the individual's existence. In Freudian terms, men's conduct becomes increasingly 'alienated', 'work for a system they do not control, which operates as an independent power to which individuals must submit'. Such submission is all the more absolute when it is made voluntarily, even enthusiastically.

Such an insight into the complex existential contradictions

of cultural reproduction affords Burns and Stalker the opportunity to examine organisational culture from a more critical, emancipatory perspective; an opportunity that is not taken up. Despite their recognition that strong organisational cultures can engender voluntary commitment to work organisations in which employees are increasingly alienated, the technical orientation of their work provides managers with the very insights with which they can elicit the 'absolute' submission Burns and Stalker claim to lament.

Burns and Stalker make a further contribution to understanding organisational culture in a subsequent discussion of informal structures. Having recognised the contribution that Roethlisberger and Dickson (1939) have made by highlighting the the significance of the shared sentiments and beliefs of workers, (ibid:98), they suggest that informal organisations can usefully be understood as political and status systems through which workers attempt to realise ends other than those of the organisation (ibid:101). In doing so, they reveal their penetration of political processes of organisational culture where culture is seen to be constructed and reproduced through the political negotiations of competing interest groups.

This is best demonstrated in their discussion of the Scottish Study. Here they note that neither the political nor status preoccupations of individuals and groups operated overtly. Rather, they were given expression through the the intricate manoeuvres and counter-manoeuvres of the negotiation and decision making procedures. Moreover, as political and

status conflicts only came into the open in decision making procedures, the organisation became adjusted to serving the political and status ends of individuals and groups. In recognising this political dimension of organisations, Burns and Stalker draw attention to the importance of ideology within organisations - that is, the competing 'ideas about the right way and the wrong way to go about things' in organisations (ibid:259). For example, they maintain that conflicts between groups subscribing to different professional cultures (such as scientists and engineers), can be understood as ideological disputes between 'orthodox and nonconformist culture[s]' (ibid:259). In recognising the importance of such ideological conflicts in the battle to the control of the organisations they note 'ideological victory, after all, carries with it a measure of political control as nearly absolute as one can hope for' (ibid:260).

In summary, then, Burns and Stalker make two important contributions to a technical understanding of organisational culture. Firstly, they expose the relationship between a well defined, 'common culture' and commitment and, secondly, they draw attention to ideological conflicts that occur between individuals and groupings as they try to gain political control of organisations and thus improve their status. In the first they significantly recognise that the absorption of dominant organisational values, beliefs and sentiments by actors can have the self-defeating consequence of increasing, rather than lessening, their alienation and subordination to organisations in which they occupy positions

of relative powerlessness. However, this insightful penetration into the existential dynamics of cultural reproduction is not pursued by the authors who are concerned with the production of technical, rather than emancipatory knowledge. In the second, Burns and Stalker make an important contribution to understanding the political processes of cultural reproduction, although they make no attempt to locate the asymmetrical distribution of power between occupational groups to their relative positioning within the social relations of production.

d. Ouchi: Theory Z. (3)

Ouchi argues that organisational cultures develop when employees have a broad array of common experiences that can communicate their underlying beliefs, and thus function as a 'shorthand form of communication' (ibid:42). Like individuals, he argues, organisations can have consistent, integrated personalities, or, equally, struggle with internal conflicts. Nevertheless, he maintains that those organisations which have a 'self-conscious awareness of the underlying values and beliefs' (ibid:132) are more likely to motivate workers towards a common goal.

Here Ouchi implicitly builds on the work of Barnard by arguing that the 'bedrock of any Z company is its philosophy' (ibid:131) and suggests that a clearly defined philosophy can help an organisation to maintain its sense of uniqueness by identifying what is and is not central to the company's mission. More formally, he argues that a company's

philosophy must include (i) the objectives of the organisation, (ii) the social, economic and environmental constraints placed on the organisation, and (iii) the operating procedures of the organisation (ibid:134). In consequence, it is important that a company's philosophy is made explicit to guide action and suggests the adoption of survey-feedback approach may be a useful way of doing this should no formal statement already exist. Ouchi argues that the power of a coherent philosophy is that it acts as the 'basic mechanism of control' in Z companies (ibid:41) enabling employees to understand the mission of the organisation and act in consistent ways.

Ouchi links the existence of a clearly defined philosophy with the increased commitment of the employees to the values of the organisation. In doing so, he develops an open systems approach to culture and argues that the reason why employees are willing to commit themselves so readily to the organisation's goals lies in the fact that Theory Z firms fill the vacuum created by the decline in middle range institutions in North America (ibid:8-10). The Z firm is said to provide a culture which 'offers employees a stable social setting in which to get their bearings and draw support to cope with the other parts of their lives' (ibid:197). For Ouchi then, it is this increased sense of ease that a Z company promotes among its employees that is the intervening variable between culture and performance.

By theorising culture in this way, Ouchi demonstrates that organisational cultures can offer existentially significant

meaning for actors. However, his analysis is insensitive to the fact that occupational identities are constituted and reproduced through asymmetrical relations of power, and that identities which are legitimised within organisational cultures tend to be those which are sponsored by groups of actors more able to infuse meaning with forms of power. The consequence of this is that Ouchi does not recognise how actors' ability to maintain a significant work identity is often closely tied to their ability to control the scarce symbolic and material resources necessary to maintain their positioning within the organisational labour process. Ironically, even actors occupying subordinate positions may vigorously resist organisational change, which may well increase their organisational role, because they fear change may threaten the relationships through which they realise their existentially significant identities. (4)

To summarise then, Ouchi builds upon the work of Barnard when addressing the overriding importance of a company's philosophy and mission; he echoes Roethlisberger and Dickson when elaborating the relationship between an organisation's culture and the values of the community; and he repeats the prescriptions of Burns and Stalker, who, as 1 discussed in the previous section, were two of the first theorists to make the connection between organisational cultures and commitment, a notion that is central to Ouchi's work. In doing so, Ouchi shows the need for actors to find existential significance in their work experiences. What he fails to do, however, is penetrate on some of the self-defeating

consequences that may result from their voluntary submission (for what ever reasons) to organisational cultures.

e. Contributions and Limitations of Technical-interest guided studies.

In summary, the key contributions made by studies guided by technical cognitive interests are that they recognise the importance of the cultural elements of organisation. In doing so, they recognise the importance of deep, often non-rational meanings to organisational actors. However, by concentrating on organisational issues concerned with efficiency and control, these writers have tended to adopt managerial perspectives. In doing so, they have become insensitive to how meanings are not 'givens' but are continually being negotiated through asymmetrical relations of power.

3.3. Research Guided by Practical Cognitive Interests.

As I already noted, some research into organisational culture
and symbolism, motivated by practical cognitive interests, is
concerned to understand how actors intersubjectively come to
construct, interpret and reproduce their social and
organisational worlds. To illustrate the different issues
and emphases within the literature I will examine four texts
from organisation theory: Gouldner (1954); Becker et al
(1961); Selznick (1949) and Pettigrew (1973) to see how far
they have been able to penetrate the existential, political
and material aspects of cultural reproduction.

a. Gouldner: Patterns of Industrial Bureaucracy.

In 'Patterns of Industrial Bureaucracy' (1954) Gouldner is
concerned to clarify some of the social processes and crucial
variables involved in differing degrees of
bureaucratisation. Central to his study is a rejection of
Weber's claim that the cultural settings of specific
bureaucracies are neutral toward different methods of
initiating bureaucratic rules (1954:20). In contrast to
Weber, Gouldner shows, through his examination of the
bureaucratisation of a gypsum mine, that the introduction of
formal and technical aspects of bureaucratic organisation can
be either promoted, modified or resisted according to actors
perceptions of their legitimacy. Furthermore, in seeking to
explain how distinct sets of actors come to make sense of the
increasing bureaucratisation of their work, he rejects
traditional prescriptive approaches to organisation studies

in favour of research motivated by practical interests. Reflecting on the place of this interest within the research process he maintains that:

> It is not the sociologist's task to recommend alternative policies and to insist that some administrative options are 'better' than others... neither ought a sociologist to serve as a justifier of received patterns, legitimating them with post factum omniscience as the product of 'inevitability'(ibid:28).

Central to the practical orientation of his research is a determination to explore the cultural context in which actors formulate and negotiate the meanings of bureaucratic rules. Accordingly, Gouldner begins his analysis by outlining the cultural differences between the informal orientations of sub-surface miners and the hierarchical organisation of surface factory workers. In doing so, he demonstrates how the miners' beliefs, rooted in the traditional values of the community and deeply resistant to change, are formulated and diffused. For example, he notes how deeply held beliefs about the danger of the mine were expressed and reinforced in 'time-worn stories passed down by word of mouth through generations of miners' (ibid:117). In particular, he pays attention to the importance of ritual in sustaining their belief systems, notably with reference to the 'propping' system. The ritualised propping of the mine not only safeguarded the miners physical safety, but also served as a psychological prop for them, enhancing their feeling of control over their situation.

Gouldner's analysis demonstrates how both stories and rituals gave the miners a means of expressing, and coping with, the

unpredictability and danger of the mine. In doing so, Gouldner implicitly argues that because organisational culture is not merely concerned with easily expressible values, it cannot be analysed quickly. It demands a commitment on behalf of the researcher to get as close to his or her subjects in order to understand how they make sense of their work culture. For example, it is impossible to understand the propping system without first understanding the meanings that the miners have invested in it.

Having set the scene, Gouldner demonstrates the value of practical perspectives on organisational culture through his analysis of the new manager's (Peele) attempts to increase productivity in the plant. In doing so, he reveals the extent of his grasp of the complex processes of cultural reproduction. Firstly, by taking an open systems view of culture, Gouldner shows how Peele's attempt at changing the culture of the sub-surface miners is the outcome of changes in the economic demands made upon the mine by its head office. For example, while Peele is seen to have a choice between accommodating his strategy to the culture of the mine, or, alternatively, to use his authority to introduce more formal rules to promote productivity, his subjection to the rational and impersonal yardsticks of head office made it more difficult to select the former strategy. Moreover, as Gouldner ably demonstrates, the successful manipulation of the culture and informal networks of the mine would require great knowledge of the intimate sentiments and beliefs of the miners; knowledge that Peele an outsider, did not possess.

Even if he had this knowledge, Gouldner argues that he would still have found the implementation of cultural change via the informal networks difficult, without affirming their time-honoured sentiments and values. `Faced with these problems, Peele opts for tightening and extending the formal control of the plant and replacing the old indulgency pattern with increased bureaucracy; an option that is strongly resisted by the miners because it violated their deeply held values and beliefs.

While Gouldner's analysis usefully shows that work cultures are not disconnected from the economic trends in society, the insistence on interpretive research, which precludes examination of capitalism or socialism (ibid:28), means that he is unable to relate what is happening within the mine to broader issues of resistance and control within the labour process. In this respect, his work is somewhat decontextualised and, as a result, fails to explore fully the material processes of cultural reproduction.

What Gouldner successfully does, however, is to elucidate the political processes of cultural reproduction and show the importance of power relationships in the production, resistance and control of work cultures. For example, Gouldner presents an interesting analysis of how the miners' idealised and legitimised the management style of Old Doug (the manager before Peele) and the indulgency pattern through the use of myth as an expression of their resistence to both Peele and his reorganisation. As Gouldner observes (ibid:82)·

The myth of Old Doug was an effort to legitimate
the indulgency pattern; by transforming Peele's
attack on the indulgency pattern into an attack on
Old Doug, the workers' grievances could be given
voice. The issue need no longer be 'This is what
we want'; it could be stated 'Old Doug did thus and
so, and he was a good man'.

To summarise, then, Gouldner makes an important contribution
to a practical orientation towards organisational culture by
suggesting that organisational change is not merely a matter
of technique, but of understanding. For example, Peele's
attempts to improve productivity by implementing new formal
structures are shown to be resisted by the miners because
they violated their values which were deeply resistant to
change. In effect, Gouldner argues that it is impossible to
understand an organisational culture without understanding
the values of the actors and the meanings they attach to
various cultural symbols such as the propping system, the
indulgency pattern and bureaucratic rules. In doing so,
Gouldner is able to penetrate some of the political
dimensions of cultural reproduction but, as I have suggested,
fails to offer similar insight into the material processes.

b. Selznick: TVA and the Grass Roots.

Selznick's study (1949) examines the development of the
Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) established to plan, monitor
and develop the 'proper' use of the natural resources (e.g.
flood control, navigation, power production, fertilization,
etc.) of the TVA catchment area. Primarily, he traces the
process through which the TVA's administration redirected the
agency's programme to meet the demands of powerful local
pressure groups in order to enhance their chances of

organisational survival. In doing so, Selznick makes a
contribution to understanding organisational culture by
showing how TVA's administration secured outcomes acceptable
to local power groups by the skilful manipulation of the
official 'grass roots' ideology. (5)

The grass roots ideology was promoted and reinforced by the
TVA's management so that it came to be seen, by staff, as
central to the culture of TVA. Noting this, and revealing how
it was accomplished, Selznick observes (1953:50) that

> The idea of a grass roots administration is...no
> casual or minor element in the consciousness of the
> Authorities staff. It is, on the contrary, one of
> the symbols most frequently refered to inside the
> organisation. Speeches to new employees, letters
> to information seekers, a popular book written by
> the chairman, memoranda discussing projects and
> procedure, all attest to the importance of the
> grass-roots idea in TVA. The systematic
> promulgation of these ideas helps define the
> character of TVA as an organisation and serves to
> shape the outlook of its staff (emphasis added).
> (9)

Expressing the importance of the development of these shared
cultural meanings, Selznick notes that the success of this
'indoctrination' throughout the organisation allows for the
loosening of formal controls (ibid:50). This is because the
cultural 'ideas and attitudes' shared by staff 'serve as
surrogates for a system of rules and formal discipline'
(ibid:50). Moreover, Selznick notes that as these cultural
meanings come to be increasingly and unproblematically
shared, they have important consequences in terms of
motivation and commitment. Firstly, shared cultural symbols
can engender such commitment to the organisation that the
employee's prestige and identity are secured from working

within the organisation. The result of this, as Selznick notes, may well be an increased 'vigor' at work. Moreover, should the organisation be attacked or criticised organisational actors will tend personally to defend it. This is because given the linkage between organisational membership and employee's valued sense of self and identity, 'to defend the organisation is often to defend oneself'. Secondly, the sharing of cultural meanings which can provides the 'rubricks of thought and action' (ibid:50) can serve as a glue or binding force between groups of technical experts who might otherwise emphasise their professional independence.

Having stressed some of the functions of a unified culture, Selznick goes on to note some unintended consequences. Primarily, he shows how the development of a shared taken-for-granted culture' can filter out of existence disparaging information. Elaborating this, the author explains that (ibid:21)

> Experienced participants in the organisational process are familiar with the continuous striving for adjustment, though few have spoken self-consciously of it. The management of its details is accepted as part of its ordinary common sense of administrative leadership. But it is often observable that where institutions have symbolic meaning beyond (and often irrelevent to) their structure and behaviour, a blindness to the less rosy aspects of organisational life arises. Explicit statements which trace the history of the organisation in terms of compromise and mediation are rejected out of hand, or at best, when accepted, are deemed shocking exposures.

This comment is particularly pertinent to the relationship between TVA and the local community. When TVA was first established it was not welcomed by local power groups who

perceived it as a central government threat to their autonomy and dominant position within the status quo. Faced with the potential resistance of local power groups and the possible demise of the initiative, the administration of the TVA successfully employed the grass-roots ideology to co-opt representatives of these pressure groups. The result of this was that the policies of TVA increasingly came to mirror those of the powerful interest groups in the area (large farmers and land-grant colleges) at the expense of the smaller landowners, ethnic minorities and conservation groups. When TVA's administration was attacked for this policy they were able to exploit the ambiguities inherent in the official doctrine of grass roots to defend themselves. For example, the doctrine is unclear about: how local representatives should be chosen, what 'close to the people' and 'participation of the people' actually meant; indeed, there were ambiguities over who 'the people' actually were. Given these uncertainties TVA's administration were able to demonstrate the legitimacy of their interpretations of what grass roots involvement actually meant in such a way as to secure their survival, thus filtering out the 'fact' that TVA's survival had been achieved through 'compromise and mediation'.

In summary, Selznick contributes to the understanding of organisational culture in two important ways. Firstly, he shows that an employee's identity is often grounded in shared cultural assumptions. Thus the development of shared cultural understandings can engender increased commitment to

the organisation. Secondly, he shows how groups more able to mobilise meaning with forms of power can exploit the relationship to legitimise their accounts and interpretations of organisational 'reality'. There are, however, important unintended consequences of such symbolic and ideological manipulation, especially in terms of blinding exponents to unwanted or disparaging information. Finally, Selznick shows that the study of organisational culture should not be decontextualised from the society in which it is located because the organisational power relations, through which culture is constituted and reproduced, will often come to mirror those of the host society.

c. Becker et al: Boys in White.

In 'Boys in White' Becker et al (1961) examine the processes that male medical students undergo in order to become practicing physicians. As a means of uncovering and examining this process Becker et al were theoretically and methodologically concerned to get as close to the students as possible in order to understand what was of interest and importance to the 'boys'.

The first important contribution that Becker et al make to the understanding of culture is in their definition: they define culture in terms of ideas and action rather than as a set of deeply held values and beliefs. Thus culture is defined as 'a body of ideas and practices considered to support each other and expected of each other by members of some group of people' (ibid:435). The authors clarify their

definition by distinguishing between student perspectives (ideas and practices that make up culture), values and attitudes. Perspectives differ from values in being situationally specific; they differ from attitudes by the fact that they contain actions as well as ideas where 'the actions derive their rationale from the ideas; the ideas are sustained by success in action' (ibid:435). In doing so, they begin to formulate the idea of culture as praxis. This theme is explored more fully in the examination of Willis 'Learning to Labour' (see section 3.4.4).

Having established their definitions, Becker et al make a second important contribution to the understanding of occupational and organisational cultures. Here they reveal that student (occupational) cultures are neither constructed nor reproduced by students, unproblematically absorbing the professional cultures of medics nor from their perspectives on physicianship prior to medical school. Rather, their culture is shown to be constructed and reproduced as students collectively set the level and direction of their efforts to learn within the organisational culture of the medical school.

While Becker et al do not directly tease out this relationship between occupational and organisational culture, there is sufficient material within their study from which to infer. Most importantly, they suggest that the students' relatively powerless positioning within the organisational culture, with little control over the content and load of their work, has an important bearing on the construction and

reproduction of their occupational culture. For example, the students are shown to suspend their idealistic, long-range medical perspectives during their passage through school and, in their place, construct student (rather than medically orientated) cultures in order to manage the day-to-day problems of learning at medical school. Thus, for the students, unlike the culture of Gouldner's miners which is absorbed from the community, occupational culture is developed at the work place as a response to meeting the day-to-day demands and pressures of studying, being examined, and yet more studying.

The final contribution that I intend to examine here is Becker et al's appreciation of some of the existential and political dynamics of cultural reproduction. This is particularly clear in their discussion of manifest and latent cultures. Here they suggest that (ibid:143)

> Another way of looking at student culture is to consider it the manifest, as opposed to the latent, culture of the group. People carry culture with them when they leave one group setting for another; they do not shed their cultural premises. Something is true of the person by virtue of this fact is that he has another social identity which draws its being from another social group. In short, the members of a group may derive their understanding about things from cultures other than that of the group they are participating in at the moment. To the degree that group participants share latent social identities... there will be a culture which can be called latent, latent in the sense that it has its origin and social support in a group other than the one in which persons are now participating.

What is particularly important here is not the identification

of sub-groups, but their realisation that members of a sub-group with well defined latent identities may be able to influence manifest culture to promote and protect their latent identities and group interests. What Becker et al have begun to grasp is that culture is not just a functional response to organisational and occupational problems of survival, although they certainly note that there are functional consequences for the student culture. Rather, they have begun to appreciate that work cultures are constructed through asymmetrical relationships of power, where actors seek to gain control over manifest culture in order to secure and protect valued resources and identities.

In summary, Becker et al provide an important piece of research which takes into account the existential and political processes of cultural reproduction. Their work, however, in being guided by practical interests and therefore not concerned more critical, emancipatory issues, is limited by being decontextualised from the material processes of cultural production. These will be explored more in section 3.4.a to f, below, in my examination of organisation theory motivated by critical, emancipatory interests.

d. Andrew M. Pettigrew: The Politics of Organisational Decision Making.

In the 'Politics of Organisational Decision Making' (1973) Pettigrew examines the introduction of new technologies into the management services division of Michaels, a large clothing and furniture store in the Midlands. He specifically

focuses upon their impact on the emerging occupational specialisms of computer programming and systems analysis. In doing so, he contributes to our understanding of the production and reconstitution of culture by examining the centrality of the programmers and analysts' distinctive norms, values and myths to their strategies for securing and maintaining control over scarce material and symbolic resources. His emphasis on understanding the politics of organisational decision-making, rather than using knowledge gained through research for prediction and control or for more critical, emancipatory ends, reveals the practical intent that motivates his work. I have thus located his work accordingly.

During his examination of the professional cultures of the computer programmers and systems analysts, Pettigrew argues that it is insufficient merely to examine their shared occupational belief-systems. Rather, he argues that these belief-systems must be examined within the political context of the organisation in which they are located. This is because distinctive occupational cultures are not developed through the sharing of specialist occupational knowledge alone, but by the ideological and mythological mobilisation of such knowledge by competent actors to secure control over symbolic and material resources.

Elaborating this theme, Pettigrew maintains that organisational division of labour creates occupational sub-units that are necessarily interdependent on one another. Moreover, it is largely through their positioning

within these occupational specialisms that organisational actors come to construct their valued sense of identity. Given this connection, Pettigrew argues that a threat to the relative positioning of an occupational sub-unit within its host organisation is experience by its component actors not only as a threat to their control over resources, but also as a threat to their identity. This being the case, occupational specialists tend to pursue strategies to secure and protect their 'rightful' use of symbolic and material resources from the imperialistic attacks of other specialist groups. One (unintended) consequence of these strategies is that they tend to result in the denial of occupational interdependence and the pursuit of conflicting ends.

Pettigrew demonstrates how such a strategy was successfully implemented by the computer programmers at Michaels. For example, he notes that while the status of computer programmers was declining nationally with respect to systems analysts, the programmers at Michaels successfully defended their symbolic space (and associated control over resources) through the mobilisation of their specialist ideology, protective myths and norms of secrecy.

Central to the ideological defence of their symbolic space was the programmers insistence that they, and they only, possessed the specialist knowledge necessary for programming. Associated to this was a belief that they should be rewarded accordingly in terms of salary and status. This specialist ideology, which presented the programmers as an enclave of distinctive competence, was

constantly reinforced (and by-and-large accepted) by the
directors of Michaels. As a result the programmers found
themselves powerful allies to fend off the threat from
systems programmers who sought to gain control of management
services. This strategy was supplemented by the the
promulgation of protective myths. Drawing from relevant
authorities Pettigrew discusses the importance of such
myths.

> The second mechanism, the generation of myths, is
> less easily characterised as a strategy in the
> Michaels case. Myers (1952:273) has suggested that
> myths are likely to appear when an occupational
> group is face with change and is seeking to protect
> its power and identity.... This point has also
> been made in the anthropological literature on
> myth: 'If we view social relations through a
> longish period of time, we see how various parties
> and supporters operate and manipulate mystical
> beliefs of various kinds to serve their own
> interests' (Gluckman, 1965:235) (ibid:151).

For example, the specialist not only claimed that special
skills were needed within the management services department
but also that only they possessed those skills; arguably the
systems analysts had equal if not superior knowledge in many
key areas. Moreover, what Pettigrew importantly reveals is
that myth can be mobilised instrumentally to secure
resources. He shows, for example, that the programmers
(cynically) sustained such myths 'especially when ..[they
were] no longer true' (ibid:151).

Finally, Pettigrew shows how the programmers protected their
ideological and mythical declarations from penetration by
maintaining norms of secrecy and control over the training
programme at Michaels. As a result, they were able to withold

important information from analysts that might have reduced the 'uncertainty and/or mystique of their task' (ibid:152).

In summary, what Pettigrew shows is that it is insufficient merely to examine the norms, values and beliefs of groups of actors without understanding how these have been infused with power to gain and/or maintain control over scarce resources. In doing so, he shows how occupational specialists attempt to maintain their valued sense of identity in situations of change through the strategic mobilisation of specialist myth and ideology. His work therefore makes an important contribution to the present debate.

e. Contributions and Limitations of Practical-Interest Guided Studies.

In summary, the main contributions of studies guided by practical cognitive interests are that they recognise that cultural meanings are not 'givens' but are continually negotiated by organisational actors. However, while they acknowledge that more powerful actors tend to be able to legitimise their sectional ideologies in terms of an organisation's culture, by failing to locate their studies within the capitalist labour process, they are unable to penetrate how actors come by the scarce resources which are the media of their power.

3.4. Research Guided by Emancipatory Cognitive Interests.

In this section I will examine the work of Silverman and
Jones (1976), Nichols and Benyon (1977), Willis (1977) and
Burawoy (1979) as examples of key texts from organisation
theory, guided by emancipatory cognitive interests, which
contribute to our understanding of organisational culture and
symbolism.

a. Silverman and Jones: Organisational Work.

In 'Organisational Work' (1976) Silverman and Jones
ostensibly examine the selection, training and promoting of
grade 1 administrators in a large public sector
organisation. In doing so, they seek to surface the
taken-for-granted stocks of knowledge that 'experts'
(interviewers, trainers, members of staff appraisal
committees) employ in interpreting the organisational rules
and practices of grading. However, rather than presenting
their work as an ethnomethodological account of
organisational work, they offer critical reflections on how,
and why, the evaluation of persons is intelligible to
organisational actors (and us) by acknowledging that the
language of grading is the language of a stratified (and
commodified) society; a society which they (we) are
continually producing and recreating through action and
speech. From this analysis, Silverman and Jones reveal some
of the dehumanising consequences of the commodification of
labour and language. In doing so, they reveal their
commitment to research motivated predominantly by

emancipatory cognitive interests. Although, having said that, it must also be noted that an intertwining of practical (part two of their book) and emancipatory (part three) interests can be detected within their research.

For Silverman and Jones, culture is the tacit stock of knowledge, the rules and practices, the knowing of what's 'expected and what's possible and how things happen' (ibid:84). It is not only knowing what the 'rules' are, but knowing how to apply them 'in the right spirit' to appropriate instances (ibid:46). In this sense, the production and reproduction of organisational culture is only possible through the continual interpretive work of skilled organisational actors. This is shown cleverly by the authors in their examination of the recruitment and selection of newly qualified graduates. Here interviewers are faced with the task of grading graduates according to their appearance, acceptability, confidence, effort, organisation and motivation. However, in seeking to follow the 'rule' of recruiting 'acceptable' candidates, the interviewers necessarily have to engage in interpretive work. For, it is not the categories that grade people, but how the interviewers interpret them for each candidate. This point is touched on by Silverman and Jones when they seek to explain why interviewers, when played tapes of former interviews in which they were involved, unwittingly reclassified formerly 'acceptable' candidates as 'abrasive'. They note that (ibid:60),

> there is no way in which 'acceptability' (or 'abrasiveness') could produce particular selection

outcomes, for the same behaviour could at different times be viewed in terms of either notion. The importance of such notions, however, is not diminished.... The role they play, then, is that of explaining (but not of producing) courses of action. Like 'reasons' in general, they provide a rhetoric through which outcomes are made accountable.

In this way, Silverman and Jones contribute to our understanding organisational culture by revealing that culture is not just about attitudes, values, beliefs or even rules. Rather it is the tacit taken-for-granted stocks of knowledge that are necessary to use rules in organisationally legitimate ways. Indeed, Silverman and Jones make it clear that organisationally legitimate work is impossible without these tacit understandings. For example, in discussing Anne, a public relations officer, the authors note that (ibid:105)

> Without this background she would have been quite incapable of ad hocing for the specific problems that confronted her work... When she encountered a problem she could not handle her stock-of-knowledge about the hierarchy and social structure of the organisation would enable her to ask in the correct quarters for guidance, whereas an outsider could not even do that.

Having examined the necessity of tacit stocks of knowledge for organisational work, Silverman and Jones critically reflect on how taken-for-granted knowledge, such as the need for grading, is intelligible to organisational actors (and to us). It is at this juncture that their work moves from an interpretive to a critical, emancipatory mode. Here they argue that the language of grading is only intelligible in a society which people are valued as commodities, in which all 'relationships have their monetary value and it is their monetary value that matters' (ibid:170). What grading and evaluation do then, is stratify people into categories of

'acceptable' and 'unacceptable' according to their possession of valued, marketable skills (as defined by the market).

The language of grading (which is the language we all use) is therefore, the language of the commodity form of life. The use of such language in organisations (and life) can have deeply alienating consequences. For example, Silverman and Jones make it clear that our speaking (and grading) of people as commodities shapes, and is shaped by, the way we treat people; that is, as 'things'. Moreover, in using the language of things (ibid:172)

> men are relating to their mode of speech as to an
> alien object; in which they use speech to do things
> (like grading) but in using it are mastered by it
> since the form of life which makes the speech
> intelligible dehumanises human activities (makes
> them something).

However, while the language of the commodity form of life necessarily dehumanises organisational actors (and us), alternative forms of life are possible where Being is not alienated from language. Moreover, it is 'only through our participation in the co-production of our mode of production [that we can]... re-collect ourselves differently' (ibid:173).

In summary, then, Silverman and Jones make important contributions to penetrating the political processes of cultural reproduction by acknowledging that organisational culture is not simply organisational rules and practices but rather the tacit stock-of-knowledge which enables organisational actors situationally to interpret such rules and practices. Moreover, they reveal that this

taken-for-granted is only meaningful for members of the commodified society in, and for, which it is continually reproduced. Thus, Silverman and Jones make a vital connection between organisational culture and the society's mode of production.

b. Nichols and Benyon: Living with Capitalism.

In 'Living with Capitalism' (1977) Nichols and Benyon are concerned to uncover how the people who work at Chemco, a large British owned multinational chemical producer, make sense of their work experience. Specifically, they examine the changes that the introduction of the New working Arrangements (NWA) have made to the working lives of both labour and management. In doing so, they not only attend to the work culture of the labourers, but, by pursuing a labour process analysis, show how culture does not exist independently of the social relations of production. Their critical, emancipatory convictions are revealed through their repeated lamentation at the 'immense waste of human potential that is locked up within capitalist factory production' (ibid: vii) and their concern to develop socialistic perspectives on the labour process. They note, for example, that their book 'carries the conviction that the struggle for the new socialist view is now a matter of great importance' (ibid:vii). And, for them, their work advances its realisation.

Nichols and Benyon contribute to our understanding of organisational culture by penetrating some of the material

aspects of its production and reconstitution. This is achieved relatively successfully by integrating their study of culture into the broader issues of the capitalist labour process. In doing so, they ably reveal that it is not technologically necessary for men to hump bags of fertiliser day-in-day-out; machines could quite easily do that. Equally unnecessary are the managerial strategies to tighten their control over the allocation and motivation of workers. The reason for this dehumanising work organisation is to be found in the fact that Chemco is not 'designed to make chemicals but chemicals for profit' (ibid:69).

It is here that an analysis of the labour process is central to their argument. It goes as follows. Industrial capitalists make profit primarily by hiring human labour power, putting it to work and exploiting it to create surplus value and subsequently profit. This profit is then returned to capital and the cycle is repeated. In order for the amount of surplus to be increased capital must necessarily find ways of increasing the productivity of labour. Thus, at Chemco, management are shown to be constantly searching for new working arrangements that will enhance their ability to extract surplus value from labour. In this light, Nichols and Benyon show Chemco's introduction of the NWA to be a manipulative strategy for managing human resources to squeeze out more surplus. The introduction of the NWA by Chemco's management is thus no more than a strategic attempt to build the equivalent of a 'strong' culture (c.f. Deal and Kennedy, 1982). It was introduced to win the ideological 'battle for

the minds and wills of men' (ibid:113) by making and reinforcing 'strong and clear statements... about the need for new attitudes, the need for commitment, for a "revolution" in the social relationships within the the factory' (ibid:111).

What Nichols and Benyon usefully reveal is that the work culture of these men at Chemco can not be understood outside of the capitalist labour process. Thus the 'technologies, job specifications and skill requirements' that enable and constrain the construction of work culture

> are not developed or imposed extra-socially, outside of a mode of production. And the capitalist system divides and socialises, enriches and impoverishes, upgrades and degrades in the interest of capital not labour. Recognise this; consider the likely priorities; and there is little mystery about why, for the Riverside workers, the NWA - heralded by management as a "change programme without parallel in British industry" - meant for the workers no fundamental change at all in their power of decision making or conditions of work (ibid:70).

As one of the workers said,

> You move from one boring, dirty, monotonous job to another boring, dirty, monotonous job. And then another boring, dirty, monotonous job. And somehow you're supposed to come out of it all "enriched". But I never feel "enriched" - I just feel knackered (ibid:16).

Ironically, through the cultural changes which the NWA was to introduce 'workers were to be invited to get more "involved" in their work, to "self-actualise" and actually to be more exploited' (ibid:10).

What the authors fail to do, however, is show labour to be a 'perpetrator as well as a victim of the capitalist

organisation of the labour process' (Knights and Willmott, 1985: 35; See also Harris, 1987, for a later analysis of Chemco that is sensitive to this issue). This is not to suggest that they completely ignore the issues of subjectivity. They do, for example, note that people are not the simple products of the forces that work upon them. However, their one-dimensional view of subjectivity, where structure, to a large extent, shapes the response of actors, blinds them to the ways in which actors are involved in reproducing the conditions of their own exploitation and subordination.

In summary, 'Living with capitalism' makes a contribution to understanding organisational culture by showing that culture is not necessarily produced through harmonious relationships. Rather, it is produced through asymmetrical relations of power where managers (as the relatively powerful) are seen to have sufficient control over 'the organisational rules and resources to successfully negotiate the cultural status quo in their favour. Thus, by locating the production and reconstitution of organisational culture within the capitalist organisation of the labour process, Nichols and Benyon are able to show how culture is manipulated as an instrument of managerial control over labour. This theme is similarly addressed by Burawoy in section 3.4.d.

c. Willis: Learning to Labour.

'Learning to Labour' (1977) is concerned to answer the puzzle
of why working-class 'kids' let themselves get working-class
jobs. In addressing this theme, Willis adopts a cultural
perspective examining the official culture of an inner city
school, the counter-culture of a group of working-class
children from the school, and the working-class culture that
their parents draw upon and reproduce not only on the
shop-floor but also in their day-to-day life. What the
author shows is that the lads know a good deal, both
discursively and tacitly, about the school environment of
which they form a part. For example, they realise that
regardless of how hard they work their chances of getting
anything other than monotonous, unedifying jobs are poor.
Having reckoned that the rewards for conformism and obedience
are qualifications of questionable value (in terms of
improving their job prospects), the lads find no reason to
sacrifice their present freedom for a future which promises
little. (7)

Finding no personal significance in the official school
culture, the lads construct their identities by opposing the
official teaching culture at almost every point. They
actively contest the authority relations within the school by
launching a continual barrage of jokes, sarcasm and irony,
and where possible, defeat the system by 'skiving off'.
However, such activity, as Willis rightly points out, has
unintended consequences for the lads. Their oppositional

forms of behaviour lead them to want to leave school early and go out to work. Moreover, the counter-school culture they develop within the school strongly resembles the shop-floor, working-class culture of their parents. This commonality of cultural stocks of knowledge oils the transition from school to work making it relatively easy to adjust to a culture where you 'take it easy' and 'take no notice' of management (1977:130). By leaving school with no qualifications and taking jobs with no career prospects, they enter a work situation in which they are effectively stuck for the rest of their lives. And as Willis concludes, their entry into this working world, ironically more akin to 'prison' (ibid¦107) than the liberation they were seeking, is, at least in part, the consequence (albeit unintended) of their own action.

For Willis 'the cultural' is viewed 'not simply as a set of transferred internal structures (as in the usual notions of socialisation) nor as the passive result of the action of dominant ideology downwards (as in certain kinds of marxism), but at least in part as the product of collective human praxis' (ibid:4). In theorising the culture/structure relationship as dialectical, in contrast to the dualistic relationship in which it is often seen in organisation theory, Willis clearly demonstrates that it is through interaction at the cultural level that the structural relationships of society are formed, reconstituted, and simultaneously drawn upon to guide action at the cultural level. Moreover, because of this dialectical relationship,

cultural reproduction always carries with it the potential for producing alternative outcomes. Therefore, at the very heart of day-to-day lived-through experiences at the cultural level is the possibility of realising a liberating and emancipatory praxis - a possibility which is closed down by the lads' efforts to make their situation more bearable.

Willis goes on to show that it is through these cultural forms that organisational actors construct their subjectivities and meaningful identities. For Willis, these cultural forms provide the

> most believable and rewarding accounts for the individual, his future and especially for the expression of his/her vital energies (ibid:172).

The counter-school culture, then, is valued because it is recognised by the lads to be 'internally authentic and self made' (ibid:172).

Expressing his commitment to the production of knowledge motivated by a critical, emancipatory intent, Willis concludes his work with a number of general principles to aid the penetration of the cultural/structural dialectic and the development of an associated emancipatory praxis. He suggest that actors should seek to understand the reproductive functions accomplished at the cultural level. For example, the lads' adherence to the counter-school culture has the unintended consequence of reproducing the supply of unskilled labour to the labour market. Next, Willis argues that actors (and writers) should seek to expose these cultural processes, and finally 'to act on behalf of, as well amongst, your

constituency if structural change is desired' (ibid:187).

In summary, Willis contributes to the body of knowledge on organisational culture by theorising the culture/structure relationship as dialectical rather than subscribing to the dualisms of much of the social sciences. By doing so, he reveals that cultural interaction has important (and often unintended) consequences for the reproduction of structural relationships. Finally, by offering some principles for penetrating these relationships he offers organisational actors (and researchers) the opportunity for critical reflection on the conditions of their existence, and the potential for joint action to counter domination and oppression.

d. Burawoy: Manufacturing Consent.

In 'Manufacturing Consent' (1979) Burawoy is primarily concerned to penetrate productive relations in order to understand how consent is organised on the shop-floor. Why, for example, do workers sometimes push themselves to advance the interests of the company; interests that are, at least theoretically, in opposition to their own? Moreover, why did he find himself actively participating in his own exploitation? As he writes, with the sadness that sometimes accompanies self discovery,

> it wasn't long before 1 too was breaking my back to
> make out, to make the quota, to discover a new
> angle, and to run two jobs at once - risking life
> and limb for that extra piece. What was driving me
> to increase Allied's profits? Why was I actively
> participating in the intensification of my own
> exploitation and even losing my temper when I
> couldn't? (ibid:xi).

In answering this question he rejects the objectivism and determinism of some streams of Marxism that reduce workers to pliable objects coerced by management strategies of control into churning out unit after unit of production. Such theories, he argues, no longer fully explain what he, and other workers did on the shop floor. In their place, he maintains, a theory is needed that allows for an element of 'spontaneous consent combined with coercion to shape productive relations' (ibid:xii). Through his participant observation of the machine shop culture at Allied Corporation, this is exactly what he offers.

At Allied a series of bonus opportunities existed that allowed workers to realise up to 125 percent of daily wages by meeting target levels of production. This bonus system readily provided workers with the necessary conditions to treat work as a 'game'. Indeed, playing the games of production - or 'making out' as it was known in the machine shop - became the central focus of the mens' work culture. As Burawoy observes, the

> shop-floor culture revolves around making out. Each worker sooner or later is sucked into this distinctive set of activities and language, which then proceed to take on a meaning of their own (ibid:64).

In this way culture is theorised to include the technical stocks-of-knowledge necessary for making out (e.g. to operate the machines), the ability to mobilise material and symbolic resources to engender the cooperation of support staff (e.g. fork-lift operators), and an understanding (and experience) of the social and psychological importance of making out or

failing to do so in terms of the construction of valued subjectivities and identities. Burawoy shows the shop floor culture to be mobilised and reproduced through symbol systems and routinised practices. These include the ability to use the ritualistic language of making out to bring off informal conversation: 'are you making out?', 'what's the rate?', 'the rate's impossible!', 'knocking out the pieces', 'best job in the house', 'I'm making out. What more do you want?', 'Gravy!' (ibid:63). Moreover, the ability to make out, to ritualistically strut around the shop floor to demonstrate one's competence, to bring off cultural interaction successfully, 'provided the basis of status quo hierarchies' where the 'culture of making out' provided the set of rules and practices by which 'individuals evaluated themselves and one another' (ibid:64).

What Burawoy reveals is that the reproduction of the culture of making out has unintended consequences for the workers. So, while workers perceive the rewards for making out 'in terms of factors immediately related to the labour process - reduction in fatigue, passing time, relieving boredom; and so on - and factors that emerge from the labour process - the social and psychological rewards of making out on a tough job as well as the social stigma and psychological frustration attached to failing on a gravy job' (ibid:85), Burawoy insists that it cannot be understood solely at this level. Rather, he maintains that the organisation of the shop floor culture emerges out of (and must be understood in relation to) specific relations of production; relations that reflect

management's concern to pump out surplus value. In this light making out has two important consequences in terms of engendering worker consent. Firstly, by organising the labour process as a game workers must necessarily subscribe to the rules of the game. One cannot, after all, play the game successfully while at the same time question the validity of its rules. And once these rules are legitimised and taken-for-granted the ideological victory of capital over labour is re-secured along with the extraction of surplus value. Secondly, playing games has the effect of placing workers in competing and conflicting positions. It redirects labour management conflict into competition between workers themselves. In fact, rather than question the morality of making out per se, workers tend to reserve their criticism of management to incidents in which they changed the work rates (or whatever) to make making out more difficult.

In summary, Burawoy contributes to the understanding of organisational culture by showing how management, by organising the labour process as a 'game', are able to manufacture worker consent. In doing so, he shows that organisational culture is produced and reproduced through asymmetrical relations of power in such a way that workers experience positive immediate rewards from playing the games in terms of reduced fatigue, the social and psychological support that making out successfully generates, and so forth. Moreover, by playing culturally significant games, workers are given seemingly real choices about how to organise their work. But it is in the very act of choosing

that consent is generated; consent spontaneously to cooperate with management to meet production targets, and ultimately, consent to their own exploitation.

e. Contributions of Emancipatory-Interest Guided Studies.

In summary, the main contribution of studies guided by emancipatory cognitive interests is that they recognise that organisation culture is not produced in a social vacuum, but in historically specific relations of production. They show how organisational actors, particularly managers, although not exclusively so, attempt to manipulate culture to realise their own interests. In doing so, some of the unintended consequences of increasing control are disclosed and explored.

3.5. Summary of key Research Themes.

From the above reviews it is quite apparent that the interests of research motivated by technical, practical and emancipatory intents are quite different. For example, research guided by a technical intent is concerned with managerial issues: how to manage organisational culture; how to build stronger cultures; how to change culture. In addition, it examines culture as a form of managerial control suitable for specific environmental situations. Literature guided by practical cognitive interests is more interested in understanding culture as shared meanings or as politically negotiated orders. Finally, critical, emancipatory work is concerned with analysing culture as a subtle form of domination and control with an emphasis on developing a

liberating praxis. These themes will be picked up in chapter 4 where I show the linkages between organisation theory's treatment of culture and the analyses offered in literature whose specific focus is organisational culture and symbolism.

Before moving on to discuss this second body of literature, it is worthwhile summarising the contributions that organisation theory has made to advancing our understanding of a critical, emancipatory conceptualisation of organisational culture. Firstly, organisation theory helps us to understand the _existential_ processes of cultural reproduction by recognising that actors can gain existentially significant meaning from work cultures. This theme is present within the studies by Ouchi, Burns and Stalker, Becker et al, Willis and Burawoy. Moreover, as Burns and Stalker, Burawoy, Willis and Selznick variously point out, the submission to the values and work practices of organisational cultures can have unintended, self-defeating and alienating consequences for the actors, both in terms of recognising their desired organisational ends and by developing valued subjectivities dependent on them actively maintaining a system of power relations through which they are both exploited and oppressed. Next, the work of Pettigrew, Becker et al, Gouldner, Selznick help us to understand the _political_ processes of cultural reproduction by highlighting how it is those groups of actors more able to infuse meaning with forms of power that tend to be able to legitimise, naturalise and sanction their sectional

ideologies as features of organisational culture. Finally, Silverman and Jones, Nichols and Benyon, Willis and Burawoy help us to understand the <u>material</u> processes of cultural reproduction by recognising that the ability of actors, or groups of actors, to pass off their sectional ideologies as day-to-day features of organisational culture is largely dependent on their prior positioning within the capitalist labour process. These themes will be picked up in Chapter five when I adopt a broadly Giddensian analysis to outline my theorisation of organisational culture.

CHAPTER FOUR: A REVIEW OF ORGANISATION CULTURE AND SYMBOLISM
LITERATURE.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 1 of this thesis I speculated on the reasons for
the recent mushrooming of interest in organisational culture
and symbolism during the last decade or so. Specifically, I
argued that the increasing problems of competition and
productivity for many Western business concerns, and the
apparent success of Japanese organisations, has resulted in a
new openness to managerial ideas from the East, particularly
those concerning culture. Secondly, I suggested that the
move to qualitative research, typified by the renewed
interest in corporate culture, has been partly motivated by
the concerns of some academics to rebuild the credibility of
the practical value of management research following the
disillusionment with more quantitative studies in the late
1970s. Thirdly, I commented on the success of this attempt to
rebuild credibility by noting that the concept of culture is
now of interest to both academics and practitioners; a
situation which has stimulated further research. Finally, I
noted that the fragmentation of the management science
research community, and the vagueness of the term culture,
has enabled studies to be pursued from a variety of
perspectives, so that culture has come to be regarded
(particularly by writers guided by technical cognitive
interests) as a panacea to a whole host of organisational
problems.

In Chapter 2 I briefly reviewed the strengths and weaknesses of five typologies that differentiate this body of literature to ascertain, among other things, which of them provides the most sensitive framework for critical, emancipatory conceptualisations of organisational culture and symbolism. The framework developed by Stablein and Nord (1985) was utilised in Chapter 3 to assess the contribution that organisation theory has made to understanding organisational culture and symbolism and, in particular, how far it has advanced the development of a critical appreciation of culture and symbolism. In this Chapter I continue the review of the literature by briefly overviewing the broad thrusts of the organisational culture and symbolism literature and, in doing so, assess how far this diverse body of work has facilitated the development of a critical, emancipatory treatment of culture and symbolism.

The remainder of this chapter is organised into five parts. In the first I make a few brief comments on the use of the typology to organise the literature review. In the next three sections, I present an overview of the key areas of interest of literature motivated by each of the cognitive interests respectively, concluding each section with a brief summary of the strengths and weaknesses of that particular body of literature. This involves an assessment of how far existing literature on organisational culture and symbolism has advanced the development of a critical, emancipatory conceptualisation of organisational culture. In the final section, I make a few comments on how far the literature has

penetrated the existential, political and material processes of cultural reproduction. Overall, the chapter is intended to prepare the reader for my discussion, in Chapter 5, of how a critical, emancipatory conceptualisation of culture might be advanced by drawing upon Giddens theory of structuration.

4.2. The Organisation of the Literature Review.

In concluding his 1979 paper 'On Studying Organisational Cultures', Pettigrew writes that he 'has only listed some items on a menu and put some of the items together in some simple dishes; it remains for others to broaden the menu and produce the cordon bleu meals' (1979:580). While I would hope that this thesis is of cordon blue quality, this chapter attempts something more limited. By using the typology developed by Stablein and Nord (1985) I hope to offer the reader a taste of the various dishes available in the organisational culture restaurant. In doing so, I recognise that people approach food (and organisational culture) for a number of reasons. For example, some regard eating a meal as a purely functional activity: for sustaining life, as a social context in which to win business contracts. Such people might be concerned with contriving a suitable atmosphere for a business meeting or to clinch a romantic encounter. They are not interested in appreciating why it has this effect, only that it enhances their chances of success. A second group of people seek to understand the social meaning of food. This group of people is exemplified by those who seek to understand why different recipes are favoured in specific geographical regions or are associated

with different occasions, and why some, like the hamburger, are eaten worldwide and at any time. Thirdly, a further group regard food as a means of liberation and life. For example the Yin and Yang system of Vietnamese culture and various streams of vegetarianism in the West are concerned to eat only healthy, life-giving foods as part of their spiritual, emotional and physical development. In this light, I encourage the reader to think beyond the immediate flavours and fragrance offered in the following review of the literature, and consider how and why the dishes were prepared. Only then, I suggest is it possible to understand why academic chefs have used certain ingredients and cooking methods to construct their dishes. Before beginning, I offer the reader one piece of advice: I suggest s/he remembers that although a dish might have a pleasing aroma and a pleasant flavour, upon consumption it might prove to have a bitter aftertaste, cause indigestion or, more seriously, have fatal consequences!

4.3. Studies Guided by Technical Cognitive Interests.

a. Overview of Literature.

In this section, I briefly overview the different research interests of literature motivated by a technical intent. It is divided into nine segments which examine literature interested in (i) developing 'excellent cultures', (ii) culture, organisational change and development, (iii) the management of culture, (iv) leadership and culture, (v) strategy and culture, (vi) cross-cultural perspectives on

management, (vii) culture and the organisation's environment, and (viii) individual components of culture (e.g. myths, stories, language etc.). In Figure 4.1 I identify literature that explores the questions raised by these eight areas of research interest. In the final segment I offer a brief summary of the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation culture and symbolism literature guided by technical cognitive interests.

Developing 'Excellent' Cultures: In the last chapter I noted Ouchi's concern to see businesses move towards type Z organisations, which, by fostering a higher degree of personal autonomy and commitment to organisational values and beliefs, should promote an increase in performance. This connection between developing 'strong' cultures and performance is picked up by writers concerned to explore how 'excellent' cultures are (and can be) constructed (Goldsmith and Clutterbuck, 1984, 1985; White, 1984; Sherwood, 1988). Ouchi and Deal and Kennedy (1982) argue that the link between culture and performance is not a direct one (cf., Akin and Hopeland, 1986). Rather, they maintain that 'a strong culture enables people to feel better about what they do, so they are more likely to work harder at it' (ibid: 16). Similarly, Peters and Waterman (1982) suggest that the reason why the development of 'excellent' cultures often leads to increased performance is because they meet the psychological need of employees to be motivated. Both Peters and Waterman and Deal and Kennedy suggest how 'excellent' or 'strong' cultures may be engendered. Peters and Waterman, for example, suggest

that organisations can engender 'excellent' cultures by
developing a 'bias for action', 'sticking to the knitting'
and becoming 'close to the customer'. Throughout these books
there is the assumption that excellent cultures can be
constructed relatively easily by any management team willing
to follow the prescription. A number of writers take issue
with Peters and Waterman' claims. White (1984), for example,
maintains that cultures are relatively difficult to change
and suggests that managers should concentrate on changing
organisational strategy to fit the culture rather than trying
to change culture to fit the desired strategy. Mitchell
(1985) suggests that so called 'excellent' cultures are often
exploitative and not particularly good employers, while
Golzen (1987b) explores some of the dysfunctional
consequences of developing strong cultures. Despite such
criticisms, the work of Peters and Waterman, in particular,
and Deal and Kennedy, to a lesser extent, still remain the
texts that come most quickly to mind when one talks of
organisational culture.

Organisational Culture, Change and Development: Following
Barnard's concern to change culture by inculcating beliefs
and values to employees, a number of writers have sought to
explore the processes of cultural change. As there is a good
deal of overlap in the themes addressed by these writers it
is difficult to sub-divide this section accurately. However,
bearing this in mind, it is possible to indicate different
emphases within this broad study of organisational change and
development. For example, some writers examine culture as

one root to organisational change (e.g., Marshall and McLean, 1985). Others focus upon how organisations can be changed so that a desired cultural state is reached (e.g., Allen and Kraft, 1982). A third emphasis is upon helping managers to understand their organisation's culture (e.g., Harrison, 1972; Handy, 1976; Tichy, 1982a, 1982b; Johnson, 1989). A further group of writers explore the various stages of cultural change (e.g., Allen, 1985; Denison, 1984; Dyer, 1984; Gagliardi, 1986; Silverweig and Allen, 1976) (1). Finally, a further group of writers refer to the importance of cultural change when refering to a number of organisation development issues such as motivation (Cummings, 1984), job enrichment (Moberg, 1981), stress (Wilson, 1988), work group behaviour (Amsa, 1986), changing negative norms (Allen and Pilnick, 1973) and organisational problem solving (Bate, 1984).

Managing Organisational Culture: A third, albeit related, emphasis within the literature motivated by technical cognitive interests is the concern to manage organisational culture. Writers interested in exploring how organisational cultures can be managed include O'Toole (1979), Baker (1980), Sathe (1983), Sethia and Von Glinow (1985), Sapienza (1985), Nord (1985) and Edwards (1988). Nord provides a useful overview of this literature and notes that while most writers who address this issue suggest that culture can be managed, they all indicate a number of limitations on the degree to which this is possible. This list includes such features as 'a lack of willingness on behalf of some actors, 'poor

communications', 'bad timing', 'a leader getting trapped by
his or her own rhetoric', 'life cycles' and 'conflicting
interests' (ibid:193).

Leadership and Culture: While a number of writers address
this issue (e.g., Pondy, 1976; Maccoby, 1976; Gilmore, 1982;
Eoyang, 1983 and Bryman, 1984), Schein's (1985)
'Organisational Culture and Leadership' is probably the most
influential text within this category. Among other things,
Schein is concerned to understand how leaders embed and
transmit culture in order to get their proposed solutions to
organisational problems implemented. In doing so, Schein
identifies primary and secondary mechanisms through which a
leader can transmit his or her cultural values. He
identifies five primary mechanisms that are concerned with:
(i) what leaders must pay attention to, measure and control;
(ii) how a leader should act to critical incidents and
organisational crisis; (iii) how a leader can teach, coach
and be a role model for subordinates; (iv) criteria by which
a leader should allocate symbolic and material rewards; and
(v) how a leader should recruit, select, promote, retire and
excommunicate his workforce. The secondary mechanisms that
Schein identifies are seen to be less powerful and more
ambiguous that the primaries. They concern the
organisation's design and structures; systems and procedures;
buildings and physical space; stories legends and myths; and
formal philosophies, creeds and charters. In concluding,
Schein argues that leaders do not have a choice whether or
not to communicate. Rather, they have a choice about how to

communicate their message and those more adept at managing these mechanisms are more likely to get their message across.

Strategy and Culture: Theorists seeking to explore the relationship between strategy and culture are generally interested in either exploring the importance of symbols and values in strategic formulation and change (Ansoff, 1979; Quinn, 1980), measuring cultural risk in strategic change (Schwartz and Davis, 1981; Johnson and Scholes, 1984). Schwartz and Davis (ibid:39) elaborate this second research interest maintaining that:

> In any industry or company that is implementing major strategic shifts, success depends on successfully combining the culture with changes in organisational structure, management systems, and people to produced desired behaviour. Where changes in any of these aspects of organisation are aimed at behaviour that is crucial to success, the risk that implementation will suffer increases if culture rejects or alters their impact.

Schwartz and Davis conclude their study by offering a step-by-step guide to assessing the level of cultural risk in a planned strategic intervention. The first step comprises defining the relevant organisational cultures and subcultures. These cultural values are then organised in terms of managers tasks and key relationships so that specific problem areas can be pinpointed. In the third stage the risk that the organisations culture presents to successful implementation of the strategy is evaluated. Finally, the aspects of culture that are both highly important to successful strategic intervention and incompatible with the approaches planned are identified and

alternative approaches to change which provide a better fit between strategy and culture are identified.

Cross-Cultural Perspectives: Cross-cultural perspectives on management are concerned to explore how 'behaviours occuring in different cultures when they are shown to be functionally equivalent in the sense that the aspect of behaviour in question represents attempts of the compared culture to solve the same problem' (Roberts 1970: 330). Literature comparing American and Japanese business methods predominates in this literature (e.g. Ouchi, 1981; Pascale and Athos, 1982; De Frank et al, 1985).

Culture and the Organisation's Environment: This body of work is founded on the premise that more attention needs to be given to the external society in which the organisation is embedded (Jelinek et al, 1983; Beck and Moore, 1985). Davis and Weiner (1985) provide a good example of such study by seeking to explore the impact of societal, industrial and community cultures on the culture of a trade union. They conclude that there needs to be a fit between the culture of the union and external culture if industrial harmony is to be maintained.

Components of Culture: The final thrust within the literature guided by technical cognitive interests is concerned with research that seeks to understand the functions of individual components of culture. For example, Boje et al (1982) proposes that organisational myths must be analysed and incorporated into planning for organisational change and

development interventions. Other research includes examinations of organisational rites and rituals (e.g. Trice and Beyer, 1985), symbols (e.g. Dandridge et al, 1980), stories (e.g. Martin, 1982) and language (e.g. Evered, 1983).

FIGURE 4.1: ORGANISATION CULTURE AND SYMBOLISM RESEARCH GUIDED BY TECHNICAL COGNITIVE INTERESTS. [1]

RESEARCH INTEREST:	EXAMPLE FROM: CHAPTER 3:	REFERENCES:
(i) The development of 'excellent' cultures	Ouchi regards type Z organisations as strong cultures	Akin and Hopeland, 1986. Dyer and Dyer, 1984. Goldsmith and Clutterbuck, 1984, 1985. Golzen, 1987b. Miller, 1984. Mitchell, 1985. Peters and Waterman, 1982. Sherwood, 1988. Westley and Jaeger, 1985. White, 1984. Wilkins and Ouchi, 1983.
(ii) Organisational culture, change and development [2]	Barnard identifies eight incentives to change organisations	Allen, 1985. Allen and Kraft, 1982. Amsa, 1986. Berg, 1985. Business Week, 1980. Cummings, 1984. Davis, S., 1984. Denison, 1984. Dyer, 1984, 1985, 1986. Frost, 1985. Gagliard, 1986. Handy, 1976. Harrison, 1972, 1978. Hebden, 1986. Huff, 1980, 1982. Johnson, 1989. Jones, M., 1988. Kilmann, 1985. Kilmann et al, 1985a, 1985b, 1985c. Knittel, 1974. Krefting and Frost, 1985. Lorsch, 1985. Lundberg, 1985. Marshall and McLean, 1985. Mirvis and Berg, 1977. Moberg, 1981. Moore, 1988. Ouchi, 1979, 1980. Ouchi and Jaeger, 1978. Ouchi and Johnson, 1978. Ouchi and Wilkins, 1985. Pondy, 1983. Pondy and Huff, 1983.

Sathe, 1985b.
Schein, 1983, 1985a.
Siehl and Martin, 1988.
Silverweig and Allen, 1976.
Snyder, 1985, 1988.
Tichy, 1982a, 1982b.
Tunstall, 1985.
Wallach, 1983.
Wilkins, 1983a.
Wilkins and Ouchi, 1985.
Wilson, 1988.
Wolfe, 1988.

(iii) The Management of culture 2

Barnard reveals how culture can be managed through use of eight incentives

Baker, 1980.
Bakke, 1980.
Bhagat and McQuaid, 1982.
Foy, 1980.
Freeman, 1983.
Golzen, 1987a.
Jensen and Rubback, 1983.
Johnson and Lundin,1977.
Kilman, 1982.
Lebas and Weigenstein, 1986.
Martin, H., 1985.
Martin, Jodi, 1988.
Nord, 1985.
O'Toole, 1979.
Peters, 1978.
Pfeffer, 1981.
Roy, 1977.
Sapienza, 1985.
Sathe, 1983, 1985a.
Sethia and Von Glinow, 1985.
Siehl, 1985.
Thompson and Wildawsky, 1986.
Uttal, 1983.
Vinton, 1983.

(iv) Leadership and culture

Ouchi regards biggest problem facing U.S. business is that Japanese are better corporate leaders

Bryman, 1984.
Eoyang, 1983.
Gilmore, 1982.
Maccoby, 1976.
Pondy, 1976.
Schein, 1985b.

(v) Culture and strategy	not addressed	Ansoff, 1979. Harvey and Woolley, 1985. Johnson and Scholes, 1984. Quinn, 1980. Schwartz and Davis, 1981.
(vi) Cross-cultural perspective on organisations.	Ouchi's notes the success of Japanese Organisations.	De Frank et al, 1985. Hofstede, 1980. Pascale and Athos, 1982. Roberts, 1970.
(vii) Culture and the organisation's environment.	Burns and Stalker note the impact of the environment on organisational culture.	Beck and Moore, 1985. Davis and Weiner, 1983. Davis, T., 1985. Gordon, 1985. Reynolds, 1986.

(viii) Elements of Culture

– **Rites and Rituals**	Ouchi identifies rituals in type Z organisations.	Danbridge, 1986; 1988 Mitroff and Kilmann, 1985. Trice, 1983. Trice et al, 1969. Trice and Beyer, 1984; 1985.
– **Symbols**	Barnard recognises importance of symbols e.g. organisational charts.	Daft, 1983 Dandridge, 1983. Dandridge et al, 1980. Frost and Morgan, 1983. Morgan, 1985. Peters, 1978. Stern, 1988.
– **Stories**	Ouchi notes importance of stories in clans (Z type organisations).	Martin, 1982. Martin et al, 1983. Martin and Powers, 1983a; 1983b. Martin and Siehl, 1983. Martin et al, 1985. Mitroff and Kilmann, 1975; 1976. Smith and Steadman, 1981. Wilkins, 1983b.

- **Language**	Roethlisberger and Dickson note the importance of special language to informal work groups. e.g., 'rate busters'.	Daft and Wiginton, 1979. Evered, 1983. Hirsch and Andrews, 1983.
- **Myth**	Not addressed.	Boje et al, 1982. Bradford and Harvey, 1972. Broms and Gahmberg, 1982, 1983. Jonnson and Lundin, 1977. Mitroff et al, 1974. Pondy, 1983. Smith and Simmons, 1983. Tommerup, 1988. Westerlund and Sjostrand, 1979.

NOTES.

1. In the construction of this typology I recognise that there is considerable overlap between the different research themes. For example, Deal and Kennedy (1982) contribute to categories (i), (ii), (iii), (iv) and (viii). However, to avoid making the lists of references overlong, I have placed research in the category that I believe it makes its most important contribution to the literature.

2. Ideally, it would be helpful to sub-divide this long list of references. However, each time I have attempted such an excercise I am left with the impression that the categories created are completely arbitrary; confusing, rather than clarifying, the literature. In consequence, I have left the list intact, which, at least, has the benefit of showing the reader the quantity of studies conducted in this area. Within the text, however, I have noted some of the key themes that fall under this conceptual umbrella.

b. Strengths and Weaknesses of Research Guided by Technical Cognitive Interests.

Without being over cynical, I think it must be said that much of the literature motivated by technical cognitive interests adds little to our knowledge of organisations. So much of it discusses the same old issues (e.g. how to manage and/or change organisational cultures) in much the same ways. Little of it is theoretically developed; little has detailed empirical grounding.

Though much of the literature is superficial and prescriptive, a number of contributions are more penetrating. Dandridge et al (1980:81), for example, make the important point that there has tended to be an emphasis on 'the surface structure of organisations' to the neglect of 'deep[er] structures' such as organisational myth and ritual. That is not to suggest, they argue, that the study of organisational symbolism is somehow more important than traditional perspectives. Rather, they recognise that organisational studies are enriched when a multiplicity of perspectives are followed. What is particularly unusual and provocative about their paper is that it raises more questions than it answers. For example (ibid:81):

> 1. Are there industry-wide stories, or other symbols common to an entire industry?
>
> 3. Are certain individuals more influential in initiating or modifying a story or ritual? If so, who are they, and how do they accomplish it?
>
> 5. What happens to symbols during violent upheavals or

organisational change. Do subsequent stories justify the change, or do present symbols provide a secure base during change?

6. Can contradictions or inconsistencies in a symbol system be used to predict impending change?

8. What effect does the surrounding culture have on the organisation's symbols? As companies relocate, this seems particularly relevant.

10. Do professional symbols support or conflict with organisational symbols, and what is the impact of this relationship?

What these perceptive questions make clear is that the study of organisational culture and symbolism is both complex and problematical. Perhaps it is only when this thoughtful, questioning approach is compared to the simplistic 'Four Phases for Bringing about Cultural Change' (Allen, 1985) or 'Five steps in closing Culture Gaps' (Kilmann, 1985), to give but two examples, that its qualitative difference can be appreciated.

It is to the limitations of technically oriented work that I now turn. One of the central weaknesses of this research is that it has been infused with the reductionism that is characteristic of the traditions that have dominated organisational studies: functionalism and rationalism (c.f. Benson, 1977; Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Clegg, 1979). Schein, for example, argues that culture is most appropriately theorised as a functional response to the problem of meeting the need for 'external adaption and internal intergration' (1985:9). Without denying that the assumptions and values of work groups can enable them to survive, and can provide the means of promoting group solidarity, it is lamentable to reduce the richness and complexity of cultural reproduction by stressing possible functional consequences alone (Filby

and Willmott, 1986).

A second limitation of the literature is that it privileges the social object over its intersubjective constitution. Asymmetries of power have been overlooked or naturalised leaving culture as something 'given' rather than as the historical outcome of political negotiation. In consequence, much of the research has tended to adopt a managerial perspective, reifying managerial definitions of organisational reality as the 'natural' way to see the world. Martin and Nicholls (1985:97), for example, suggest that one cultural change occuring within Britain at the moment is the 'reassertion of managements basic right to manage'. Quite where this 'basic right' has come from, and who has invested managers with it, is not seen as problematic.

Of all the literature guided by technical cognitive interests, research that examines the components of culture seems, at first glance, to be closest to the issues raised by this thesis. For example, in my examination of the Public Relations and Personnel Departments (See Chapters 7-10, below) I explore how the specialists mobilise ideology, myth and humour to define, defend, mediate and advance their interests. However, a third major weakness of the literature prevents me from drawing heavily upon this work. In short, this weakness is that there has been a concentration on elements of culture (e.g. symbols, language, stories, myth, humour and so forth) to the neglect of treating culture as a whole. The result of this is that while authors may have

made a contribution to understanding, for example, organisational stories (Martin, 1982; Martin et al, 1983; Martin and Powers, 1983b), there is often a failure to appreciate how meaning mobilised in other cultural forms may support, deny or contradict that transmitted through the vehicle of stories.

Having discussed the strengths and weaknesses of the literature, the question that remains to be answered is: how valuable are the insights generated by technically orientated research for the construction of a critical, emancipatory treatment of culture? In my assessment, the contribution has been minimal. This is not to dismiss this body of literature but merely to recognise that it is guided by different research interests than my own. Having said this, some research (e.g. Wilkins and Johnson, 1978; Mitchell, 1985) does recognise that organisational culture has an impact on the emotional well-being of employees and this is to be welcomed. In general, though, the prescriptive approach of these studies tends to work against the development of an emancipatory praxis. This is because organisational interventions that are imposed from above, regardless of how noble their intention, tend to have the effect of increasing employee dependence on paternalistic managers, rather than encouraging the development of free, interdependent working relationships.

4.4. Studies Guided by Practical Cognitive Interests.

a. Overview of the Literature.

I have identified three different themes within the literature guided by practical cognitive interests. The first seeks to differentiate and/or review the literature on organisational culture and symbolism. The second body of literature is concerned with understanding what organisational culture is, how it is constructed and reproduced and, in the light of this, how it can (or should) be studied. Finally, the third stream of literature examines how meanings are mobilised through different elements of culture such as myth, humour and ideology. Figure 4.3 identifies literature which explores these research issues.

Understanding the Diversity of the Literature: The typologies developed to differentiate the literature on organisational culture and symbolism (Louis, 1981; Morgan et al, 1983; Smircich, 1983; Allaire and Firsirotu, 1984; Stablein and Nord, 1985 - all reviewed in Chapter 2, above), together with a number of review articles (e.g. Pettigrew, 1979; Hofstede, 1986; Turner, 1986) typifies research guided by practical cognitive interests that is concerned with understanding the diversity of the literature. As I have already given a 'flavour' of this literature (see Chapter 2, above), I will not repeat myself here but move on to discuss the second research interest of literature guided by a practical intent.

<u>Understanding Organisational Culture:</u> A good deal of the research guided by practical cognitive interests has been concerned with understanding what organisational culture is, how it is constructed and reproduced and how it can (or should) be studied (Van Maanen and Barley, 1984; Turner, 1971, 1989; Smircich and Morgan, 1982; Pettigrew, 1985). Given the fragmentation of the management science research community (discussed in Chapter 1), it is unsurprising that researchers have found a number of answers to these questions and, as a result, it is difficult to give a coherent overview of them. Fortunately, this task is made easier by the emergence of two dominant approaches. The first examines organisational culture as a network of shared meanings while the second adopts semiotic and structuralist approaches to culture.

Smircich (1983b, 1983c) provides a good example of research guided by a practical intent which seeks to understand organisational cultures by studying the networks of commonly held meanings that individuals possess about their organisational situations. By examining how organisational actors make sense of themselves, their subordinates, colleagues, superordinates and the social context in which they work, the researcher uncovers how they make their organisational experiences meaningful. Associated work focuses on the processes through which actors come to negotiate and re-negotiate organisational meanings (e.g., Fine, 1984). Gregory (1983) also focuses on meaning, noting that organisations can be multi-cultural rather than

homogenous; organisational members interacting 'as if' they shared cultural meanings rather than necessarily doing so.

The second, semiotic approach examines the encoding and decoding of signs by organisational members to render their activity meaningful. Barley (1983) provides a lucid example of this approach to the study of organisational culture in his study of the signs and semantic codes manipulated by a funeral director to give bereaved relatives a sense of normality. For example, he shows how the funeral parlour is designed so that it resembles a family living room and how the corpse is laid out as if s/he were sleeping rather than dead in order to give friends and relatives of the deceased the impression of the normality and peacefulness of death, rather than emphasize its finality. In a different vein, Linstead (1985a) provides a structuralist analysis of an organisation's induction process showing how interest groups (e.g., personnel management and union representatives) . seek to gain control of the symbolism of induction through organisational rhetoric and discourse. In so doing, he draws attention to the fact that organisational meanings may not necessarily be shared by constituent members. Rather, he suggests, the meanings that are accepted and naturalised tend to be those embedded in the dominant-hegemonic codes of the organisation, and these, more often than not, tend to be managerially biased.

Components of Culture: Finally, I identify work guided by a practical intent that examines how meaning is mobilised by organisational actors through myth (e.g., Kamens, 1977, Meyer

and Rowan, 1981), symbols (e.g., Wexler, 1983), rituals (e.g., Evanchuk, 1988) and humour (e.g., Boland and Hoffman, 1983; Zijderveld, 1983). As I noted in section 4.3a, above, research which examines the components of culture potentially offers insight into interpreting some of my empirical data which examines the mobilisation of ideology, myth and humour by public relations and personnel specialists. To indicate some of the strengths and weaknesses of research which examines various components of culture guided by technical cognitive interests, I reflect on the humour literature.

Despite the recent growth of interest in organisational culture and symbolism (see Chapter 1, above), relatively little recent work has focussed on the importance of humour in organisational discourse. This is surprising when juxtaposed with the numerous, but fleeting, examples of humorous expression and joking behaviour in work situations that have been noted since the Hawthorn Studies (Powell and Paton, 1988). With a few notable exceptions (Lundberg, 1969; Turner, 1971; Boland and Hoffman, 1983; Holdaway, 1988), where humour has been examined in organisational contexts, it has tended to be fashioned in what Burrell and Morgan (1979) term the sociology of regulation, examining the functions of humour for group cohesiveness and identity (e.g. Bradney, 1957; Coser, 1959 and Sykes, 1968), or its mechanics (e.g Emerson, 1969; Handleman and Kapferer, 1972) (2).

Although, the barrenness of organisation theory on humour is not reflected in anthropology (e.g Radcliffe-Brown, 1940; Douglas, 1968) and philosophy (e.g Bergson, 1911; Freud,

1960), where some scholarly work has been produced, much of which has lacked detailed case studies in which to ground theoretical contributions. Fine (1977: 315) properly identifies one of the weaknesses of such approaches, arguing that

> Humour is a most delicate flower; a living bud which when plucked quickly dies. However, those engaged in research on humour insist with regularity and stubornness upon plucking humour from its natural environment - the ongoing flow of social interaction. That naturalistic or 'in situ' approach to humour while employed, upon occasion, has been underutilised as a method of research.

Humour is indeed a delicate flower. To merely examine the mechanics of its production or its functions for social order is to risk becoming desensitised to the powerful hues and aromas it emits. Without denying that humour can be 'functional' in the sense of making working life more tolerable or by containing tendencies towards anomic disintegration, to reduce the study of humour merely to an examination of its functions and mechanics is to deny much of its richness and ambiguity by abstracting it from the relations of power that are its media.

Fortunately, there are some rich studies guided by practical cognitive interests which attend to some of the ambiguities of humour in organisational settings (e.g., Boland and Hoffman, 1983; Holdawoy, 1988). While these express a practical intent, they can be appropriated by researchers guided by different cognitive interests. As a result, they provide detailed ethnographic material which can be re-interpreted from a critical perspective and, therefore,

provide grist for the emancipatory mill. This is
demonstrated particularly well by Boland and Hoffman's
examination of humour in a small, privately owned machine
shop. For example, in their interpretation of shopfloor
humour, Boland and Hoffman recognise that humour can confirm
the ambiguity of self in work situations. Having noted that
each worker establishes a strong self-identity as a skilled
machinist expressed in the 'morning ritual of arriving,
dressing, having coffee, checking his machine' and in the
machine-skills he demonstrates, Boland and Hoffman explore
how humour 'serves to celebrate an individual's existing
identity' whilst simultaneously 'assert[ing] its fragility
and ultimate equivocality' (ibid: 193). They elaborate (ibid:
195):

> ...to the extent that the jokes we observed are
> allowing for multiple frames of reference to be
> used in defining the self-identity of the
> individual worker, a certain ambiguity of identity
> is maintained. The essence of alienation is the
> experience of the product of one's labour as alien
> from one's self. It is experienced as foreign from
> the self, and divorced from it. It is not an
> expression of one's self, but an independent object
> that stands against self. The product of an
> individual's labour, as an object alien to him, is
> less of a problem as the self-identity from which
> the product is alien is itself ambiguous. To the
> extent that the definition of self is equivocal,
> the more difficult a clear judgement of that which
> is alien from it becomes. Thus, the degree of
> ambiguity of the self constructed through humour
> functions to socialise the individual into
> accepting as nonproblematic a certain level of
> alienation (emphasis added).

By examining how the machinists use what resources they
possess to pull jokes on one another, which have consequences
for the securing of identity, Boland and Hoffman contribute
to our understanding of organisational culture and symbolism

by penetrating the political and existential processes of cultural reproduction. However, these penetrations can only be partial because their work is insensitive to the material processes of cultural reproduction; each of the processes only being understood when their interrelationships and interpenetrations are accepted and explored. Nevertheless, they offer sufficient richness of ethnographic detail for their work to be built upon by more critical theorists.

FIGURE 4.2: ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE AND SYMBOLISM RESEARCH GUIDED BY PRACTICAL COGNITIVE INTERESTS. [1]

RESEARCH INTEREST:	EXAMPLE FROM CHAPTER 3:	REFERENCES:
(i) Understanding the diversity of the literature	Not addressed	Allaire and Firsirotu, 1984. Frost et al, 1985. Hofstede, 1986. Jelinek et al, 1983. Louis, 1981. McAuley, 1981. Morgan, 1986. Morgan et al, 1983. Ott, 1984. Pettigrew, 1977, 1979. Pondy et al, 1983. Smircich, 1983a, 1985. Stablein and Nord, 1985. Turner, 1986. Van Maanen and Barley, 1985. Weick, 1985.
(ii) Understanding organisational culture: its construction, reproduction and how it may (or should) be studied.		
— **culture as shared network of meanings, and/or interpretative systems 2**	Gouldner recognises that surface and sub-surface miners shared different networks of meanings	Bourn and Ezzamel, 1986. Burns, 1977. Christensen, 1988. Clark, 1970. Daft and Weick, 1984 Degot, 1987. Ebers, 1985. Filby and McNulty, 1989. Fine, 1979, 1984, 1988. Fine and Kleinman, 1979. Gray et al,1985. Gregory, 1983. Jones, 1983. Kleinman, 1982. Kleinman and Fine, 1979. Louis, 1980, 1983, 1985a, 1985b. McNulty and Filby, 1989. Pettigrew, 1985. Smircich, 1983b, 1983c. Smircich and Morgan, 1982 Turner, 1971, 1989. Van Manen and Barley, 1984.

–	**Semiotic and Structuralist approaches**	Not addressed

Barley, 1983.
Bouissac, 1976.
Linstead, 1985.
Tway, 1976a, 1976b.

(iii) Elements of Culture

.

–	**Myth**	Gouldner examines 'Rebecca' myth

Kamens, 1977.
Meyer and Rowan, 1981.

–	**Humour**	Becker examines humour of medical students

Arora, 1988.
Boland and Hoffman, 1983.
Bradney, 1957.
Coser, 1959, 1960.
Fine, 1977.
Holdaweay, 1988.
Johns, 1986.
Lundberg, 1969.
McDonald, 1988.
Sykes, 1966.
Ullian, 1976.
Wilson, 1979.
Zijderveld, 1983.

–	**Ideology**	Selznick examines 'grass roots' ideology

Meyer, 1982.
Shrivastra, 1987.

–	**Symbols**	Becker shows importance of symbols of medical culture (e.g., doctor's white coat).

Ebers, 1985.
Feldman and March, 1981.
Manning, 1979.
Starbuck, 1982.
Wexler, 1983.

–	**Rituals**	Gouldners shows importance to miners of ritualistic pit-propping system

Beyer and Trice, 1988.
Meching and Wilson, 1988.

NOTES.

1. In the construction of this typology I recognise that there is considerable overlap between different research themes. Louis (1981), for example, contributes to categories (i) and (ii). However, to avoid confusion, I have placed research into the category in which I believe it makes the most important contribution.

2. Originally, I intended to sub-divide this section to differentiate literature that understood organisational culture to be shared meanings, interpretative schemes and negotiated orders. However, as there is no consistent definitions of what these metaphors mean, such a distinction is not helpful in differentiating the literature. I have therefore settled for simply grouping the literature together, leaving the reader to sub-divide the list, should s/he wish to do so.

b. Strengths and Weaknesses of Research Motivated by Practical Cognitive Interests.

The strength of the literature guided by practical cognitive interests resides in its refusal to take culture as a 'given' and its insistence on examining how it is negotiated and reproduced. In doing so, researchers have ably surfaced the 'commonly held fabric of meanings... that individuals possess about their situations... by examining the understandings that the individual has of himself - or herself, the boss, colleagues, subordinates, and the wider context within which the organisation operates' (Smircich, 1983b:162). Moreover, as Barley (1983:409) comments,

> Once we recognise the pervasiveness of signification, we are no longer constrained to look at cultural phenomena in the overtly symbolic and can focus on how members of an organisation or occupation interpret a wide range of phenomena including chairs, air, and sunlight - entities so mundane as to appear irrelevant to the well-intentioned but culturally ignorant researcher.

By examining the importance for organisational actors of rendering their cultural experience meaningful, I suggest that research guided by practical cognitive interests facilitates the development of a critical, emancipatory conceptualisation of culture by providing rich, detailed, ethnographic accounts of how organisational actors intersubjectively negotiate and sustain definitions of cultural reality. In doing so, its strength is, as I suggested in my discussion of Boland and Hoffman's (1983) study of 'Humour in a Machine Shop', that it offers partial

penetrations of the _existential_ and _political_ processes of cultural reproduction (see Chapter 1, above, and Chapter 5, below, for definitions of the existential, political and material processes of cultural reproduction).

However, despite providing some excellent studies, research motivated by practical interests is frequently abstracted from the social relations of production. Thus, while concentrating on the meanings (possessed) by individuals (Smircich, 1983b, see above), research is frequently insensitive to structural asymmetries of power. For example, while Smircich (ibid:161) notes that the enactment of organisational reality may be 'influenced by some form of power', there is no reflection on how actors, or groups of actors who effectively mobilise meaning with forms of power, come to occupy positions of relative dominance. The inability of such research to critically reflect upon and theorise the politics of the negotiation of meanings tends to unwittingly reify the status quo. As a result, research motivated by a practical intent is insensitive to the _material_ processes of cultural reproduction. Alvesson (1985a: 12) develops this critique by recognising that the 'majority of corporate culture and organisational symbolism literature does not adequately consider materialistic or concrete parts of organisational life, like formation of work and the work procedures, into account, thus expressing an one-dimensional, simplified and systematically biased view of organisations.' In response to this tendency within the literature, he suggests that a redirection of research focus

is desired, the most significant of which is a move away from
an emphasis on beliefs, values and other aspects of people's
minds to an analysis of the social practices in which beliefs
and values are embedded; and a move from around the work
activities (e.g., Christmas parties) to a concentration on
activities and tasks carried out in day-to-day organisational
work.

4.5. Studies Guided by Emancipatory Cognitive Interests.

I have identified five broad areas of research within the
organisation culture and symbolism literature guided by
emancipatory cognitive interests. The first explores the
material basis of organisational culture. The second,
examines the relationship between organisational culture and
relationships of domination and subordination. The third
theorises organisational culture as a management control
strategy. In the fourth category I have grouped radical
humanist literature that examines how organisational symbols
can form the bars of a 'psychic prison' (Morgan et al, 1983).
Finally, I note literature which studies humour, ideology and
myth etc. from critical, emancipatory perspectives. In
Figure 4.3, I identify literature that explores these five
research interests.

a. Exploring the Material Basis of Culture.

There is a small, but nonetheless significant, body of
literature which seeks to explore the material basis of
organisation culture and symbolism (Hill, 1981; Willmott
1984, 1987). In view of one of the aims of this thesis to

develop an appreciation of the material processes of cultural construction and reproduction, this literature is of importance. Alvesson (1985a - see above) provides a good example of this work by maintaining that research into organisation culture should attend more closely to the material aspects of culture. This is an important point. However, his proposal (1986) that the way to advance this line of study is to make use of the work of Bordieu to explore differences in cultural practices within different classes and fields existing within the organisation is of limited value. This is because it fails to locate the production and reproduction of organisational culture within the capitalist labour process. Better examples are provided by Hill (1981) and Willmott (1984, 1987). Of these, Willmott provides a richer account because his work is not insensitive to what Giddens calls the 'duality of structure.'

In this thesis, I contribute to this literature by exploring more fully the material processes of cultural reproduction (see Chapter 5, below). There I suggest that our understanding of organisational culture can be advanced by developing a sensitivity to the processes through which actors transform nature in order to secure their material existence. By this, I mean that if the production and reproduction of organisation cultures is to be understood more fully, the organisations studied must be contextualised within the relations of production through which they are constituted and reproduced. The value of this approach is demonstrated in my ethnographic examination of the work

culture of public relations and personnel specialists (see Chapters 7-10, below). There I explore how recent changes in the relations in production (see Chapter 5, below, for definition) have had unintended consequences for the specialists' work cultures.

b. Domination and Organisational Culture.

The second thrust of the literature guided by a critical, emancipatory intent examines how actors are involved in sustaining the conditions of their own domination (Golding 1979, 1980b; Soeters 1986). Golding (1979) provides a good example when he examines the symbolic elements mobilised by management to lend relations of domination and subordination a sense of permanence in such a way that the structures of domination within society are reproduced within the organisation; organisations therefore representing one means by which the structures of domination are perpetuated within society.

This thesis contributes to this body of literature by exploring some of the unintended (and self-defeating) consequences of the public relations and personnel specialists' attempts to define, defend, mediate and/or advance their interests within the host organisation (see Chapters 8-10, below). In particular, I explore how the specialists' reification of the host bureaucracy (as monolithic and inflexible) had the unintended consequence of filtering out of existence alternatives to their defensive strategy, through which their subordination to the host

bureaucracy was reproduced.

c. Organisational Culture and Control.

The third body of research that I have identified in the
literature guided by emancipatory cognitive interests
comprises research that examines organisational culture as a
strategy for management control (Roberts, 1984; Ray, 1986;
Rosen, 1985a, 1985b; Knights and Willmott, 1987; Alvesson,
1988). Knights and Willmott (1987) provide a good example.
They draw upon Giddens' theory of structuration to reveal
management's management of meaning in a strategic attempt to
change the organisational culture of an insurance company.
In doing so, they expose the material, political and
ideological basis of organisational culture as an instrument
for management's control of the labour process.

I contribute to this literature by examining how relatively
powerful organisational actors (such as the ex-journalists
within the Public Relations Department) are able to mobilise
what control they have over symbolic and material resources
to secure their own interests. Moreover, by being sensitive
to what Giddens' terms the 'dialectic of control' (see
Chapter 5, below), I also show how subordinate actors (such
as the non-journalists within the Public Relations
Department) are never wholly dependent upon the powerful.
Rather, they are quite adept at using what resources they
have at their disposal to resist and/or undermine the control
of their oppressors (Friere, 1972 - see Chapter 10, below).

d. Organisational Culture as a Psychic Prison.

A further strand of research motivated by an emancipatory intent examines, how in the construction of meaning and mediation of realities, the content of culture can take the form of bars of what Morgan et al (1983) call a 'psychic prison' (Walter, 1983; Henriques et al, 1983; Jermier, 1985). For despite being minimally acceptable, or indeed because of it, social organisations can have contradictory properties and alienating effects. Walter (1983) adopts a radical humanist perspective (Burrell and Morgan, 1979) to examine how pursuit of the cultural symbols of 'success' can lead to a self-defeating search for happiness and inner-direction by engendering narcissism. Moreover, Walter suggests that the symbols of the welfare state, societal influence and paternalistic organisations can simultaneously affirm individual narcissism and insulate organisational members from the very crisis needed to stimulate real strategies for emancipatory change.

In this thesis I contribute to this literature by examining how the public relations specialists' imbued the bureaucracy with a masive, reified power, effectively denying themselves the possibility of recognising the opportunity to confront the relations of power which locked them into their departmental closet (see Chapter 10, below). In doing so, I disclose how the formation of a 'psychic prison' cannot be understood fully by examining the existential processes of cultural reproduction (as those from the Radical Humanist

paradigm tend to suggest). Rather, I argue that analysis of this existential problem is enhanced when it is sensitive to the material and political processes of cultural reproduction.

d. Elements of Organisational Culture.

Finally, I identify literature guided by emancipatory cognitive interests which examines the symbolic elements of culture (e.g., Golding, 1980a; Nichols, 1980; Abravanel, 1983; Filby and Willmott, 1986, 1988; Linstead, 1985b, 1986b; Collinson, 1988). Collinson provides a good example in his examination of shop-floor humour, through which male workers sought to secure a masculine sense of identity. However, as Collinson goes on to show, the securing of this identity had the unintended consequence of obscuring both the asymmetries of power within the organisation and the reality of managerial control of the factory's labour process. In doing so, Collinson provides an insightful contribution to the literature by locating the existential problem of securing identity within the material processes of cultural reproduction. Moreover, by disclosing how organisational actors mobilise humour as a resource in relationships of resistance and control, he shows his sensitivity to the political processes of cultural reproduction.

In this thesis, I contribute to the literature by examining how public relations and personnel specialists mobilise ideology, myth and humour to define, defend, advance and/or mediate their work cultures (see Chapter 8 and 9, below).

Moreover, by drawing on Giddens' theory of structuration, I (more explicitly than Collinson) explore the importance of ideology, myth and humour to the existential, material and political processes of cultural reproduction.

FIGURE 4.3: ORGANISATION CULTURE AND SYMBOLISM RESEARCH GUIDED BY EMANCIPATORY COGNITIVE INTERESTS. [1]

RESEARCH INTEREST:	EXAMPLE FROM CHAPTER 3:	REFERENCES:
(I) Material basis for organisational culture	Burawoy locates machine shop culture within the capitalist labour process	Alvesson, 1985a; 1986. Hill, 1981. Willmott, 1984, 1987.
(ii) Domination and culture	Burawoy shows how actors are involved in reproducing the conditions of their own domination	Alvesson, 1985b. Golding, 1979, 1980b. Soeters, 1986.
(iii) Organisational culture and control	Nichols and Benyon expose changes in organisational culture as a strategy for increasing management's control of the labour process	Alvesson, 1988. Knights and Willmott, 1987. Ray, 1986. Roberts, 1984. Rosen, 1985a, 1985b.
(iv) Culture as a 'psychic prison'	Not addressed	Frost and Krefting, 1983. Frost and Morgan, 1983. Henriques et al, 1984. Jermier, 1985. Walter, 1983.
(v) Elements of culture		
— Rituals	Not addressed	Bennett et al, 1981. Bocock, 1974.
— Ideology	Burawoy examines ideology as a material practices	Abravanel, 1983. Alvesson, 1987. Filby and Willmott, 1986, 1988. Nichols, 1980.

– **Humour**	Willis shows the 'laff' to be an important part of the counter-school culture	Collinson, 1988. Filby, 1989b. Linstead, 1985b, 1986b, 1988.
– **Myth**	Not addressed	Filby, 1989a. Carter and Jackson, 1987. Golding, 1980a. Jackson and Carter, 1984. Rosen, 1984.

NOTES.

1. In the construction of this typology I recognise that there is a considerable overlap between the different research themes. For example, Filby and Willmott (1988) contributes to categories (i), (ii), (iv) and (v). However, to underline the key contributions of the literature, I have placed research in the category that I believe it makes its miost significant contribution.

4.5. Strengths and Weaknesses of Research Motivated by Emancipatory Cognitive Interests.

A major strength of this body of work is its exposure of the limits of research motivated by technical and practical intents. Critical of the failure of such studies to attend to the processes of power and control, critical, emancipatory work focusses on the cultural naturalisation, legitimation and socialisation through which domination is sustained (Deetz, 1985; Knights and Willmott, 1987). Quite how these processes are theorised is dependent on a number of factors, but particularly on how they conceptualise the relationship between agency and structure. Where structural relationships are given primacy over individual subjectivities, actors are shown to be either bludgeoned into reproducing a particular cultural form (e.g. Nichols and Benyon, 1977) or taken in by the processes of naturalisation, legitimation and socialisation (e.g. Deetz, 1985). Either way, actors appear to be little more than 'cultural dopes' (Garfinkel, 1967). More sophisticated treatments of the processes of cultural reproduction, which acknowledge a dialectical relationship between agency and structure, reveal actors to be, at least partly, responsible for the reconstitution of asymmetrical relationships of power through which they are oppressed (e.g. Rosen, 1985a; Knights and Willmott, 1987). While these latter works have made important theoretical developments to the critical understanding of organisational culture, their choice of research material weakens the overall import of the papers. Both Rosen and Knights and Willmott have sadly

ignored Alvesson's (1985a:13) important exhortation to focus on 'work-activities' rather than on 'around-the-work-activities.' Thus, while Knights and Willmott, for example, visited their research site 'for periods of three to five days on a bimonthly basis' for a period of 'two years', claiming an 'exceptional quality of access', they surprisingly choose to examine a two-day meeting held in a luxury hotel. Without denying that their analysis is interesting, the reader is nonetheless left wondering why the authors did not draw on their ethnographic material to examine working practices more central to the labour process at Pensco and, in so doing, explore how control was mobilised (and resisted) in daily work interaction.

How far, then, has this literature contributed to the development of a critical, emancipatory conceptualisation of organisational culture and symbolism? Certainly its critical edge provides an advancement on orthodoxy. The work of Collinson, Rosen and Knights and Willmott has been particularly insightful to the extent that they penetrate the existential, material and political processes of cultural reproduction. In doing so, they have disclosed that cultures are not just 'givens', neither are they simply the negotiated outcome of constituent organisational groups. Rather, taken together, the work suggests that organisation culture is produced and reconstituted as actors mobilise material and symbolic resources (political processes of cultural reproduction) to secure both a valued sense of identity

(existential processes of cultural reproduction) and their livelihoods (material processes of cultural reproduction). Where this thesis advances this small body of literature is by more formally exploring the interrelationships and interpenetrations of these processes of cultural reproduction, both theoretically in Chapter 5, and empirically, in Chapters 8-10.

4.6. Summary.

In the literature review I have shown that while research into organisational culture and symbolism has addressed the existential, political and material processes of cultural reproduction, little theoretical and/or empirical work has been undertaken that has been able to explore all three dynamics simultaneously. Moreover, by failing to appreciate all three dimensions, writers have necessarily been unable to explore any of them adequately, for they are genuinely interdependent of one another.

One question that begs to be answered is 'why has there been a failure by theorists to address all three dimensions simultaneouly?' Two reasons come to mind. Firstly, as I have noted earlier in the chapter, the literature on organisational culture and symbolism has been infused with, and has reproduced, the dualism (between object and subject) inherent within the social sciences. In consequence, the literature has focussed either on culture as the product of the actions, motives, reasons and beliefs, with structural considerations being marginalised to no more than an

unexamined backdrop (as in the case of work motivated by practical cognitive interests). Alternatively, structure is taken as the principle object of analysis to the comparative neglect of agency. Accordingly, if the interest of the researcher is on organisational actors' intersubjective experiences of their organisational world, it is of little surprise that existential (and perhaps political) processes are addressed to the neglect of material considerations. Equally, work that focusses on the social object does so to the neglect of existential dynamics of cultural reproduction. In short, I am suggesting that literature infused with the dualisms of social theory is theoretically incapable of simultaneously exploring the interrelationships between the existential, material and political processes of cultural reproducution. This being the case, the only hope for advancing a critical, emancipatory conceptualisation of organisational culture lies in a theorisation of culture that acknowledges the agency-structure relationship to be dialectical. In the next Chapter, I draw on Giddens' theory of structuration to develop a theory of culture that is sensitive to this dialectic.

The second reason why little work has been undertaken to simultaneously address existential, material and political processes of cultural reproduction is that it is difficult! This is something I have discovered in my own research, where I often felt (and still feel) that I had 'bitten off more than I could chew.' Moreover, the writing-up of empirical material informed by such analytic intents is complicated and

difficult to accomplish successfully. That there have been so few previous studies, and none, as far as I know, of this length, to guide me has not eased the task of writing this thesis. I will comment on this more fully in the conclusions.

In summary, I have suggested that one way of advancing our understanding of organisational culture and symbolism is to attend to the existential, material and political processes of cultural reproduction. Such a project is undertaken in the remainder of this thesis.

PART TWO

THE CONCEPTUALISATION

OF CULTURE.

CHAPTER FIVE: TOWARDS A CRITICAL, EMANCIPATORY THEORISATION OF CULTURE.

5.1. Introduction.

a. Overview of Chapter.

In Chapter 2 I reviewed the typology developed by Stablein and Nord (1985) to differentiate the literature on organisational culture and symbolism. There I argued that one of the features that makes it preferable to other frameworks, given the purposes of my thesis, is its sensitivity to critical, emancipatory approaches to organisational culture. However, having reviewed the literature in Chapters 3 and 4, it is evident that such critical, emancipatory work has been comparatively underdeveloped. In this chapter I show how a critical appreciation of organisational culture might be advanced through Giddens' (1976, 1979, 1984) theory of structuration. The chapter is divided into two parts. In the first, I outline the key themes of Giddens' theory of structuration. In the second, I draw on this theory to advance our understanding of the existential, political and material processes of cultural reproduction. Before beginning these discussions, I offer a few brief comments showing the compatibility of Giddens' theory of structuration with Habermas' notions of emancipatory cognitive interests and associated critical theory.

b. The Consistency between Habermas' Conceptualisation of
Emancipatory Cognitive Interests and Giddens' Theory of
Structuration.

Critical theory, according to Habermas, is tied to an
emancipatory interest by being guided by a concern to free
others from domination: both from the domination of others
and the domination by forces that they do not understand or
control, including forces that are humanly created and
reproduced. The object of critical theory is to offer the
possibility of the transformation of these forces by making
them reflexively accessible to their participants. As
Habermas (1972:310) elaborates, critical theory is concerned
to ensure

> that information about lawlike connections sets off
> a process of reflection in the consciousness of
> those whom the laws are about. Thus the level of
> unreflected consciousness, which is one of the
> initial conditions of such laws, can be
> transformed. Of course, to this end a critically
> mediated knowledge of laws cannot through
> reflection alone render a law itself operative, but
> it can render it inapplicable.

The self-understanding necessary for the development of an
emancipatory praxis is often obscured by unacknowledged
conditions of interaction such as the ideological framing of
asymmetrical relationships of power both within organisations
and society. If emancipatory interests are to form the basis
of detailed empirical work (see Chapters 7-10), it must be
complemented by drawing upon a social theory and methodology
capable of exposing asymmetries of power within social
relations. Habermas is a good theorist who offers few

insights into how a critical theory could be empirically used. Thus it is to Giddens that I turn. Without denying that Giddens has expressed a number of reservations about Habermas' writings, especially his critique of hermeneutics (Giddens, 1976, 1977, 1982, 1987), Giddens theory of structuration is largely consistent with Habermas's notion of emancipatory cognitive interests and critical theory. His theory, I argue, provides a way of advancing a critical, emancipatory conceptualisation of organisational culture and symbolism by exposing how the mobilisation of signs and symbols by actors in social interaction is infused with forms of power; dominant groups being better placed to legitimise and de-historicise their sectional ideologies, presenting them as naturalised features of organisational culture.

5.2. Giddens's Theory of Structuration.

In the last chapter I suggested that in order to advance a critical, emancipatory conceptualisation of organisational culture and symbolism which is sensitive to the existential, political and material processes of cultural reproduction, a theorisation of culture is needed that transcends the object-subject dualisms inherent in much of the social sciences. Though not without limitations, Giddens' theory of structuration provides a more explicit model for understanding cultural reproduction than other theorists who seek to overcome the dualisms of the social sciences (e.g., Willis, 1977; Benson, 1977; Burawoy, 1979). More specifically, Giddens' framework is favoured because, as Thompson (1984: 149) has recognised, it offers 'a formulation

which is far more sophisticated in its detail and far more suggestive in its application than any of the other versions currently to be found in the literature.' The theoretical contributions of the theory are outlined below, whilst the methodological implications for its application in empirical research are discussed in Chapter 6.

In contrast to interpretative sociologies, which are grounded on the 'imperialism of the subject' and functionalism and structuralism, which are founded on the 'imperialism of the social object', Giddens reconceptualises agency and structure as a duality (1984:2). His contention is that the analysis of 'social activity must be founded neither in the consciousness or activities of the individual subject, nor in the characteristics of the object (society), but in the duality of structure' (Giddens, 1979:120), which he characterises as

> ...the essential recursiveness of social life, as
> constituted in social practices: structure is both
> the medium and outcome of the reproduction of
> practices. Structure enters simultaneously into
> the constitution of the agent and social practices,
> and "exists" in the generating moments of this
> constitution (ibid:5).

Restating this, Giddens argues that structuration theory neither assumes that action is determined by structure nor assumes that structure is comprised of a combination of actions. Rather, he maintains that the central foci of analysis is upon the social practices through which action is structured in routinised, everyday action and how structural features of action are, by the very performance of action, themselves reproduced. Accordingly, structuration theory offers a way of penetrating how, in their production of

meaningful social and organisational worlds, human beings draw upon and simultaneously reconstitute properties of structure (theorised as rules and resources) in the same recursive processes through which they formulate their own sense of subjectivity and social identity. As Giddens (1984:331) argues,

> In order to "bring off" the interaction, the participants make use of their knowledge of the institutional order in which they are involved in such a way as to render their interchange "meaningful". However, by invoking the institutional order in this way - and there is no other way for participants in interaction to render what they do intelligible and coherent to one another - they thereby contribute to reproducing it... And it is a 'real' (i.e. structurally stable) order of relationships precisely because they, and others like them in connected and similar contexts, accept it as such - not necessarily in their discursive consciousness but in the practical consciousness incorporated in what they do.

Giddens uses the concept of structure to explain the spread and continuity over time of particular forms of interdependent social relations between individuals and groups. In doing so, he compares the relationship between interaction and structure to that of speech and language: 'just as every sentence in English expresses within itself the totality which is the "language" as a whole, so every interaction bears the imprint of the global society' (1976:122). Expanding this, he notes that whereas speech is always situated in space and time, language is a 'virtual order' outside of time and space. Whereas speech involves the activity of subjects, language does not: in this sense language is subjectless. Finally, whereas speech is the product of intentional communication between self and others,

language is neither the intended product of any subject nor oriented towards another. From this, Giddens argues that structure can be understood as rules and resources which, although existing outside of time and space, bind and stretch social practices across time and space by being drawn on and simultaneously reproduced in routinised social interaction.

This discussion can be helpfully illustrated by reference to personnel management. Personnel management can be understood in two ways. Firstly, personnel management can be regarded as a concept (distinguished from financial management, public relations, operations planning etc.). As such, it can be seen to be equivalent to 'language' in the above argument because the concept of personnel management does not exist in time-space, does not involve the activities of subjects and is not 'the intended product .of any subject nor oriented towards another. However, personnel management can also be regarded as a set of routine activities (e.g. recruitment, selection, interviewing etc.) brought off by organisational actors (who regard themselves, and are regarded, as personnel specialists). When viewed in this way, personnel management can be likened to 'speech' because it 'is always situated in space and time', always 'involves the activity of subjects' and is the product of intentional communication between self and others.' The concept of personnel management and the practice of personnel management are linked dialectically: the concept being drawn on (to guide action) and reconstituted in the routine interaction of personnel specialists.

Giddens identifies three analytically separable dimensions of
structure - signification, domination and legitimation.
Systems of signification allow actors to communicate
meaningfully to one another through interpretative schemes.
Systems of domination allow actors to influence each other's
conduct through the application of facilities (rules and
resources). Finally, systems of legitimation allow actions
to be collectively sanctioned through the application of
norms. Associated with these three dimensions of structure
are equivalent dimensions of interaction - communication,
power and sanctions/morality. These are mediated by three
'modalities': interpretative schemes, facilities and norms
(see Figure 5.1). The modalities mediate between the
systematic properties of structure and the elements of
interaction, which is to say that they are drawn on by actors
in the process of bringing off meaningful interaction and, at
the same time, are media for the reproduction of structure.

Figure 5.1: <u>The</u> <u>Duality</u> <u>of</u> <u>Structure</u> <u>in</u> <u>Interaction</u>.

```
STRUCTURE      Signification......Domination.....Legitimation
                    :                 :              :
                    :                 :              :
MODALITY       interpretative.......Facility...........Norm
               scheme               :              :
                    :                 :              :
INTERACTION    Communication........Power..........Sanction
```
(Taken from Giddens 1984:29).

Giddens contends that in their constitution of interaction
agents draw on, and thereby reproduce, structural properties

(systems of domination, legitimation and communication) which are the medium and outcome of their social practices. Where such practices are recurrent, social systems emerge. These are understood to be regularised patterns of interaction involving individuals and groups. They do not have structures in themselves, but rather are structured by the routinised implementation of rules and resources in interaction. For example, the work culture of the Personnel Department (see Chapters 7-10) can be regarded as a social system which is reproduced as its members (and other organisational actors) routinely draw upon and reproduce modalities of structure in daily interaction.

Giddens therefore argues that the study of social systems must necessarily be undertaken through the study of agents' interaction. Moreover, he argues that such analysis can be undertaken from two perspectives. From one perspective, Giddens contends that researchers can focus on strategic conduct by attending to how agents draw on interpretative schemes, facilities and norms in the constitution of interaction. This requires a methodological bracketing of institutional analysis. Alternatively, when strategic conduct is bracketed, the researcher is able to examine the modalities as widespread features of the social system. Elaborating this, Giddens writes (1979:81) that these perspectives express a duality of structure, rather than a dualism.

> Where institutional analysis is bracketed, the modalities are treated as stocks of knowledge and resources employed by actors in the constitution of interaction as a skilled and knowledgeable

accomplishment... Where strategic conduct is placed under an epoche, the modalities represent rules and resources considered as institutional features of system and social interaction. The level of modality thus provides the coupling elements whereby the bracketing of strategic conduct or institutional analysis is dissolved in favour of their acknowledged interrelation.

It may be helpful to provide an example to ground Giddens' rather abstract model of structuration. The following illustration is taken from the interviewing work undertaken by the Personnel Department studied in Chapter 7, 9 and 10. Systems of signification, domination and legitimation are all involved in job interviews. For, in order for the interviewers and interviewees successfully to bring off an interview they must draw upon minimally compatible interpretative schemes. This may involve a grasp of the meanings of technical words, how non-verbal activity is culturally understood, and what is understood to be an appropriate answer to interview questions. In the process of drawing on these interpretative schemes, the constituent actors are simultaneously involved in the reproduction of systems of <u>signification</u> applied to constitute the sense of encounters as 'interviews.' Facilities are also mobilised by the actors involved in the interview. The chair of the panel routinely sets the direction of questioning, control the interview programme, and makes the final decision should it be necessary for him or her to use the casting vote. The system of <u>domination</u> is reproduced that establishes the chair as a position of power. (1)

Finally, both parties draw upon, and reproduce, norms of dress (men wearing a suit), personal appearance (tidy hair), non verbal behaviour (do not stare), politeness (wait for

question to be completed before beginning to answer), address (greet interviewer by Mr. or Ms. so and so, not Fred or Nancy), and deference (allowing the interview panel to set the agenda). In doing so, the system of <u>legitimation</u> is reproduced that establishes accepted behaviour in an interview situation. Where norms are violated by an interviewee his or her actions are likely to be sanctioned by non-selection. This, of course, presupposes that the interview panel has the prerequisite control of facilities in order to make such a decision. For example, should it be the managing director's son being interviewed, the panel may feel obliged to select no matter what norms are violated because panel members occupy positions of subordination to, and are dependent on, the managing director.

To repeat, while the three dimensions are analytically distinct they are intertwined in interaction. In any given situation organisational actors draw upon combinations of these modalities. The communication of meaning cannot be adequately analysed without an appreciation of how interpretative schemes are infused with norms and mobilised through the command of facilities.

Having outlined and illustrated key elements of Giddens' theory of structuration, it is now time to sketch how an analysis of organisational culture can benefit from such a treatment. From a Giddensian perspective, organisational culture is not a static phenomena. Rather, it is continually being reproduced (and/or changed) as actors draw on interpretative schemes, power and norms in interaction.

Culture can be studied from two perspectives: from the level of strategic conduct or institutional analysis. From the first, the researcher examines how organisational actors routinely draw on modalities (e.g.,interpretative schemes) to constitute and reproduce their organisational world. In doing so, critical attention is directed at how interpretative schemes become ideological as groups mobilise their control over facilities to infuse interpretative schemes with norms. Cultural studies that examine strategic conduct are likely to be ethnographic in nature. Should strategic conduct be bracketed in the examination of organisational culture then the emphasis will be on the chronically reproduced features of the culture. From this perspective researchers might be interested in, for example, the way occupational groups have historically been able to connect signification to legitimation in the pursuit of their sectional interests. In the following chapter I will present the methodology of my research in greater detail, explaining why I focus on the strategic conduct of actors rather than on the institutional features of structural properties. Before doing so, I will explain how Giddens' theory of structuration advances our understanding of the existential, material and political process of cultural reproduction.

5.3. Existential, Material and Political Processes of Cultural Reproduction.

One of the benefits of using Giddens' theory of structuration in the study of organisational culture is that it lends itself to at least some consideration of the existential,

material and political processes of cultural reproduction. To recapitulate, I define existential processes as the processes through which organisational actors construct their identities through routine interaction. Material processes are defined as the processes through which nature is transformed, thus securing the material survival of human beings. Political processes are the processes by which actors or groups of actors more successful at mobilising forms of power in interaction are able to secure sectional intersts by naturalising and legitimising their specialist ideologies. These processes are conceptual distinctions which help us to understand organisational culture more fully. In interaction existential, material and political processes are all drawn on and reconstituted simultaneously. I pick up this point again in section 5.3.d. Before doing so, however, I outline each of three processes of cultural reproduction.

a. Existential Processes.

I begin my analysis of the processes of cultural reproduction and reconstitution by examining existential processes. By existential processes, I mean the processes though which actors come to construct a valued identity through social relations. I begin with the existential, rather than the material or political, because it is necessary to understand that human beings' relationship to the environment is comparatively underdetermined in order to understand how different forms social organisation (e.g., capitalism, socialism, feudalism etc.) are possible. In doing so, I

follow Giddens (1984: 3) who accepts 'a hermeneutic starting point' in the theory of structuration 'in so far as it is acknowledged that the description of human activities demands a familiarity with the forms of life expressed in those activities.'

I have already suggested that some literature motivated by practical and emancipatory cognitive interests has made inroads into understanding the existential processes of cultural reproduction. However, much of this literature, infused with the dualism between object and subject, fails to do this adequately. For example, work subscribing to the interpretative schools tends to concentrate on cultural meanings, but fails to recognise how these meanings are legitimised and naturalised through the political processes of cultural reproduction as more powerful actors draw on allocative and authoritative resources (material processes) to secure sectional interests (see Chapters 3 and 4). In short, they have no conception of culture as praxis. A second problem of work which focuses on action by examining individual agents is, as Giddens quite rightly observes, that the accounts organisational actors can give are necessarily 'bounded', both by unintended consequences and unacknowledged conditions of action (see Chapter 3). The result of these insensitivities is that the theory of the subject constructed is incapable of exploring the existential processes of cultural reproduction. How then, should agency be theorised? Once again, I turn to Giddens (and Berger and Luckman) for pointers.

Rejecting Marx's notion that human beings capacity for making tools is what distinguishes them from other animal species, Giddens (1982) claims that the uniqueness of human beings lies in their search for self mastery and meaning. The contention here is that human beings constantly try and generally succeed, albeit temporarily, to make their social world intelligible. This begs two questions. Firstly, why are humans so concerned to make sense of their world when such a preoccupation seems absent from other animal species? Secondly, how do actors make their social world meaningful?

In addressing the first question the work of Berger and Luckman (1966) is particularly insightful (Berger and Luckman. They argue that human beings' ongoing attempt to make their world intelligible is rooted in their deep-seated need to achieve 'ontological security' by effecting at least a minimally acceptable degree of closure on the 'world-openness' with which they are confronted. Unlike other animal species, who inhabit a 'closed-world' where their relationship to their environment is firmly structured by their biological and instinctual organisation, human beings' relationship to their environment is comparatively underdetermined. In consequence, they are constrained to construct their own humanity. Exactly how human beings construct and reproduce their 'humanity' is variable across time and space. For example, it takes little more than a browse through anthropological literature to see that the way human beings experience and make sense of their 'humanness' varies considerably. Some groups are nomadic, others

geographically fixed; some are tribal, other live in vast industrial conurbations; some live in patriarchal societies, while other in matriarchal societies. Thus, as Berger and Luckman (1966:66-7) observe,

> the ways of becoming and being human are as numerous as man's cultures. Humanness is socio-culturally variable. In other words, there is no human nature in the sense of a biologically fixed substratum determining the variability of socio-cultural formations. There is only human nature in the sense of anthropological constants (for example, world-openness and the plasticity of instinctual structure) that delimit and permit man's socio-cultural formations. But the specific shape into which this humanness is moulded is determined by those socio-cultural formations and is relative to their numerous variations. While it is possible to say that man has a nature, it is more significant to say that man constructs his own nature, or more simply, that man produces himself.

For human beings to attain (at least the illusion) of a solid sense of self and identity, they must recursively 'bring off' the social practices through which their unique sense of humanness is re-constituted. Moreover, the same process affords them the opportunity to direct their unfocussed 'drives' towards 'meaningful' action thus holding at bay the existential anxieties and tensions that world-openness engenders and realising some degree of ontological security. Unless human beings can make sense of their social world they are unable to reproduce the social practices through which not only the social world, but their very subjectivity and identity is reconstituted. One could therefore argue that the need and ability to make sense of their social world is the distinctive characteristic of human beings because without it they would be unable to realise their own humanity.

Having answered the 'why' question it is now possible to address how human beings render their social worlds intelligible. Here Giddens (1984) has usefully constructed two models which help explain the processes through which human beings make sense of their social world. The first is a 'stratification model of the acting self' (ibid:3); the second explores the different levels of human consciousness. I examine each in turn.

The very fact that human beings can reproduce the social practices, through which their social world and their own subjectivity is established, presupposes some reflexive form of knowledgeability. This reflexivity is the ability of humans to continually monitor the flow of lived through experiences (the duree) as well the social and physical contexts in which they move. The reflexive monitoring of action, in turn, depends upon the rationalization of action. This is understood by Giddens to be the capacity of competent agents to maintain a 'theoretical understanding' of the grounds of their activity. By this Giddens means that actors can generally, if asked, give an account of why they are doing such and such. However, while actors can usually give an account of their actions they cannot necessarily do so for their motives, particularly if the motivation for action is partly grounded in the actors unconscious. Finally, as Figure 4.2 shows, Giddens recognises that action is bounded by unacknowledged conditions and unintended consequences.

FIGURE 5.2. Giddens' Stratification Model of Action.

(Source: Giddens 1976: 56)

The reflexive monitoring and rationalisation of action is
illustrated by the comments of one of the personnel
specialists. Recalling a recent incident concerning the
writing of a job description she told me that

> One manager came in here with the job description
> he had written himself. I asked him 'does it cover
> everything this person will do?' He said 'Yes.' So
> I read through it just to check. Now it so
> happened that I knew the person who was leaving
> that post and I knew she made the tea, delivered
> and opened the mail, did the photocopying and
> liased with supplies... So I asked him why he
> hadn't put these things down... He stood there
> open mouthed and sort of said to himself "Does Meg
> do those things... Yes I suppose she does". He
> obviously hadn't a clue what was going on in his
> department because it happend so smoothly each day
> that he took it for granted. I really want to say
> "typical male" but we all do it. I was reading only
> last week that human can only hold about seven
> facts in their heads at one time, so if things are
> not a problem we ignore them. It's like a
> background noise, at first we hear it but gradually
> as we get used to it we don't hear it anymore
> unless we really make an effort to tune into it
> again. It's like that at work. Unless you tune
> into what's going on you really don't think about
> it. (emphasis added)

Here the specialist reflexively monitors her action. This is
revealed in her comments 'so if things are not a problem we
ignore them.' Problems can only be recognised by actors as
they reflexively monitor their lived through experiences.
Her comments on why the departmental manager 'hadn't a clue
what was going on in his department' illustrate the
rationalisation of action. For example, she accounts for his
poor monitoring of action by saying 'we all do it. I was

reading last week that humans can only hold about seven facts in their heads at one time, so if things are not a problem we ignore them.'

Giddens links the stratification model of the acting self with his model of the different levels of human consciousness. Here he suggests that much of the reflexive monitoring of action is routinely done at the level of 'practical consciousness'. Practical consciousness is defined as actors knowing tacitly about how to 'bring off' social encounters in given contexts without being able to formulate such knowledge discursively. Actors are, however, potentially able to make practical knowledge explicit should they be asked to give discursive accounts of what is to them taken-for-granted and routinely accomplished activity. The rationalisation of action takes place at the level of discursive consciousness. This is the ability of actors to give verbal expression to the conditions of their own action within the social contexts in which they move. Finally, the importance of the unconscious motivation of action. Here the unconscious is seen to include forms of impulses, knowledge and understanding that are either wholly barred from consciousness or appear in only in distorted forms. Giddens usefully summarises (1984: 4) the relationships between these three levels of consciousness:

> Between discursive and practical consciousness there is no bar; there is only the difference between what can be said and what is characteristically simply done. However, there are barriers, centred principally upon repression, between discursive consciousness and the unconscious.

Some of the comments of the personnel specialist on
'background noise' illustrates the distinction between
practical and discursive consciousness.

> It's like a background noise, at first we hear it
> but gradually as we get used to it we don't hear it
> anymore unless we really make an effort to tune
> into it again. It's like that at work. Unless you
> tune into what's going on you really don't think
> about it.

For much of the time what we do is filtered out of discursive
consciousness once it ceases to be new or problematic. And,
like background noise, it is difficult to focus upon whilst
it remains unproblematic, although not impossible. Moreover,
it is primarily through this routinised action monitored at
the level of practical consciousess that organisational
actors are able to maintain a sense of ontological security.
And, as long as such routines can be reproduced over time, at
least a sense of 'solid' identity can be maintained. When
interaction is unproblematic it is not directly motivated but
carried along at the level of practical consciousness.
However, should routinisation be threatened two things
happen. Firstly, it is likely that action will become
directly motivated again as the actor seeks to avoid
potential anxiety arousing situations. Secondly, interaction
that was previously taken-for-granted becomes the object of
the reflective gaze of consciousness and is carried on at the
level of discursive consciousness until the threat is dealt
with and a new status quo is established. This raising of
consciousness has important implications for the development
of emancipatory praxis (to be discussed Chapter 10).

b. Material Processes of Cultural Reproduction.

Earlier I noted that social practices, biting into time and space, are considered by Giddens to be at the root of the production and reconstitution of the subject and the social object. In my discussion of the existential processes of cultural reproduction, I examined how the involvement of organisational actors in routine activity had important consequences for securing a sense of self and identity. In doing so, I revealed how social practices are at the root of the constitution of the subject. In this section, I explore the material processes of cultural reproduction by focussing on the organisation of recurrent social practices through which the social object (e.g., organisations, societies etc.) is reconstituted. More formally, I define the material processes of cultural reproduction as the processes through which actors transform nature in order to secure their material existence. The material processes of cultural reproduction are an important focus of study because if the production and reproduction of organisational cultures is to be understood, they must be contextualised within the relations of production through which they are constituted and reproduced. Thompson (1984: 38) agrees. He contends that modern work studies which are 'disconnected from and unrelated to an economic and historical context,...make little more than a fleeting, descriptive sense.' For example, the public relations and personnel practices described in Chapter 8 only make sense as management practices within a capitalist mode of production.

Central to the theory of structuration is Giddens' claim that recurrent social interaction, through which organisation cultures are produced and reconstituted, does not take place in a social vacuum. Rather, interaction is carried out within existing social systems (e.g., organisations, cities, etc.). Giddens defines 'systems' as the institutionalised forms of interdependent social practices of individuals and groups. These systems are not created by actors, but they are reproduced and transformed by them, 'remaking what is already made in the continuity of praxis' (1984: 171). For example, in my analysis of Nichols and Benyon's 'Living with Capitalism' (see Chapter 3), I disclosed that the work activities carried out at Chemco could only be understood within the capitalist relations of production. In performing these activities, Chemco's employees do not construct capitalist relations of production, for it appears to them as an 'objective' feature of the social world. However, by entering into capitalist relations in production (by selling their labour power), they necessarily reconstitute its features.

Giddens illustrates the relationship between individual actors and the institutionalised forms of interdependent social practices of individuals and groups in Figure 5.3:

FIGURE 5.3: The reproduction of social life.

Source: Giddens 1984: 191

Figure 5.3. shows actors drawing upon structural properties (in the form of modalities of structure) in reflexively monitored action, and in so, doing, reconstituting these structural properties (e.g., structures of domination. legitimation and communication). The most deeply embedded structural properties, implicated in the reproduction of social totalities, are structural principles. Giddens defines structural principles (1984:185) as 'principles ·of organisation of societal totalities.' The study of structural principles is the 'study of major aspects of transformation/ mediation relations which influence social and system integration.'

Central to these structural principles, I argue, is the mode of production in which work activities are situated. Burawoy (1985: 29) defines the mode of production as

> 'the social relations into which men and women enter as they transform nature'. Each mode of production is made up of a combination of two sets of social relations... First, there are the social relations of men and women to nature": the relations of productive activity and of the labour process, sometimes known as the technical division

of labour. <u>I shall refer to these as relations in production</u>. Second, there are the social relations of "men and women to one another": the relations of distribution and consumption of the product of labour and the relations through which surplus is pumped out of the direct producers, sometimes known as the social division of labour. <u>I shall refer to these as the relations of production</u>.

Within capitalism, workers are dispossessed of their own means of production. Propertyless actors are therefore constrained to sell their labour power to employers, or, as Fox (1974: 284) puts it,

> The propertyless many are forced by their need for a livelihood to seek access to resources, owned and controlled by the few.

They are 'forced' sell their labour power, as Giddens (1984) notes, because there are few other options available to them within capitalism. Certainly some people are self-employed, others may 'drop-out', but for the vast majority of people, selling their own labour power is the only viable option. Of course, an actor may have a number of job openings, but the contractual options open to him or her are effectively of a single type: that of a seller of labour power. Were people not constrained to sell their labour power in order to secure their material existence, managerial departments such as personnel are unlikely to have established (in their current forms). For example, the role of personnel specialists is to recruit, train, co-ordinate and control labour in order to facilitate the efficient (profitable) production of goods. If workers were not constrained to sell their labour power, the coordination of work activities would still be needed, but the recruitment, training and control of labour would not be needed (at least in the forms in which we know them).

Having bought labour power, the capitalist sets it to work on the other factors of production (land, raw materials, etc.) to produce goods with use values. Such production is accomplished through the relations in production. That is the way the employer organises the work activity of men and women to transform nature into goods. However, the production of such products is not the only goal of capitalists. They need to exchange those products for a price greater than they cost to produce. In so doing, creating profit. The turning of surplus value into profit is accomplished through the relations of production.

That workers are constrained to sell their labour power in order gain a livelihood appears to workers as an 'objective' feature of the social system. Workers experience of selling their labour power can be summed up in the old adage: 'that's just the way it is.' However, and this is the key point, by entering into relations in production to transform nature and secure a material existence, actors, at the same time reconstitute relations of production, and 'conceal the essence of those relations' (Burawoy, 1985: 31). Burawoy addresses himself to the question of how actors conceal the relations of production through their strategic reconstitution of the relations in production. First, he argues, that the relations of production within capitalism are separated from the relations in production. Relations in production take place within the organisation, relations of production are necessarily external to the producing organisation. Burawoy (ibid: 32) observes that 'this

separation of relations in and of production, of course, corresponds directly to the institutional separation of "ownership and control."' Secondly, he shows that relations in production have the effect of fragmenting labour, frustrating the emergence of a collective consciousness. Thirdly, in capitalism, workers are unable to see the totality of social relations. All they see is their immediate (geographically specific) work.

The question which must now be addressed is how far does such an argument hold true for state welfare sector, of which ANIP is a part? In answering this question I intend to examine the areas of similarity and difference between the relations in and of production of state and market sector organisations.

To begin with I will address areas of similarity between the relations of production of state and market sectors. Firstly, it must be made clear that the very existence of a state welfare organisation within a capitalist economy is dependent on capitalist relations of production. For, it is only as people are paid wages (ultimately through the extraction of surplus value) that the taxes necessary to fund state welfare activities can be raised. Equally, however, state activities bring into being new and additional forms of social relations of production, not dependent on obscuring the extraction of surplus value. This has contradictory consequences. The development of new relations of production undermines the dominance of capitalist relations of production. In doing so, however, it also undermines the

conditions on which the state welfare sector depends (c.f., Cousins, 1987).

Turning now to relations in production, the work of Cousins (1986, 1987) is insightful, and although she concentrates much of her work on the National Health Service her insights are nonetheless valid and applicable to the present analysis of ANIP. She argues that state and private sector workers are equally under the control of employers because they all sell their labour power, surrendering their creativity to their respective employers. Moreover, as Crompton and Jones (1984:214) recognise, despite the fact that it may be theoretically incorrect to label state managers as capitalists 'they are nevertheless constrained to act as "capitalists" in respect of the organisation and control of their labour force.' Recent Government policy decisions concerning the management of ANIP have tended to confirm this view. For example, forms of capitalist rationality have been introduced into the provision of state welfare and educational services. In consequence, state managers are required to operate in much the same ways as those in the private sector. Thus, emphasis is placed on cost efficiency, productivity and accountability. One recent government sponsored investigation into the managerial structure of ANIP forcefully makes this point. The Chairman of the Spooner Committee (1984) contends that

> we have been told that ANIP is different from
> business in management terms, not least because
> ANIP is not concerned with the profit motive and
> must be judged by wider social standards which
> cannot be measured. These differences can be
> greatly overstated. The clear similarities between

> ANIP _management_ _and_ _business_ _management_ _are_ _much_
> _more_ _important_. (emphasis added)

It is not surprising then, that Carchedi (1977), Crompton and Gubbay (1977) and Crompton and Jones (1984) all maintain that state employees are, for the above reasons, as equally oppressed as private sector workers despite that fact that they are not (technically) engaged in the production of surplus value.

These similarities, however, must not be overstated for a number of reasons. Firstly, even with the increased emphasis on accountability and efficiency there nonetheless remains a fundamental difference in modes of rationality of state and private sector organisations. Thus, while private sector organisations are governed by the logic of maximising profit state organisations transparently are not. Rather, they are governed by non-market considerations like interest group demands, political concerns and budgetary controls. Moreover, with so many (and no clear) criteria to be met the setting of efficiency and effectiveness goals is typically problematic. For example, at ANIP there is a bifurcation of measurement criteria between, on the one hand providing the best possible service for each client, and on the other, keeping the marginal cost of each intervention at a minimum. Obviously there are tensions between these values, for, to provide the best possible service often requires the large time input from relatively highly paid case workers which results in the raising of costs for each client intervention. Moreover, the setting of measurement criteria is further complicated by the ideologies of professional groups within ANIP. The service professionals, who are in

direct contact with clients, tend to subscribe to the
ideology of providing the necessary education and care
regardless of its cost. In contrast, administrative
coalitions have typically criticised this policy because of
it high marginal costs both in terms of labour power and
financial resources. The result of all this is that the
labour process cannot be merely geared to meeting simple
production targets. And, in the absence of having to
constantly meet production targets, the control of the labour
process at ANIP, while effected through much the same
strategies as those found in comparable organisations in the
private sector, has tended to be less rigorous.

This difference is articulated by employees of ANIP who
favourably compare their present working environment to that
formerly experienced in the private sector. During my
research period I was often told that ANIP, despite
'sometimes being a bloody awful place', was 'by-and-large a
much better place to work than out there in the "real world"'
(personnel officer). Employees frequently expressed their
preference for the laxer styles of supervision 'where you're
often allowed to get on with your own work' to the 'system
where the... boss is always eye-balling you... making sure
what you do is up to par' (secretary). Moreover, ANIP was
considered to be a 'better place to work' by employees
because they believed they could usefully offer informed
opinions regarding their particular specialisms that would be
considered (or at least not dismissed out of hand) by
decision making forums. Through such mechanisms many workers

believed both they and their services were genuinely valued by the organisation.

This, of course, does not necessarily mean that the real subordination of labour is any less real at ANIP. Labour process writers (e.g. Cressey and MacInnes,1980; Friedman, 1977), for example, have argued that the development of laxer control techniques such a responsible autonomy, industrial democracy and participation merely reflect management's attempts to harness the creativity of highly-skilled workers thus 'regain[ing] control by sharing it' (Cressey and MacInnes 1980:21). Moreover, as much of the literature on organisational culture motivated by a technical cognitive interest points out, there has been a general move towards the humanisation of the workplace as a tool of managerial control following the influential works of Ouchi (1981), and particularly Peters and Waterman's 1982 work 'In Search of Excellence' (Martin and Nicholls, 1984; Westley and Jaeger, 1985).

Within the state sector, there is a separation of ownership and control. While the state technically 'owns' its organisations, it is career managers who control the labour process in the relations of production. The effect of this separation is twofold. Firstly, the existence of a state sector, a humanised face of capitalism, obscures that its existence is dependent upon the capitalist mode of production. Secondly, by offering alternative relations of production, it also negates the capitalist mode of production on which its very existence depends. Individual workers, of

course, do not see this. For at the level of strategic conduct, workers experience the labour process as fragmented and atomised, and as Burawoy notes (see above), they can no longer see the totality of social relations. By examining the material processes of cultural reproduction, I explore how the strategic conduct of organisational actors in relations in production reproduces the structural properties of social system (relations of production). For example, in my analysis of the public relations and personnel specialists I show how the development of strong occupational consciousness may, in fact, prevent the cross-occupational consciousness of large numbers of people to overthrow the entire system. For, the struggling of smaller groups, each seeking to advance their own interests, is antithetical to a fundamental change of the social system. To put this another way, the reason why occupational specialists do not confront the relations of production through which they are exploited is because they are seeking dominance within the relations in production.

c. Political Processes.

So far I have outlined what I mean by the existential and material processes of cultural reproduction. I now turn my attention to the political processes of cultural reproduction. By the political processes of cultural reproduction, I mean those processes through which actors, or groups of actors, mobilise what control they have over scarce resources to secure, advance or defend their own interests in the relations in production. The political processes of

cultural reproduction are conceptually distinct from material processes (although not distinct in the moment of their reconstitution). Political processes focus on how actors seek to secure their interests through the mobilisation of forms of power, ultimately to advance their positioning within the relations in production. Material processes, examine, how routine activity in the relations in production has the (unintended) consequence of reproducing the relations of production. The study of the political processes of cultural reproduction is important because the establishment and reconstitution of relatively stable divisions of labour within work cultures is only possible as routinely mobilised forms of power via scarce material and symbolic resource to define, legitimise and sanction sectional ideologies as 'natural' features of an organisation's culture. I begin my analysis of these political processes by outlining Giddens' notion of the dialectic of control.

Giddens theorisation of the 'dialectic of control' follows directly from his particular conception of agency. He claims that there is a 'logical connection between power and agency' (1984: 14), where 'action logically involves power in the sense of transformative capacity' (ibid: 15). Power is not regarded as a personal possession but treated as as a relational concept. That is, power is realised in relations with other actors (or with nature). By theorising power as relational, Giddens rejects the view that power relations only work in one direction. Rather, Giddens (1976: 9) maintains that

power relations are always two-way; that is to say
that however subordinate an actor may be in a
social relationship, the very fact of involvement
in that relationship gives him or her a certain
amount of power over others.

Moreover,

Power within social systems which enjoy some
continuity over time and space presumes regularized
relations of autonomy and dependence between actors
and collectivities in contexts of social
interaction. But all forms of dependence offer
some resources whereby those who are subordinate
can influence the activities of their superiors.
This is what I call the dialectic of control (1984:
16).

For example, in the capitalist mode of production, workers

are subordinate to capitalists. However, they are not

powerless, for they can withdraw their labour power (on which

the capitalist is dependent for the production of surplus) by

striking.

The result of the interdependent character of power relations

means that domination can never be reduced to an automatic,

mechanical process. For, although domination seeks to reduce

relations of interdependence into ones of dependence, by

being involved in relationships (however asymmetrical),

subordinates always retain some control over resources

through which power can be exercised. As Giddens notes

(1979: 9)

Those involved in subordinate positions in social
relations are frequently adept at converting
whatever resources they possess into some degree of
control over the conditions of reproduction of
those social systems.

This can be illustrated by reference to the Personnel

Department. In Chapters 7 and 9 I show the department to be

occupying a relatively subordinate position in relation to the host bureaucracy. The departmental specialists are dependent on the bureaucracy for allocative resources: their very existence within the South-East Division of ANIP, the size of their budgets, the number of specialist they are able to get funding for, the size and positioning of office space etc., and for authoritative resources: where they are positioned within the occupational division of labour within ANIP, what access they have to strategic planning forums, status, etc. However, the personnel specialists, whilst occupying subordinate postions, nonetheless have access to certain resources. In particular, they successfully mobilise some of their budget to promote the department's image within the host bureaucracy. This has resulted in the specialists securing additional allocative resources in the form of increased staffing and finance, and authoritative resources in terms of status.

In focussing on relations of domination, I am emphasizing how actors seek to use what control they have over scarce resources to infuse organisational discourse and practices with forms of power in order to secure sectional interests. By interests, I do not believe in the objective, given existence of interests (unlike Giddens who does not problematise the ontology of interests). Rather, following Burawoy (1985: 28), I recognise that

> the interests that organise the daily life of workers are not given irrevocably; they cannot be imputed; they are produced and reproduced in particular ways.

In short, interests are situationally specific. For example, the interests of the minority of public relations specialists subscribing to a promotional ideology of public relations to secure a valued sense of identity as promoters of image are, at least temporarily, 'met', by dismissing much of the department's work in order to delegitimise the informational ideology of public relations (see Chapter 8). Yet, at the same time, their interests in maintaining a livelihood are to market the very services they undermine to secure their employment within the host bureaucracy (see Chapter 9). Thus, it is too simple to say that the interests of the promotional specialists are met by either undermining or supporting departmental work practices. Rather, how they define their interests in discourse depends on whom they the talking to.

In my examination of the political processes of cultural reproduction I focus specifically on ideology, myth and humour. Following Thompson (1984: 132), I am concerned to explore how

> the meaning of what is said - what is asserted in spoken or written discourse as well as that about which one speaks or writes - is infused with forms of power...It is the infusion of meaning with power that lends language so freely to the operations of ideology. Relations of domination are sustained by a mobilisation of meaning which legitimises, disseminates or reifies an existing state of affairs, and meaning can be mobilised because it is an essentially open, shifting indeterminate phenomenon.

Let me examine these in turn. By ideology, I refer to 'asymmetries of domination that connect signification to the legitimation of sectional interest' (Giddens, 1984: 33). In this formulation, ideology does not refer to abstract systems

of belief since it locates these concretely in the context of power relations through which they are expressed. The power of ideology is that it (attempts to) represent sectional interests as universal ones, and to naturalise and reify the status quo, filtering out of existence the very power relations through which ideology is produced. For example, in my examination of work culture of the Public Relations Department (see Chapter 8), I disclose the presence of two competing ideologies of public relations: one informational, the other promotional. In doing so, I show how professionals seek to mobilise what control they have over scarce symbolic and material resources to legitimise their own sectional definitions of public relations. The relationship between those holding to informational and promotional ideologies of public relations was characterised by a mutual discrediting of the others ideology. For example, one of the 'promotional' specialists commented on the difference between 'real' public relations and the work carried on within the office, which he termed 'press relations':

> Public relations differs from press relations because you get a lot more exhibition work and promotional work. Real public relations requires style and flair. You've either got it or you haven't... Public relations is not like press relations. You can't just rush up to someone with a grubby note book and a pencil stub to get a story ...to publicise an event. You have to think issues through. Maybe use a teaser campaign, develop a coherent strategy, win clients confidence. Of course public relations people want good press coverage. But we don't resort to being journalists, lapping up to people to get press coverage. No, we develop a strong conceptual campaign. If it's good, then journalists come to us for the inside story.

The above comments are infused with a promotional ideology of

public relations. Public relations is considered to be about the promotion of image, about style, and carefully planned campaigns. In contrast, those who subscribe to an informational ideology are represented as illegitimate public relations specialist. For 'real' public relations specialist would never 'lap' up to people, nor would they be seen using 'grubby note books and pencil stubs.' In short, press relations activities have no 'style.'

The term 'myth' is often associated with, and restricted to, accounts of the world that have a deep psychological significance for those who sustain them. A possible consequence of this is that myths are understood to have primarily affective basis, rather than as an instrument for achieving legitimacy or articulating interests (e.g. Daft, 1983; Berg, 1985). Rejecting this restrictive conception of myth, which is based upon the separation of the concrete and rational (non-mythical) and the abstract and emotive (mythical) contents of discourse, I suggest that although a particular symbol-system has an overtly instrumental origin or significance, it does not mean that its maintenance is necessarily a matter of (emotional) indifference for those who construct it. On the contrary, actors may be most anxious that the myth is accepted by others and that their own actors are perceived to conform to its symbolic reality.

While myth has been defined in a number of ways including 'fairy tales' (Westerlund and Sjorstrand, 1979: 21) to 'story[ies] about the past, present or future events' (Abravanel, 1983: 286), my use of myth is informed by Barthes

(1972: 10), who argues that 'myth is a type of speech...a system of communication...a mode of signification. Barthes argues that language is made up of a three-dimensional pattern: the signified and the signifier, which together become the sign. To illustrate this, he asks the reader to imagine a bunch of roses (the signifier) being given to a person to signify love or passion (the signified). Together, the signifier and the signified - the 'passionified' roses - form the sign. Myth however, while still comprised of the tri-dimensional pattern,

> is a peculiar system, in that it is constructed from a semiological chain, which existed before it: it is a second order semiological system. That which is a sign (namely the associative total of a concept and an image) in the first system, becomes a mere signifier in the second (ibid: 114).

This can be illustrated by the example of a job description written by the Senior Public Relations Manager. As I show in Chapter 9, the manager wrote departmental job descriptions in organisationally sanctioned language. These descriptions not only depicted the job, but also played a mythical role in legitimising departmental practices. On one level, the job description acted as a signifier of the actual job. But, at a deeper level (the second order semiological system), it also became the signifier of the organisational *myth of* the work of the public relations department. That is, it presented the bureaucracy with a legitimate framework for interpreting and accommodating the presence of public relations. As Barthes (ibid: 143) notes:

> myth does not deny things, on the contrary...it purifies them, it makes them innocent, it gives them a natural and external justification, it gives

them a clarity which is not that of explanation,
but that of a statement of fact...it organises a
world which is without contradiction because it is
without depth, a world wide open and wallowing in
the evident, it establishes blissful clarity...

In the example of the job description, the power of myth
resides in the capacity of the public relations specialists
to exploit ANIP's efforts to monitor and control the work of
its personnel. The myth enshrined in the job description
produces 'blissful clarity' as it screens out features of the
department's work culture that are either incompatible with,
or undetected by, the host bureaucracy. Accordingly, it is a
particularly powerful symbol system for securing (and
obscuring) sectional interests.

I now turn to humour. Whereas other social theorists may
regard humour as either inconsequential or merely functional
for group identity of social, cohesion, Giddens' theory of
structuration lends itself to an interpretation of humour as
a social process through which meanings are communicated,
power relations are negotiated and sanctions are applied
(Filby, 1989b). Instead of marginalising humour as a trivial
topic of social and organisational analysis, Giddens
encourages humorous practices to be regarded as expressions
of the structural properties of the settings of interaction.
More specifically, I suggest that humour, like other forms of
discourse, is infused with forms of power. Those actors or
groups of actors who successfully infuse humour with their
sectional ideologies my find it to be a particularly powerful
form of discourse. This is because, as Freud (1960: 103)
notes,

It [humour] will further bribe the hearer with its
yield of pleasure into taking sides with us without

any close investigation, just as on the other occasions we ourselves have been bribed by an innocent joke into over-estimating the substance of a statement, expressed jokingly. This is brought in the perfect aptitude in the common phrase 'die Lacher auf seine Seite ziehen' (to bring the laughter over to our [sic] side) (Parenthesis added).

A good example of this is provided by the personnel specialists' response to a circular from the Catering Manager (situated at George Radnor House - see Chapter 7). The circular announced the dates of the various Christmas functions to be held for staff members from George Radnor and '357' and concluded with the arrangements made for the staff located in Tower House. This final section read:

> In addition to the full Christmas lunches, ...it is planned that on certain dates leading up to Christmas a plated meal comprising a turkey sandwich, mince pie, etc., will be available at the other staff dining room at Tower House.

Concerned, firstly, that they had no 'dining room' at the Tower, secondly, that they were not invited to use the canteen facilities at George Radnor House (even for a Christmas lunch), and thirdly, that they felt they were being 'fobbed off' with a token Christmas meal, the personnel specialists sent a humorous reply to the Catering Manager. The reply took the form of a A4 size poster of a town crier, loudly ringing his bell and holding up a manuscript headed 'Hear Ye...' Having removed the original message from the scroll, the specialists inserted this sarcastic reply:

> We, the undermentioned 'gourmets' at Tower House wish to congratulate the "South-East Division" and in particular the Catering Manager for his foresight in presenting his highly imaginative and original 'Christmas Fayre' to be provided 'on certain days leading up to Christmas' to the fortunate members of staff at Tower House.

We are astounded that this year, we are to be given
the additional culinary delights of "etc." to a
throughly novel gastronomic experience.

Some members of staff are concerned that this
"etc." should not be too highly spiced as it could
cause considerable resentment to our less fortunate
colleagues at George Radnor House and 357 who are
not being offered this particular delicacy.

At this particular seasonal time of goodwill to our
fellow colleagues, we wholeheartedly extend an
invitation to those members of staff at George
Radnor House and 357 to join with us in sharing our
festive "etc.", plus, at no extra expense, turkey
sandwich AND mince pie.

We would advise you to book early so as to avoid
the risk of disappointment.

In this example, the power of humour can be seen in that
humour can be a vehicle for communicating serious messages.
Through it, for example, the specialists were able to
indicate to the Catering Manager that they felt somewhat
ill-treated in respect to their access to Divisional catering
facilities. In this particular case, the serious message of
the document was heeded by the Catering Manager and 'special
arrangements' were made for Tower staff to partake of the
Christmas meal at George Radnor House. However, the message
of humour is always not so readily accepted; sometimes it is
challenged. But, when the content of humour is challenged,
the addresser can (usually) find sanction in society's
leniency towards the humorous and claim s/he was only joking
(Turner, 1971). Even more so in this case, for had the reply
not been regarded as illegitimate, the specialists could have
deflected possible reprisals by claiming that the Catering
Manager had no 'Christmas Spirit.'

To recap, then, the political processes of cultural
reproduction are those processes through which actors seek to

secure, defend and advance their control over scarce symbolic and material resources in the relations in production. In Chapters 8 and 9 I will examine these in some detail in my analysis of the work cultures of the Public Relations and Personnel Departments.

d. The Interdependence of the Existential, Material and Political Processes of Cultural Reproduction.

So far, I have outlined the existential, political and material processes of cultural reproduction. In this section, I show the interdependence and interpenetrations of these processes. In my discussion of these processes, I have shown how social practices, stretched across time and space, are the routines through which actors' gain a valued sense of identity, mobilise their control of symbolic and material resources to realise their interests, and reproduce the social relations of production through which they secure their material existence or livelihood. Accordingly, it is in the moment of structuration (when modalities of structure are drawn upon and reconstituted) that the existential, political and material processes are reconstituted. To illustrate the relationship between existential, material and political processes of cultural reproduction, it is useful to return to my earlier example drawn from the routine work of the personnel specialists: a job interview.

I begin by examining the existential processes involved in a job interview. Within a capitalist society, peoples' values are generally determined by their positioning within the

labour process. For example, the first question asked of a new acquaintance is frequently 'what do you do?' For those without work the maintenance of dignity and identity can be problematic for they are no longer immersed in the routines through which identities are secured and reconstituted. For the interviewee finding work is therefore important in order to maintain a sense of identity and self-worth. Thus, the interviewee is directly motivated to find a job in which his or her identity can be 'solidified.'

Turning to the <u>material</u> processes of cultural reproduction, the interview situation cannot be understood outside of the relations of production through which it is produced. Within capitalism, actors do not offer themselves for work simply to gain a feeling of significance. Rather, the majority of actors are forced to sell their labour power in order to realise a livelihood. In this light, the job interview is a mediatory mechanism which brings together human beings selling their labour power to potential purchasers. The sellers of labour power attend a job interviews in an attempt to extract from potential employers the greatest possible price for their labour power, given the existential constraints they place upon the work they wish to do. For example, actors might well accept a lesser wage in order to pursue a career in which they find existential significance in favour of more highly paid jobs in which they (expect to) experience higher degrees of alienation, frustration and boredom. In contrast, the buyers of labour power seek to maximise their potential purchase of labour power for a given

sum of money.

Political processes must also be considered. Firstly, if a professional organisation is relatively successful at restricting entry into the profession, then the engineered scarcity of labour in that area of expertise is likely to keep the 'going rates' for selling labour power relatively high. In this way, the political processes impact upon material and existential processes. For example, that people enter a profession suggests that they are likely to receive existential significance from their work as they immerse themselves in the routines of that profession. Moreover, by organising together in a professional association, actors are able to co-ordinate their control over scarce symbolic and material resources, enhancing their potential for securing sectional interests. Secondly, the political activity of the buyers of labour power must not be overlooked. For example, organisational actors may be able to mobilise their control over scarce material and symbolic resources to ensure that certain specialists are recruited while others are rejected. In the case of the public relations department (examined in Chapters 7-10), the Senior Public Relations Manager was able to mobilise authoritative resources so that he could write all job advertisements in the light of his sectional ideology. As a result, he was able to ensure that it was ex-journalists, rather than non-journalists, who were recruited, thus maintaining their control of departmental work organisation and resources.

To further illustrate this point (and the interdependence of

the processes of cultural reproduction), I record the comments of one of the public relations specialists who adhered to a promotional ideology of public relations. Recollecting the comments of the Senior Public Relations Manager concerning his application for a vacant post within the department, the specialist said,

> Geoff told me I needn't bother to apply for the job. Not in so many words of course, but he made his point very clear. He said he really wanted someone with journalistic training. He's looking for another journalist. Surprise, Surprise! He wants to turn the whole department into an office full of bloody journalists. I'm a public relations man, and I'm not going to change my way of doing things just to fit in here. After all, a man has got to have his self-respect. I felt like telling him to stuff the job, but work is hard to come by these days.

Here the specialist recognises his work to be existentially significant to his being. He refers to his sense of identity as a 'public relations man'; an identity which is grounded in the way he carries out his work. This is revealed in his comments that 'a man has got to have his self-respect' and that he was not 'going to change my way of doing things just to fit in here.' This suggests, that his sense of identity as a public relations specialist is existentially significant to him. To deny it would be akin to losing his 'self respect.' However, his ability to express his professional ideology is tempered by his realisation of the material processes of cultural reproduction. Thus, while the specialist would like to tell Geoff to 'stuff the job', he is constrained by his need to earn a livelihood. And, given the high unemployment experienced in Britain during the time of my study, he recognises that in the absence of another

purchaser of his labour power, he would jeopardise his livelihood if he left (or was forced to leave) his current position. Finally, the extract clearly illustrates the way actors seek to secure their sectional interests by mobilising what control they have over scarce resources. For example, the Senior Public Relation Manager is shown to be using his control over allocative and authoritative resources (in this case, his position as chair of the selection committee for the vacant post) to, as far as possible, ensure that an ex-journalist is selected, rather than a person who is less likely to subscribe to an informational ideology of public relations. However, in accordance with the dialectic of control, the extract show the promotional specialist mobilising what resources he controls to resist the transformation of the office into 'an office full of bloody journalists.' In this case, he threatens to mobilise his control over the way he works as a form of resistance: 'I'm a public relations man, and I'm not going to change my way of doing things just to fit in here.' By offering such resistance, the specialists is able to maintain his identity as a promotional specialists and not compromise 'his self-respect.'

Drawing these points together, two important observations can be made. Firstly, one of the unintended consequences of trying to 'attain a closure upon the precariousness of meaning' through immersion in the routines of a profession is that 'it simply places individuals in the competitive struggle over the symbolic and material resources that are

seen to sustain an unproblematic sense of self' (Knights and Willmott, 1985: 26). This is because those groups which are able to gain and maintain control over valued symbolic and material resources (through which their power is exercised) are able to gain the illusion of independence, and hence achieve a 'solid' sense of self and identity. This is shown in the extract, where the specialists without a journalistic background finds the process of securing a valued sense of identity far more problematic that the journalists who control the way work is carried out within the department. Secondly, and relatedly, it is worth noting that one consequence of the labour process being carried on through asymmetrical relations of power is that the methods of attaining ontological security not only depends upon but also recreates these asymmetries. Actors' very sense of normality and individual subjectivity 'is dependent upon, and tacitly supportive of, the reproduction of the prevailing forms of domination and oppression' (Knights and Willmott, 1987:47). Thus, the way organisational actors come to construct valued identities and reproduce their work cultures is largely dependent upon their relative positioning within the relations in production.

PART THREE

THE PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

CHAPTER SIX: RESEARCH METHODS.

6.1. Introduction.

In the last chapter I suggested how the development of a critical, emancipatory conceptualisation of organisational culture could be advanced by using Giddens' theory of structuration because it is appreciative of the existential, material and political processes of cultural reproduction. In this chapter I explain how I have employed Giddens' theory to study the work cultures of personnel and public relations specialists located within a large state bureaucracy. The chapter is divided into four parts. In the first, I discuss Giddens' methodological recommendations for employing the theory of structuration in empirical research. In particular, I stress Giddens' contention that research must have an ethnographic bent in order to penetrate what actors need to know in order to accomplish their work. I discuss my research methods in the second part. In doing so, I explain why I selected the Public Relations and Personnel Departments for my research sites; how I gained and maintained access to these departments; how I gathered information from observation, interviews and documentation, and how I recorded this data. In the third part, I discuss how I organised and analysed my data. Finally, in part four I discuss how I have written up my research.

6.2. Structuration Theory and Methodology.

In 'New Rules of Sociological Method' (1976), Giddens suggests that structuration theory has implications for

research methods, data analysis, and the writing up and communication of research findings. These will be examined in turn. As 1 noted in Chapter 5, Giddens maintains that structuration theory allows for two types of methodological bracketing. In institutional analysis, reflexively monitored social conduct is held in suspension (bracketed) so that interpretative schemes, norms and facilities are analysed as structures of signification, legitimation and domination. By doing so, it is possible to examine how institutions (e.g., state bureaucracies, nation states, etc.) are reproduced across time and space. In strategic conduct, structural properties of social systems are placed under an epoche so that focus is placed upon the ways in which actors draw upon and reproduce modalities of structure in their daily interaction. Given my concern to examine the existential, political and material processes of cultural reproduction, the focus of research is upon how actors strategically draw upon and reconstitute modalities of structure in their daily work activities. As a result, I focus upon how the public relations and personnel specialists draw upon and reconstitute interpretative schemes, norms and facilities in order to communicate and sanction their ideological definitions of work within asymmetrical relations of power. If this is the case, how should organisation culture research be conducted?

In answering this question Giddens maintains that the social world has to be grasped as a skilled accomplishment of active human beings. This, he argues, has important implications

for research activity. If the task of the social researcher is to uncover the meaning systems through which actors routinely construct and reproduce their social worlds, 'immersion in a form of life is the necessary and only means whereby the researcher is able to generate such characteristics' (1976: 161). This point is elaborated by Giddens in 'The Constitution of Society' (1984: 284), where he states that 'all social research has a necessarily cultural, ethnographic or "anthropological" aspect to it.' This is because the focus of the researcher's activity must be on uncovering what his or her own knowledge leads him or her to believe that others must know if they are to successfully accomplish their daily work. This view is consistent with Smircich's (1983b: 165) contention that the study of organisational culture must necessarily be ethnographic, involving 'a 'significant period of time in the setting observing and interacting in order to learn directly from organisational members.' I discuss the detail of my ethnographic research methods in section 6.3.

Turning his attention to the process of interpreting field data, Giddens argues that the social researcher must of necessity draw upon the same sort of skills and interpretative frameworks as those s/he seeks to analyse. The production of meaningful accounts is dependent upon the ability of the social researcher to penetrate the meaning systems which are drawn upon and reproduced by actors in the construction and reconstitution of their social world. In the process of research, these frames of meaning are

continuously analysed and mediated by the social researcher through the use of the theoretical constructs and technical language which constitute the social-scientific discourse of the researcher's particular discipline. This is what Giddens refers to as a 'double hermeneutic,' because sociological descriptions, which are intended to mediate the frames of meanings mobilised and reproduced by those studied in the production and reconstitution of their day-to-day organisational worlds, are themselves interpretative categories which demand translation in and out of the technical language of sociological discourse. As a result, the relationship between the interpretative schemes employed in day-to-day interaction by those studied and the interpretative schemes drawn on by the researcher to interpret his or her subjects' activity is complex; not simply a one-way connection. Rather, as Giddens identifies (ibid: 162),

> ...there is continual 'slippage' of the concepts constructed in sociology, whereby these are appropriated by those whose conduct they were originally coined to analyse, and hence become integral features of that conduct (thereby in fact potentially compromising their original usage within the technical vocabulary of social science).

For example, some of the technical words from the vocabulary of organisation studies, such as 'structure,' 'hierarchy,' and even 'culture' have been appropriated by lay actors to help interpret their day-to-day organisational experiences.

Given the need for the social researcher to translate the frames of meaning within which organisational actors orient their conduct in and out of sociological language, Giddens

maintains that literary style is important in the writing-up of research. In the case of ethnographic research, he argues that it is important for the researcher to offer a 'thick description' in order to describe the 'cultural milieu to others who are unfamiliar with it' (1984: 285).

To exemplify how structuration theory might be employed in empirical research, Giddens, in 'The Constitution of Society,' re-examines Willis' 'Learning to Labour' (see Chapter 3, above). In particular, he emphasises the unintended consequences of the lads' development of the counter-school culture, showing how it effectively (but unintentionally) leads to a closer integration of their activities with the institutions they seek to oppose and undermine. The choice of 'Learning to Labour' as the text to exemplify the analysis of strategic conduct in research is helpful for my own purposes. For, in 'Learning to Labour' (as I suggested in Chapter 3, above), Willis (at least partly) penetrates the existential, material and political processes of cultural reproduction by showing how the lads' construction of a valued identity (existential process) through the mobilisation of what resources they control within the school (political process) has the unintended consequence of reproducing the features of the capitalist labour process (material processes). Furthermore, Willis' work is guided by an emancipatory intent. He, for example, points out (to the lads and the reader) that in light of the unintended consequences he identifies, their actions were self-defeating.

Following Giddens and Willis, l maintain that one of the aims of researchers concerned to produce knowledge guided by emancipatory cognitive interests should be to penetrate the unacknowledged conditions and unintended consequences (existentially, politically and materially) of their subjects' routine activity, enabling those studied to critically reflect upon this previously obscured knowledge to guide the development of an emancipatory praxis. This does not mean that actors will necessarily develop an emancipatory praxis from such insights, as the above discussion of 'Learning to Labour' ably shows. However, it at least provides an opportunity for reflection which can be seized, considered or ignored. This point is taken up in Chapter 10 when I examine the opportunities which the public relations and personnel specialists had for critical reflection, and why these were (and are) rarely used as a springboard to emancipation.

6.3. Defining Ethnography.

If ethnography is seen to be the appropriate research method for studying how groups of actors routinely 'bring off' their social interaction, the question that must be answered is: what is ethnography? While there are a number of different analytic and interpretative approaches to ethnography (Silverman, 1985), most researchers agree that it is participating 'overtly or covertly, in people's daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions; in fact collecting whatever data are available to throw light on the

issues with which he or she is concerned' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983: 2). In many ways it is an extension of the practical methods an intelligent lay person would use to get at the meanings of a group of people (Schwartz and Jacobs, 1979). This comparison is particularly apt if we consider the case of an organisational newcomer trying to 'learn the ropes.' As a newcomer the culture of an organisation initially appears strange and distinctive (Louis, 1981). Subsequently, as the newcomer observes how work practices are accomplished; listens to, understands and begins to use specialised vocubularies; learns how to participate in organisational rites and rituals; and becomes adept at using appropriate forms of humour etc., s/he gradually learns what is needed to unproblematically bring off organisational work. The process is much the same for the participant observer, who, whilst initially confronting an alien work culture, can, assuming s/he is skilled, gradually earn and learn membership to organisational and occupational in-groups. Ethnography therefore can be seen as exploiting the capacities that any competent social actor employs when confronting strange social situations.

That the researcher and non-researcher employ similar techniques for making sense of everyday life is not surprising once we recognise the reflexive character of social research; that is that we are part of the social world we study and cannot escape being so. Moreover, as Hammersley and Atkinson (1983: 15) point out, 'we cannot avoid relying on 'common sense' knowledge.' This, in other words, brings

us back to Giddens' notion of research as a double hermeneutic. This has important methodological implications, for, while some researchers maintain that it is possible for data to be uncontaminated by the researcher, the fact of reflexivity makes it untenable to attempt to base social research upon epistemological positions independent of common sense knowledge.

In the following sections I explain how I conducted my field research. For the sake of convenience I have divided the research process into three stages: field relations, interpretation and writing-up. In doing so, however, I necessarily mythologise the research process; something of an irony for a thesis which, at least in part, seeks to debunk myth. Why is this account of research mythical? Simply because it filters out much of what I did in the process of research. For one thing, field relations, interpretation and writing up are not so easily segmented, but necessarily iterative. Secondly, in writing up my research methods, the account of research appears to be more ordered than it seemed (at least to me) to be. The conventions of writing research in a step-by-step sequence (I did this at such and such time etc.), together with the limitations of space available to discuss research methods, ensures that much of the complexity and confusion of being in the field never reaches the written page (c.f., Bell and Newby, 1977). Thus, in writing my account, I am very conscious that it captures only the shadows of what I did, and the mere tinglings of some of the joys and anxieties I experienced during my time in the

field.

a. Selecting the Research Sites; Gaining and Maintaining Access, Field Relations.

Recognising the reflexive nature of social research had important implications for the choice of my research sites. Given the fact that the researcher must, of necessity, draw on common sense knowledge to make sense of the social interaction under investigation, and, given my concern within this thesis to test the usefulness of structuration theory for developing a critical understanding of culture rather than to analyse a social situation for its own sake, it seemed appropriate to select a research site about which I already had a good deal of common sense knowledge.

Fortuitously, I had recently (1982-83) been employed as a trainee to work on a specialised project within the Public Relations Department in the South East Division of ANIP. This project, which lasted for nine months, was concerned with evaluating the appropriateness of ANIP's service provision for members of the local community. During my employment I adopted the role of a covert participant observer and frequently made jottings about the work I was doing along with any thoughts, feelings or perceptions I had about my work, departmental and non-departmental colleagues, departmental work practices, interaction with other departments and interaction with the host bureaucracy. During the first few weeks, when the work culture appeared to be strange and distinctive, I was primarily concerned to

discover how to produce acceptable work and fit into the social life of the department. Subsequently, the process of becoming an accepted member of the department facilitated entry into the underlife of its culture. As a covert participant observer, it was possible to penetrate more deeply into the everyday cultural practices of the department and the ideological understandings of such practices. Increasing competence at displaying the knowledge and skills of a member, including, for example, the capacity to 'read' and participate in jokes, served to increase trust, with the result that access was gradually gained to more intimate and contradictory features of the work culture of the department. Reflecting upon these notes, I concluded that this department would provide an appropriate site for furthering my research endeavours because I already possessed a good deal of tacit and discursive knowledge about the department and its host organisation. Having established and maintained good relations with members of the department, it was not difficult to re-negotiate two subsequent periods of (overt) research, one of six weeks, the other of seven. The first of these took place approximately eighteen months after the completion of my project work within the department. The second was some eight months later.

During my research within the Public Relations Department I often felt in a 'Catch 22' situation with regards to accessing taken for granted information. When I was regarded as an outsider, having limited knowledge of departmental practices, it was relatively easy to ask other members to

account for their activity. However, despite having worked within the office for nine months, l remained uncertain about which features of the work culture were considered by the specialists to be important and which peripheral. Consequently, I was not sure what questions to ask. To exacerbate this situation, more intimate reflections on work activity were concealed from me, making it still more difficult to find the 'right' questions. Ironically, when I became accepted as an insider, knowing which features were considered to be more important to the specialists, my very status as an insider prevented me from adopting the questioning approach of a naive outsider. This was because, as an insider, it was assumed that I knew why things were as they were. When I continued to ask questions about features of organisational life about which it was considered I should know, my status as an insider was questioned, and the more interesting features of work life once again began to be concealed from me. This was a dilemma I never overcame; never being sure of whether or not to to ask questions.

This was not the only problem of access I experienced within the department. One considerable problem (at least to me) was that I found it difficult to explain to the specialist what I was researching, partly because as an ethnographer I wasn't too sure of what exactly I was looking for myself! I quote from my research diary:

> I feel Geoff [Senior Public Relations Manager] doesn't understand what I do. Do I leave him in a nebulous state or try to give him something more concrete to stand upon - BUT WHAT?

I was primarily concerned that if I concealed my research activities from departmental members they might restrict my access to more interesting features of the work culture. Equally, I was convinced that Blau (1964: 28) was correct in suggesting that researchers in bureaucratic field situations, particularly inexperienced ones,

> ... should not resort to concealment and deception. It is difficult to simulate a role successfully over long periods of time, and if concerns over detection adds to the observer's other worries he is not likely to be effective in discharging his research responsibilities.

As a result, I decided to explain that I was 'an ethnographer seeking to understand the construction and reproduction of work cultures.' While I was seeking to offer a genuine definition of my research interests, and not trying to resort to what Douglas (1976) terms the 'hare-brained academic ploy' where the researcher attempts to obscure his or her research interests through employing long academic words, this definition nonetheless caused bewilderment among my research subjects (and embarrassment for me). Having experimented with other definitions, I finally found that informing departmental members that I was simply interested in discovering how they made sense of their day-to-day working lives seemed to satisfy the more curious members of the department.

Offering a definition departmental members could understand was significant in the development of good field relations. Once my subjects realised that I was not a 'management spy' passing informing to the bureaucracy about their work

activities etc. (something that was of concern to them, especially since I was based as a researcher in the Management Centre of my university), I was able to access more interesting features of the organisational underlife. Quite unexpectedly, access was improved when I shaved off my beard, approximately three weeks into my first period of overt research. I was informed by several departmental members that it made me look 'less serious', 'less like a boffin' and 'more approachable'. Without the beard I apparently 'smiled more' and made people feel more at ease in interview situations!

The selection of the Personnel Department as a research site was made for much the same reasons as those for the Public Relations Department: I already had some knowledge of departmental work practices and I considered access to be relatively easy to obtain. I first came into contact with members of the Personnel Department in the process of carrying out my project research in 1982. As part of the project I was required to interview personnel and educational specialists within the South-East Division of ANIP. As a result I visited the Personnel Department approximately twelve times during the nine month period and, in doing so, became acquainted with its members.

Gaining access to this department, however, was more difficult than I had anticipated. The difficulty for the personnel specialists was that I was associated with the Public Relations Department, with whom the personnel specialists were becoming increasingly frustrated. In an

attempt to promote the image of the Personnel Department, ANIP's public relations specialists were consulted. However, the public relations managers, who favoured an informational rather than a promotional ideology of public relations, were seen to be unhelpful. It was unfortunate (for me) that I tried to negotiate access into the Personnel Department so soon after this exchange. Whether I was considered a 'public relations spy' or not is difficult to say, although l certainly got that impression at times. Even when I assured departmental members that I would not be feeding back any research findings to public relations specialists (or anyone else), I still felt distrusted. Eventually, access to the department was formally granted. However, the personnel specialists' belief that the Public Relations Department had deliberately tried to frustrate their attempts to promote new human resource technologies, and their association of me with the Public Relations Department, ensured that I was neither fully trusted nor accepted as an insider. So, while I gained entry into the department, I was unable to negotiate access to the more intimate features of the specialists' work culture. As a result, I found the two six week research periods much more demanding and emotionally draining than my research in the Public Relations Department and, rubbing salt into this wound, it also yielded comparatively poor research data.

During both periods of research in the Personnel Department, I experienced feelings of self-doubt, uncertainty and frustration. This was particularly true of the first few

days (c.f., Shaffir, Stebbings and Turowetz, 1980; Taylor and
Bogdan, 1984). Like Smith-Cunnien (quoted in Taylor and
Bogdan, ibid: 33),

> I felt uncomfortable in this setting. Most of this
> was my own shyness, I think, although some
> definitely stemmed from the fact that a stranger
> sitting there is conspicuous and I was doing
> nothing but look around... Part of the
> uncomfortableness came from the fact that at some
> moments there was literally very little to watch...

In many ways I now think that my experience of research into
the Public Relations Department lulled me into a false sense
of ease; I had imagined that participant observation was
easier than it was. When I began my research in the
Personnel Department I was disconcerted to be collecting so
little data. This fuelled my insecurity: I was often left
wondering if it was my own lack of experience as a researcher
rather than the personnel specialists 'closing ranks' that
hindered me from gaining access to the sub-life of the
office. Certainly, my inexperience didn't help. I became
increasingly concerned that my ethnographic record would be
devoid of interesting research findings and tried to be a
little more forward (without being aggressive) in my attempts
to interview departmental members. In retrospect, this was
not helpful, and I now feel that I should have waited until
my rapport was better before using this technique. Others
have made similar mistakes for much the same reasons. Blau
(1964), for example, attempted to employ the technique of
continual observation prematurely. He records his
experiences (ibid: 28):

> I think the answer is not simply that lack of
> experience prevented me from knowing how much

resistance this method of observing interaction would create in a group not yet fully reconciled to my presence. Common sense should have told me so, had not irrational factors prevented me from realising it. I was a lone observer in the midst of an integrated group of officials who were initially suspicious of and even somewhat hostile to me and my research. While they were part of the bureaucratic structure, my position was not anchored in it. My anxiety engendered by this insecure position was undoubtedly intensified by the pressure I felt to progress with observations, since I was not sure I could achieve the research aims in the limited time available. It seems (and I use the tentative wording advisedly because I am now reconstructing mental processes of which I was not then fully aware) that I tried to cope with this anxiety by imposing a rigid structure on my research activities. This emotional reaction may have prompted my decision to turn so early from more exploratory observations to the precisely circumscribed and fairly routine task of recording interaction frequencies.

Perhaps because of these mistakes, my fears and anxieties, I learnt more about managing the research process during my time with the Personnel Department than when I was studying the public relations specialists. I felt constrained to establish a good rapport with the personnel specialists. I presented myself as an 'acceptable incompetent' (Sanders 1980: 164) in order to ask questions about 'what everyone knows;' I offered to help people out, to do favours for office members in order to establish rapport (c.f., Johnson, 1975); I developed an interest in their work. Nonetheless, despite these efforts, I became increasingly depressed about the poor quality of access I was getting. As often happens in the field, assistance came from an unexpected source. Following Warren and Rasmussen (1977), who noted that male and female researchers alike can use sexual attraction to gain information, I invited one of the secretaries out for a lunchtime drink. Outside of the office situation she was more relaxed and informative. What was particularly helpful,

however, is that she apparently told the other female members that I was 'an all right guy. normal really!' Subsequently, the female members of staff were much friendlier and more helpful and I was able to interview most of them several times (even if often for only relatively short periods of time) before I ended my second period of research.

In retrospect, it was the chance features of research - shaving off my beard, organising a lunchtime drink - that surprised me most. My reading of several research methodological texts certainly didn't prepare me for the ebbs and flows of the research process. I had expected gaining access to be less problematic, easier to negotiate and maintain. However, these unanticipated events taught me a good deal about the precariousness of establishing good field relations. And, hopefully, this will enable me to be more flexible and relaxed in any future attempts to negotiate access to research sites.

b. Research Methods and Data Recording.

Prior to entering the field for my first period of overt participant observation I experienced considerable anxiety over whether I would be able to produce an acceptable piece of research. I was particularly concerned to be thought of as a 'good researcher.' As a result, I felt constrained to copy a model of research that had already gained respectability, thereby ensuring that my methodology would at least be acceptable (providing I implemented it satisfactorily). Like Barley (1983), I was impressed by

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Spradley's (1979, 1980) suggestions for conducting ethnographic research and analysing the ethnographic record thereby constructed. Before entering the field, however, I read a number of other texts and articles that discussed the implementation of other qualitative research methodologies and, in doing so, I was struck by C. Wright Mills' (1959: 224) comment to field researchers:

> Be a good craftsman: Avoid a rigid set of procedures. Above all seek to develop and use the sociological imagination. Avoid fetishism of method and technique. Urge the rehabilitation of the unpretentious intellectual craftsman, and try to become a craftsman yourself. Let everyman be his own sociologist...

This exhortation encouraged me to experiment in my field research; it gave me the confidence to use my 'sociological imagination' in the process of research, to try to tune my techniques to the field situations I encountered rather than seeking to capture the complexity of organisational life on one methodological film, whether or not it was the most appropriate. C. Wright Mills, I believed, offered me the liberty to incrementally experiment in the field. I took it. As a result, in my field research I used a compendium of research methods including observation, interviews and document analysis. To illustrate this multiplicity of research method, I now outline how I constructed the ethnographic record of my study of the Public Relations Department.

In the early stages of my research I simply sat in the office, watched what was going on and listened to any snatches of conversation I was able to overhear (c.f.,

Smircich, 1983b). During coffee and lunch breaks I built up a rapport with departmental members. We talked about sport, politics, family, current affairs and, of course, the weather! During this early period of research I began constructing my formal ethnographic record. I noted down who was doing what, when, with whom and how. I recorded when members were in the department; if they were out I found out where they were going and scribbled this down too. I noted who visited the office, for how long and for what purpose. I found Spradley's (1980) recommendations for making descriptive observations helpful. He suggests the researcher should try to identify nine features involved in social activity to focus observation. He suggests the researcher should attend to (ibid: 78):

1. Space: the physical place or space.
2. Actor: the people involved.
3. Activity: a set of related acts people do.
4. Object: the physical things that are present.
5. Act: single actions that people do.
6. Event: a set of related activities that people carry out.
7. Time: the sequencing that takes place over time.
8. Goal: the things people are trying to accomplish.
9. Feeling: the emotions felt and expressed.

After approximately two weeks of just being in the office I began to ask people to explain why they were doing what they were doing. While the answers I received to such questions did not initially seem very illuminating, they did serve to gently introduce departmental members to being questioned by me.

After four weeks in the field I began to organise some more formal interviews with departmental members. This proved to

be very frustrating. The restricted and unpredictable availability of committee rooms made it difficult for me to find a quiet place for interviews. On the few occasions that I did manage to get a room at a time convenient for departmental members I was very disappointed with the quality of data I received. Part of the problem, I now think, was that I felt uncomfortable about taking departmental members away from the office, particularly at busy times. I commented on this concern in my research diary:

> I feel I have to be careful about depth interviews
> because I don't feel I can get much depth in the
> office - but if I leave office I might miss
> something... Always wondering when to grab people
> for interviews. When I arrange a committee room
> invariably something comes up; when people are free
> I can't seem to get a room. Also I feel guilty
> about taking their time. Is this irrational or
> what? I would feel happier if I was offering more
> back to the department (quid pro quo), but what can
> I offer? I don't want to get involved in
> consultancy (which sometimes I feel they want me to
> do) because it would` jeopardize the status of my
> research.

In consequence, I now think I rushed the interviews, making them too directive rather than allowing the specialists to talk at ease about the features of organisational and occupational life that were of concern to them. In addition, when confronted with a tape recorder, the specialists only offered 'on the record' accounts of the work culture, rather than the 'off-the-record' observations I was learning about in informal conversation. What these attempts at interviewing did do, however, was focus my attention on the specialists' use of on-the-record and off-the-record information in their day-to-day interaction with the bureaucracy and the press; a key feature of public realtions

work to which I had previously been blind.

I made other attempts to interview departmental members less formally, without the use of a tape recorder. The most successful of these took place during car journeys (on the way to and from meetings, exhibitions etc.) and in the local pub at lunchtime. In retrospect, I think this was because the specialists felt more relaxed in these informal situations. Less successful (and more embarrassing) was my attempt to interview one of the secretaries in the department's store room. One morning, some five weeks into my study, I asked one of the secretaries if I could arrange to see her for twenty minutes or so for an interview. One of her colleagues overheard and suggested that we use the store room which would give us some privacy and enable her to work undistracted. I agreed. Just after the morning coffee break we both went into the store room and talked about various issues concerning public relations. Unfortunately, the room was quite warm and after about fifteen minutes she asked if we could continue the interview at a later date because she was finding the room too hot for comfort. We opened the storeroom's door, cameras flashed and a chorus of 'we know what you were doing' went up! Subsequently, a photograph of the secretary and myself exiting the store room was fixed to the wall accompanied by the caption 'the researcher doing his research!!' Needless to say, I didn't use the store room again!

In addition to observation and interviews, I also attended some committee meetings and examined various documents,

including press releases, press stories written about ANIP's services, booklets produced by the department, minutes of committee meetings relevant to public relations, job advertisements, job descriptions, planning reports and books discussing ANIP's inception and historical development. In doing so, I quickly noticed that the accounts of public relations work mobilised by the specialists within departmental discourse differed from those offered to the host organisation. These apparent contradictions are discussed in Chapter 9.

In terms of accessing knowledge held by the specialists' at the level of discursive consciousness, practical consciousness and the unconscious, my employment of several research methods was helpful. Knowledge held at the level of practical consciousness was accessed by reflecting on my own experience and by getting actors to offer discursive accounts of their action. Having 'learnt the ropes' I began to reflect on what I needed to know in order to get by in public relations. In doing so, I was (at least partially) able to make practical knowledge discursive. Knowledge held at the level of discursive (and practical) consciousness could be accessed through interviews as this inevitably forced actors to offer reflexive accounts of their activity. This, of course, does not mean that the accounts offered to me were 'true' or even believed to be 'true' by the actors themselves. For example, the actors (i) may have given me answers they thought I wanted to hear, (ii) may have deliberately concealed why they had done certain things, or

(iii) may not have been aware of why they had done such and such (i.e., action was rooted in the unconscious), and merely offered me a rationalisation of their action. However, by checking their accounts with the tacit knowledge I had learned about about departmental work activities and by carefully observing non-verbal movements that accompanied the presentation of these accounts, I developed a sense of whether they 'believed' these accounts. In addition, through the process of triangulation, I was able to uncover inconsistencies within and between actors' accounts. This also provided valuable information. For even if I believed actors to have fabricated their rationalisations of action, all was not lost because I assumed the fabrication was for a reason (which could be pursued in subsequent research).

Accessing knowledge held within the unconscious was more difficult and only minimally successful. Firstly, participant observation is not an appropriate technique for penetrating the unconscious; psychoanalysis is a more suitable method. However, I am limited on two fronts from using such a technique in empirical research: the first technical; the second one of consent. I am technically limited in using psychoanalysis in research simply because I have no formal training. I am morally constrained not to use it because I believe it is unethical to use such 'deep' techniques on subjects in research situation without their prior and willing consent and even if I were a trained psychoanalyst I had received no such consent. However, whilst knowledge held at the level of the unconscious cannot

be directly accessed through ethnographic techniques, the effects of this knowledge can be observed. For example, I was able to observe actors' eye gestures when they were talking about sensitive issues and how actors responded when their routines were disrupted or threatened by crisis etc.

I wrote all my research notes up as soon as possible after the event: in the lavatory (I think departmental members still believe I suffer from a weak bladder!), on the way to the local shops (for my twice daily Mars Bar), during coffee and lunch breaks, whilst on errands for departmental members etc. Obviously, note taking from memory has to be selective, and precise recall is never fully possible (c.f., Zweig, 1952). However, with practice I was surprised at how much I could remember by simply paying attention to what was going on within the department. I was constantly looking for key words and phrases in members' remarks. I used these to frame my recall of peoples' conversation. I would constantly play back the conversation in my head, visualising the scene and the participants to aid my memory. I particularly tried to remember the first and last sentences of each conversation or interview (c.f., Zweig, 1952; Taylor and Bogdan, 1984). This also facilitated my recall of data. Each evening after my day in the field I re-read through my notes and reconstructed each conversation from my notes and memory. In addition, I wrote-up any other observations that I had not previously recorded, any questions that I needed to find answers to, my thoughts and feelings about how my research was going. Finally, I continually reflected upon, and tried to write

discursive accounts of, the (often taken-for-granted) knowledge which I had 'picked up' whilst working within the office. In the following section, I explain how I set about analysing this field material.

c. Organising and Analysing Data.

The organisation and analysis of my research data was an ongoing process, beginning prior to my first overt period of research in Public Relations and continuing throughout the writing up process. For example, during my field research I read through all relevant field notes at the end of each week, making notes of 'hunches' I had, common themes that were developing (e.g., the public relations specialists' antipathy towards the bureaucracy), questions I wanted to ask. In the subsequent weeks I sought to 'test' these hunches, investigate any contradictions that were emerging in actors' accounts and ask the questions I still wanted answered. In between the two periods of overt research I re-read my notes and once again noted emerging themes etc. to be explored when I returned to the field some months later. In this way research and analysis were reiterative.

To illustrate how I organised and analysed my data I will restrict my discussion to the ethnographic record of the Public Relations Department. On completion of my two periods of study I was confronted with files of research notes (containing observational material and interviews), documentation (booklets, press releases, job descriptions, press cuttings etc.) and my research diary notes (containing

my thoughts, fears, hunches and some preliminary analysis).
Before beginning my analysis, I coded each page of notes with
a three numbers (e.g., 3/12/2). The first number referred to
the day on which the research notes were taken (day 1 being
the first day of my first period of overt study), while the
second digit identified the page number from that day's field
notes. The third number differentiated the two or three
paragraphs written on each page of notes. In the case of the
documents I had collected, I simply used their title, page
number and paragraph number to code material (e.g., Minutes
of Divisional Planning Meeting 23 June, 1984/3/1) as the
basis of the coding system. I chose this coding system
because it would enable me, I thought, to triangulate between
(i) material collected by different research methods and (ii)
material collected at different stages of the research
process.

Following Giddens, my analysis was guided by the concern to
understand how the public relations specialists communicated
and mobilised forms of power to sanction sectional
definitions of public relations. In order to surface this
information I began by reading through my research notes and
listed the various public relations activities (norms)
routinely carried on within the department. The list
included:

Work Practices

Answering press enquiries
Organising press conferences
Organising the press index
Writing press releases

Writing and producing booklets
                    Photography
                    Exhibitions
                    Training others in the use of P.R. Skills
                    Audio-visual presentations
                    Distributing work within the department
                    etc.

Secondly, I listed activities which the specialists were
constrained to do in order to meet the bureaucratic
requirements of ANIP. This list included:

                Managing Relations with ANIP

                    Writing job descriptions
                    Planning meetings .
                    Advising the Chairman on P.R. issues
                    Distributing the press index
                    Firefighting (see Chapter 7 for definition)
                    etc.

Using this list of activies as headings, I re-read my
research material and filed relevant extracts under
appropriate headings. For example, under the heading
'Distributing work within the department' I wrote '1/3/2;
1/4/3; 2/6/2; 2/5/1 etc. However, I found this coding
unhelpful because I could never remember which portion of
material the code referred to. Subsequently, I noted the key
words from the paragraph referenced as the fourth part of the
code. For example, the material I classified under this
heading now read:

        Day 1/3/2: 'Learning ropes'
        Day 1/4/3: 'Butter-them-up'.......
        Day 2/6/2: 'All hands to the wheel'
        Day 2/5/1: 'Our bread and butter' ....

While this meant that my research material took considerably
longer to code, it was nonetheless worthwhile because it
enabled me to recall (at least some of) the incidents to

which the codes referred.

Having read through my notes and extracted examples of departmental work practices, a picture of what the specialist did (their normative behaviour) began to emerge. To improve the clarity of the picture, I re-read these extracts to surface the interpretative schemes and facilities drawn on (and reproduced) by the specialists in their day-to-day organisational work. I began by identifying the interpretative schemes mobilised by the specialists. In doing so, it became clear that distinct sets of interpretative schemes were mobilised within the department. One regarded public relations to be about the dissemination of information, the other about the promotion of image. Re-reading the notes, I identified the following sets of interpretative schemes:

Informational
Interpretative Schemes

Promotional
Interpretative Schemes

(i) Concerning public relations work:

How to answer press enquiries
How to organise press conferences
How to write press index
How to write press releases
How to write and produce booklets
How to use photographs
How to organise exhibitions
How to train non-P.R. staff
How to use audio-visual material

(ii) Concerning managing relations with ANIP

How to relate to bureaucrats
How to write a job description   (no information on this)
How to use planning meetings
How to advise Chairman
How to use press index   (no information on this)
How to firefight

For each of these interpretative schemes I built up a picture of what the actors said they needed to know in order to successfully accomplish public relations activities (see Chapters 8 and 9, below).

Having identified these two distinct sets of interpretative schemes, I then examined how far these were mobilised by the specialists in their day-to-day public relations work (normative behaviour). To do this, I compared (triangulated) material gathered from my observations (normative behaviour) with that which I collected from interviews (interpretative schemes). What this analysis revealed was that while two distinct sets of interpretative schemes were mobilised by the specialists, the majority of the actual work was conducted in ways consistent with an informational rather than a promotional ideology of public relations. The question that needed to be answered was how were the specialists subscribing to an informational ideology of public relations able to ensure that only work practices guided by their sectional ideology were sanctioned.

In order to answer this question, I focused my analysis on the facilities mobilised by the specialists within the department. In doing so, I surfaced the various authoritative and allocative resources that the specialists subscribing to an informational ideology were able to mobilise in their day-to-day interaction. These included:

Authoritative Resources

Historical supremacy of informational

ideology within the department
Majority of specialists subscribed to
informational ideology
Both managers subscribed to public relations
ideology
Managers were responsible for departmental
recruitment
Control over work distribution
Control over promotion
etc.

Allocative Resources

Control of budgets
Promotions
etc.

At each stage of the analysis I checked out my 'findings' against the common sense knowledge I picked up during my time within the department to see whether my analysis rang true to my experience. Turner (1988: 116) acknowledges the value of this in the process of data analysis.

> A consequence, then, of encouraging investigators to participate in the act of knowing and to develop skill and connoisseurship in knowing is that they are likely to supplement their analytic understanding with what Polanyi variously calls 'personal knowledge', 'tacit knowledge' or 'craft knowledge' of that which they seek to understand. In its nature, the essence of this 'personal knowledge' is difficult to express articulately: as Polanyi comments, 'We know more than we can say.' But personal knowledge nonetheless provides a background of experience and expertise which enables us to appraise that information which we wish to absorb and employ explicitly. In the light of this tacit knowledge, we treat, as Polanyi puts it, 'the experience of our senses' to an array of possible theoretical accounts which would express our deepening understanding. (emphasis added)

Thus, where my experience confirmed the accounts I was constructing I felt confident that they were competent interpretations of the data.

Having identified how organisational actors drew upon (and, according to the theory of structuration, reconstituted) modalities of structure in routinised organisational

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interaction, I then re-examined the research data to surface what information I had concerning existential, material and political processes of cultural reproduction. Once again, I compiled lists of information relevant to these issues. With regards to existential processes, I was particularly concerned to gather information about the specialists':

Existential Processes of Cultural Reproduction

Construction of valued work identities
Feelings about work
Anxieties about organisational/ occupational changes
Alienation and frustration at work
Unintended consequences of action in terms of realising 'solid' sense of self

With regard to the material processes, I was concerned to uncover how in their routine organisational work the specialists (often unintentionally) reproduced features of the capitalist labour process such as the:

Material Processes of Cultural Reproduction

Commodification of labour power
Occupational division of labour
Control of the labour process
Asymmetries of power necessary for capitalist production

Finally, with regard to the political processes of cultural reproduction, I was concerned to understand how public relations specialists infused interpretative schemes with forms of power (in myth, humour, ceremony etc.) to sanction their sectional prescriptions of how to:

Political Processes of Cultural Reproduction

Manage media relations
Manage relations with ANIP
Manage relations within the department
Unintended consequences of seeking to realise
sectional ends through political processes

Through an extended process of analysis, of checking and reflecting upon my research notes and my 'common-sense' knowledge of departmental practices, I was able to construct a sense of what actors needed to know (at the level of practical and discursive consciousness) in order to get by in public relations and also (at least part of) the existential, political and material processes of cultural reproduction. The next stage of the research process was to decide how to write-up this analysis of my field work. This is discussed in the following section.

6.4. Writing-up my Research.

Like analysis, writing an ethnography is an on-going process, beginning in the recording of field notes, hunches etc., and ending in the final draft of the project. Arriving at this final draft, however, was (for me at least) a long and confusing process of trial and error. In particular, I have found it difficult to decide (i) what themes and examples to include, (ii) how this material should be organised and (iii) how this should be written-up. I will examine these in turn.

a. What to include in the ethnography

Deciding what information to include depends largely on what

one wants to accomplish through the ethnography. Given my concern to examine the contribution that a Giddensian framework makes to understanding organisational culture and symbolism, it seemed necessary to illustrate how public relations and personnel specialists drew upon and reconstituted modalities of structure in routine organisational work. To do this, examples needed to be given of how the specialists mobilised interpretative schemes, norms and facilities in their interaction. Furthermore, given my claim that the Giddensian framework advances a critical, emancipatory conceptualisation of organisational culture by penetrating the existential, political and material processes of cultural reproduction, examples of these penetrations needed to be included somewhere within the written text. Finally, some information about ANIP was needed to contextualise the work cultures of the departments, and the specialists' relations with the host bureaucracy. Given the limitations of space (some 30,000 words) in which to write my ethnography, I felt constrained to omit information, however interesting, that did not facilitate the meeting of these three criteria.

Secondly, following Alvesson (1985b) I decided to include only information that related directly to around-the-work-activities (see Chapter 4, above, for a discussion of this). This meant that I discarded many interesting features of the specialists' work cultures (such as Christmas parties) in order to focus on what Alvesson terms the more materialistic features of organisational

life.

Thirdly, I excluded some information on ethical grounds.
Throughout my research ethical issues have been of some
concern to me. On the one hand, as a researcher I was
particularly keen to penetrate the hidden, contradictory and
sometimes illegal features of the specialists' work
cultures. On the other, when I managed to access such
feature of organisational life I felt uncomfortable, not at
all sure of how to handle such sensitive information. Having
guaranteed confidentiality to my informers, I was concerned
to ensure that the actors could not be identified.
Accordingly, I have included some non-relevant misinformation
within the thesis to conceal the identity of the organisation
(ANIP) and its members. However, I was not only concerned to
conceal sensitive information from outsiders, but also from
insiders within ANIP. However, anonymising the departments
and their members would not solve my main fear: that other
members of ANIP, who knew the identity of the members of the
departments in which I did my research, might be able to
identify actors involved in organisationally illegitimate
activities were they (unlikely as it is) to read my thesis.
In consequence, I have not included any information which I
considered to be particularly deleterious to the specialists
concerned.

Out of the remaining material I have selected examples that I
believe best illustrate the points I make within the text.
In doing so, I recognise that I do not offer a complete
picture of the work cultures of public relations and

personnel specialists, but only a 'thick description'
(Geertz, 1973).

b. The Organisation of the Text.

Having selected what information to use within the text my
next problem was deciding how to organise this material. I
found Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) overview of different
strategies for organising the text both informative and
helpful. They refer to the first of these as 'natural
history' where the ordering of the text parallels the process
of discovery. However, given that 'topics, themes and data
do not unfold in a neat sequential fashion, and cannot
normally be presented in such a way' this way of organising
the text seemed inappropriate for my purposes (ibid: 215).
The second strategy they identify - 'the chronology'- is a
strategy which follows some 'development cycle', 'moral
career' or 'timetable' of activity (ibid:217). This is an
appropriate strategy, as Hammersley and Atkinson point out,
for writing ethnographies in which the passage of time is
important. This approach seemed to provide the best way of
handling informational relating to the historical development
of ANIP, its South-East Division, and the two departments
studied. However, Like 'the natural history' it seemed
inappropriate for handling the majority of my material
because key issues did not develop sequentially.

The third strategy is described by Hammersley and Atkinson as
the 'narrowing and expanding of focus.' By this, the authors
mean that the text should be organised in such a way that the

focus of analysis increasingly becomes narrower, broader, or moves backwards and forwards through different levels of analysis. This strategy for organising the text seemed ideal for moving between discussion of the existential, political and material processes of cultural reproduction. Following Willis (1977), Hammersley and Atkinson suggest that a fourth strategy for organising the text is to separate the narration from the analysis. Initially, I had intended to use this techniques for organising my ethnography. However, the limitations of space made it difficult to do so convincingly; I found it a better use of space to incorporate analysis with narration thus avoid the repetition (of quotes, background material etc.) that a strategy of separation necessarily requires. Finally, Hammersley and Atkinson suggest 'thematic organisation' as a fifth strategy for writing-up the ethnographic record. This proved to be a useful way of organising my written accounts of the work cultures of the public relations and personnel specialists. Accordingly, I have organised my four ethnographic chapters under the following thematic heading:

Chapter 7:   The history, background and current policies
              of ANIP, its South-East Division, and the Public
              Relations and Personnel Departments.

Chapter 8:   The work cultures of the Public Relations and
              Personnel departments.

Chapter 9:   Managing relations with the host bureaucracy.

Chapter 10:   Opportunities for critical reflection and the
              development of an emancipatory praxis.

Within these chapters I have found 'chronology' (Chapter 7)

and 'the narrowing and expanding of focus' (Chapter 8-10) to be helpful strategies for organising the text under the thematic headings.

c. The Problem of Reflexivity in Research.

Earlier in this chapter I noted that the sociological research was characterised by reflexivity, where the researcher necessarily has to draw on common-sense knowledge in order to interpret his field work. But if the researcher has to draw on his or her common sense knowledge to render ethnography meaningful, it suggests that there is no overarching conceptual schemes by which one can judge the validity of our work. In other words, all knowledge is relative - the construction of the researcher as much as of the researched. This raises the problem of how the researcher draws his or her readers' attention to the fact that the text was self-consciously constructed by the researcher.

One way of handling this issue is to simply ignore it. A great many ethnographic texts, for example, are written as if there is an objective world which can simply be read by the researcher. This approach is unsatisfactory; it avoids rather than recognises the problem. More recently, a number of writers have argued that the researcher should be willing to probe beyond the level of straightforward interpretation that the text often suggests (Woolgar, 1988; Woolgar and Ashmore, 1988; Pinch and Pinch, 1988). Woolgar and Ashmore, (1988) for example, suggest that the use of new literary

forms may be helpful to draw attention to the fact that the text is a construction of the researcher. Common techniques include the use of multiple voices in the construction of the text (c.f., Pinch and Pinch, 1988), and the writing of the text in dramaturgical form (Jermier, 1985). The problem with such techniques, especially the use of multiple voices, as Pinch and Pinch 1988 and McHugh (1990) point out, is that they can be so irritating and intrusive that the thesis the researcher seeks to develop is overshadowed.

Latour (1988), I believe, provides more helpful suggestions. Rather than opting for Meta-reflexivity, where the researcher writes in such a way to avoid the text being believed by its readers, Latour favours infra-reflexivity, where the attempt is made to make the account believed by its readers. How is this reflexive? Latour argues that the researcher should not claim that his account is objective, but allow the text to be judged as it stands by the reader. Elaborating this he writes (ibid: 171)

> Infra-reflexivity goes against this common belief in asking no privilege for the account at hand. When I portray scientific literature as in risk of not being believed and as bracing itself against such an outcome by mustering all possible allies at hand..., I do not require for this account any more than this process: my own text is in your hands and lives or dies through what you do to it. In my efforts to forstall certain outcomes and encourage others, I too muster all available allies, all linguistic possibilities...

This is the position I am most at ease with. I recognise the constructed nature of my text, and in doing so, do not claim that it objectively reproduces the 'reality' of the work cultures studied. Instead, I muster all available allies

(references etc.) to make the account believable. In the end, though, it must live or die in the readers' hands.

d. Writing the Text.

The actual process of writing has, without doubt, been the most difficult stage of the research process. My worst days in the field now seem insignificant in comparison to the struggle of turning field notes into a finished text. While I found Spradley's (1979, 1980) recommendations for writing ethnography helpful, they did nothing to prepare me for the existential anguish of writing. It was a long and arduous task (of writing, re-writing, editing, re-organising etc.), not unlike (I suspect, although will never really know) a pregnancy. I had my morning sickness - the thought of getting up in the morning to work all day on the thesis was enough, I thought, to make anyone sick; times of depression, times when I felt heavy with the conceptual child growing within me. And now the birth, hoping, with the expectant father (my supervisor), that it will live (in your hands).

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONTEXTUALISING THE RESEARCH: THE PUBLIC
RELATIONS AND PERSONNEL DEPARTMENTS.

7.1. Introduction

In Chapter 5 I argued that Giddens' theory of structuration
is particularly helpful for penetrating the relatively
neglected existential, political and material processes of
cultural reproduction. To recap, I define existential
processes as the processes through which organisational
actors come to secure a 'solid' sense of self in routine
interaction. Material processes are defined as the processes
through which organisational actors draw upon and
reconstitute control over allocative and authoritative
resources, thus reproducing the regularised relations of
autonomy and dependence by which nature is transformed and
their own material survival secured. Finally, political
processes are defined as the ways in which actors mobilise
what control they have over scarce material and symbolic
resources in order to regulate the overall conditions of
system reproduction in ways which secure and advance
sectional interests. In Chapters 8, 9 and 10, I analyse the
work cultures of the Public Relations and Personnel
Departments in light of these processes. Before doing so,
however, it is necessary to provide some background on the
historical development and current standing of ANIP, its
South-East Division, and the two specialist departments in
order to contextualise what is to come. Accordingly, this
chapter seeks to present information necessary to enable the
reader to situate the work cultures of the two departments

within the social relations in which they are produced. The Chapter is divided into four sections. In the first two, I describe the inception, history and current services of ANIP and its South-East Division. In parts three and four, I introduce the Public Relations and Personnel Departments.

7.2. HISTORY ON ANIP.

After the end of the Second World War, Britain underwent considerable social, political and economic changes. It was a time of social reformation. Some of the most newsworthy of these changes were moves to bring substantial elements of industry, education and welfare provision under direct state control or, at least, under closer state supervision. It was in this climate of national reconstruction that ANIP was established to remove the inadequate and often irrational delivery of some welfare and educational services.

Prior to its inception in the early 1950s, such services were provided by an amalgam of state, private and charitable institutions. However, this fragmentary provision of services was seen to be inappropriate for meeting the needs and demands of post-war Britain. The relevant Ministry Spokesman concisely summed up this conviction saying that despite the 'excellent attributes' of certain parts of the voluntary sector, the piecemeal approach to the provision of such educational and welfare services was 'unsuited to the modern needs of the whole population'. 'National control', he argued, must be 'welcomed' in preference to the existing localised administrations. Thus the state machinery was

established and negotiations took place with relevant organisations and professions over how such a nationally organised body should be set up and managed.

During these negotiations relatively powerful professional groupings, particularly those involved in the provision (rather than the administration) of services, mobilised their monopoly power over expert knowledge to clinch favourable employment contracts, a great deal of professional autonomy and an influential part in policy formulation. Since its inception, these professionals have successfully mobilised their control over symbolic and material resources to maintain and defend their dominance in the relations in production. In particular, they proved themselves adept at defining ANIP's mission in terms of their sectional ideology. This is well illustrated by extracts from a recent (1985) booklet written to inform its clients of ANIP's services. Rather than reflecting managerial and administrative ideologies, which emphasize the need to carefully monitor the marginal cost of services in order to satisfy budgetry demands, the booklet is infused with the ideology of the service providers. Making no mention of current controversies over the cost of service provision, the booklet focuses on the importance of meeting client's needs (regardless of cost) as well as the social value of the services provided. Accordingly, it dwells on case histories of successful interventions on behalf of clients, stresses the 'benefit to the community' of such services, and underlines the belief that the considerable discretion

enjoyed by service professionals in terms of deciding 'how best to meet client needs' must not be eroded.

The dominance of the service professionals, with their 'irresponsible' resource management, has been of constant concern to state administrators. Indeed, there have been a number of attempts by administrators to curtail the power of the professional providers of services. One of the more recent of these, and the most important in terms of the thesis, was the Spooner Committee's investigation into the management structure and style at ANIP. Reflecting the concerns of the Thatcher administration during the 1980s with cost efficiency, productivity and accountability, the rationale underlying the changes proposed in the final report (1984) was that if managers and administrators were unable to influence the service professionals directly, they could, at least, discipline them through the rigorous control of budgets. To facilitate this change, consensus management, historically associated with ANIP, was to be replaced by the appointment of career managers individually accountable for their new divisions. Part of their brief was to initiate major cost cutting programmes further restricting the money available for service professionals. This was supplemented by the withholding of monies as efficiency savings designed to encourage managers to deliver the same level of client care at a lower marginal cost.

One consequence of the introduction of this market rationality into ANIP has been the attempt of managers and administrators to use the environment of change to improve

their own positioning within the organisation in relation to the service professionals. This is explored in chapter 9 where I examine the way the Personnel Department has sought to manage its 'rise from the laughing stock of the organisation to one of the top departments' (personnel officer). In contrast, other professionals (namely service professionals and public relations specialists) have perceived the changes as a threat and have sought to mobilise what control they have over material and symbolic resources to defend and protect their professional identities.

Government policy has also had important effects on ANIP in other areas. In line with the current moves towards privatisation and increasing competition, managers have been obliged to seek competitive tendering for low grade work such as office cleaning. The result of this has often been the dismissal of ancillary staff and the farming out of work to private enterprise companies. A further consequence of this is that certain administrative units have become fearful that they too may be made redundant, being replaced by private agencies. This is particularly true for personnel (e.g. recruitment and selection) and public relations specialists.

In this way, the recent organisational changes have been experienced by administrative professionals as both opportunities and threats. For administrative professionals occupying relatively powerful positions (e.g., accountants) in the organisational hierarchy, the changes have provided a clear rationale for them to advance their sectional interests. In contrast, administrative departments occupying

weaker positions have become fearful that more powerful administrative units may see them as expendable as they seek to advance their positioning within the organisation.

The actual mix of services provided varies between each of the 12 geographical divisions of ANIP depending on its demographic composition, the perceived needs of clients (as defined by service professionals), historical precedents and the relative strengths of competing service professionals. As my research was undertaken in the South East Division of ANIP, I will now offer a brief overview of its structure to frame my analysis of the Public Relations and Personnel Departments.

7.3. The South East Division of ANIP.

Employing in excess of 10,000 staff, the South East Division is one of the largest in ANIP. This is partly the result of migration to the south of the country, swelling both the population of its catchment area and associated demands for services. Pressure for an increase in the type and level of service provision, from both the Government (frequently questioned in the House of Commons over the delivery of services in the Division) and local community and interest groups, has led to the employment of additional service and administrative staff. One consequence of this is that both service and administrative departments are on the large size compared with those in other divisions. A second consequence has been that northern divisions (and opposition M.P.s) have pointed to the relative wealth of the South East Division (in

terms of both human and material resources) as evidence of a North-South divide in the country.

Within the Division the dominance of service ideologies is marked. Such professionals have attempted to pass off their professional ideology as organisational status quo. This is well illustrated in the comments of one service specialist who explained to me the meaning behind the logo of the organisation:

> The logo of the organisation is quite interesting you know. You know, the sign that's put on most of the letter headings and official documents. I'm sure you must have seen it. The one with the _five_ _lozenges_ arranged in the circle... _What's_ _particularly_ _interesting_ _is_ _that_ _it_ _shows_ _how_ _we_ _all_ _work_ _together_ _here_ _to_ _make_ _sure_ _we_ _give_ _the_ _best_ _possible_ _service_ _to_ _each_ _individual_. I think that's why its such a good logo because it reminds us that we all need to work together to deliver the goods (emphasis added).

Two things stand out in this description. Firstly, the choice of the word 'lozenges' is revealing. On one level this is purely descriptive of the blue symbols' shape. However, it also has connotations of small medicated sweets which serve to emphasize the caring ideology of the service profession. In addition, the ring of circles was used to legitimise the ideology of service professionals working together in the interest of the client.

In contrast, the logo's interpretation by administrative staff reflect their concern to undermine the service ideology and redress their unfavourable positioning with the productive relations of ANIP. An Accountant, for example, having informed me that the logo was designed at the behest

of service professionals, suggested that the logo more appropriately signified how service professionals are 'constantly running around in circles... constantly chasing their tails.. They're just so badly organised and inefficient. You just wouldn't believe it'. Another administrator told me the logo reminded him of a 'plug-hole' down which service specialists seemed to be pouring vast amounts of money.

The negation of organisational symbols is, of course, well documented. Smircich, (1983b), for example, notes how organisational personnel unfavourably reinterpreted a company's metaphor, 'wheeling together', to signify their incredulity and resistance to organisational change interventions. What such analysis shows is that organisational cultures are not necessarily harmoniously produced, as some of the literature motivated by technical cognitive interests seems to suggest. It also makes nonsense of some writers' claims that organisational resistance comes only from the lower strata of the organisation (e.g. Barnard, 1938). What it does suggest, however, is that attention must be paid to the influence of occupational, professional and/or small group cultures on the production and reconstitution of organisational culture. Thus, as Cousins (1987:51) insists,

> A view of organisation as a political, negotiated process is of especial value in drawing attention to the different ideologies and sources of power actors bring to their work situation and to the policy making process, and the ways in which different groups can influence or resist managerial choices.

Accordingly, my analysis of the management and administration

of the South East Division of ANIP will bear this emphasis.

Within the Division some fifteen percent of employees are involved in the fourteen administrative departments: Personnel, Public Relations, Organisation and Methods, Operational Research, Legal Services, Training, Manpower Planning, Industrial Relations, Architects, Supplies, Reprographics, Payroll and Accounts, Statistics and Educational Resources. These departments are spread over three sites. The major administrative block, 'George Radnor House', contains Public Relations, Organisation and Methods, Operational Research, Manpower Planning, Architects, Industrial Relations, Supplies, Payroll and Accounts and Reprographics. This was seen to be by far the most prestigious of the office blocks, having its own car park, subsidised canteen, showers and changing rooms and plusher furniture: thick carpets, large desks and plenty of space per person. Most of the more senior administrators were, unsurprisingly, based at George Radnor.

Further along the same road was '357'. Here one would find Statistics, Legal Services and Educational Resources. This building was not as well furbished at George Radnor, but was seen to provide a pleasant environment to work in. Personnel and Training were housed in 'Tower House' about 2 miles from the other units. This was a large tower block that was shared by several organisations, ANIP occupying the 6th and 7th floors. This was seen to be the 'pits'. With the increasing number of staff, and the current unavailablity of additional officer space at the Tower, employees worked in

'cramped conditions' compared to the more spacious George
Radnor and 357. Moreover, the Tower had no canteen, only a
small snack bar, older furniture and no car park. And in the
absence of relatively powerful senior officials to press for
refurbishment, Tower personnel saw no chance of immediate
improvements. Moreover, the positioning of Personnel and
Training at Tower House was seen by them (and other
administrative specialists) to be symbolic of their poor
standing within the administrative hierarchy. They were seen
to be, as one statistician gently informed me, 'not very good
departments'.

7.4. The Public Relations Department.

The Public Relations Department was established some fifteen
years ago primarily to manage press relations. The senior
public relations manager recollected its inception.

> It all started with two blunders with the press.
> The first was about supposed "financial
> irregularities" within a service department. In
> fact, it was a big mix up, but that department was
> unhelpful with the press, to say the least, and
> confusion reigned. I think they possibly lied to
> cover a few things up, probably because they really
> didn't understand how to handle the situation or
> the press. The second was a leaked private
> report... Anyway, after these two incidents, which
> funnily enough happened in this Division, it was
> decided that each Division should appoint a Press
> Relations Officer. Some divisions didn't like it
> but it was seen as something they had to do. I
> guess this is why P.R. is still unfavourably viewed
> in some divisions. Even now there is little scope
> given to P.R. in the Western Division (emphasis
> added).

The early briefs of these Press Relations Officers was
essentially to use their knowledge of the press to prevent
the recurrence of such 'blunders'. Almost five years after

its inception, the press officer appointed in the South East Division left and was replaced by another ex-newspaperman. Not long after his appointment, his informed use of the bureaucratic arts of ANIP, together with a growing friendship with the Division's senior administrator, enabled him to expand the staffing, budget and boundaries of his department to cover the broader functions of public relations. Thus, in addition to its established role of press relations, the department gradually came to be involved in the production of information booklets and in the training of service professionals about the 'correct' management of media relations.

Four years ago the manager left to establish a consultancy firm and was replaced by the present senior manager. In addition, a junior manager was appointed to meet the increasing workload. Thus, at the time of my research, the department had eleven members: two Public Relations Managers (Geoff and Liz), four Public Relations Officers (Brian, Mary, Sue and Jo), three secretaries (Kari, Meg and Tracey) and two trainees (Simon and Trish). The senior Public Relations Manager was in his early fifties, the other manager and the four officers being in their late twenties or early thirties. With the exception of one secretary in her thirties, the secretaries and trainees were in their twenties. Only the senior manager, one officer and one of the trainees were male. While the majority of public relations specialists, including both managers, were recruited from journalism, two of the officers had previously

been employed as public relations specialists within the private sector.

The Senior Public Relations Manager was responsible for managing the formal boundary between the department and the bureaucracy. This involved a weekly meeting with the Chairman to review the key press stories of the previous week and to plan the relevant press coverage for the Chairman's activities during the coming week. The senior manager was also required to attend some three or four planning meetings each week to recommend appropriate strategies for attracting media coverage for new and ongoing services. Further, he attended various working parties and discussion groups throughout the division to explore new ways of improving services and attracting favourable media support. In addition to these meetings and working groups, his time was largely devoted to preparing reports for the Chairman and other senior managers and in directing and developing the department's training courses.

The junior manager supervised the day-to-day running of the office. This involved checking the daily national newspapers for any news coverage of ANIP and briefing the officers on how to tackle potentially controversial matters. She also assigned work to each officer for the following few days and supervised the work of the secretaries and trainees. The remainder of her time was spent in visiting service centres throughout the Division to advise on matters relating to public relations and the use of media to inform their public of the availability of services.

On average about seventy percent of the specialists' time was involved with press relations of one sort or another: answering press calls, writing press releases, the press index, managing press relations for the launch of new services, and the training of service specialist to competently carry out some of the above practices. About another ten percent of time was spent in the writing and production of information booklets, with the remainder used for administration, the occasional exhibition, meetings and research (into, for example, new photography techniques).

For much of its history the public relations specialists have regarded their position within ANIP as unproblematical. However, recently, public relations departments in other divisions have suffered contraction, with the prospect of further reductions in their staffing. This is perceived by the specialists to be the first move towards offering their work services out for competitive tendering. This uncertainty has been heightened by two further changes. Firstly, following the recommendations of the Spooner Report, there has been a move away from a management philosophy based on shared responsibility for resource allocation and control towards a position in which individual managers are held directly responsible for the resourcing and performance of their departments. In turn, this change has stimulated a potentially large, but rather unwelcome (for the ex-journalists) demand for an increase in non-press related services such as promoting the image of other administrative departments to the significant others within the host

bureaucracy. Secondly, and most worrying for the specialists, their relationship with the press has been changing. Partly as a result of the introduction of new technology which makes it easier for newspaper editors to enforce tighter copy deadlines, and partly as the result of their effectiveness in training service professionals in 'successful' media relations, journalists have increasingly by-passed the Public Relations Department and found sources amongst the service and administrative professionals. This has led to a considerable fall in the number of press calls received by the department and a rise in their anxiety. Associated with this has been a growing, but only covertly acknowledged, uncertainty and insecurity about organisational expectations and controls on their department as well as their 'professional' identity as conveyors of information rather than promoters of image.

7.5. The Personnel Department.

Before discussing the Personnel Department in the South-East Division of ANIP, is it important to locate it within personnel management as a whole. As Watson (1977) clearly shows, it is impossible to understand personnel management outside of the problem of capital to recruit, dismiss and control labour. Tracing the history of the profession, he locates its roots in the industrial 'welfare movement', where some entrepreneurs, like Cadbury, Boot and Rowntree, expressed their paternalistic concern for their employees by appointing welfare workers. This concern, however, is not to be seen as some form of 'do-goodism'. Rather, it was a

rational attempt to secure profit. Cadbury (1912:xvii) illustrates this by linking the well-being of employees to business efficiency:

> The supreme principle has been the belief that business efficiency and the welfare of the employees are but different sides of the same problem. Character is an economic asset; and business efficiency depends not merely on the physical contribution of employees, but on their general attitude and feeling to the employer. The test of any scheme of factory organisation is the extent to which it creates and fosters the atmosphere and spirit of cooperation and goodwill, without in any sense lessening the loyalty of workers to his own class and its organisations.

With the two world wars, during which the control of labour was considered paramount to secure production, the emphasis of personnel management began to shift from welfare to the mobilisation of formal, rational techniques of human resource management. One result of this was that personnel specialists gradually came to lose their welfare 'tag' and were incorporated more fully into management and administration roles. Since then, one of the major concerns of personnel managers has been to gain recognition for themselves as a profession. This is well illustrated by the concerns of the Institute of Personnel Management to establish the professionalisation of personnel management (Legge, 1978).(1)

Having provided this very brief history of the development of personnel management it is now possible to examine its role in ANIP. Established as an integral part of ANIP, the Personnel Department has been traditionally concerned with recruitment and selection, updating and maintaining the terms

and conditions of employment, handling ANIP's grievance and disciplinary procedures, and with a token, although symbolically significant, welfare role. Until the mid-seventies these functions were carried on in a comparatively stable and certain environment. Since then, considerable changes have occured which have resulted in the fall, and more recently, the rise, of the department's status both in their own, and in other administrator's, eyes.

The first of these has been the geographical move of the department from George Radnor House to the Tower. With the increasing number of administrative staff employed, George Radnor House was seen to be becoming 'rather cramped' by 1976. In consequence, it was decided to build a second office block into which some specialist from George Radnor and 357 (which would then be sold) could be moved. Planning for this new facility began in early 1977, with the expectation of moving into the new offices in mid 1980. In order to ease the immediate situation, it was decided to move two functions into temporary accommodation, prior to moving them into the new block. After lengthy discussions it was agreed that Personnel and Training were most in need of extra space and were transferred to floors six and seven of a privately owned office block - the Tower. However, a reduction in ANIP's capital budgets, together with leaps in bank borrowing rates led to an indefinite postponement of new building projects, including that of the new office block. This has led to the annexing of Personnel and Training some two miles from George Radnor and 357.

During this period the Personnel Manager resigned and was
replaced by his deputy who found it difficult to handle the
increased pressure. As Tony, the current Personnel Director
lamented,

> That manager wasn't really interested in the job.
> He wasn't a career man. In fact, it seems he was
> manipulated into taking the job. He didn't really
> understand the complexity of the job and wasn't
> really interested in it. He didn't get to know the
> needs of the other departments or of his own. As a
> result, it gradually got around that Personnel
> weren't very helpful and weren't very good. And
> you know, once those kind of rumours start it's
> pretty impossible to stop them. But I don't think
> he even tried. He knew his retirement was coming
> up and I suppose he couldn't be bothered or had
> just run out of steam... Anyway the result was
> that when I was appointed four years ago the
> Department had a very bad reputation. It was
> slagged off by everyone and was mistrusted by
> everyone. The connection between us working here
> [the Tower] was quickly made. The word got around
> the "the pits worked at the pits".

More recently, after a period of being regarded as a 'very
poor department', societal changes, and their impact on ANIP
in general, have provided a more favourable context for the
'rise of the new department'. As John, Tony's deputy,
reflected,

> Change permeates everything. We have to look to
> the future. The way people perceive situations is
> a cultural function. We see situations and act
> upon them in the way our culture generally sees
> things... The structure of Britain is changing.
> It's more acceptable as a nation that we have
> change... Values have changed. People now realise
> they have got to change or be left by the wayside.
> Change is here to stay.

Three changes are pin-pointed as being of special importance
in the rise of Personnel. Firstly, the nationwide curtailment
of union power has been experienced within ANIP as a
reduction in the influence of the unions. This has been

welcomed by the personnel specialists because it has made it easier for them to overcome union resistance to the introduction of new control techniques: induction, human job analysis, personality profiles, career planning, etc. Secondly, the general emphasis of the Thatcher administration on individual responsibility and accountability, as enshrined in the recommendations of the Spooner Report, has provided the department with 'an environment in which our enterprise can flourish', or more colloquially, 'given us the necessary boot-up-the-arse to get it going' (Personnel Officer). Thirdly, the move towards competitive tendering has been perceived as a threat to the continued existence of the department. It was recognised that a department focusing mainly on recruitment and selection was very vulnerable to being replaced by any number of private agencies who specialised in those areas. Moreover, it was felt that the continued existence of a nominal, but highly visible, welfare role gave the department an unwelcome 'soft' image incompatible with their desire to present their services as sophisticated techniques for the modern management of human resources.

The response of the department to date has been to expand its services beyond recruitment and selection to include induction, 'human job analysis', 'personality profiles, and career planning. In addition, attempts have been made to contract the welfare role. Tony's recruitment as Personnel Director is considered to be an integral part of these changes. His deputy told me that the Personnel Director's

brief was 'basically to be an agent for change', both within the department and in the way human resources were managed within ANIP. Upon joining, 'the first thing Tony did was examine the total image of the department'. As a result of this there was a

> big shakedown. We started to make the best use of the resources we had. We started to improve our image and get people's confidence back. People started saying "What's going off in Personnel?" They recognised that we just weren't the same department anymore.

The success of this strategy is now being realised both in material and symbolic terms. Chief among these is considered to be the promise of money for a second Personnel Director to manage non-recruitment and selection functions. 'Eighteen months ago', John proudly told me 'they [ANIP] wouldn't even have talked about giving us a new Director. Now look, we are going to have one. All we need now is to move out of the pits [the Tower] and we'll be well on our way'.

At the time of research the department had 16 members headed by Tony and John. Kiara, Bev and Beth, the three Personnel Officers, were responsible for writing job advertisements, getting them placed in appropriate publications, organising interview panels and interviewing candidates. They were supported by Zoe, Fran and Sasha, who provided support services (sending out application forms, interview dates and acceptance/rejection letters to candidates) for service applications, with Louise and Jane doing the same for administrative vacancies. Tina, Barry (Baz) and Maressa provided secretarial services: typing on the 'machines',

personal filing, opening mail, etc. George, the welfare officer, and Mercy, his secretary, produced 'In Touch', the monthly welfare magazine for ANIP's employees and provided counselling services where appropriate. Other then George and Mercy in their fifties, John and Zoe in their forties, Tony, Beth and Fran in their thirties, and Sasha in her late teens, the staff were all in their twenties.

7.6. The Participant Observation.

In the following three chapters, I explore more fully how these recent changes have had consequences for (i) the specialists' securing of their professional identities, (ii) their relative positioning in the relations of power at ANIP, and (iii) how, by reflecting upon (i) and (ii), these changes potentially provide the stimulus for the development of an emancipatory praxis.

CHAPTER EIGHT: THE SECURING OF IDENTITY AT WORK.

8.1. Introduction.

In Chapter 5, I outlined my contention that Giddens' theory of structuration is useful for understanding organisational culture because it is potentially sensitive to the existential, material and political processes of cultural reproduction. My methodology for using this theory in empirical research was outlined in Chapter 6. In this chapter, I expand and explore some of the issues identified in Chapter 7, showing how organisational changes have been experienced by the members of the Public Relations Department. I focus on the Public Relations Department for two reasons. Firstly, as I noted in Chapter 6, my ethnographic record of the work culture of the public relations specialists is far more detailed that that of the personnel specialists. As a result, it provides the richness of detail necessary to explore how the specialists constructed their work identities. Secondly, when I attempted a detailed examination of the work cultures of both the Public Relations and Personnel Departments, I found that the text became both repetitive and over long. As a result, in this chapter I have concentrated my analysis on the work culture of the Public Relations Department and have left my discussion of the Personnel Department until the following chapters.

In my analysis of the work cultures of the specialist department, I specifically focus upon the <u>existential</u>

processes of cultural reproduction, disclosing how organisational changes have had consequences for occupational specialists' attempts to secure unproblematic work identities. In examining the existential processes, however, it has been necessary to attend simultaneously to the political processes of cultural reproduction in order to show how the occupational specialists attempted to mobilise their control over scarce symbolic and material resources to defend valued work routines through which their work identities were secured. To begin with, however, I show the impact of government policy on the work organisation of ANIP through focusing briefly on the material processes of cultural reproduction.

In my discussion of the material processes of cultural reproduction in Chapter 5, I suggested that the establishment of state organisations brought new forms of relations of production into being. This point needs elaboration. Within capitalism, the primary form of relations of production is characterised by capitalist ownership of the means of production on which labour power is set to work. Thus, when surplus value is extracted through the careful organisation of the relations in production, it can be turned into profit for the capitalists via the exchange process. The relations of production are therefore characterised by the commodification of labour. Within state organisations, however, the situation is different. The labour process in state organisations cannot be understood solely in terms of the exchange relations of capital and labour. Whereas

capitalists have by-and-large, unlimited control over how
relations in production are to be organised (subject only of
legal requirements) and are primarily interested in the
extraction of surplus value, the state faces contradictory
pressures over how societal resources should be utilised.
For, on the one hand, the state acts as an employer of a
significant percentage of the nation's workforce and is thus
lobbied by pressure groups (trade unions, constituency M.P.s,
etc.) to maintain a certain level of employment. It is also
pressurised to maintain and/or increase its level of service
provision. On the other hand, however, the state is placed
under pressure (by industry) to keep taxation low so that
spending and investment can run at a higher level. As a
result, there is considerable pressure placed on the state to
ensure that the relations in production are organised
efficiently, both to maintain employment and as a defence
against those who might claim that taxpayers' money is being
wasted. The problem for the state, then, is how to devise
modes of internal organisation (the relations in production)
that meet pressures from capitalist and non-capitalist
interest groups (Offe, 1975; Cousins, 1987).

To this end, Offe (1975a) argues that the state can organise
the relations in production in accordance with three modes of
operation. Offe first identifies the 'bureaucratic mode'
which arises when state resources are allocated via the
routine application of pre-determined rules. These however
are often too rigid and inflexible for state activity.
Second, the 'purposive-rational mode' is identified. Offe

regards this as descriptive of instances where planning is determined by technical-rationality via indicators such as performance measures and cost-benefit analysis. The problem with applying such criteria to state industry is, as I suggested in Chapter 5, that there are no clear criteria of assessment within state organisations which would specify the goals of activity. Finally, Offe identifies the 'democratic mode' of political conflict where strategic formulations are devised as an outcome of political negotiations of interest groups. The problem here is that the demands of non-capitalist groupings to increase government spending can threaten the state role in encouraging accumulation. Cousins (1987: 58) summarises the inadequacies of these three modes of operation, noting that this

> implies that it is difficult for the state to devise forms of internal organisation which make compatible political demands and the requirements of capital accumulation. Hence the <u>vacillation of government between a number of strategies in the management of state services, reorganisations, efficiency drives, privatisation, and centralisation</u> (emphasis added).

During the time of my study, I suggest that the Government has attempted to shift the mode of organisation of state organisations from a bureaucratic to a purposive-rational mode. By this, I mean that a market rationality in the form of competition over access to resources has been introduced (following the Spooner Report), replacing the previous situation where resources were accessed through the implimentation of organisational rules and procedures. One consequence of these changes has been that some specialists have found it more problematic to construct valued work

identities. This is exemplified below by reference to the public relations specialists located within the South-East Division of ANIP. 1 outline the existential processes through which identity was formulated prior to recent Government changes and then explore the unintended consequences of these changes with respect to the securing of a 'solid' sense of self and identity. Before doing so, however, 1 will comment further on the nature of identity.

8.2. The Securing of Identity in Work Cultures.

By identity, I refer to the individual's subjective sense of his or her positioning within social relations and relations with nature: it is the 'sense of continuity he or she experiences as these positionings are reaffirmed through routine interaction. For a great deal of the time, identity is reconstituted at the level of practical consciousness (see Chapter 5, above). Accordingly, one experiences the sense of having a 'solid' subjectivity without necessarily reflecting upon how this identity is reconstituted in daily interaction. However, where the routines through which the experience of world openness is placed under a nomos (see Chapter 5), are disrupted, the maintenance of a solid sense of self becomes more problematic. Initially, the disruption of routines is experienced at the level of the unconscious, appearing in the form of increased stress, anxiety and angst. These uncomfortable feelings make it possible, although not inevitable, that action becomes more directly motivated as it comes under the reflective gaze of consciousness. In this way, the process of forming a 'solid'

identity is no longer accomplished simply at the level of practical consciousness but must be motivated directly at the level of discursive consciousness.

In industrial organisations, as I suggested in Chapter 5, many actors gain their valued sense of identity through identification with a section of the organisation and/or the specific work duties they perform. As Turner (1971: 77) notes, such actors

> ...regard themselves as if they were part of it [the section of the organisation], and they regard it as if it were part of themselves. They defend its actions, they rejoice in its success - they identify with it. The extension of the ego associated with the ownership of property, the enactment of ceremonials and the participation, through language, in joint activities of all kinds may all encourage the development of the feeling of identifying with a larger whole.

As Van Maanen and Barley (1984) have argued, this process of identification is particularly strong when high involvement in work is an important feature of the work culture. It is most directly exemplified in the professions and in other organisations where the pervasiveness of particular interpretative schemes can engender positive identification with the occupation (e.g., the police, fire service, etc.). For, as Van Maanen and Barley (ibid: 300) recognise,

> the more pervasive, esoteric and numerous the codes employed by members of an occupation, the more likely the occupation engenders identity because the confluence of codes overdetermines a perspective on reality and overrides the plausibility of naive interpretations of the same matter.

This is not to suggest that identity is always primarily reconstituted through positioning within the relations in

production - for example, many 'working class' people secure identity through a working class culture apart from the workplace (see Willis, 1977). Nevertheless, it is most certainly of importance for many people within advanced capitalistic societies such as Britain.

The following analysis begins an exploration of the existential processes of cultural reproduction by showing how public relations specialists routinely reconstituted valued work identities prior to recent Government attempts to change the organisation and control of ANIP. Following this, I show how these Government changes have had the unintended consequence of disrupting the work routines of the specialists, making the securing of identity more problematic for some.

8.3. The Work Culture of the Public Relations Specialists.

I begin by examining how the public relations specialists defined and defended their occupational identities through the skilful mobilisation of interpretative schemes, facilities and norms in routinised occupational practices. An appreciation of their distinctive career histories is a prerequisite to understanding how members of the Public Relations Department came to define their work and construct a valued sense of identity. This is because the specialists draw upon and reproduce interpretive schemes and norms appropriated prior to their recruitment by ANIP. This is not an unusual occurence. Turner (1971) notes that individuals often attain an identification with the area in which they

first worked, even though they may have moved subsequently into new areas. This holds particularly for early career stages when work identity is still in the processes of being solidified. It is of particular interest to note that two competing sets of interpretative schemes are mobilised within the Public Relations Department, each claiming to capture the 'true' nature of public relations. Accordingly, the majority of the department recruited from newspaper journalism define public relations primarily in terms of the <u>dissemination of information</u>. For them, 'being-in-the-know', 'giving the right information', and demonstrating their mastery of language are key elements through which they construct and reconstitute a valued sense of self and identity. In contrast, the specialists recruited from private sector organisations understood 'successful public relations' to be about the <u>promotion of image</u>. Accordingly, their identity was secured through maintaining their personal sense of masculinity/ femininity, their control over valued symbolic rewards (company cars, expense accounts etc.) and their success in promoting the image of the organisation. These competing accounts of public relations are now outlined.

a. The Informational Ideology of Public Relations.

The majority of the public relations specialist had a background in newspaper journalism. For such journalists, there are four distinct alternative routes to advancement. The first is to work for one of 'the nationals', particularly 'the heavies' (The Times, Daily Telegraph, etc.), but failing that 'the comics' (The Sun, Daily Mirror, etc.). Jobs at

this level are, of course, limited. Most journalist who stay within newspaper journalism can realistically expect to rise only as far as a 'good regional.' Should the journalist wish to leave the staff of a newspaper but continue to use journalistic skills three other options exist. The first is to move sideways into free-lance journalism: selling stories to magazines, periodicals, etc. Alternatively, the journalist can seek to find employment working for radio or television companies, either in their newsrooms or working on documentaries. Finally, they can move laterally into public relations. For those who make this move, positions within the public sector are seen to be more desirable, despite their relatively lower pay. This is for two reasons. Firstly, such jobs are seen to be less vulnerable to economic fluctuations; public relations being one of the first specialisms (along with personnel) to be contracted during periods of financial difficulties. But, more importantly, public sector posts have traditionally privileged the journalistic ideology of informing, rather than promotion which infuses so much of private sector public relations. As one of the ex-journalists employed at ANIP recounted.

> I wanted to get out of journalism but there's few areas to really go into - only P.R. I started applying for lots of jobs... In many ways [this]... was the best of the bunch. I don't feel like I'm trying to get money out of anyone or buttering-them-up just to get an account (emphasis added).

Indeed, buttering-up and other promotional gimmickry connected with private sector public relations are seen to be rather distasteful by the ex-journalists, particularly those

who have worked for 'serious' newspapers where, they contend, the 'facts' are left to 'speak for themselves.'

In contrast to 'buttering-them-up' (a feature that they regard as central to promotional public relations - see below), the ex-journalist defined the skills of public relations to be concerned with '<u>getting the right information to the right people at the right place at the right time</u>.' For 'successful' public relations to be accomplished, at least a tacit understanding of certain norms and interpretive schemes concerning how to access and disseminate this information was seen as essential for the specialists. This was not only to 'bring off' unproblematical media relations but also to secure valued occupational identities through which closure on world openness and at least minimally acceptable degree of ontological security is attained. In considering media relations to be the central part of their work, the ex-journalists organised the department's work around the successful provision of information. Accordingly, a 'Duty Press Officer' (DPO) was appointed each day, on a rota basis, from either the Junior Public Relations Manager or one of the four officers. His or her duties began with reading through all the national daily newspapers (with the exception of 'the comics: The Sun, Daily Mirror and Daily Star, etc.) together with any weeklies, periodicals or professional journals which might offer news coverage of ANIP's service. Such articles were then 'dashed' in one of their top corners. A brief summary (maximum of 25-30 words) was then written on an 'Index Sheet' together with

appropriate page and paper (or journal) references. This was photocopied: one copy being given to Tracey, so that a photocopy of relevant articles could be taken and filed, one copy each to the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, and one being retained by the Duty Press Officer in case s/he should be questioned on any of the stories during the day.

Throughout the day any press enquiries were directed by Kari (the receptionist) to the Duty Press Officer. S/he would then talk to the journalist, noting their papers, questions, focus of the story and deadlines. If the questions could not be answered immediately the Duty Press Officer would find out the answer and invariably ring the journalist back (hopefully before their deadline) with the relevant information.

Stressing the necessity of understanding 'how a newsroom works', handling press enquiries was explained in terms of journalistic stocks-of-knowledge. For each press call the DPO would typically need an understanding of the editorial practices of the media involved (newspapers, television or radio). This would include a knowledge of newsroom and journalistic practices: when copy deadlines were likely to be; whether journalists from that organisation lie about their deadlines to get information more quickly (and if so, by how much); whether the editor respected former 'embargos'; whether it was possible to trust particular journalists with 'off-the-record information'; and whether the journalist (or their media organisation) tended to write favourably or unfavourably about ANIP. A failure to understand this mass of information was seen to make long term press relations very

precarious. The oft repeated account of the department's establishment (see chapter 7), stressing the incompetent management of the press by uninformed specialists, was used to reinforce the view that only specialists with journalistic skills, able to routinely draw on their knowledge in their day-to-day work, were successful in media management. Moreover, the occasional fire-fighting is used to remind the bureaucracy of what happens when such knowledge is not used to inform media relations.

Accordingly, when the department offered training (only ex-journalists were involved in training) to other service and administrative departments, it was these journalistic skills that were stressed to the exclusion of promotional interpretive schemes. For example, during training sessions on media relations, the senior manager would typically begin the day with a presentation of how newspapers are produced. Having established this foundation he would go on to show the necessity of meeting journalistic norms for successful press coverage. For example, the writing of a successful press release was considered to be an art form located within an established, but unwritten, structure. In order to gain the desired media coverage, it needed to be structured correctly with the most important points first, answering the relevant questions of 'who, where, what, when, and how.' Each sentence was to be no more than 25-30 words long, with paragraphs not exceeding two sentences. A sentence was not to be broken at the end of a page and continued on the next. The copy was to in double-spaced type with the indicator 'MF'

at the bottom of each page if there was 'more to come' on a second or third page, and finished with the word 'END.' Each press release should clearly state who was issuing it and give a point of contact. The whole document should then be stapled together. Finally, a knowledge of when to issue press releases was important: Tuesday 10 a.m. being the best time with 4.45 on Friday the worst.

During the training sessions the participants were reassured that although these norms may appear to be arbitrary, the failure to adhere to them was typically sanctioned by poor press coverage. Thus, because newsrooms were frequently a mess, with 'paper flying around everywhere', press releases not stapled together could easily be separated and pages mislaid. The result of this was no story. If the release was styled in a journalistic fashion (conforming to professional norms), it was often possible for editors to include it with the minimal of reworking. Conversely, press releases not styled in accordance with such norms were frequently 'binned'; busy editors not having time (or desire) to spend on them.

One of the unintended consequences of these training courses was that by codifying so precisely the essence of press relations activities, the specialists made it possible for others (non-journalists) to colonise the area. By training other members of the host bureaucracy in the procedures of press relations, it became possible for the press to by-pass the specialists and contact service professionals directly. The led to a subsequent fall in the number of press calls

received by the department, which, ironically, was seen as something of a surprise by the public relations specialists.

Considered central to the ex-journalists' prescriptions for the successful management of media relations was the specialists' ability to locate and disseminate the 'right information.' One of the managers commented on this.

> It's interesting that people credit us for knowing how to find information. It's part of a journalist's training: knowing where to look for what you're looking for. We're given credit often for things we don't deserve - or rather credit for the wrong reasons. It's not just about getting the job done but knowing how to go about it. That's the real skill.

Requisite information is 'dug-up' from a variety of sources. Many press enquiries can be answered from stocks-of-knowledge appropriated by the specialists throughout their careers. However, when the public relations specialist receives a request for information that s/he doesn't personally know how to answer the first port of call is to ask the other specialists within the department. If the other specialists are unable to provide the desired information files are consulted. Should these also produce a blank, their journalistic skills are drawn upon to locate the 'right information.' Journalistic training is considered advantageous because it teaches its subjects skills for knowing how and where to find information. Whether it be from service professionals, administrators, former colleagues from the press or a vast network of other sources and informants, the skill is in knowing the quid pro quo to be offered in exchange.

One of the specialists provided a helpful example of the ex-journalists view that locating information is a skilled activity. Her face glowing, she told me something of the personal gratification involved in locating the 'right information.'

> What is bread-and-butter to us often causes others anxieties. That's because we know where to look. We're specialists, of course. I'm often told by people that "people like you are worth their weight in gold." Once a person in charge of the XXX investigation came to see me because he needed to see some press cuttings. So I pulled a few strings with some contacts at 'The Messenger' - you know scratch my back, I'll scratch yours sort of thing - and took him to their cutting department. He said "you're worth you're weight in gold." Sometimes people from other divisions even call us up because we've got a reputation for getting the job done. Moments like that make the job worthwhile. (emphases added)

These comments disclose significant facets of the existential processes of cultural reproduction through which identity is formed. Supporting my contention that while identity might be subjectively experienced as an individual characteristic, the experience of identity as a 'solid' phenomenon pertaining solely to the individual is illusory. For, as Cooley (1902 - quoted in Breakwell 1983: 8) claims,

> self and society are twin born... and the notion of a separate and independent ego is an illusion.

Rather, as Cooley suggests, actors' experience of their own subjectivity is largely tied to how they perceive other people see them. The formation of identity is therefore a social process. For example, in the above extract, the specialist can be seen to construct her work identity through being immersed in the routines (e.g., finding and

disseminating information) that she perceives other people to regard as a distinctive competence ('sometimes people from other divisions call us up because we've got a reputation for getting the job done'). As actors are praised by others for 'getting the job done', the feeling of joy, sometimes euphoria, which is felt as energy normally used to monitor action is momentarily released in a catharthic experience, encouraging actors to connect the activities praised with the feelings which that praise engenders so that those activities are routinised and a valued sense of identity secured through their routinisation.

The extract also suggests that the existential processes of cultural reproduction through which identity is routinely secured is interdependent with political and material processes. With regard to the political processes of cultural reproduction, the specialist discloses how her ability to 'get the job done' is often dependent upon her control over scarce resources ('I pulled a few strings with some contacts'). Quite what was offered in return ('you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours') for access to the cutting department is not clear from this extract. However, the quid pro quo usually took the form of disclosing background information (off-the-record) to journalists to enable them to frame their stories more accurately. By offering such an exchange, the ex-journalist mobilised her control over scarce resources, in this case valuable information, to bring off the activity successfully, and maintain an unproblematic and valued work identity as a

provider of specialist information. The extract also illustrates the impact of the material processes of cultural reproduction on the formation of identity. For example, the specialist notes that the department is praised for its expertise in collecting and disseminating information. This praise, however, is not given because the actions of the ex-journalists are aesthetically pleasing, but because their skills (of locating the 'right' information) facilitate the successful accomplishment of the others' work, through which they, in turn, secure their livelihoods and valued identities. Even the description of the specialist as 'worth your weight in gold' is illuminating, for it is an economic analogy. Following Silverman and Jones (1976 - see Chapter 3), this can be regarded as an example of the language of grading. It is the language of the commodity form of life, where people are valued according to their contribution to productive relations.

b. The Promotional Ideology of Public Relations. (1)

In contrast to the ex-journalists, who routinely constructed their professional identities through demonstrating their expertise in finding and disseminating information, the non-journalists interpreted their work in the light of a competing set of interpretive schemes. Both the non-journalists had learnt their skills in private sector public relations practices, and, following redundancy (due to the closing of their departments), had taken positions within ANIP until more lucrative opportunities materialised. During their careers within the private sector they had come to

understand public relations in terms of promoting rather than informing. Sue confirmed this, maintaining that

> There is a great deal of difference between public relations and what goes on here... It's all very well being able to write press releases but that's only a small part of it. It's another thing altogether to be able to use the press for your own ends. You can tell them 'that' [points to a copy of a press release] but it's different telling them that and getting them to write a favourable story.

The successful management of public relations, according to the non-journalists, requires skills and personality that few journalists were seen to possess. Central to these was 'presence': 'the capacity to make an impact wherever you go, to fill out a room with the essence of your company.' Those with 'presence' were seen to be successful; those with a lesser measure were thought (by other non-journalistic specialists) to struggle in their careers.

While presence was seen to be indefinable (something to be experienced rather than necessarily understood), certain physical, symbolic and material resources were used as metonyms for it. For example, during my first few weeks of work I had no inkling that there was more then one definition of public relations. I had been told by the ex-journalists that it was about 'getting the right information to the right people at the right place at the right time.' However, when I asked Brian to tell me about public relations he used none of the above terms. Rather, he offered an account of a visit he had made to a local club to indicate what public relations was all about.

> Let me tell you abour P.R. One day in my previous firm we were all invited by a customer to go out on

a stag night. We all met at the Lynx Hotel so we
didn't have to drive and they organised a coach to
take us to this place. We drank all night and then
there was a couple of strippers. I had contact
lenses on at the time and one of the strippers came
over and shoved my face in her crotch... As it was
a private function they could do anything. In the
end they invited people to perform with them on
stage so loads of people were up there dropping
their trousers. That's what public relations is
all about. Let me know you've figured out what I
mean. (emphasis added)

While the story was not difficult to remember, its
interpretation eluded me for some weeks. However, as I
surfaced interpretative schemes mobilised by the specialists
to explain (and in doing so, re-secure) their work
identities, I began to construct an interpretation of the
signification of Brian's account. Central to the
specialists' work identity was their masculinity or
femininity. One had to prove oneself as a 'real man' or
'real woman.' For the men, success with women and ability to
'hold your drink' were seen to be essential. In the above
extract, for example, Brian makes it clear that it is he,
rather than one of the other specialist present, who was
initially chosen by the stripper. He also emphasizes the
importance of alcohol. The specialists did not merely have a
drink but 'drank all night.' On another occasion, Brian
invited me to attend the local branch of a public relations
specialists' organisation. When I asked him what was likely
to be on the agenda he replied: 'Same as always Ivan. It's
just an excuse for a piss-up.' For the women specialists
(and to a lesser extent the men) physical appearance was
paramount. It was no surprise then, to discover that the two
non-journalists were the sharpest dressers within the
department.

In addition to sexuality, it was important for the specialists to be seen having high status and influential positions. In a conversation with Brian he mobilised this interpretive scheme.

> When I was working at KKY [one of his former organisations] I would often be drinking at my club when someone would call me... It was a bit embarrassing at the time but <u>it gave everyone the impression that I must be important to be called up so late</u>. (emphasis added)

One's importance was effectively measured by status symbols: secretaries,

> it's not necessary to have secretarial skills. You have a personal assistant to do that sort of stuff for you... In proper P.R. you are not expected to take notes; you tell other people to take notes for you. You certainly don't do your own typing. You pass it on to your secretary. You've got too many other important things to do to bother about such menial work.

large expense accounts, overseas trips,

> P.R. is totally different in its commercial aspect... you get all the perks - here you get travelling expenses... At KKY we got company cars, all expenses paid trips abroad - I done the Paris Air Show twice , all expenses paid. You get lunches on expenses with a good expense account,

and the requisite sporty company car.

However, these specialists, now working within ANIP, had to do their own typing, had no individual expense account, overseas trips or company cars. The specialists were nonetheless still able to maintain their identities by regarding their employment by ANIP as only temporary and hoped to be re-employed in the private sector in the not too distant future. They interpreted their redundancies in a way

that did not threaten their identity. For example, Brian told me that his redundancy was

> just one of those things. It really had nothing to do with my work performance or that of the department. The decision was made higher up to sub-contract all P.R. work so the internal department was closed.

In doing so, they were able to deal with the threat emanating from the their loss of livelihood by simply ignoring it. As Breakwell (1983: 16) comments,

> Research on attribution processes has shown that people who can, for instance, attribute a failure to material circumstances refuse to admit that their failure in those circumstances indicates anything about them as people or about their identity.

By refusing to acknowledge that the cost of the very resources they thought necessary to symbolise success (e.g., a large expense account, company car, overseas trips, etc.) may well have enabled public relations agencies to significantly undercut the department's budget for public relations activities, thus leading to its dismantlement, the specialists were able to protect their work identities from threat. In addition, by frequently recalling to each other the material and symbolic resources they were once able to mobilise when employed in the private sector, the two promotional specialists were able to re-experience the emotions that the control of these resources gave them. In this way, the specialists were able to avoid confronting seriously the fact that the symbols and practices around which they had previously constructed their identity were no longer available to them. Had they acknowledged that their

employment by ANIP might be more than a temporary 'blip' in their career paths, then it would have been more difficult to protect their identity from a potentially threatening situation.

8.4. Consequences of recent Organisational Changes for the Securing of Professional Identity.

So far I have outlined the competing sets of interpretive schemes through which the two groups of specialist made sense of public relations and constructed their professional identities. Holding such diverse interpretive schemes, it is no surprise that the specialists had different conceptions of how public relations activities should be carried out. However, while they held different definitions of P.R. there was little antagonism between the factions during my initial period of participant observation. In fact, departmental relations were seen to be very informal; the prevalent metaphor for the work organisation of the department being 'all hands to the wheel.' The specialists were given a large amount of autonomy, and there was considerable job rotation within the department so that both the ex-journalists and non-journalists were all involved in answering press calls, producing booklets, etc.

However, with the contraction of public relations departments in other divisions of ANIP, and the tightening of department's budget within the South-East Division, the Senior Public Relations Manager became concerned that redundancy might occur within his own department. This led

to a more careful monitoring of the costs for individual public relations activities. One result of this financial scrutiny was that the senior manager realised that the booklets produced by non-journalists were significantly more expensive than those produced by the ex-journalists. Given the ideological differences between the two factions, this was not surprising. Whereas the ex-journalists were primarily concerned with getting the 'correct' information into print, those expressing a promotional ideology began placing a greater emphasis on the appearance of the product. As Sue remarked,

> Some of the printing here is poor. I just wouldn't entertain it. I would go for better print, better paper and better art work.

'Better print, better paper and better art work' were obvious features of the booklets produced by the non-journalists: they were noticeably glossier and more attractively designed. However, the senior manager attempted to get the two non-journalists to 'change their style of working' to cut the costs of production. The non-journalists, for example, were reprimanded for 'hiding the information in the gloss' and for over-spending. Such comments were perceived by the non-journalists as an unwelcome encroachment on their professional autonomy and strongly resisted. Brian rather bitterly informed me that

> Last year Geoff asked me to do a booklet for another department. The agency I used ... I've used before. Geoff says they are not very good and charge over the top. That's his opinion. They are very efficient and give a high standard of work.

By refusing to compromise their 'professional standards' and

send booklets to less expensive publishers, the non-journalists exacerbated the developing ideological conflict between the two groups of specialists. The result of this was that the ex-journalists, concerned that 'run-a-way budgets' might lead to redundancy, began to exercise their control over departmental resources more forcefully, defining the public relations activities of ANIP solely in the terms of the informational ideology. This was accomplished in a number of ways. Firstly, the public relations function at ANIP has traditionally been defined in terms of press relations as a result of the two blunders which led to the department's inception (see chapter 7). This enabled the ex-journalists to use the historical success of informational practices to legitimise and sanction their own ideology. For example, in response to the frequent requests from the non-journalists to broaden the work practices of the department to include more press conferences, exhibition and promotional activities, Geoff would say

> We've always done it this way, and we've always
> made a good job of it.

In addition, the historical dominance of the informational ideology has resulted in both the senior positions within the department going to ex-journalists, along with the control over authoritative and allocative resources which accompanied managerial status. The informational specialists were therefore able to exercise their control over authoritative and allocative resources to distribute the department's work among its members. This is significant because when non-journalists were seen to produce non-legitimate work,

such as 'over-spending' on booklet production, they could be sanctioned. Typical of such sanctioning was the removal of non-journalists from contentious areas of work. In a conversation about Brian, Liz explained the practical reasoning behind such sanctioning.

> When Brian first came he did some very good work. But after a while he kept insisting that we should pay more attention to presentation. By this he meant farming out to agencies. Now I think we would all agree that some agencies are excellent, but when you consider their costs in terms of the information we want to give...well, it just isn't financially viable. So in the end we've had to keep Brian on press duty much of the time... we know he won't throw the spanner in the works if he is not doing high grade work.

In addition to distributing work, the ex-journalists (through Geoff) control departmental recruitment, effectively ensuring that only journalists were selected for vacant posts. When questioned about a recent job advertisement he had written which invited only journalists to apply, Geoff acknowledged it to be 'a mistake'.

> I should have put "journalistic or public relations backgrounds". But I want a journalist. I don't want someone from P.R. who's been swanning around on the fringe. I want someone from the 'Daily Messenger' or 'The Herald' who can do the job.

Having effectively barred additional non-journalists from selection, Geoff also wanted to prevent either of his non-journalistic colleagues from seeking promotion within the department. Such a strategy was bitterly resented by the non-journalists. Angrily, Brian confirmed this.

> Geoff told me I needn't bother to apply for the job. Not in so many words of course, but he made his point very clear. He said he really wanted someone with journalistic training. He's looking for another journalist. Surprise Surprise! He

want's to turn the whole department into a office
full of bloody journalists. Well I'm not a
journalist. I'm a public relations man, and I'm
not going to change my way of working just to fit
in here. After all, a man has got to have his self
respect. I felt like telling him to stuff the job,
but work is hard to come by these days.

By mobilising their control over scarce symbolic and material

resources to sanction the two specialists who refused to

adhere to their informational definitions of public

relations, the ex-journalists effected a closure on the world

openness that recent Government changes had brought about.

For, whilst they had allowed the legitimacy of both sets of

interpretative schemes, the ex-journalists had at least been

tacitly aware that public relations could be approached in

alterative ways. However, by denying the legitimacy of the

promotional ideology, maintaining that the informational

approach was the only way to conduct public relations, the

specialists filtered out of existence the the conception of

the department as a network of interdependent relationships,

captured in the metaphor 'all hands to the wheel', and began

to treat the non-journalists as subordinates. In doing so,

the specialists hardened the 'nomos' they had constructed

over the world openness and began to experience a feeling of

increased security, even invulnerability. For now, even if

redundancies were to take place, they could legitimately

remove the non-journalists, not simply because they adhered

to a different ideology, but because they refused to carry

out public relations practices in the 'appropriate way.' By

believing that they had removed the threat to their

livelihood that recent government changes had brought about,

the ex-journalists once again were able to unproblematically

secure their identity as informational specialists through

their routine involvement in public relations practices. And, once the threat to their identity was perceived to be over, the specialists reflected less and less on their daily work until it was once again conducted at the level of practical consciousness.

In contrast, the non-journalists' identities became increasingly threatened. For, not only had they no access to valued material and symbolic resources, but, in addition, were now barred from the promotional activities though which they constructed their work identity. However, some degree of protection from the insecurity this engendered was attained by claiming that the reason they were not engaged in promotional activities was because the department was not a 'genuine' public relations department, but rather an office 'full of bloody journalists.' For example, the non-journalists began to express the belief that the falling off of the number of press calls received by the department was because the ex-journalists did not know how to handle the press. The non-journalists began to discredit the techniques of the ex-journalists claiming that successful media relations <u>could</u> <u>only</u> be achieved through getting to know the journalists more personally. For example, Sue stressed that

> <u>It's</u> <u>no</u> <u>good</u> <u>trying</u> <u>to</u> <u>manage</u> <u>the</u> <u>press</u> <u>through</u> <u>press</u> <u>releases</u> <u>and</u> <u>answering</u> <u>calls</u>. <u>You</u> <u>need</u> <u>to</u> <u>get</u> <u>to</u> <u>know</u> <u>them</u> <u>personally</u>. <u>The</u> <u>way</u> <u>to</u> <u>get</u> <u>good</u> <u>stories</u> <u>is</u> <u>not</u> <u>to</u> <u>give</u> <u>them</u> <u>press</u> <u>releases</u> <u>but</u> <u>to</u> <u>take</u> <u>them</u> <u>out</u> <u>for</u> <u>a</u> <u>drink</u>, <u>or</u> <u>a</u> <u>meal</u> <u>or</u> <u>a</u> <u>show</u> <u>and</u> <u>get</u> <u>to</u> <u>know</u> <u>them</u>. You have to be the public face of the company and sell it to them. In this world we all know that you don't get something for nothing. You can't just write a press release and expect good coverage. You more or less have to encourage good coverage. Of course you can't buy it directly. But over time you can encourage it as

you socialise with the journalists (emphasis added).

The lack of, and poor quality of, exhibition work also provided the non-journalists with ammunition for their attack on the work practices of the ex-journalists. For example, Brian maintained that:

> Public relations differs from press relations because you get a lot more exhibition work and promotional work. Not like the exhibitions here. That sort of thing is o.k. for schools I suppose, but I wouldn't want to use it. It's such a home-grown thing. You know the sort of thing they throw together on 'Blue Peter.' If I was doing that exhibition I would call in the professionals. That's the only way to do things. Use the professionals. (emphasis added)

Finally, the attacks became more personal; the non-journalists claiming that the ex-journalists were not 'genuine' P.R. personnel. Brian again:

> Geoff's not a P.R. man. He's a journalist. He doesn't drink or push himself forward like a P.R. man. He takes his work too seriously. That's not to say that P.R. men don't take their work seriously, but every so often we go out for a real binge. Geoff doesn't do that.

By reconstruing the status of the department from a public relations department to a press office, the non-journalists were able to save face. It was, they told me, not their fault that they were not involved in promotional activities but that of the department. Why so? Because the 'bloody journalists' had no conception of how public relations should really be managed.

In summary, by undermining the work of the non-journalists, the informational specialists dealt with the problem that Government changes had brought about by increasing their dominance over non-journalists. In doing so, they were able

to re-construct their 'nomos' over world openness that Government changes had brought to their consciousness. As a result, they were once again able to reconstitute their identity through immersion in public relations routines at the level of practical consciousness. Ironically, by discrediting the work of the non-journalists, the informational specialists denied themselves the possibility of utilising their distinctive resources to meet the increasing demand for promotional work from other departments within the South-East Division. The result of this, as I show in the following chapter, was that rather than attempting to improve the department's position within the organisational hierarchy by offering new services (e.g., promoting the expertise of other departments), the department followed a defensive strategy, seeking to conceal what the specialists considered to be a 'maverick structure from other bureaucrats.

In contrast, while the non-journalists were able to carry out certain routines at the level of practical consciousness (e.g., answer press calls), the maintenance of their distinctive work identities now could only be accomplished at the level of discursive consciousness. This was because the maintenance of their work identities was now dependent upon their ability to discredit the work of the ex-journalists in order to prove to themselves that they were not bona fide public relations specialists.

8.5. Summary.

In this chapter I have shown that understanding how specialists construct their work identities is central to making sense of their work cultures. I have illustrated this, showing the interdependence of existential, political and material processes of cultural reproduction. Specifically, I have argued that in relations in production characterised by asymmetrical relations of power (material processes), the securing of specialist work identities, through which some degree of ontological security is realised (existential processes) is dependent upon the degree of relative control that groups of actors have over allocative and authoritative resources (political processes). This contributes to existing accounts of organisational work by revealing the interdependence of the existential, political and material processes. It also clearly discloses some of the unintended consequences of changes in one of these processes on the other two. For example, I have shown how Government policy has brought about changes in the relations in production (material processes), which has had unintended consequences for the specialists ability to secure unproblematic work identities (existential processes) and the way they in which they have mobilised their control over symbolic and material resources (political processes). I build upon this analysis in the next chapter by showing how the strategies pursued by the public relations and personnel specialists to improve their positioning within the relations in production (material processes) both reflect and reproduce

their distinctive work identities and their control over scarce symbolic and material resources.

CHAPTER NINE: MANAGING RELATIONS WITH THE BUREAUCRACY.

9.1. Introduction.

In the last chapter, I explored how specialists at ANIP sought to effect at least a minimally acceptable degree of closure on the precariousness of world openness by securing and defending 'solid' work identities through mobilising what control they had over scarce symbolic and material resources. In this chapter, I show how these identities have had important consequences for their strategies to define, defend, expand and/or mediate their positioning within the host organisation (Breakwell, 1983). In particular, I disclose how the strategies pursued by the public relations and personnel specialists for managing relations with ANIP have had unintended consequences, both for themselves, and for the host organisation. The chapter is organised into three parts. In parts one and two, I discuss the strategies adopted by the public relations and personnel specialists respectively for managing their relations with the bureaucracy. Finally, in the third section, I discuss some of the unintended consequences of these strategies in the light of the existential, political and material processes of cultural reproduction.

9.2. Managing Relations with the Bureaucracy: Public Relations.

In Chapter 8, I examined the culture of the Public Relations Department and showed how those specialists adhering to an informational ideology were able to define the department's work in their own terms through the skilful use of symbolic and material resources. This was done as the specialists mobilised interpretative schemes, facilities and norms in order to bring off successful public relations activities. In particular, I suggested that the ex-journalists' control over allocative and authoritative resources, via the Junior Public Relations Manager, enabled them to infuse their informational interpretative schemes with forms of power to sanction the work of the non-journalists when they refused to 'toe the line.' It is no surprise, then, that the ex-journalists similarly drew upon and reconstituted the interpretative schemes of journalism in their management of the department's boundaries with ANIP.

In this section, I firstly focus on the informal interaction between members of the department, showing how the specialists maintained their professional identities whilst working within a bureaucracy: an organisational form which their journalistic training had taught them would hinder them getting their job done, either deliberately or through the general incompetence of bureaucratic administration. Following this discussion, I examine how the senior manager managed the formal interface between the department and the

host bureaucracy. I focus on the management of formal rather than informal boundaries because although informal interaction was considerable - the department housed the 'floor photocopier' and the 'newspaper stack' - it was regarded (by the specialists) as peripheral to their relationship with ANIP. Despite the frequent visits of staff from other departments, either to use the photocopier or browse through the day's newspapers, the conversation that occured during these times was concerned with the weather, families, holidays and other such personal matters rather than direct discussion of work. This typified much of the informal communication between the members of the Public Relations Department and staff from other specialists units within the administration block. While there was a good deal of informal networking between staff, much of it was centred around interests outside the workplace rather than on work itself. In fact, the public relations specialists tended to keep their work very much to themselves and discussed it infrequently with outsiders, and only then with people who were personally trusted. As a result, they paid little attention to this casual interaction and tended to focus on the management of official channels of communication through which valued material and symbolic resources were seen to be secured.

a. Interpretative Schemes about the Bureaucracy mobilised within the Public Relations Department.

In their previous journalistic careers, the public relations specialists came to internalise a number of interpretive

schemes concerning bureaucratic forms of organisation. These definitions of bureaucracy, mobilised in departmental interaction, had important consequences for their management of the formal boundaries with ANIP. Fundamentally, the ex-journalists regarded bureaucratic forms of organisation as inflexible, impersonal, poorly organised and 'bound up by their own red tape.' More importantly, for the specialists, bureaucratic organisations typically frustrated them in their attempts to get the job done. In a discussion with one of the ex-journalists, I was informed that reporters typically found bureaucracies problematic because the speed of their information processing was often slow, making it difficult for the journalists to meet tight copy deadlines. Worse still, bureaucrats were often seen to stand in the way of the journalists' attempts to get their stories. Another of the specialists (Jo) told me that,

> As a reporter you tend to go blundering in - you don't care who he is in the hierarchy - you're only interested in getting your story. I haven't much time for people in a hierarchy; it's amazing the number of people who think they're special because they hold a position in the hierarchy. As a journalist I was always fighting against the hierarchy and now I haven't much time for people who stand in my way (emphasis added).

As public relations specialists, it was of little surprise to them that the bureaucratic organisation of ANIP was antipathetic to the swift completion of their work. Often the specialists would lament the lack of insight into media matters displayed by other members of ANIP. This problem was partly diagnosed (by the specialists) as the result contrasting time frameworks within the bureaucracy and the

department. Within ANIP, medium to long term planning was
seen to be essential for the continuation and development of
service provision. Frequently decisions were taken over a
five year period. As a result, the value of information was
considered to be lasting. In contrast, for the public
relations specialist, the news value of information declined
rapidly. Should media requests for information not be met
prior to stated deadlines, important column inches could be
lost as sub-editors filled the paper with other stories. It
was therefore considered important by the public relations
specialists that they have the full co-operation of other
staff in order to capitalise on media coverage. Following
the failure of another administrative department to provide
requisite information to meet a deadline, Liz, the Junior
Public Relations Manager, explained that

> There's so many subtle nuances. That's something I
> can't get the bureaucracy to understand. You have
> to remember to deal with radio and television
> enquiries before the newspapers as they have hourly
> deadlines...

She continued,

> There is such a different time scale of events here
> [the department] to in the bureaucracy. We keep
> trying to tell them that press coverage is
> important; if we don't get them the information,
> and, particularly, if the request is from the
> comics, then they'll speculate or just make it up.
> We keep trying to tell them that if they want news
> coverage then they must act quickly or deadlines
> will be missed. In some cases, it's not too
> important but in others, once the story is late,
> it's lost and forgotten. And also, we need to meet
> as many deadlines as we possibly can in order to
> maintain a good relationship with the press. That
> makes it more likely that they'll run our press
> releases. It's like if we show we understand the
> press's problems they'll show they understand our
> problems as public relations people. But how do
> you get these buggers [bureaucrats] to give you

information when you want it. I don't know. All I
know is that it's like a hare trying to teach a
tortoise to run. Just about bloody impossible!

Part of the problem for the public relations specialist was
that the bureaucracy was perceived as more 'mechanistic'
(Burns and Stalker, 1961), impersonal and inflexible than
their own 'organic' department, making information processing
much slower. While this was true to some extent, the
specialists' desire to get their job done often had little
concern for the work load of other members of ANIP, for whose
work servicing public relations with information was
marginal. When information was not forthcoming from the
bureaucracy with the rapidity they desired, the specialists
used such incidents to reinforce their interpretations of
ANIP, and its members, as a sluggish, monolithic, and often
incompetent.

Paradoxically, while the specialists saw their requests for
information in order to answer press enquiries as legitimate
they had little sympathy for the demands for information from
other departments, regarding them as an unnecessary obstacle
which hindered them in their attempts to get the job done.
This concern was well expressed in a humorous article that
appeared in a trade journal received by the department. The
specialist who discovered the article (Liz) read out the
following extract:

> My Christmas present has clearly arrived a week
> early. Today, the telephone was broken. And I
> could actually get some work done! And you know
> what the beauty of a broken telephone is? You
> can't telephone anyone to ask them to fix it!
> Hallelujah for a quiet life.

During the remainder of the pre-Christmas week this article

became a focus for office humour. Departmental members tried to decide which Christmas presents they would prefer to receive and the suggestions included reductions in de-forestation for the purposes of providing bureaucrats with the requisite mountain of paper needed for their unending circulars, along with many other quips ridiculing the symbols of bureaucratic organisations (i.e. telephones, circulars, memos, numerous meetings, etc.).

The perceived incompetence of the bureaucracy was reinforced within the department through a form of humour which possessed the semantic qualities of metaphor and myth through which the specialists were able to covertly define organisational reality. As Turner (1971) notes, the ambiguous quality of metaphorical humour allows it to be used to communicate serious messages in a socially acceptable fashion. Should the signification of the humour be challenged, the teller can find refuge in society's leniency towards humour and claim s/he was only joking. In this way the specialists were able to mobilise their organisationally illegitimate ideology as a symbol of individual and departmental resistance to the bureaucracy. For example, over every desk in the department the same 'Peanuts' cartoon, originally clipped from a newspaper (and subsequently the object of multiple photocopying) was pinned in prominent positions. The cartoon read as follows:

> Caption 1: (shows Snoopy dressed as a surgeon on his way to the operating theatre)
> Here's the world famous surgeon on his way to the operating room.

Caption 2: Let' see... Was I to have surgery today or
                    perform it? I think I have it written down
                    somewhere.

        Caption 3: Ah yes,... 'perform surgery'.

        Caption 4: That's a relief!

When questioned about the cartoon's prominence in the office,

one of the specialists indicated that it was seen to be

representative of the confusion and incompetence of the

bureaucracy which didn't 'know whether it was coming or

going... They really don't know if they're going to perform

surgery or receive it.' At face value the cartoon contained

none of these meanings. However, within the context of the

department it became a code invested with metaphorical

signification through which the bureaucracy was ridiculed.

Ridiculing the bureaucracy was the sport of the specialists.

So much so, in fact, that they positively sought out examples

of bureaucratic inefficiency and impersonality. For example,

Geoff told the department of some correspondence he had sent

and received.

        I wrote a letter to a colleague starting 'Dear
        Tom..' He wrote back and said 'Thank you for your
        personal letter..' But of course, it wasn't a
        personal letter... We always call each other by
        our first names within the department. But he
        wanted everything to be done in order. He wanted
        to be called Mr. Brown..

The incident was used to imply the stuffiness and

impersonality of the host bureaucracy. What is particularly

significant about this (and other such incidents) was that

they were exceptions to the rule. Most of the staff at

George Radnor, for example, were known to each other by their

first names. Yet when one individual expressed a desire to

be addressed more formally the request was seized upon as an example of bureaucratic impersonality.

By contrasting their informality with the bureaucracy's formality ('He wanted to be called Mr. Brown..'), their own ability to get the job done with ANIP's incompetence ('Was I to have surgery today or perform it'), their speed at responding to news stories with the slowness of the host organisation ('it's like a hare trying to teach a tortoise to run. Just about bloody impossible!') and their brevity with the 'paper pushing' characteristics of the bureaucracy ('bound up in their own red tape'), the specialists were able to distance themselves from the organisation in which they worked. By regarding themselves as a 'breath of fresh air to the bureaucracy,' the specialists were able to maintain their professional identity, even though they were employed by a bureaucratic organisation they had been taught to despise, by claiming that they are in the bureaucracy but not of it..

b. Managing the Formal Boundaries between the Department and the Bureaucracy.

Prior to recent organisational changes brought about by the Spooner recommendations, relations with the bureaucracy were managed without major difficulties: the specialists generally being able to acquire necessary resources for getting the job done. Prior to Geoff's appointment as senior manager, the former manager managed relations with ANIP through skilful use of the bureaucratic arts. Geoff said of his predecessor, that he

could talk the language of the bureaucrats. He was
like a computer man. He pressed the button and got
results. He built a bridge with the bureaucrats.
For example, whereas we are taught to be brief -
you can answer a letter in a few lines - he always
would write long letters.

However, while the former managers skilful mobilisation of
bureaucratic language was acknowledged, he was regarded, by
the other specialists, to have 'sold out' by becoming
indistinguishable from other bureaucrats. When Geoff was
appointed he attempted to re-emphasize the department's
separateness from the host organisation. Accordingly, he
refused to compromise their 'way of working' by 'becoming
just paper pushers.' He justified this decision, maintaining
that

In a bureaucracy P.R. isn't well understood. As
long as we deliver the goods it's o.k., although if
we didn't I'm not sure that it would be detected
(emphasis added).

As a result, he argued that the incompetence of the
bureaucracy was such that it would not be too difficult to
extract necessary resources for public relations activities.
Departmental humour seems to confirm this.

During the period of research, many stories were told which
championed the department's exploitation of bureaucratic
inefficiencies so that scarce resources could be secured.
However, following the introduction of a career management
structure (part of Spooner's recommendations), there were
fears that departmental activities would be monitored more
closely. For the ex-journalists, the fear was that the
department might become 'bureaucratised.' Seeking to maintain
a high degree of flexibility and autonomy within the

department, the specialists were concerned that their clannish form of work culture would be regarded as illegitimate by the bureaucratic host organisation, resulting in the withdrawal of legitimacy and associated rewards. The perceived risk was, as Meyer and Rowan (1981: 540) put it, that the omission of 'legitimated elements of structure' would result in the 'lack (of) acceptable legitimated accounts of their activities.' In response to this threat, the public relations specialists employed legitimising myths to meet the symbolic requirements of the host organisation. Their use of such myths is well illustrated in the writing of job descriptions for individual members of the department (see Chapter 5, above, and this chapter, below) and in the format and style of an information booklet written to alert other departments to the presence and role of the public relations department.

The information booklet took the form of a 'ceremonial' document in which the Public Relations Department was represented as a rational activity that conformed with the institutional myth of formal organisation (Meyer and Rowan, 1981). Mobilising bureaucratic interpretive schemes favouring longer term planning and service provision, the document defined public relations as 'the deliberate, planned and sustained effort to establish mutual understanding between an organisation and its public.' It went on to state that 'P.R. is not merely an opportunistic affair. Obviously opportunities should be seized upon, but there should be a long term view of public relations, setting out various aims

and goals.' Public relations was considered to be planned 'to maximise benefits and make the best use of training and resources.' Finally, the maintenance of public relations interventions was advised on the grounds that 'a one-off effort does not constitute a successful P.R. exercise. The effort must be maintained and all opportunities be exploited.'

The contents of this booklet can be seen to offer and reinforce a myth that provides the bureaucracy with a means of attenuating what, for the public relations specialists, was the bureaucratically illegitimate informality and flexibility of their work. The booklet's appropriation of organisationally legitimated language and rhetoric, particularly in the respect of emphasising the long-term nature of public relations work, enabled the construction of 'blissful clarity' (Barthes, 1972; Golding, 1980). In this way, the departmental members were able to mask their concern to secure legitimacy over and above any concern to make effective contribution to the development and promotion of the organisation.

Whereas the specialists themselves understood successful public relations to be based on 'instinct and guess,' they readily submitted to the expectations of the bureaucracy by emphasising the rationality of the specialism. Thus, rather than seeking to educate the bureaucracy about the organisational distinctiveness of the department, the managers favoured a more conformist, submissive approach in which they sought to shroud their activity in legitimising

myths (Kamens, 1977). In a similar vein, the public relations managers complained that the jobs within the department were too flexible and overlapping to write meaningful job descriptions. Nevertheless, bureaucratic rules constrained them to do so for the purposes of recruitment and staff appraisal. Their response was to send Personnel a document which was written in a style that satisfied bureaucratic requirements. As one of the managers commented:

> When personnel try to regulate us they operate by rigid rules which means we sometimes have to make a reassessment of the way we function and try to describe it in a clear way that is quite different from the way we think about it ourselves. This is particularly true of job descriptions.

He continued by refering to particular difficulties encountered in the grading of Liz's job.

> I was having difficulty in getting Personnel to accept the grading. I'd put on Liz's job description. Then someone told me unofficially that Personnel scaled jobs according to the number of people supervised. Of course, it's all hands to the wheel here... so we never really think of. hierarchy as such. In effect we all know that Liz is officially in charge of the whole department when I'm not here. So I rewrote the job description saying Liz was in charge of the department and it was immediately cleared by personnel.

By employing these legitimising myths, the specialists found that resources were not as difficult to secure immediately following the Spooner Report as they had expected. As a result, they came to view the bureaucratic claims that resources would be monitored more closely as toothless threats, reinforcing their beliefs in the incompetence of the bureaucracy. In doing so, they came to see the Spooner Report in the same light as earlier re-organisation

interventions. That is, incompetent management of the bureaucracy would make any changes impotent. In doing so, the specialists mythologised the host organisation. This had the unintended consequence of filtering out of existence information that pointed to ANIP's increasing attempts to monitor resource utilisation. Such was the mythical conceptualisation of the host organisation, mobilised in departmental interpretive schemes, that when ANIP's management structure began to change in line with efficiency targets it was not greatly noticed by the public relations specialists. This is particularly ironic because, as the official voice of the organisation, they transmitted information to their publics which their departmental ideology and myth prevented them from noticing and analysing seriously. The specialists did issue a number of press releases communicating the significance of the Spooner Recommendations to ANIP's future organisational structure and control of services. However, by reproducing the myth of ANIP as a monolithic, unchanging and incompetent bureaucracy they found it difficult to believe that the Spooner Report would have any effect. Privately, the specialists regarded the report as 'an interesting study in the use or rather the non-use of words' maintaining that the new language of cost-efficiency would soon be discarded due to the pressure and immediacy of day-to-day bureaucratic practices. The paradoxical result was that while their attempts to write official documentation in organisationally sanctioned language were by and large successful before Spooner, their failure to mobilise the new vocabulary of Spooner (as members

of the Personnel Department successfully did - see below)
meant that their ability to secure resources was beginning to
wane by the end of my study.

9.3. Managing Relations with the Bureaucracy: Personnel.

In Chapter 7, I noted that following moves in introduce
competitive tendering into ancillary grade work, the
personnel specialists became concerned that a department
primarily focusing on recruitment and selection activities
was vulnerable to being replaced by any number of private
agencies who specialised in those areas. That they were
regarded as 'the pits' led them to think that if there were
to be any experiments in the competitive tendering of
specialist employees, they were likely to be the guinea pig
department. However, as I noted, the personnel specialists
managed their response to societal and organisational changes
in such a way as to promote their department within the host
bureaucracy. Like their colleagues in the Public Relations
Department, the personnel specialists mobilised
organisationally legitmised rhetoric and myth to manage their
relations with the host bureaucracy. However, the strategies
underlying their use differed considerably. While both
groups of specialists mobilised these forms of discourse in
attempts to ensure their respective departments' survival,
the public relations specialists sought to use myth and
rhetoric to <u>conceal</u> <u>and</u> <u>defend</u> existing departmental
practices, and the personnel specialists sought to <u>promote</u>
new work practices. I now examine the content of their
rhetoric and myths.

a. Organisational Rhetoric.

The Spooner recommendation on the managerial structure and style of ANIP were seen by the personnel specialists, not only as providing a climate of change, but as providing a new organisational rhetoric. Central to this rhetoric was a vigorous concern over 'cost-efficiency' and 'accountability.' Both of these notions have been exploited by the departmental managers in their dealings with the host bureaucracy.

During my first period of (covert) research (ending some 9 months before the publication of the Spooner Report) the specialists' justification of their activities was most often couched in terms of 'helping recruiting departments through the complexities of employment legislation', 'monitoring the terms of employment' and 'handling disputes and disciplinary procedures.' The post-Spooner responses were very different. For example, having asked Beth to justify the work practices of the department she told me that

> We do recruiting better than managers. That has to be cost-effective. Obviously, if we can use our expertise to enable other departments to recruit the appropriate staff with the minimum of fuss, and enable departmental managers to get on with what they're paid for, rather than forcing them to struggle through the demands of recruitment and selection, then it has to save us all money. The department is important for us all because it's simply the cheapest way of doing it well (emphasis added).

Kiara drew upon the same rationality to describe her role at a selection interview.

> Managers ask most of the technical questions. I guess the questions I ask are based on my experience and knowledge of people in those departments being interviewed. I look for people

who will fit in well with the existing staff. You
look for different sorts of people for different
departments. The Human Job Analysis that John is
now introducing will be very helpful here. And,
the thing that holds it all together is that by
finding out who will fit best into the culture of
the existing department we can help keep start-up
costs to a minimum (emphasis added).

The use of such rhetoric was abundant, both in departmental

conversations, and, perhaps more importantly, in official

documentation.

In the same vein, the notion of accountability began to be

mobilised in departmental practices and language. In

particular, the development of new control techniques to

facilitate this is significant. The 'Effective Appraisal

Interview' (EPI) is one such technique. Here John justifies

its introduction:

It's something we've been fighting to get started.
As you know we've had a couple of dummy runs and
they've gone very well... But we were getting
resistance from higher up although none of us
really knew why. But, since we've been asking for
it to start so that departmental managers can get
together with their subordinates and pick-up where
they're not performing up to standard, we've got a
lot more support. Of course, they can also
encourage and nurture things that are going
according to plan, but EPI is essentially to locate
and weed out problem areas. It's just another way
of getting people to toe the line. You know, If
people are aware that they can't get away with
anything and that what they do will have an impact
on their career then they'll be more careful and
hopefully work harder [emphasis added].

What is interesting about the introduction of EPI is that it

met with resistance until it was couched in terms of

accountability and control. Once its symbolic presentation

was shaped to confirm and support existing organisational

ideology and rhetoric, it was welcomed with open arms by most

divisional managers as an 'important' and 'valued' addition

to the human resource technology employed by AN1P. In this light, the affixing of 'cost-efficient' and 'accountability' to existing and new services can be seen to have served as organisationally legitimised tags which were symbolically significant in changing internal and external perceptions of the department. For, as Meyer and Rowan point out (1981:540),

> Affixing the right labels to activities can change them into valuable services and mobilise the commitments of internal participants and external constituents.

Moreover, what is particularly interesting about this re-labeling exercise is that it was a conscious attempt to ensure departmental survival and expansion. Tony confirms this in the following extract.

> We've developed our techniques. We've developed staff appraisal and development. We've dropped all the rubbish and geared it up to training and development more. From a personnel point a view it's a good move because it's establishing us as a professional department. Everyone here is much happier now that our future is more secure. I don't want to be cynical but I guess the introduction of new techniques and the revamping of old ones was essentially to secure our survival. Now, of course, we don't tell that to anyone. We dress it up in terms of cost- effective techniques and managerial aids but if I'm frank that's a bit of a front...(emphasis added).

Thus, not only did the language of cost-efficiency and accountability provide symbolic camouflage for inefficiency, it inadvertently provided the context in which the latter could be promoted. For, it enabled (and obliged) highly paid specialists to develop the symbolic presentation rather than examine the content and effectiveness of occupational work practices. The irony here is that the very language that

ANIP introduces to promote these changes provides specialist groups with a symbolic 'tag' to legitimise 'inefficient' work practices which it was designed to root out.

b. The myth of professionalism.

The use of organisationally sanctioned rhetoric to re-label occupational work practices, while significant, does not alone account for the improved positioning of the personnel department within the relations in production at ANIP. What made it such an effective symbol-system for the personnel specialist was that it was enmeshed in their re-presentation of work activities in terms of the myth of professionalism. In Chapter 5, I offered my definition of myth. Following Barthes (1972), I argued that in myth the sign of the first order semiological chain is emptied to become the signifier of the myth, the second order semiological chain. In this light, the re-presentation of human resource techniques and specialist documentation to emphasize the department's professionalism can be seen to exemplify the symbolic qualities of myth. This can be demonstrated by analysing two extracts from an interview with John.

The first refers to the re-presentation of job advertisements on ANIP's notice boards. John informed me that

> We used to advertise all the ANIP jobs internally on blue sheets. But, notice boards would get so cluttered up with these sheets. So we decided to put it all together in a 'Job Shop.' You've seen them around, I'm sure. We divested ourselves of the old blue sheets and used the new departmental logo on good quality paper. We kept all the orange lettering [the new colour for all departmental documentation] so that people will see it and associate it with the 'Job Shop' and our

<u>professional</u> identity as a department. We again want people to see our department is full of <u>professional</u>, trustworthy people (emphasis added).

If we analyse this extract we can see that in the first order semiological system the the collection of job advertisements stapled together and affixed to various notice boards in administrative and service centres is the signifier, the jobs advertised, the signified. Together, the signified and the signifier make the sign - the 'Job Shop.' However, there is a second order semiological system at work here too. For, not only do the personnel specialists want to communicate the denotive message (vacant jobs), but they are more concerned to use the 'Job Shop' as a vehicle to establish the professionalism of the department amongst colleagues from other administrative and service departments. At this level of analysis the sign (the' Job Shop') becomes the signifier for that which is now to be signified (the professionalism of the department). And, at this level of discourse, the sign (now the new signifier) and the signified work together as myth.

The second extract clearly reveals that such mythologising (albeit not understood in these terms) was the clear intent of the specialist. Here John is justifying the introduction of folders to improve the presentation of prerequisite material for interviewers.

> We had these folders made for the interview panel. They are <u>professionally</u> designed. Then all the documentation: the job description, application forms etc. was placed in them. <u>We</u> <u>don't</u> <u>give</u> <u>them</u> <u>anything</u> <u>different</u> <u>in</u> <u>terms</u> <u>of</u> <u>information.</u> <u>But,</u> <u>it's</u> <u>just</u> <u>presented</u> <u>in</u> <u>a</u> <u>more</u> <u>professional</u> <u>way.</u> I want other managers to feel they can come to us and get good <u>professional</u> advice. I want them to feel they get a good service from a <u>professional</u> department and come back to us for advice (emphasis

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added).

John makes it abundantly clear that the rationale for
introducing the folders was not primarily to provide
interviewers with a material aid, but to symbolically
establish and promote the department's professionalism.

Why is the Personnel Department's mythologising of
professionalism so effective? The answer lies in the nature
of myth itself; in what it is not and what it is. Firstly,
as I have argued, myth is not a first order semiological
system. If it were, then the personnel specialists' strategy
to secure scarce material and symbolic resources through
mobilising the ideology of professionalism would most likely
have failed. Why is this so? Because first order
semiological systems remain rooted in history. So, had the
specialist simply adopted a strategy of merely informing
non-departmental colleagues that they were becoming a
'professional' department, such colleagues could (and would)
compare this new information with their historical
stocks-of-knowledge which define Personnel as a 'poor
department.' And, with the weight of history against them,
the personnel specialist claims would most likely have been
dismissed.

However, the power and quality of myth is that it

> does not deny things, on the contrary, its function
> is to talk about them; simply, it purifies them, it
> makes them innocent, it gives them a natural and
> external justification, it gives them a clarity
> which is not of an explanation but that of a
> statement of fact... it gives them the simplicity
> of essence, it does away with all dialectics, with
> any going back beyond what is immediately visible,
> it organises a world which is without
> contradictions because it is without depth, a world
> wide open and wallowing in the evident, it

> establishes a blissful clarity...(Barthes 1972:
> 143, emphasis added).

Myth, then, is a powerful symbolic form because it 'wallows in the evident', in the present, and allows no 'going back [in time] beyond what is immediately visible'. As a result, when the personnel specialists' myth of professionalism is presented to organisational colleagues, it presents only 'time present' (Eliot, 1963); not 'time present' (e.g. departmental claims of professionalism) juxtaposed with 'time past' (a poor department). In so doing, myth 'buttonholes' the receiver into the present and de-historicises the past in such a way that the receiver is left with no comparison. To him or her, the Personnel Department is a professional department because that is how it appears.

Following Armstrong (1985, 1986), this analysis suggests that it is those groups of specialists more adept at mobilising symbolic and material resources to legitimise their work practices (by claiming that they offer solutions to specific organisational problems) that are most likely to to be able to advance their interests. As a result, organisational culture, as I have maintained throughout this thesis, cannot be regarded as a 'given' but as the negotiated outcome of the political processes of cultural reproduction. The rise of the Personnel Department, therefore, may be seen to be related to their increasing ability to justify specialists activities in terms of the organisational culture.

9.4. Some Unintended Consequences of the Specialists' Strategies to Secure their Livelihoods.

In the above accounts, I have illustrated some of the

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political processes of cultural reproduction. In particular, I have shown how, in response to Government attempts to improve the efficiency of ANIP, new managerial structures were designed and implemented. With the introduction of the new managerial structures came a new emphasis on cost-efficiency and accountability. This placed the administrative specialists in a somewhat ambiguous situation. On the one hand, they welcomed the changes because the new career structure offered them increased access (for some senior managers) to decision making forums, and through these, the possibility of redressing the balance of power with regards to service professionals. On the other hand, they recognised that many of the criticisms aimed at ANIP concerned the incompetence of its administration (c.f., Filby and McHugh, 1989); the emphasis on cost-efficiency and accountability might prove to be a double-edged sword, bringing with them a closer policing of the administrative activities and finances as well as those of the service professional. This recognition has led departmental managers to attempt to improve the image of their departments within the host organisation, hence the demand for promotional services that the public relations specialists received from other departmental managers following the implementation of the Spooner recommendations. As a result, the specialists sought to mobilise what control they had over scarce symbolic and material resources to convince other members of the bureaucracy that their work activities were being carried out legitimately. This provides a good example of Giddens' notion of the 'dialectic of control,' for it shows that power

relations do not work only in one direction. Rather, in response to the Government's attempts to increase their effective control over the running of ANIP, occupational specialists mobilise what control they have over scarce symbolic and material resources to secure sectional interests. This has led to some unintended consequences for both the individual specialists and the host organisation.

With regard to the existential processes of cultural reproduction, the actions of the specialists have ignored the subjectivities of those who work within other units by denying that organisational interaction must necessarily take place between interdependent self-conscious subjects. For example, the personnel specialists introduced new human resource techniques as a means of improving their positioning within the host bureaucracy; techniques that, while symbolically successful, were of dubious value. Even the personnel specialist doubted their credibility. As John told me

> The techniques are not fool proof. In fact I'm sure Bev has told you she thinks they're a waste of time. But as I've explained to her, such things get us noticed. Its a bit like missionaries giving plastic combs to the natives to make them friendly. We offer nice little techniques to the managers to win their approval (emphasis added).

By treating other organisational actors in the same way that they treated objects, that is, as 'things' to be worked upon and manipulated, where necessary, to realise their interests, the personnel specialists ignore or deny the fact that other organisational actors are people too. By attempting to promote the status of their department within the host

organisation, and by reinforcing their experience as
independent subjectivities, the personnel specialists filter
out of existence the fact that the successful accomplishment
of their work activities is necessarily dependent upon
relationships of interdependence with other organisational
actors. As Roberts (1984: 300-301) observes,

> ...individualistic action, building as it does upon
> the assumption of the essential independence of
> self and other, is increasingly inappropriate to
> the reality of the complex interdependence of
> action which is organisation... It is
> individualism that turns organisational life into a
> series of vicious circles of control and resistance
> between individuals and groups and, thereby,
> increasingly diverts energy, resources and
> attention away from the realisation of the
> productive potential of organised relationships
> (emphasis added).

This suggests that the existential processes of cultural
reproduction have important, albeit unintended, consequences
for political and material processes. In attempting to
demonstrate the 'cost-efficiency' of their services, the
specialists as ANIP use valuable resources to symbolically
manage departmental images. Ironically, the 'wasting' of
limited budgetary resources in these promotional activities
may cumulatively result in the very redundancies that they
are seeking to prevent, although, of course, not necessarily
within their own departments. Furthermore, by effectively
denying their interdependence with colleagues from other
departments (by treating them as 'things' rather than as
people), the specialists filter out of existence the fact
that their ability to exploit the opportunities afforded them
by the Spooner Report (to redress their unfavourable position
with regards to the service professionals) is dependent on

the degree to which they collaborate together. The result of
this has been that while the service professionals still
mobilised a coherent ideology (see Chapter 7, above), the
ideology of the administrative practitioners became
fragmented as specialists competed against one another to
secure dominant positions within the newly formed
administrative structures. One consequence of this
ideological fragmentation has been that the service
professionals, mobilising a coherent ideology, have been able
to strongly resist administrative attempts to sanction their
use of scarce resources by infusing their sectional ideology
into public discourse (see Filby and McNulty, 1988 for an
example of this in the National Health Service). What this
suggests is that the very strategies employed by individual
administrative groups to defend, secure and advance their
positioning within the relations in production may,
cumulatively be the very reason why the administrators, as a
group, have failed to fully exploit the opportunities offered
them by Spooner for collective advancement.

CHAPTER TEN: TOWARDS EMANCIPATION.

10.1. Introduction.

In my examination of the existential processes of cultural reproduction (see Chapter 5, above), I noted that it is primarily through the routinisation of work activities, monitored at the level of practical consciousness, that actors are able to realise a degree of ontological security. As long as such routines can be reproduced over time, organisational actors are able to unproblematically secure valued work identities. However, should these routines be disrupted, work activities once again come under the reflective gaze of consciousness (discursive consciousness) as organisational actors attempt to reconstruct either their work identities or the circumstances which led to the disruption of work routines (or both) in order to re-secure a minimally acceptable degree of ontological security. This raising of consciousness, I argued, is a prerequisite for the development of an emancipatory praxis.

By 'emancipatory praxis', I mean the development of a liberating pedagogy (Friere, 1972:25) which

> makes oppression and its causes objects of
> reflection by the oppressed, and from that
> reflection will come their necessary engagement in
> the struggle for their liberation. And in the
> struggle this pedagogy will be made and remade.

Following Friere (ibid:25), I contend that it is only as actors 'discover themselves to be 'hosts' of the oppressor' that they

can they contribute to the midwifery of their liberating pedagogy. As long as they live in the duality where to be is to be like, and to be like is to be like the oppressor, this contribution is impossible. The pedagogy of the oppressed is an instrument for their critical discovery that they and their oppressors are manifestations of dehumanisation.

In this way, emancipation must involve a critical appreciation of how we construct valued work identities within asymmetrical relations of power. For, the more we attempt to secure valued work identities by becoming relatively more powerful (that is, by becoming the oppressor), giving us a feeling of independence, the more emancipation eludes us. This is because, the development of an emancipatory praxis can only be realised when we acknowledge our interdependence on one another. The development of an emancipatory praxis involves existential, political and material processes.

This chapter is divided into two parts. In the first part, I draw upon examples from my research to illustrate situations in which actors' consciousness was raised. Then, in the second part, I explore some reasons as to why this heightening of consciousness rarely resulted in the development of an emancipatory praxis.

10.2. The Heightening of Consciousness.

During my empirical research, I observed a number of events which offered actors the possibility of reflecting more deeply upon the work routines through which they constructed their valued work identities. In this section I reflect upon following: (i) my presence as a researcher within the

department, (ii) the presence of mavericks, (iii) forms of humour, and (iv) crisis.

a. My Presence as a Researcher within the Departments.

During my periods of research, I was continually asking the specialists to account for their work activities (see Chapter 6, above). These included questions concerning the details of their work: 'why did you do that?', 'Why did you do it in that particular way?', 'has it always been done that way?', 'when was that way of doing things started?', 'who started it?', etc. In addition, I also asked question concerned the specialists' emotional response to various work activities: 'how does that make you feel?', 'what makes you unhappy about your job?', 'why don't you get on with (name)?', etc. Generally, as Giddens (1984: 6) observes, actors 'will not ordinarily ask another person why he or she engages in an activity which is conventional for the group or culture of which that individual is a member.' This suggests that much of their activity is monitored at the level of practical consciousness. However, by asking questions that actors neither normally asked nor thought of asking themselves, I was able to get the specialists to reflect upon work practices which they routinely took for granted.

The specialists were normally able to explain their activities by reference to their professional ideologies (see Chapter 8, above), thus making them explicit. For example, when I asked Liz to explain the rationale behind the elaborate coding of press releases (see Chapter 8, above),

she responded, maintaining that a well written press release 'increases our ability to get the right information in print and in the hands of our target groups.' In doing so, she drew upon (and reconstituted) the informational ideology of public relations. Occasionally, however, the specialists would reflect more deeply on their relationship to their work. For example, during my research into public relations, Mary was involved in writing a number of information booklets to inform ANIP's publics of the various services offered by different service centres. Having been asked to read through the copy of one of these booklets, I noticed that the copy was poorly written. I asked her why this was the case. She replied,

> Well, that's all they're getting. I have certain
> demands on my time. They have messed me around so
> I just can't be bothered with them. I refuse to
> bend over backwards on jobs if other people will
> not meet me half way. If the people at Ambrose
> Walk [the street on which this service centre was
> situated] can't be bothered to do their stuff, I
> can't be bothered to put in loads of extra work to
> make up for their failings. So the copy is not
> very good. Tough shit! That's all they're getting
> (emphasis added).

This answer appeared to contradict the professional ideology of the ex-journalists that Mary generally affirmed in her discourse. I asked her to explain this apparent contradiction. She immediately replied, saying

> Oh, Ivan, you shouldn't believe all that stuff we
> tell you about journalism... I suppose we talk
> about our past a lot because it gives us a sense of
> belonging. But, public relations is about
> sweet-talking: knowing how to be awfully nice to
> people whilst telling them to get lost. A friend of
> mine described successful P.R. to have been
> accomplished when your client doesn't realise he's
> been stabbed in the back until he turns around.
> That's not the official view of course, but I guess

it's more accurate (emphasis added).

By seeing public relations in this light, Mary had the opportunity to reflect upon her subscription to the informational ideology she deployed and reproduced in departmental discourse. Certainly, she realises that the mobilisation of journalistic interpretative schemes is important for identity ('it gives us a sense of belonging'). However, in this extract, Mary argues that public relations can be more 'accurate(ly)' defined in terms of the promotional ideology mobilised by the non-journalists ('public relations is about sweet-talking') than the informational ideology she publically subscribed to. Had Mary exploited the opportunity that this 'insight' afforded her, she may have realised that the two ideologies of public relations were not mutually exclusive. This offered her the opportunity to reflect upon how the specialists subscribing to the promotional and informational ideologies might have been able to support, rather than undermine, each other's work activities, thus expanding the skills offered offered by the department. Moreover, by legitimising the skills of the non-journalists, departmental members could have pursued a strategy of promoting the image of the department to the bureaucracy, rather than one of concealment and defence. However, it seemed significant that the following day Mary (un-prompted) modified her statement.

> I've thought quite a lot about some of the things I said about P.R. being about sweet talking. I think I over reacted to your question: I was having a bad day, and I was fed up with writing that damn Ambrose Road booklet. Anyway, I didn't really mean what I said. P.R. really is about getting the right information across. I'm sorry, I don't know why I said all those things about "sweet-talking" and "back-stabbing." I hope I didn't mislead you. I

<u>was</u> <u>just</u> <u>having</u> <u>a</u> <u>pissy</u> <u>day</u> (emphasis added).

In doing so, she failed to exploit the opportunity that the disruption of practical consciousness by the unconscious threat to her identity (posed by the people at Ambrose Road) offered her. Instead, she puts her unrestrained outburst down to 'having a pissy day', and, in doing so, removing it from serious consideration. By doing so, the potential threat that this insight held to the unproblematic accomplishment of her work identity was, at least for the time being, removed. Mary's future answers to my questions were always caged in the 'official' ideology of the information specialists, and her identity was once again reconstituted through immersion in taken-for-granted work routines.

b. Mavericks.

The presence of a maverick within a work culture also offers other specialists the opportunity to reflect upon the work practices through which they routinely secure their identities. By 'maverick', I mean a person who contravenes normative behaviour in the process of accomplishing his or her work. By demonstrating that work can be accomplished in ways other than those prescribed by work ideologies, the maverick potentially offers his or her colleagues the opportunity to reflect upon the reasons which lie behind their particular methods of working. Although there were no 'excellent' examples of this within my research, Barry (Baz), one of the juniors within the Personnel Department, exhibited some maverick qualities. Since joining the department, he has broken a number of established office codes. For

example, he broke down the barriers between work and leisure. He dressed in a far more casual way than his colleagues. Whereas the other members of the office walked around the office, he hopped, jumped, or imitated John Cleese's 'Ministry of Funny Walks.' His piece de resistance was to breakdance on his desk. If asked by one of his bemused colleagues why, for example, he 'dressed as if he was on his way to a wine bar', he would respond by asking them why they wore 'suits and ties.' In an interview with Baz he maintained that his actions were driven by an underpinning philosophy of life. He lamented that

> It's a great shame the way people carry on at
> work... All they talk about is work, work,
> work... People are so much more than machines.
> Who we are is more important than what we do. It's
> like me and the way I dress. I think the others
> [in the department] all see me as just a joker,
> and, of course, in may ways they're right. But, I
> have thought a lot about the way our work cuts into
> our private lives... A husband rings home because
> he has to work late; a family fits their lives
> around going to and coming home from work. So, I
> think I'm trying to make a small statement that we
> should't get work out of proportion. Work is
> great: sometimes it's good, sometimes its bad, and
> it pays the bills. But, our lives are more than
> just nine to five. So, why do we keep talking
> about work to our friends between six and twelve?
> I guess the others probably tell you I'm full of
> shit. Perhaps they're right. But, I'm just trying
> to say that maybe more important things, like what
> we do in our leisure time, should impinge on our
> work rather than just the other way around.

His actions, however, were viewed by his colleagues as an expression of his self-indulgence rather than as having any deeper philosophical foundations. So while his actions (and comments) offered his colleagues the opportunity to reflect upon why they acted (or, in this case, dressed) as they did, because he was normalised as the office comedian his comments

were never taken seriously and, therefore, never critically reflected upon.

c. Humour.

So far in this thesis I have discussed humour on a number of occasions (see Chapters 4, 5 and 9, below). In doing so, I have noted that humour, like other forms of discourse, is a social process through which meanings are communicated, power relations are negotiated and sanctions are applied. In this section, I expand upon this treatment of humour by discussing and illustrating the potential of humour to demystify social relations. In this way, humour can offer organisational actors opportunities to critically reflect upon the routine work practices through which they secure a valued sense of identity.

In rejecting functionalist theorising of humour, I have focussed upon the role of humour in the ideological production and/or appropriation of symbol-systems through which actors construct, defend or resist an intersubjectively meaningful world through the mobilisation of relations of power (see Chapter 8 and 9, above). As I suggested in my examination of the ex-journalists' attitudes to bureaucracy (see Chapter 9, above), humour, bearing the semantic qualities of myth and metaphor, can be mobilised to protect actors' preconceptions from critical reflection. However, unlike other forms of discourse, humour also undermines myth and demystifies social relations. This is particularly true of forms of humour in which existing social relationships are

first mirrored and then overturned within its boundaries. A form of control is juxtaposed with that which is controlled in such a way that the controlled is seen to triumph, albeit symbolically (Douglas, 1968). In this way, humour can provide an opportunity for actors to reflect upon particular ways in which structure is implicated and reproduced in existing social relations. It can push the taken-for-granted into the area of the problematic. It can immediately open up and stimulate the reflective thinking prerequisite for the development of an emancipatory praxis.

This can be illustrated by reference to an incident that took place within the Public Relations Department during a particularly concerted campaign by the Senior Public Relations Manager to reinforce the need to check copy before it was 'put to bed.' Such was the vigour of this campaign that many of the other specialists regarded it as a slur on their professional competence and it was decided that the Senior Manager needed 'bringing down from his high horse.' Accordingly, the following practical joke was 'pulled' on the senior manager.

As a means of informing both service and administrative professionals across the Division of the wide range of public relations facilities that the department offered, the Senior Public Relations Manager decided to write and publish an introductory booklet on the department's activities. After several months planning, writing and editing, the booklet was sent off to a local firm for printing. An inspection copy of the booklet was intercepted by the secretaries on its route

from the printers to the Senior Public Relations Manager. With the use of correction fluid and various lettering stencils, the secretaries carefully altered the date of publication from 'May 1984' to 'May 1884.' The document was then re-inserted in its envelope and placed on the Senior Manager's desk. The senior manager proof-read the specimen copy but failed to notice the falsified date. He telephoned the printers and told them to begin the printing of the first batch of booklets. Some ten minutes later he came out from his side office and proudly showed his colleagues the booklet. One of the officers (who was party to the practical joke) had a quick browse through the booklet, 'spotted' the incorrect date, and informed the senior manager. After a few expletives, the senior manager rushed towards his office explaining that he had to cancel the print-run before it was too late. Just before he reached his door, the office staff burst out into laughter and explained the joke to the senior manager. However, such was his attachment to the project, that rather than enjoying the joke, the senior manager became sulky and withdrawn. A couple of hours later, however, he appeared to 'share' in the joke, but, other departmental members regarded this simply as falling-in-line so as to save face.

This particular incident provides a good example of the way in which humour potentially offers the opportunity for reflective thinking prerequisite for the development of an emancipatory praxis. This practical joke offered the Senior Public Relations Manager the opportunity to reflect upon the

degree of importance he had attached to this particular project: his 'baby' and his (hypocritical) failure to exemplify his own copy-checking ideals. However, rather than perceiving how he was constructing his identity through immersion in work routines (in this case the writing of an information booklet), and how the reconstitution of identity as such continually left him open to anxiety should these routines be disrupted (as in the joke), the senior manager was merely relieved that it was 'only a joke', and returned to his work.

d. Crisis.

In my examination of 'culture as a psychic prison' (see Chapter 4, above), I referred to the work of Walter (1983), who argued that crisis provides an opportunity for the critical reflection needed to stimulate the development of an emancipatory praxis. A good example of the effects of crisis on stimulating critical reflection is provided by the personnel specialist's attempts to secure an unproblematic sense of self and identity following recent Government policy changes.

Like the public relations specialists (see Chapter 8, above), members of the Personnel Department found it difficult to construct valued work identities following the initial 'squeeze' brought on by Government changes. As John informed me,

> When I took over, I had no idea of how bad things were. Everyone was so self-conscious about being called "the pits" that they almost overdid it. Everything they were doing took a considerable time

because people were trying not to make mistakes. But of course, by double checking everything, a backlog of work built up and other people then used this to confirm their notion that we were "the pits." This, of course, made everyone even more nervous. Looking back on it now, it seems crazy, but people were really getting worked up. One of the girls, for example, confided in me that she was so worried that the department would be shut that she came into work each morning with "knots in her stomach."

These comments are quite revealing. Firstly, the account suggests that the specialists were routinely unable to reconstitute valued work identities (at the level of practical consciousness) by immersing themselves in work routines. For example, John's recollection that everyone was 'so self-conscious' about their work that they 'double checked' their work in an attempt to avoid mistakes, suggests that work activities were conducted at the level of discursive rather than practical consciousness. The extract also suggests that by being unable to construct valued work identities through immersion in work routines, the specialists were unable to enforce an effective closure on the precariousness of world openness brought about by the threat, or more accurately, the fear of the threat, to their livelihoods that Government policy changes were thought to have brought. The result of this was that they were no longer able to hold at bay unconscious anxieties normally barred from consciousness through immersion in work routines. This was experienced as having 'knots in her stomach' by one of the staff members.

Certainly, it is not surprising that the personnel specialists found it difficult to secure a 'solid' sense of identity. With the reduction in union activity, and high

levels of unemployment in Britain, personnel issues were no longer regarded as being particularly important within other departments in the South-East Division. There was a ready supply of labour available in most specialities. This made it more difficult for the personnel specialists to sustain their claim that they were better at recruiting than managers. For as a manager from a different speciality told me,

> with unemployment as it is, any Tom, Dick or Harry could select new staff. I think in times of full employment people are more fussy about the jobs they accept, but now people just want to work and will more or less fit in wherever they can. Selection really isn't a problem anymore, despite what the folk up at the Tower might tell you. It's more a matter of saying "Right, we'll give you, you and you a trial for a couple of months and see how you get on," and if they don't perform we'll try a few more out. (emphasis added)

The problem for the personnel specialists was that in the situation of high unemployment they found it difficult to make recruitment and selection sufficiently grave a problem to convince significant others in the bureaucracy that it warranted the attention of internal personnel professionals. Recognising this, John assumed that unless the department could provide specialist techniques that were seen to be beneficial to other managers, their days might well be numbered.

This crisis situation offered the personnel specialists the opportunity to examine their work activities at the level of discursive consciousness, and to reflect critically upon their existential commitment to personnel work practices, through which they previously had been able to construct an

unproblematic sense of self. However, they do not appear to have seized this opportunity. They do not seem to have realised that the securing of identity through immersion in work routines left them vulnerable to anxiety should those routines be disrupted. Rather, by suggesting that career development might be more problematic for administrators, following changes brought in as a result of Spooner's recommendations, than under the old administrative structure, the personnel specialists were able to gain monopoly control over what were now regarded as valuable human resource techniques. And, by offering these new services, the personnel specialists began to prosper in the organisational hierarchy (c.f., Armstrong, 1985, 1986). By doing so, the specialists came to believe that the department's future had been secured. One consequence of this was that it became much easier for the specialists to construct valued work identities. For now the threat of closure was over, the specialists began to reflect less and less on the services they provided and, once again, were able, once again, to re-secure their identity through an existential commitment to the very work routines (recruitment and selection) whose previous disruption had left them open to the precariousness of world openness.

This observation raises a number of issues. Firstly, in contrast to Giddens, who maintains that ontological security can only be realised as actors immerse themselves in routines in order to hold at bay anxieties that come from their existential condition of world openness, it implies that no

lasting experience of ontological security can be gained

through such means. As Willmott (1985:26) has argued

> The existential condition of world openness
> engenders the experience of anxiety as both self
> and the social grounds of its constitution are
> experienced to be problematic. Faced with the
> precariousness of identity implicit in the
> unpredictability of social relations, individuals
> are constrained to maintain or construct a 'nomos'
> that offers a degree of protection from such
> uncertainty. Although the effort to attain a
> closure upon the precariousness of meaning is
> motivated by a concern to remove the presence or
> threat of anxiety, it simply places individuals in
> the competitive struggle over the symbolic and
> material resources that are seen to sustain an
> unproblematic sense of self. In reality, an
> unintended consequence of such efforts is an
> evasion rather than an avoidance of the
> precariousness of meaning. Life then becomes
> dominated by a self-defeating preoccupation with
> effecting social closure upon world-openness
> through the control of nature, self and social
> relations.

Restating this, Willmott seems to be suggesting that attempts

to secure a 'solid' identity within asymmetical relations of

power are necessarily self-defeating. This being the case,

emancipation cannot be fully accomplished through immersion

in routines, or through attempts to secure control over

valued material and symbolic resources in order to defend a

valued 'sense' of self. For such a 'solid' sense of self

precariously rests on the maintenance of routine, and should

such routines be challenged, the reconstitution of

established identities can become problematic. If

emancipation is not gained through immersion in routines, how

then can it be experienced? Again Willmott (1986) is

helpful. Following Laing, he maintains that a reliable

source of ontological security is only to be found as actors

surrender their attachments to habitual practices so that

while they recognise routines and can adequately bring off organisational practices, they are not unduly worried by disruption. In this sense the continual striving to secure identity through control over symbolic and material resources is necessarily self-defeating because it can offer no lasting solution to the challenge of world openness. Rather, it is only as actors give up their attempts to 'have' a solid sense of self, and just 'be', that is, in a Zen sense, to let life flow in and through you, that lasting ontological security can be experienced.

10.3. Responses to the Heightening of Consciousness.

In the first part of this chapter, I suggested four ways in which the level of consciousness could be raised, offering organisational actors the opportunity to reflect critically upon their existential commitment to work routines, through which they secured their work identities. In this section, I explore why the raising of consciousness did not result in the development of an emancipatory praxis. In doing so, I suggest there are four possible responses to the raising of consciousness (c.f., Filby, 1989b).

a. Response No. 1: Failure to Recognise Insights which the Heightening of Consciousness Potentially Offers.

The first response to the heightening of consciousness is to fail to recognise the insight which it potentially offers. This can be illustrated by reference to the public relations specialists' strategy for managing their relationship with the host bureaucracy. As I explained in Chapter 9, the

occupational culture of the public relations specialists involved forms of myth and humour which elevated their own culture above that of the bureaucracy. The negation of the bureaucracy appeared to raise their own status and self-image, and, in doing so, protected them from the threat to their identity that their precarious positioning within a bureaucratic organisation potentially raised. Yet, by imbuing the bureaucracy with a massive, reified power, the specialists effectively denied themselves the possibility of recognising, let alone seizing, the opportunity to confront the relations of power which locked them in their departmental closet. What they sensed, but never directly confronted, was their dependence upon the bureaucracy. What they overlooked, and therefore could not exploit, was the increasing pressures on the bureaucracy to re-assert its public image. Even when the amount of press relations activity declined, the defensive strategy of the department was to use the discourse of the bureaucracy to re-assert the centrality of its press related activity. The concern to conceal from the bureaucracy the fall in contact with the press was made abundantly clear by one of the managers who, when asked by me to comment on this replied

> it's funny you should have noticed that. I don't know why that is... Of course, I would never publicly admit to it, even if it meant falsifying figures.

In large part, this response can be explained by the ex-journalists' investment in an informational ideology. This interpreted the growing demand for presentational and promotional skills as a threat, and not as an opportunity for

resisting the pressure to live out myths. Instead of directly addressing the erosion of the basis of their presence in the organisation, they sought the protection of myth, and displaced their anxiety through ridiculing the bureaucracy. Actions by members of the bureaucracy that confirmed the stereotyping were selectively highlighted and mythologised. As a result, their preconceptions were protected from critical reflection.

The irony of the situation, and this is the central point, was that by mythologising the bureaucracy, the specialists filtered out of existence information which indicated that the bureaucracy either didn't have a firm view of the public relations activities or were disinterested in monitoring their delivery. For example, in an interview with one of the managers, I asked him to reflect on the department's relationship with ANIP. Included in his reply were the comments: 'as long as we deliver the goods, its O.K.; although if we didn't, I'm not sure it would be detected - I don't know.' Had the manager reflected upon this comment he might have recognised that it suggested a loose-coupling between the department and host organisation. Moreover, this revelation potentially gave him (and the department) the possibility of, at least, some emancipation by debunking the myth of the bureaucracy's unnegotiable demands. This potential was not fulfilled. Instead, the failure of detection was simply interpreted as another confirmation of the myth of the incompetence of the bureaucracy. So, paradoxically, the very stereotypes constructed by the

specialists to interpret their position within the bureaucracy, and to maintain a degree of autonomy, tended to filter out of perception the potential for enjoying and expanding the freedom idealised in their occupational ideology. By reifying the reality of self-image and by exaggerating the oppression of the bureaucracy, the work culture of the specialists had the psychologically comforting, but also self-defeating, effect of rationalising and reproducing a trained incapacity to perceive the opportunities presented by the changing demands of the bureaucracy. As a result, a considerable amount of time was taken up in undertaking the very activities that were said to be anathema to their own occupational identity.

b. Response No. 2: 'So What?'

While much of the insight that the heightening of consciousness potentially affords is never perceived, sometimes actors do reflect more deeply on their work. Where this is the case, there are three responses available to organisational actors. The first of these is a nihilistic response of 'so what?' The argument here is that nothing really changes so why bother with the pains of emancipatory 'childbirth.' An example of this response is provided by a conversation I had with one of the female personnel specialists. Whilst interviewing her about the work practices of the department, I asked her how she felt about the fact that the two managerial positions had always been filled by men. Reflecting upon this, she replied that

> I guess it's just the way things are. It's always
> been like that. Whether we like it or not, men
> have always got the best jobs, and there's very
> little we can do about it. When senior positions
> come up, I don't bother to apply anymore. I used
> to, but men were always selected, so what's the
> point. It is better to just keep your head down
> and get on with your work.

By adopting this resigned response, the specialist filtered
out of existence the possibility that a sustained attempt to
ameliorate the relatively subordinate position of women
within the department might eventually be successful. The
personnel specialist reified the status quo, accepting the
subordination of women as 'just the way things are.'

c. Response No. 3: The Fear of Freedom.

The next possible response to the enlightenment that critical
reflection can bring is one where emancipation is seen as
desirable, but the fear of freedom (Fromm, 1942; Friere,
1972), and the cost of taking responsibility for their own
action is perceived to be so high or so risky that actors do
not attempt the development of an emancipatory praxis. An
example of this response is provided by Kari, one of the
secretaries in the Public Relations Department. Contravening
the wishes of the senior manager that only the specialists
should respond to journalists' questions, Kari informed me
that, for nearly a year, she had successfully answered press
enquiries when alone in the office at lunchtimes. She also
informed me that many of the journalist had responded
favourably to her speed and style of answering press
enquiries. In response to this confession, I asked her why
she had not approached Geoff to request some formal training

in press related skills so that she could, in time, apply for some public relations jobs. Having admitted that she had often thought of this, she expressed her concern that she might be reprimanded, or even dismissed, rather than praised if she openly confessed to answering press calls against Geoff's express wishes. From my limited knowledge of Geoff I thought that this was unlikely and told her so, whereupon she confessed that her real fear was that if she was trained in public relations and proved to be incompetent, she would have 'no dreams left to keep her going.' Expanding on this, she told me that

> I guess I've always wanted to be involved in P.R. That's why I took this job. Here I can join in the excitement of the office without having to take all the flak should things go wrong. As they say "uneasy lies the head that wears the crown." At the moment I'm just not emotionally prepared to deal with failing. I'm not saying I would fail. In fact, I'm sure I would be very good. But, you just never can tell. If I tried and it all went wrong, I'd have nothing left to look forward to. So, for the moment, at least, I'm quite happy to sit back and do the work at lunchtimes.

This seems to confirm Friere's (1972: 24) observation that

> the oppressed, who have adapted to the structure of domination in which they are immersed, and have become resigned to it, are inhibited from waging the struggle for freedom so long as they feel incapable of running the risks it requires.

So, while Kari would like to be involved in public relations, and even believes she would be good at it, the fear of taking formal responsibility for her actions prevented her from attempting to realise her 'dreams.'

d. Response No. 4: Towards Emancipation.

The final response to the heightening of consciousness is one where the insights generated from critical reflection provoke actors to re-negotiate their positioning in the social world by resisting and undermining oppressive forces. This can be illustrated by an incident that happened to me during the first period of research within the Public Relations Department. Initially, my employment within the department caused some disruption of the established activities of the secretaries. My status was rather indeterminate and this caused problems in the matter of who should do my typing: the secretaries within the office or the typists from the pool a couple of doors down the corridor. From my point of view, it was beneficial to get the departmental secretaries to handle correspondence and reports because it generally guaranteed a quicker service. This demand, however, was perceived as extra and unwelcome work by the secretaries. We all felt uncomfortable in the situation and it gradually resulted in an uneasy working relationship between us. That is, until the secretaries engineered the following piece de resistance.

In an attempt to ease our working relationship I had offered the secretaries some degree of compensation by agreeing to collect heavy supplies from the Stores to save them the administrative nightmare of booking a porter to do the job. One day Meg asked me to 'nip downstairs to Stores and get a long stand.' I obliged and left the office. Immediately,

Meg telephoned the stores manager and asked him to keep me standing around for 30-40 minutes. I arrived at the stores room and asked for 'a long stand' (which I assumed was a fixture for displaying literature). The stores manager told me it was just being delivered and to wait a few minutes for the invoice to be checked. After half an hour of being told 'it'll only be a minute' I was informed that it was not, after all, part of the consignment and it would not be in until the following day. Upon my return to the Public Relations Department to inform the secretaries of the non-arrival of the stand the entire office erupted into fits of laughter demanding to know whether I had enjoyed my 'long stand!'

By successfully pulling off the joke, the secretaries were able to strengthen their negotiating position in the typing dilemma. I felt embarrassed that I had been so gullible, and lest I should become the butt of another joke, I took my typing to the pool.

This incident, however, gave me the opportunity to reflect upon the importance of status in the construction of my work identity. I appreciated for the first time how my arrogance must have appeared to the secretaries (and to my other colleagues). In doing so, I realised that one of the consequences of this was that it gave me the illusion that my relationship with the secretaries was one of independence rather than interdependence. By successfully pulling off the joke, and depriving me of their secretarial services, I realised for the first time how dependent I was on the

services that the secretaries offered. As a result, I began to treat them as human beings with thoughts and feelings rather than merely as the providers of secretarial services. By doing so, I came to develop a mutually supportive working relationship with the secretaries. They then volunteered to type my letters and reports. I, in turn, offered to send my correspondence to the typing pool if they were particularly busy. By recognising our dependence upon one another and basing our working relationships on recognising each other's individuality, rather than seeking to enforce our rights (e.g., the right to have my letters typed by the departmental secretaries), we were able to enter into and enjoy our interdependent working relationships.

In writing this account, I have once again been made aware of how important status has become in the construction of my subjectivity. But, in having my consciousness raised once again, it has given me the opportunity to reflect critically upon my existential commitment to status, and hopefully move from a 'having' to a 'being' mode of existence (Fromm, 1979). By this, I mean moving from a situation where my status and authority (as a lecturer at a prestigious university) is regarded (by me) as an important symbolic tag ('having' mode of existence), to where I 'demonstrate [authority] by what they are [or who I am] - and not mainly by what they [or I] do or say - what human beings can be' (Fromm, ibid: 45).

10.4. Summary.

In this chapter I have shown ways in which the specialists'

level of consciousness was raised in ways which offered them
the opportunity to reflect critically upon their construction
of valued work identities in involvement in relations of
power. However, despite these numerous incidents, the
development of an emancipatory praxis was rare. Even in my
own case, I have re-discovered the importance of status in
the reconstitution of my own subjectivity. This suggests
that even where praxis is attempted, an enormous amount of
creativity and energy is needed in the period of emancipatory
midwifery (Linstead, 1984), and even then it may be aborted
or still-born.

C O N C L U S I O N S

CHAPTER ELEVEN: CONCLUSIONS.

11.1. Introduction.

Having completed the main body of the text, I now offer some
brief concluding comments. These comments are organised into
two parts. In the first part, I critically reflect upon the
contributions that the thesis has made. Then, in the light
of these comments, I offer some suggestions as to where
future research into organisational culture and symbolism
might usefully be directed.

11.2. Critical Reflections on the Contributions of this Thesis.

Throughout the thesis I have argued that a critical,
emancipatory conceptualisation of culture advances our
understanding of organisational culture and symbolism. It is
now appropriate to critically reflect upon the extent to
which the thesis supports this claim.

Following some introductory comments, the thesis began with a
lengthy review of the literature (Chapters 2-4). The purpose
of this review was to explore the strengths and limitations
of existing research on organisation culture and symbolism.
This review demonstrated that existing work is limited
because, apart from a few notable exceptions (Willis, 1977;
Burawoy, 1979; Rosen, 1985a; Knights and Willmott, 1987;
Collinson, 1988), it has been insensitive to the
interdependence of the existential, material and political
processes of cultural reproduction. The result of this has

been that research has tended to focus either on material and political processes or on existential and political processes. In consequence, while research may have partially penetrated one or two of the processes, by failing to appreciate the interdependence of all three, it either treats actors as 'cultural dopes' (Garfinkel, 1967) or decontextualises the organisation's culture from the relations of production through which it is produced and reconstituted.

Apart from laying the foundation for my theorisation of organisational culture (see Chapter 5), the literature review makes three contributions. Firstly, by comparing the strengths and limitations of typologies which differentiate the literature on organisational culture and symbolism, I have provided a clear example of how all typologies simultaneously illuminate and obscure features of the literature (cf., Silverman, 1985). Secondly, I offer a detailed examination of the how established texts on organisations have theorised culture. In doing so, I argue that culture has been of interest to organisation theorists for some fifty years. In this light, it cannot be simply explained away as a contemporary fad. Thirdly, I provide a detailed typology of organisation culture and symbolism literature. Like all typologies it has its limitations. I have already discussed some of these in Chapter 2. Others, however, I am doubtless blind to, and leave for my academic peers to surface. Despite its weaknesses, the typology provides a sound overview of the literature and, by doing so,

facilitate future research by identifying both themes which writers have explored in depth and areas which have been comparatively neglected.

In Chapter 5 I argued that the use of Giddens' theory of structuration provided one way of advancing a critical emancipatory conceptualisation of culture because it treated agency and structure as a duality. By doing so, it is not insensitive to research which seeks to explore the existential, material and political processes of cultural reproduction simultaneously. Thus, a fourth contribution which this thesis has made has been in exploring the interdependence and interpenetrations of the processes of cultural reproduction, showing how a sensitivity to all three processes advances our understanding of organisational culture and symbolism.

There are, however, drawbacks in using Giddens' theory of structuration. I have already noted two limitations of his work. Firstly, I noted that Giddens does not problematise the ontology of interests (see Chapter 5). Secondly, I argued that his assertion that ontological security can only be realised as actors immerse themselves in routines to hold at bay anxieties which come from their existential condition of world openness is misguided (see Chapter 10, below). This is because ontological security attained through immersion in routines precariously rests on the maintenance of those routines.

In addition to these two limitations, I suggest that the most

significant problem of using Giddens' theory of structuration to guide empirical research is its complexity. As I noted in Chapter 4, critical studies on organisational culture have been comparatively neglected, partly because they are difficult. I have found this to be the case. So, while the strength of Giddens' work is that it enables the existential, material and political processes of cultural reproduction to be penetrated, its limitation is that its very analytic complexity makes it difficult to employ in empirical research.

The remainder of the thesis employs Giddens' theory of structuration to examine the work cultures of the public relations and personnel specialists. The strength of this ethnography is that it clearly demonstrates the interdependence and interpenetrations of the processes of cultural reproduction. By doing so, the thesis makes its fifth contribution by suggesting that culture is not necessarily a unified phenomenon, nor is it easily manipulated or changed by relatively powerful organisational actors. Rather, what the ethnography suggests is that attempts by organisational actors to change culture often have unintended (and sometimes self-defeating) consequences. For example, in Chapter 9 I suggested that the rhetoric of 'accountability' and 'cost efficiency' introduced into ANIP to increase efficiency was appropriated by the personnel specialists as a symbolic tag to legitimise what otherwise might have been regarded as inefficient work practices.

Finally, the sixth contribution of the thesis is that it

identifies everyday situations in which our consciousness is raised (see Chapter 10). In doing so, I suggest that it is possible to utilise the insight which the heightening of consciousness brings to develop an emancipatory praxis, through which we can begin to realise more of our ontological potential for enjoying free, interdependent social relations. I have not suggested that this is an easy route to take, only that the destination makes it worthwhile.

11.3. Future Research.

1. In writing this thesis I have concentrated on organisational culture and symbolism. However, the thesis has touched upon other important issues which I have not developed. For example, the thesis has offered insights into specialist work ideologies and bureaucratic organisations. In neither case have I attempted to integrate these into existing theories of professionalism or bureaucracy. Both of these area could usefully be explored more formally.

2. One of the underdeveloped areas of research which the thesis touches upon is the labour process of the state welfare sector. To date, theories of the labour process of the state welfare sector have tended to emphasize what it is not (e.g., state welfare workers do not create surplus value) rather than explore the unique relations of production which the state welfare sector brings into being.

3. Following on from No. 2, further exploration could usefully be conducted into the consequences of the ongoing change in the public sector for administrative and service

professionals in the state welfare sector. I am very aware that in my ethnography 1 have only studied administrative departments. The analysis could be enriched by offering a comparative study on how service specialists have sought to define, defend and mediate their sectional interests in times of change.

4. In my study of organisational culture and symbolism I have focused specifically upon ideology, myth and humour. However, my ethnography has touched upon other components of culture which I have not developed. In particular, my discussion of the history of ANIP (see Chapter 7) raises the question of whose history I have written. As I have suggested elsewhere (Filby and McHugh, 1989), organisational histories are not value neutral. Rather they are partisan, often reflecting the interests of those who are able to generate particular historical accounts of the organisation's development. The problem for the researcher is therefore not only in the demands of writing historical accounts, but also in knowing whose history one has written. The study of organisational history as ideology, therefore, is an areas which could usefully benefit from future investigation and reflection.

5. Finally, I hope this thesis will encourage further critical studies of organisation culture. In particular, I would be interested to see how other researchers handle the theoretical complexities necessary to penetrate the processes of cultural reproduction.

NOTES.

CHAPTER ONE.

1. To say that both camps may be 'satisfied' is not to imply,
however, that there is necessarily any agreement between
academics and practitioners on how to theorise or employ the
notion of culture in organisational settings. In fact, some
academics have been concerned to discredit the practitioners'
approach to the topic. For example, Ott (1984) makes a
qualitative distinction between the 'pop culture magicians',
who seek to appropriate the notion of culture and offer their
clients the possibility of overcoming an array of
organisational problems through a magical change in their
culture, and the 'honest grapplers' of academia who genuinely
seek to increase the level of understanding in the cultural
dimension of organisations, albeit from a wide range of
perspectives. In addition, Turner (1986:104), adopting Ott's
terminology, criticises the magicians for their 'little
knowledge of the implications of the terms which they use'
and for 'sell[ing] the belief that corporate culture can be
controlled, changed and manipulated from the top down in ways
to meet the managerial needs for cost effectiveness and
productivity gains'; an erroneous belief in Turner's eyes.

2. In light of the strong Giddensian element within this
thesis, it is worthwhile to comment briefly on why I have
adopted the Habermasian concept of cognitive interests as the
basis of my typology in favour of the framework Giddens
himself develops. Giddens distinguishes between (i)
functionalism and structuralism, which both tend to theorise
structure as prior to action and are inclined towards
objectivism, (ii) the various forms of interpretative
sociology where action and meaning rather than structure are
given primacy, and (iii) structuration theory which focuses
neither upon the existence of structures nor upon the
experience of individual actors, but rather upon how social
practices are ordered across time and space. In doing so, he
treats action and structure as a duality rather than as a
dualism. This framework is potentially useful for this
thesis bearing in mind that a key feature of this project is
the empirical implementation of a basically Giddensian notion
of structuration as a means to uncovering the existential,
material and political processes involved in the institution
and reproduction of the work cultures of two specialist
departments within a state bureaucracy. In this sense it
potentially provides a neat fit between the theoretical and
empirical sections of the thesis. Despite this, it is still
my opinion that for the purposes of this thesis Habermas
offers a more insightful framework for the following reason.
Like the typologies that seek to segment the organisational
culture literature according to competing definitions of
culture found within the anthropological literature, and
those which seek to distinguish according to distinct
meta-theoretical assumptions, the Giddensian typology is
useful in identifying the ideas, or assumptions, which divide
the numerous conceptualisations of culture. What they all
fail to do, however, and what Habermas succeeds in doing, is

to offer a theory of knowledge that is able to identify the interests which guide the production of these competing ideas. The power of such a theory in uncovering the connections between interests and ideas is that it offers the possibility to better understand why particular intellectual traditions emerge and gain support. In light of the above discussion on the comparative underdevelopment of critical, emancipatory conceptualisations of organisational culture, such a facility is particularly valuable. Further, given the desire within this thesis to encourage reflexive thinking on the a-priori values and beliefs that underlie and guide research, the Habermas typology again provides a more appropriate framework.

3. ANIP is a pseudonym. The thesis contains other non-relevant misinformation to conceal the identity of the organisation and its members.

CHAPTER TWO.

1. Smircich also recognises meta-theoretical underpinnings of research. However, in her typology she develops the notion of root anthropological metaphors more fully than her appreciation of meta-theory. As a result, I have located her within this category to explore the similarities her work shares with Allaire and Firsirotu.

2. As I have suggested before, this is common to most typologies. However, the commonality of this problem does not make it any less resolvable.

CHAPTER THREE.

1. Despite the many criticisms of 'Management And The Worker' that have been raised since its publication, which argue, for example, that the research ignores the role of conflict in organisations, is managerially biased, ignores the role of unions, is unscientific in its approach to research, and misinterprets the results (Landsberger, 1958; Carey, 1967; Rose, 1975), most theorists would agree that the contributions they have made to the theoretical development of management is beyond dispute (cf., Perrow, 1972; Burrell and Morgan, 1979). Indeed, as Perrow (1972:95) notes

> That... [their] findings should be labeled "discoveries" indicated how little members of management and industrial psychologists - and indeed, industrial sociologists in general, if there were any at that time - knew about actual organisations.

Thus, while their conclusions have been seriously questioned, they have nonetheless made significant contributions to both the study of organisations in general, and, more importantly for present purposes, to the study of cultures in organisation.

2. It is worthwhile noting that in terms of Habermas' theory of cognitive interests Roethlisberger and Dickson provide an excellent example of the intertwining of cognitive interests in the research process. For, although the authors' concern to reveal how informal organisations can be manipulated to improve efficiency can be seen to be guided by technical interests, their methodology, which seeks to uncover the meanings actors attribute to various organisational symbols, expresses a practical intent. As such, 'Management and the Worker' provides an example of how practical knowledge is used to source technical prescriptions.

3. In discussing organisational culture, Ouchi (1981) makes passing reference to contributions made by Barnard, Roethlisberger and Dickson, Burns and Stalker. By examining the way he treats these ideas it is possible to weave together the central concerns of theorists approaching organisational culture with a technical interest in the manipulation of the culture for a number of different ends. Underlying Ouchi's work is a technical interest in the motivation of workers with the aim of increasing productivity in American business organisations. In examining the issues of productivity, he studied Japanese enterprises in both Japan and North America (Johnson and Ouchi, 1974) and soon began to run across American firms in the United States that had adopted an enlightened 'Z' type style of management in which employee involvement and reciprocity are emphasized. The problem of low productivity in the United States, Ouchi maintains, will be neither solved by monetary policy or through increased investment in research and development, but, rather will be remedied by strengthening organisational culture - that is, the

> set of symbols, ceremonies, and myths that
> communicate the underlying values and beliefs of
> that organisation and its employees (Ibid:42),

4. Ouchi pursues this analysis by distinguishing between three fundamental social mechanisms through which interaction between individuals is controlled, and compares type Z firms with clans, as distinct from markets or bureaucracies. The clan is seen to foster close interchange between work and the community and enables employees to experience a higher degree of personal autonomy and realize human potential. From this, he argues that the key to increasing performance is to create new organisational structures, incentives and philosophies and so move the enterprises' culture more towards a clan or type Z organisation. However, while singing the praises of clans here in increasing performance, he modifies this proposition elsewhere (Wilkins and Ouchi, 1983) and suggests that clans are only have sufficient performance efficiencies under conditions of uncertainty and change. Indeed, Wilkins and Ouchi (1983:477) go so far as to state that

> clan forms of control will be less efficient than
> competing bureaucratic or market forms in governing
> transactions where the level of complexity or
> uncertainty is relatively low or moderate.

In this respect, he echoes the contingency theme that is so central to Burns and Stalker's (1961) distinction between 'mechanistic' and 'organic' management systems.

5. The TVA was established in 1933 and promoted by President Roosevelt as a means of improving the planning and use of natural resources in neglected regional areas. It was seen (by its supporters) to be a model of a progressive centralised body giving discretion at local level for interested parties to be involved in its running (the grass roots policy). As such, it was not only established to 'lend assistance' to local people by 'working through established agencies' but also to be 'close to the people', encouraging the 'participation of the people' with the aim of achieving a 'unity' between the central government and the local community on how best to manage the area's resources (Ibid: 59-64). Thus, the TVA did not only perform administrative functions; it also had strong symbolic and ideological meanings beyond its technical merits.

6. All references taken from 1953 edition of the book.

7. One criticism of Willis work that needs to be mentioned is that it is incredibly one-sided: he does not explore how the 'ear'oles' make sense of their world. How, for example, do they come to believe , in contrast to the 'lads', that their endeavours will help them in the job market.

CHAPTER FIVE.

1. Silverman and Jones (1976) illustrate this clearly in their analysis of interview work by showing that candidates who tried to direct the course of the interview, removing effective control of the social situation from the chair, were passed over in favour of those who displayed the appropriate deferential behaviour.

CHAPTER SEVEN.

1. This, of course, is equally true for public relations. Like the Institute of Personnel Management, the Institute of Public Relations has organised training courses to restrict entry to and promote the 'professionalism' of public relations.

NOTES CHAPTER EIGHT.

1. In writing this account of the promotional ideology of public relations I have had to rely on the opinions of only two informants. This is for the simple reason that only two of the specialists (Brian and Sue) subscribed to this promotional ideology. Of these two, I have relied rather more heavily on Brian's accounts. This is because his comments better illustrate the points I am making. Having said this, I wish to emphasize that his views are representative of the promotional ideology subscribed to by Sue and himself. While there are a number of precedents for relying heavily on key informants, for example, Whyte's

'Street Corner Society' (1943) and Willis' 'Learning to Labour' (1977), it would obviously have been more desirable to have had more than two informants, but one cannot engineer research.

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